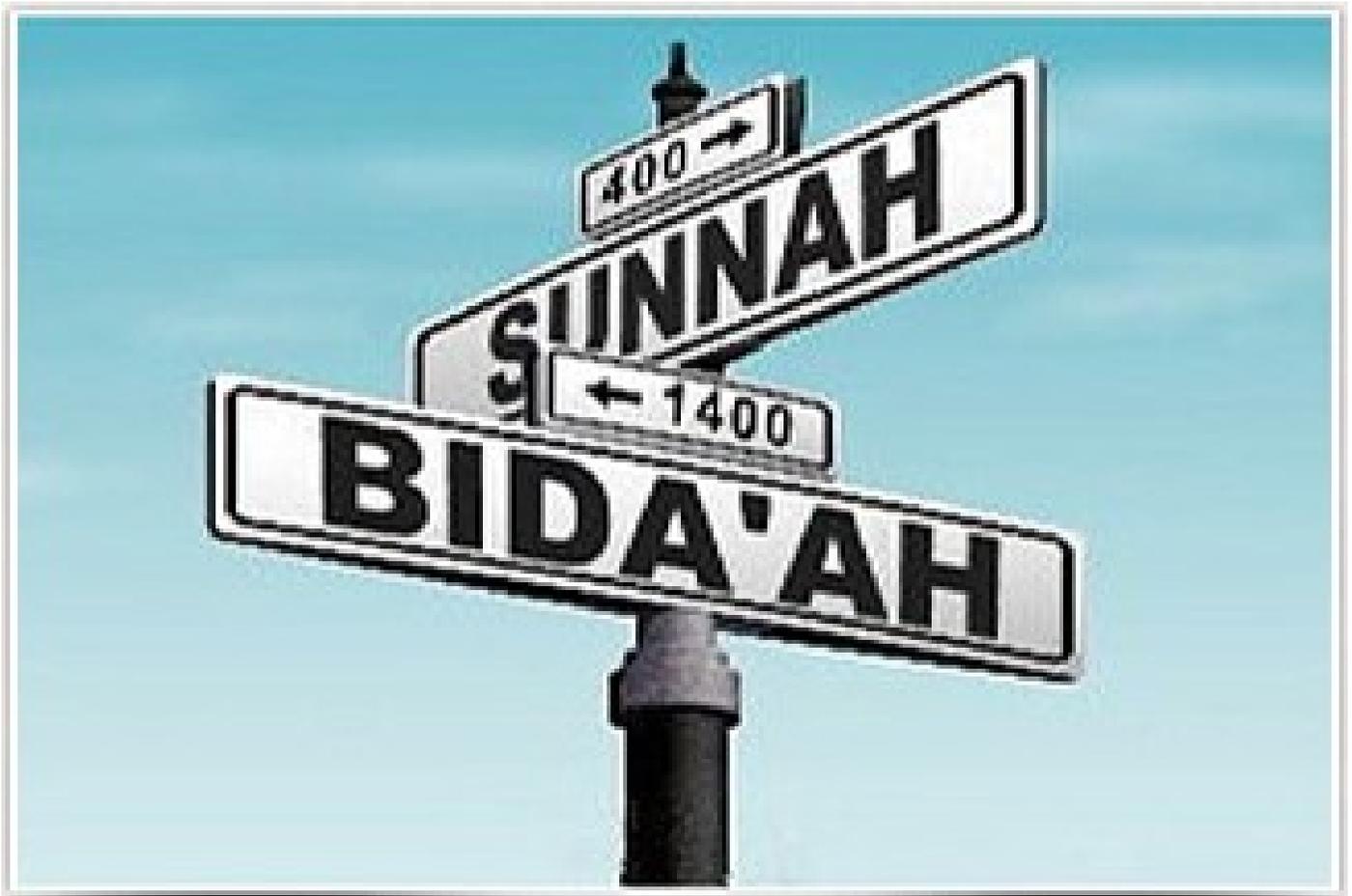


Innovations: An Integral Part of Muslim's Life



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The Controversial Innovation (*Bid'ah*) in Islam

Why Innovation

Inventions are an integral part of human existence and therefore of Islam. Creativities in providing solutions are only responses to the commands of Allah and the teachings of Islam. Allah SWT states in 38:29:

[Here is] a Book which We have sent down upon you, full of blessings, that they may reflect upon its signs [genuinely think through its theories, investigate and discover its predictions, expressions, concepts and matters], and that men of understanding may receive admonition.
Qur'an, 38:29

The Holy Qur'an contains expressions and inspirations appropriate for every time and circumstance, not just the time of the Prophet Muhammad, his companions and those who came after them, known as Tabi'een. Only by the timely and purposeful study of its verses, can these expressions be realized and utilized. Hence, Muslims are required to invent and produce new solutions or systems that meet the ever-changing lifestyles, technology, social and political environments of all people.

