



Warning Against Bid'ah
(Innovation in the Religion)

Warning Against *Bid'ah* (Innovation in the Religion)

All praises and thanks are due to Allâh, Who ordered us to follow the revelation and avoid innovating in the religion. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allâh Alone without partners in the worship, just as He has no partners in creating the creation. I also bear witness that Muhammad is Allâh's slave and Messenger, whom He sent to be followed and obeyed. May Allâh's peace and blessings be on Muhammad, his progeny and Companions and all those who followed him with excellence.

O people! Fear Allâh and know that He has completed this religion for us and commanded us to follow and hold to it. Allâh said:

﴿وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ﴾

“And verily, this is My straight path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His path.”
(6:153)

Therefore, every act of worship that does not have a basis in the religion and has no proof to support it, specifically in the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, is indeed an act invented by the wicked and a part of the ‘other paths’ that deviate away from Allâh's Straight Path. The Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ».

“Whoever performs a deed that does not conform to our matter (religion), then it is rejected.”

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَنْ أَحَدَثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ».

“Whoever invents in our matter (religion) what is not a part of it, then it (the innovation) is rejected.”

O Allâh's slaves! Know that *Bidah* (innovation in the religion)

destroys the true religion and takes the place of the *Sunnah*. Imam Ahmad narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

«مَا ابْتَدَعَ قَوْمٌ بَدْعَةً إِلَّا نَزَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ السُّنَّةِ مِثْلَهَا» .

“Whenever people invent a *Bid'ah*, Allâh removes from them a *Sunnah* in its place.”

There are many evil consequences for inventing a *Bid'ah*, such as replacing the *Sunnah* as we stated. For every time a *Bid'ah* is invented, it replaces a *Sunnah*, until the religion fades away completely. This is why we find the innovators dedicating more effort to their *Bid'ah* than they dedicate their effort to the *Sunnah*, since the devil makes the path of *Bid'ah* seem appealing in their eyes and hearts.

Furthermore, the innovator invents *Bid'ah* because he thinks that the religion is incomplete and thus seeks to complete it with his innovation! Otherwise, if he thought that the religion was complete, why would he invent any *Bid'ah* at all? Also, the innovators in the religion shy away from the *Sunnah* and do not feel the strength to practice it, even though they are active in practicing the *Bid'ah*. They might spend their wealth and energy and waste their time resurrecting all types of *Bid'ah*. Moreover, innovating in the religion resurrects the practices of *Jahiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic era of ignorance) in people's lives and surely directs to division and disputes. Each group feels that what they have is better than what the others have, just as Allâh described them.

﴿كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ﴾

“Each group rejoicing in what is with it (as its beliefs).” (23:53)

﴿وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ﴾

“And follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His path.” (6:153)

The *Sunnah*, in contrast, unites people, gathers their hearts and makes them brethren who love each other, follow one path and embrace one

religion.

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allâh (i.e., this Qur’ân), and be not divided among yourselves.” (3:103)

Moreover, among the evil consequences of *Bid'ah* is that it directs to denying the truth, especially when the innovator is called to it. When called to the truth, he would insist on the *Bid'ah* and even defend it! Further, *Bid'ah* spoils the correct religion, just as the devils among mankind and jinn wish and hope for, especially the disbelievers and hypocrites. Enemies of Islam try their best to corrupt it using all means at their disposal, especially and foremost the weapon of *Bid'ah* and superstitious beliefs. They do this in order to distort the image of Islam and cover the true essence of the correct religion. By doing so, those who do not have knowledge of the true essence of Islam will think that it is a collection of superstitious, empty practices and thus shy away from embracing it. Adding to this evil, is the fact that those who propagate *Bid'ah* earn material benefits or acquire fame because of their *Bid'ah*. This is how they satisfy their lusts and desires and collect the enormous wealth that is paid for these *Bid'ah*. Sometimes, illegal sexual activities occur in the process of practicing *Bid'ah*, as well as, shameless mingling between men and women.

There is no doubt that various media outlets, such as the newspapers, radio, TV, and so forth, play a primary role in spreading all types of *Bid'ah* and transmitting them to various parts of the world. Those who read, hear of or watch such evil broadcasts think that these *Bid'at* are a part of Islam. Moreover, we should not forget the role that wicked scholars play in resurrecting *Bid'ah*, propagating them and portraying them in the shape of legal Islamic practices. Consequently, all Muslims, especially scholars and those who deliver *Jumu'ah* speeches, are required to warn people against the evils of *Bid'ah*.

O Allâh's slaves! Celebrating the Prophet's birthday, the night of *Isrâ'* and other 'religious' celebrations are also a type of invented *Bid'ah* in the religion. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, his Companions and the best generations of Islam did not celebrate these occasions—even though

they knew about them! Rather, these celebrations were invented in the latter, less righteous generations as an act of imitating the Christians in contradiction to the Prophet's guidance. This is exactly what the Prophet ﷺ foretold would happen, when he said:

«لَتَسْبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ حَذْوِ الْقُدَّةِ بِالْقُدَّةِ حَتَّى لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ لَدَخَلْتُمُوهُ» .

“You will follow the practices of those who were before you (Jews and Christians), step by step, that even if they enter a lizard's den, you will enter it after them!”

It is amazing to witness the energy and dedication of those who resurrect the *Bid'ah* of celebrating the night of *Isrâ'* and *Mi'raj* (when the Prophet ﷺ was transferred from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to heaven, then back to Makah, overnight). Yet, they do not show much dedication to the five compulsory daily prayers during that very night, for they do not attend it in *Jama'ah* (congregation), if they pray that is! The devil beautifies this *Bid'ah* in their eyes and makes the *Sunnah* hateful to them. It is therefore not strange to realize that the innovators are not religious in general, since the religion that they know is the one that they invented for themselves.

O Allâh's slaves! The Prophet ﷺ warned against the *Bid'ah* and used to say these words in his *Khutbah*:

«أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَخَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُخْدَعَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَالَّةٌ» .

“*Amma Ba'du* (Then)! The best speech is Allâh's Book, the best guidance is that sent with Muhammad ﷺ, the worst matters are matters of innovation, and every *Bid'ah* is a heresy.”

The Prophet's Companions were firm in their rejection of all types of *Bid'ah* and warned sternly against them. For instance, Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه was told that Amr bin 'Utbah and his friends had built a mosque on the outskirts of Kufah (in Iraq). Therefore, Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه commanded that it be torn down. Then he (Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه) was told that a group of people were gathering in a corner in the mosque at

Kufah around Amr bin 'Utbah and were praising Allâh together and mentioning His Oneness.¹ Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه wore a veil over his face and went to that group, sat with them and made sure they were doing what he was told they did. He then unveiled his face and said, "I am Abu Abdur-Rahman (and he was the commander of Kufah during that time)." He then said, "You either have acquired more knowledge than the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ, or have invented a *Bid'ah* in injustice and transgression." Amr bin 'Utbah replied, "We seek forgiveness from Allâh," thrice. A man from Bani Tamim said, "By Allâh! We neither collected better knowledge than the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ, nor did we invent a *Bid'ah* in transgression. Rather, we are a people who were remembering Allâh." Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه replied, "Rather (you have invented a *Bid'ah*). By He in Whose Hand is Ibn Mas'ud's life! If you follow the practices of the people (Muhammad ﷺ and his Companions), you will indeed achieve a great achievement. Otherwise, if you deviate to the right and left, you will be led astray in a tremendous way."

O Allâh! Show us the truth as such and grant us the favor of following it, and expose to us