There is no running away from novelties so long as the vehicle of Islam moves forth, and as the human life continues its progression into civilization and modernization. Along with improvements, developments and advances come problems and obstacles. Confronting these obstacles may call for more creativity. In

the examples of the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions and the Tabi'een in providing solutions for their difficulties and circumstances they faced. It is puzzling to the mind as to why such topic becomes controversial at all? See the section "Discussion on Innovation (Bid'ah) in Islam" below.

Engaging Muslims' Intellect

Muslims must not shut down their intellects based on any fear or fatwa rejecting innovations. Muslims must step out of the box of "I cannot do anything about it because there is a fatwa on it; because God will take care of it; because the issue does not pertain to me, and the list of do nothing and lay back goes on and on and on." Allah SWT opened the ways for Muslims to learn, be engaged, and lead the way to prosperity. He described the believers saying:

They believe in God, and the last day; and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and zealously strive to excel (compete) in good works: These are righteous (the ones who augment the human potential). Qur'an 3:114

To be zealously striving to compete with someone, the competitors would have to have a product, a projector actions they are competing against each other with. How can we be "competitors" if we do not have anything to compete with or must not be creative and innovative, especially in augmenting the human potential? How can one come up to the level that Allah SWT set out for him or her if they intend to shut off their minds and hearts from producing actions or answers to their failures?

Understood that not all the solutions, made by the Prophet for the 7th-century inhabitants of Arabia, work for the people living in the midst of the fast-paced technology of the 21st century, anywhere on this globe. Neither are the fatwas made in the centuries past may be any suitable. These fatwas could well serve their time and place, but may not be useful in the advanced world that demands solutions fit with its fast-growing industries, economy, and social and political ever-changing worlds.

The Creation of Specialized Institutions

Today's Muslims declining trend in just about all walks of life imposes on them the creation of research institutions dedicated to the study of their decline, and for producing approaches and plans to get them out of their abysmal failures. Establishing specialized research institutions, in association with the existing colleges and universities, along with think-tanks as well as other research enterprises, are a must for today's impaired Muslim Ummah.

Muslim schools, Islamic centers, and academic institutions should offer courses in *tarbiyah* (education, orientation, and training) in the spiritualities of Islam. Spiritualities such as taqwa, humbleness (*kushu'*), thikru-Allah (intensified sessions in contemplation and in remembering Allah, His attributes, the Universe, the worlds and Heavens, and so much more of His signs and creations.) These institutions should offer higher degrees in the "Inner-Self Purification (Tazkiyah)." Muslim educational systems should institutionalize the Prophet's teaching of *al-Hikmah* (Wisdom).

Education courses should include the [Prophet's management schemes](#) of his affairs: How did he unite his people, how did he change minds and hearts; how did he eradicate tyranny and violence; how did he establish peace and security and justice and civility. Education should implant in the minds of students the [Sunnah of planning](#), and [Itqan](#), the work with precision and artistry, the [Sunnah of Careful Considerations](#), and many more of his astute, administrative and managerial Sunnan.

Discussion on the Controversial Innovation (Bid'ah) in Islam

The controversial topic of innovation in Islam is one of the more important topics to explore. The correct understanding on bid'ah should remove much ambiguity and encountered tensions among Muslims and ease the way for Muslims into progress. The author recommends that this topic made for study in every Islamic institution, home, and business.

This writing is greatly influenced by [Dr. Adnan Ibrahim's presentation on bid'ah](#) on the television program [Aafaq](#), broadcasted by Rotana satellite from Egypt, July 2014.

The Linguistic Meaning of Bid'ah

The Arabic word bid'ah came from the root word Ibdaa' meaning to create something from nothing, without an earlier occurrence or presence. Example: Allah is *badi'u*, the first to develop or to initiate the Heavens and the Earth.

The Prophetic Traditions of Innovation

Much of the discussion referenced in this article centered on the Prophetic Traditions listed below and some Qur'anic verse in support of an argument or a position relating to the topic.

Every innovation is bid'ah, a new creation, and every bid'ah is deviance, and each deviance is in the [Hell] Fire. -Muslim

Whoever, Sanna Sunnatan Hashanah, initiate a good practice in Islam, and others do likewise after him, there will be written for him its reward and the like reward of all those who follow him, without decreasing the least from their reward. And whoever starts a bad practice in Islam, he will bear the burden of his bad practice, and the burden of all who likewise follow him, without decreasing in the least from their burden. -Muslim and Al Temithi
Keep on my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Caliphs, cling to it willfully [literarily, with your molar teeth.] -Abu Dawood and Termisi, Hadith Hasan Sahih

Follow the two after me, Abi Bakr and Omar. -Sunan Altermithi and Ibn Sa'd

Scholars Deliberation on Bid'ah

The traditional Muslim scholars deliberated bid'ah (innovation) differently. Many of them accepted bid'ah and classified it into bad and good categories, while others reject it completely. Several of the scholar's definition and arguments on bid'ah presented so the readers can judge for themselves what is the correct answer to bid'ah.

The Scholars Sided with Innovation

Al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam (1181-1262)

A more elaborate explanation of bid'ah made by the Shafi'i great scholar al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, known as the sultan of scholars. In his book, "Qawai'd al-Ahkam, The Basis of Religious Rulings" explained bid'ah as "the creation of action of what was not known during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad," peace be upon him, pbuh, and then he divided innovation into five categories: Sahih Bukhari and by Imam Malik in his "Mawtta'" reported that the Prophet, pbuh, during Ramadan, had led the people for three consecutive nights, but on the fourth night, he did not. Instead, he prayed at home. When was he asked why did he not pray in the Mosque? His reply was: "So the people do not get the idea that these prayers are mandatory ones."

During his caliphate, Omar ibn al-Khattab (634-644), did not like the people praying individually and in smaller groups in the Mosque. So, he appointed Ubaii ibn Ka'bb to lead the individuals and the small groups in a single collective prayer, which became known as Taraweeh. The same sources continued to state that days after he made his order, the Caliph Omar entered into the Mosque and upon seeing the Muslims congregating beautifully in Taraweeh, he pleasantly expressed: "What a great bid'ah this is, but that which you sleep on it, is even better [in rewards] than this one." Signifying the prayer at the end of the night, known as Tahajud. Thus, Omar ibn al-Khattab, pbuh deliberately changed Taraweeh as we know it today and encouraged Muslims to follow.

Some encountered issues few years following the death of the Prophet necessitated preservation of the sacred knowledge of the Qur'an and the Hadith. The changes prompted by the new masses of non-Arabs entering Islam from the conquered land, and the decline in the quality of faith (iman) in the hearts of the believers. In consideration of these needs, a deliberate creation of new institutions and enterprises were made. Some of these establishments were:

- 1- Prohibited Bid'ah. This category applies strictly to the Muslim's system of Aqeedah or belief. An example of this type of bid'ah is to describe Allah SWT in a physical shape, form or volume.
- 2- Undesired or Unwanted Bid'ah. The like of this type of bid'ah is the decoration of Mosques and Qur'ans.
- 3- Permitted Bid'ah. This category applies to such innovations in food making, communications, and

transportations. This category is seen by al-Izz as permissible innovations.

4- Desired Bid'ah. This category of innovations may include: Every religious enterprise that was not known during the lifetime of the Prophet such as Islamic schools and institutions, faith- establishments such as the congregational Taraweeh Prayer during the month of Ramadan, initiated by the Second Caliph Omar (630-632), and the detailed training and discipline of Sufism (675) as described in the sciences of Psychology and Philosophy.

5- Obligatory Bid'ah. Al-Izz considers this category of innovations a must. It is sinful otherwise if nothing is done about it. The Obligatory requirement will be reduced to a Limited Obligatory (Fardh Kifayah) if the offensive or bad condition is treated. The Obligatory Bid'ah category applies to an imposed circumstance or deteriorating condition demanding correction or solution. What follows are few historical examples.

- The compilation of the verses of the Qur'an and collating them into a single volume (632-634).
- The establishment of the dotting and punctuation systems of the letters and words of the Qur'an (688-746).
- The creation of the Arabic Grammar (760-796).
- The founding of the Basis of the Science of Hadith, Traditions of the Prophet (604-890).
- The founding of the Basis of the Science of Aqeedah, the Muslim's fundamental belief (767-855).
- The founding of the Basis of the Science of Fiqh, the details and mechanics of how to do and or what to do as recommended by the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi'i and Maliki Schools of Fiqh (767-855).
- The founding of Sufism, a school of spiritual and moral *tarbiyah*. Tarbiyah is an institutional education with discipline and training by qualified mentors. Sufism is an institution of tarbiyah to love and be closer to Allah and His Prophet, to instill taqwa, awareness of Allah and His Attributes, and for making the Muslim an ethical healthier human being.

Al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam's Bid'ah Definition Adoption by Other Scholars

There were many traditional scholars who adopted the bid'ah classification of al-Izz in their establishments and writings. Some of these scholars were: al-Shahab al-Qarafi (1228-1258), a Maliki Jurist. Al-Iman al-Nawawi (1233-1277) in his work, "Tahtheeb al-Asma' wa al-Lughat". Al-Imam al-Zurqani (1645-1710), a Maliki scholar, and Muhammad Abdeen (1198-1252), a Hanafi jurist, known for his great work "Hashiyat ibn Abdeen, or Rad al-Mukhtar ala ad-Dur al-Mukhtar."

Al-Tabari (838-923),

Al-Tabari in his "Tabari Commentary of the Holy Qur'an," addressed Muslims saying: ***"You invented the Taraweeh (praying the night prayers in the Mosque during the month of Ramadan), yet it was not prescribed for you. You must continue to honor it because some of the sons of Israel made innovations that were not prescribed for them by Allah, but later on, abandoned it. Allah, therefore, lectured them about it."*** And then he read the verses of Chapter Hadeed, 57:52.

Imam Shafi'i (767-820)

Imam al-Bayhaqi (944-1068), who wrote on the biography of Imam Shafi'i, the founder of the Shafi'i school of thought stated Imam Shafi'i's bid'ah definition as: ***"the innovations are two kinds: The first is an innovation that contradicts the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', and other agreed upon verdicts. This is an undesired bid'ah or rejected. The second is that which does not contradict the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma' and other agreed upon verdicts. This is an acceptable or admitted innovation."***

Al-Hafith Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (1358-1417)

Al-Hafith ibn Rajab, a Hanbali school of thought Jurist, in his book, "Jami' al-Ulum wa al-Hikam, the Collective of Knowledge and Wisdom," defined bid'ah as: ***"Anything done that has no basis in the Shar' (Islamic doctrine),"*** 'This definition is more specific than that of al-Izz,' according to Dr. Ibrahim. Note: "The Collective of Knowledge and Wisdom," is the commentary on the "40 Nawawi Hadith" book.

Al-Hafith Ibn Hajar al-Asaqalani (1372-1449)

The scholar Ibn Hajar al-Asaqalani, who wrote "Fath al-Bari, Grant of the Creator," the great commentary work on Sahih al-Bukhari, defined bid'ah in the same manner as Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali's definition above.

Imam Abu Shamah al-Maqdisi (d. 1267)

Imam Abu Shamah al-Maqdisi, the teacher of Imam Nawawi, defined bid'ah in two folds: accepted and rejected categories.

Imam Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 1388)

Imam Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi, a Maliki scholar, in his two volumes book "I'tissam" (The Study of Fiqh of Bida'), gave much wider elaborations and discussions on bid'ah deserving much gratitude. He gave bid'ah two basic definitions:

1- Narrow: Bid'ah is a method created in the Sharia Law with the intent of improving Ibadah or worship.

2- Broad: Bid'ah is a method created in the Sharia Law designed to implement the intents of the Sharia Law.

Shihabu ad-Deen Abu Shamah al-Dimashqi (1202-1267)

Abu Shamah al-Dimashqi the author of "Ibn Assakir" and "Al Ba'ith ala al-bida' wa al-Hawadith, The Trigger Against Bida' and Incidents," divide bid'ah into two kinds: Denied and Accepted.

Innovations Made by the Companions of the Prophet During his Lifetime

During the lifetime of the Prophet, pbuh, many of his companions had made suggestions and new creations or inventions that the Prophet simply acknowledged and accepted. Innovations, like the athan, the Muslim's call for the prayer, which was a dream and the pulpit have become integral parts of the Islamic practice. On this matter, Dr. Ibrahim elaborated saying that if innovations were not permissible by the Prophet and that if he had not accepted them, his companions would not even dare to say or attempt any innovation. Following, are some other examples of the companion's innovations, some of which the Prophet approved, yet others he disapproved:

A- Make Up the Missing Portions of the Prayer After Joining the Imam

One of the best innovations in Islam, during the time of the Prophet pbuh was made by Mu'ath ibn Jabal. He established the mechanism of what a person does to make up the part of the prayer he missed when he or she joins the Imam (prayer leader). Mu'ath ibn Jabal stated:

If one joins the Imam, he or she must continue with the Imam until he finishes the prayer, then make up the units or the parts he or she missed out of the prayer for being late to join the Imam.

Dr. Ibrahim says: 'Before this innovation, the Muslims used to do what they thought they had missed out of the prayer immediately after joining the Imam, on their own and then continue with him until he finishes.' One can see some people making prostrations, others bending, yet others following the Imam. When the Prophet was told about it, he was pleased and said,

Mu'ath has made Sunnah for you, follow it. Sunan Abi Dawoud

This Hadith asserts that the Prophet pbuh did not stop Mu'ath from making an innovation, but instead it showed that he endorsed it. All Muslims have undeniably, performed Mu'ath's Sunnah every since its invention.

B- The Sunnah of Praying Two Rakh'ah (prayer unit) of Captives

Khubabe ibn Uddai requested his capturers, before his crucifixion to pray two *rak'ahs* (a prayer unit). This prayer of two units has become a Sunnah for any captive distant to die, reported both, Bukhari and Muslim.

C- Bilal ibn Rabbah Practiced a Self-Made Sunnah

Bilal ibn Rabbah made a sunnah to himself. Once, the Prophet pbuh called him and said: "Tell me, did you do something I have not done? I heard the sound of your shoes in Heaven." He said, "Every time I use the restroom, I make wudu', and every time I made wudu' I pray two Rak'ahs." The Prophet then said:

Yes, that is what it was. -Al-Termithi, Ahmad ibn Hanba, Al-Hakim

D- The Reading of Surat Ikhlass in Every Rakh'ah By an Anssari

One of the Ansars used to pray two chapters as he leads the Muslims in the prayer. The first Surah was always al-Ikhlass, then another surah. His companions asked him not to read al-Ikhlass in every rak'ah, however he insisted. They complained to the Prophet about him, the Prophet asked him why was he doing so. He replied: "Because I love Surat al-Ikhlass." The Prophet said:

Your love of it admitted you into Heaven. -Bukhari

E- The Prophet Cherished A Companion's Supplication

One time the Prophet was in a circle of learning with his companions. A companion was praying by them. When the companion finished his prayer, he said: "Oh my Lord, I asked You that to You belong the appreciations and gratitude, there is no deity other than You, You are the Mannan (giving in abundance), the Initiator of the Heavens and the Earth, oh You are the Majesty and Generous." Upon hearing it, the Prophet pbuh said:

He has indeed called upon Allah with His High name, in which, if He is called with, He will give. -All Books of al Sunnan

F- Angels Rushed to Document a Supplication of Gratitude

In one of the prayers, and after the Prophet stood up from prostration, saying "samia Allahu leman hamidah," he heard a companion saying in reaction to the call of the Prophet, "Rabadna wa laka al hamdu khatheeran tayiban mubarakan feeh." When the payer was over, the Prophet asked. "**Who of you said it?**" The man said, "I am O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet then said: "**Indeed, over thirty angels raced for writing it.**" -Bukhari and Muslim

G- Raaq, Blissful Holistic Supplicator

Abu Sa'eed al-Khidri was traveling with some of his companions. They got hungry. They came upon a tribe, asked them for food, but they refused to feed them. After a short period of time, the people came to the companions asking if any of them is a Raaq, a blissful holistic supplicator. They said, why do you ask? They said that a scorpion bit their leader's hand. Abu Sa'eed said to them, I am a Raqa. I will do it, but with something in return. They said we would give you a number of sheep. Abu Sa'eed accepted and then read the Fatiha Surah seven times on the leader's infected hand. Abu Sa'eed said:

After my reading, the man came to it as if one was released from the [sored] rope ties, with no pain at all.

The companions of Abu Sa'eed abstained from eating from the meet of the sheep he got for labor, questioning the validity of obtaining the sheep. When they returned to the Prophet pbuh, and told him the story, he asked Abu Sa'eed, "**How did you know that was ruqyah?**" He said, "**O Messenger of Allah, I did not know it was ruqyah, but it was something Allah put in my heart, and that is how it was.**" The Prophet then approved the eating of the meat and said: "**Consider me for a peace [of the meat.]**" - Bukhari and Muslim and Ahmad

H- The Prophet Did Not Approve Harmful Innovations

The Prophet pbuh was not in support of some of his companion's innovations that were by their nature against the teachings of Islam. Once the Prophet was giving a sermon, he saw a person standing out in the sun. He asked who the person was; he was told it was Abu Israel. He asked why he was standing in the sun. They said, "**He made a promise to himself that he would stand and not sit, abstain from speaking, not sit in the shade, fast and not eat.**" The Prophet pbuh said, "**Tell him to seek shade, sit and speak, and to continue his fast.**" -Sunan Ahmad

The Prophet (PBUH) chose for the man what was good, such as fasting, which is known to be good for body, spirit and soul, and speaking with people to ease his psychological problems, and disallowed what could be harmful and torturous to the body such as lengthy standing, especially in the hot sun. Bukhari

The Scholars Opposed Innovation

Among the scholars who reject bid'ah are Ibn Taymiyah (1263-1328) and Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792). See:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EDKDHPZSUc>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Taymiyyah

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi_movement target="_blank">
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Abd_al-Wahhab

Arguments Pro and Against Innovation

Scholars opposing innovations based their decision on the above Tradition, reported in Sahih Muslim, ***“Every innovation is bid’ah, a new creation, and every bid’ah is a deviance and each deviance is in the [Hell] Fire.”***

Ineffective and Effective Descriptive Rule

Those who oppose innovation make their total rejection reasoning against bid’ah even in the Prophetic Tradition, “Whoever innovates in our religion that which is not in it, it is rejected.” They said the clause, “what is not of it,” is a “transparent descriptive” clause. It does not make it a condition. Dr. Ibrahim states that this is a valid argument. He explained that scholars defined “descriptive” into two kinds: ineffective or transparent and effective. The ineffective description can be removed out of the sentence without affecting the meaning of the sentence. Example: Qur’an 6:38. “or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you.” If the “words with its wings” are removed out of the sentence, the meaning of the sentence does not change. Thus, “all innovations are rejected,” clause can be removed without affecting the meaning of the Tradition.

The Claim Making Innovations Must Mean the Prophet Did not Know Enough of his Business

The group of bid’ah opposing scholars claim that innovating something that the Prophet left out implies that the Prophet did not know his subject and that those who made the invention knew better than the Prophet. Dr. Ibrahim said this claim makes a weak argument. If the Prophet left something out without speaking about it, does not signify its prohibition or that it is undesired. In fact, the Sharia rule in this regard is that ***“all things are permitted unless stated otherwise.”***

The Rule of “No verdict on a matter, not a disapproval of it”

The Jurists’ grand rule regarding “no action” [on a matter] is not a condemnation of the matter.” This rule establishes that when a matter is left out without a verdict on it whether good or bad, does not imply it is bad, evil or denounced. The Prophet pbuh did not eat lizard meat, but its meat is permissible in Islam. Does his denial mean that the lizard meat is prohibited? In another example, a person came to the Prophet with hunted meat during his pilgrimage duty. The Prophet refused to eat meat since a pilgrim cannot eat from the permitted meat of the un-pilgrims. The Prophet said:

Allah has made prohibitions, do not exceed it, and made obligations, do not discard it, and left things out [without saying anything about them], not because he forgot them, but as a mercy for you, so do not ask about them. -Al-Bayhaqi, al-Daraqatni, and al-Hakim

The Prophet did not Allow Innovation in the Ritual Act of the Prayer

Imam Al-Bukhari reported that Abi Bikrah, a companion of the Prophet, entered the Mosque while the Prophet was leading the prayer and making ruku’ (bowing down). So, Abi Bikrah bowed down the minute he entered and kept walking in that position until he reached the people performing in the prayer. When the Prophet learned about it, he told Abi Bikrah, “Good for being assiduous, but do not do it again.” This Hadith shows that the Prophet rejects innovations made in the actual rituals (Ibadat), since they indeed made a change in the actual basis of religion. This case supports the argument that “innovations in the actual rituals (Ibadat) are the innovations to be rejected since they make a change in the actual or basic rituals of religion.

Admitting All But Intending Specifics’ Rule

How did the majority of the scholars approves innovations, and had classified it into categories: objectionable, acceptable and even obligatory, etc? Yet the Prophet pbuh had stated: ‘Every innovation is a deviation and every deviation is misguidance and every misguidance is in the Hell Fire.’

Regarding this question, Dr. Ibrahim stated that the scholars who allowed innovations claim that the words “every innovation” in the Tradition does not mean all innovations, but the majority of them. This interpretation is based on what is known to the Jurists as “al-‘Aam al-Makhsuss,” Admitting All but Intending Specifics.” Said differently, not all innovations [about any and all matters] are in Hell Fire, but the majority of them are. Some innovations are good, recommended gratifying and praised. He said, based on the clause in the Hadith of the Prophet, “that which is not in it,” to be rejected, is what has no roots in religion, but if there are roots [open, unrestricted directives admitted by the religion,] then innovations [for a particular matter] are acceptable. This leads to the basic belief, “anything goes against the basic rules of Islam or with a plain directive against innovation, only then that would not be permitted in Islam and is distant to Hell Fire.” Examples: Making the month of fasting in “Sh’aban” month, not Ramadan and the daily five obligatory prayers ten is a change in the basic teachings of Religion.

Some scholars said regarding the Hadith, “Whoever innovates in our religion that which is not in it, it is rejected.” That is what has no roots in the Sharia is rejected, but if there is a cause or a base for invention in the religion, then that is acceptable.

The Rewards for Good and Bad Innovations

According to Dr. Ibrahim, the scholars who recognized innovations based their decisions on several biographical indications and Prophetic sayings. One example is:

Whoever, Sanna Sunnatan hassanah, initiate a good practice in Islam, and others do likewise after him, there will be written for him its reward and the like reward of all those who follow him, without decreasing the least from their reward. And whoever starts a bad practice in Islam, he will bear the burden of his bad practice, and the burden of all who likewise follow him, without decreasing in the least from their burden. -Muslim and al Temithi

This hadith clearly states that a new innovation is permissible in Islam. However, those who oppose bid’ah argued that the clause ‘Whoever starts (sunnah) a good thing in Islam,’ in the above Hadith means, “an existing, but sleeping or forgotten Sunnah of the Prophet, not a new one,” but according to Dr. Ibrahim, “*this claim makes a weak argument, since the second half of the Hadith states, ‘and whoever creates a bad sunnah in Islam, is there bad sunnah in Islam, he asked?’*” This fact points out that the Hadith is indeed speaking of “*new innovations or creation, not inactive ones.*”

Guided Caliphs Can and Are Allowed to Make Innovations (Sunan)

The Prophet pbuh encouraged his followers to practice his and his Guided Caliphs Sunan, saying:

Keep [practicing] my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, cling to it persistently [literarily, with your molar teeth]. -Muslim Abu Dawood and al-Termithi

The Hadith is rated *Hasan*, Good, and establishes that the Rightly Guided Caliphs will have a similar Sunnah to that of the Prophet, supporting the argument that the creation of good Sunan and those of the Guided Caliphs can and are admitted in Islam by the Prophet, himself. Following the examples of Abi Bakr and Omar, means follow their mechanism of management, including the creation of good innovations. The Prophet pbuh said:

Follow the two after me, Abi Bakr and Omar. Sunan al-Termithi and Ibn Sa’d-

Present Day Issues

It must be understood that not all the solutions that were made by the Prophet for the 7th-century inhabitants of Arabia work for the people living in the midst of the fast-paced technology of the 21st century, anywhere on this globe. Neither are the fatwas made in the centuries past may be any good. These fatwas could well serve their time and place, but may not be useful in the advanced world that demands solutions fit with its fast-growing industries, economy, and social and political ever-changing worlds.

The Demand For Advanced Planning

Today, Muslims are like all other people, who have businesses to manage and employment that demands advanced planning for off-work days, and in advance reservations for most of their spheres of life. The

busy and fast-paced living imposes on Muslims to come up with in-advance notices for their places of work, health care, family affairs, and businesses. In America, Muslims are obligated to reserve large convention centers eight to ten months in advance to accommodate the crowds attending Eid prayers and festivities. Under these circumstances, Muslims are required dutifully to use a scientific method to arrive at the correct dates for the start and end of Ramadan or Eid timing.

Waiting until the night before the feast or the beginning of the month of fast, in many cases, is too late to properly accommodate the festivity rituals. This analogy applies equally to the ritual of the Pilgrimage. Making flight and hotel reservations necessary for the dutiful Pilgrimage to Mecca, one cannot wait until the beginning of the month of Thu-al-Hijjah when Saudi Arabia officially declares the date of the Pilgrimage. The first of the Thu-al-Hijjah, for many people around the world, is too late to make the Pilgrimage arrangements and hotel reservations.

Nowadays, the pilgrimage date should be available to the pilgrims three to four months in advance to satisfy their fast-paced life. Verdicts pertinent to this matter should be based on Islam's ideal teachings of

Yasirou wa La Tu'asirou, facilitate, make it simple and easy, not un-doable, hard and difficult, 'wa Bashiru wa La tunafirou,'encourage and inspire [optimistically] and do not discourage and dispirit.
-Bukhari and Muslim

For detailed information on the topic of lunar months determinations, see our article, "[The Wisdom of the Prophet in Determining the Lunar Months.](#)"

Women's Travel

One should not expect people today to adopt the traveling rules that were established for the harsh and unsafe conditions of the desert of the 7th century Arabia. Today there are convenient types of transportation with safety systems and security that allow for females to travel across the world without the guardians that were a necessity in Arabia's crude 7th-century transportation and communication systems. Of course, there are always exceptions; one must use their minds and intellects to run their lives accordingly. If such dangerous places for travel exist in the 21st century, then one should use all the safety and security measures necessary to guard the females.

Revitalizing Faith (Iman)

In the early times of Islam, Muslims initiated projects to overcome their problems and weaknesses. Today's Muslims are in dire need of revitalizing their faith, establishing rationality and eradicating insanity and extremism in this world. The author believes that in this 21st century, solutions must be designed to instill the deteriorating iman, humility (khusu'), moralities and taqwa, (awareness and fear of Allah, having the consciousness of Allah and His Attributes) in the hearts and minds of the mass majority of the Muslims. Every individual in the community must participate in making the community's vehicle move forward towards security and excellence, not backward into inferiority and ignorance.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, to understand the evolving nature of the human being in association to the "timeless" Islamic faith, one cannot help but say that life and innovations, made for the basics of faith, are a must. Looking again, at the Prophet's Hadith "*Whoever innovates in our religion that which is not in it, it is rejected,*" one can easily conclude that any bid'ah clearly created in the faith, not for the faith, that is the bid'ah to be rejected. Today, for example, the violation of the Islamic standards in the sanctuary of the human soul, and permitting the slaying of innocent people, Muslims and no-Muslims alike, who incur no aggression against Muslims or Islam is indeed an innovation in the religion and a violation of the teachings of Allah SWT and His Prophet pbuh. See our articles "[The Foreign Policy of Islam Regarding non-Muslims](#)" and "[The Distortion of Islamic Doctrine.](#)"

Likewise, making Fajr prayer three rak'as (units), rather than the actual two rak'as is indeed an innovation in religion, but creating a video documentary displaying the characters of the Prophet Muhammad to the world, cannot be anything other than an innovation for the religion, not in the religion. Dotting and punctuating the letters and words of the Qur'an, so that people like you and I can read it and understand it correctly, has to be a good innovation for the religion, but not in the religion.

In one of the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California meetings, [Dr. Muzamil Siddiqi](#)* was asked before as many as 200 imams and Muslim leaders, whether Mawlid an-Nabi (the Prophet's Birth Celebration) is a bid'ah or not, his reply was: "***I asked our Ulama (scholars) in Saudi Arabia this question and their answer was: 'It is not a bid'ah, since the Mawlid an-Nabi function is not made in the religion, but for the religion.'***"

Muslim scholars in past, present and future make fatwas and verdicts in response to the relevant circumstances, social and political situations and cultures they live in to remedy the associated problems. Islam cannot be taken from fatwas affected by the political and social conditions in past centuries. These fatwas cannot possibly work for the circumstances and issues facing Muslims in the fast-paste, 21st century. Even neurologists have to increase the yearly IQ standards to cope with the advancing industry and inventions affecting the social, political and religious life of people. New solutions and establishments must be the way to resolve and solve the Muslims derailing and deteriorating conditions.

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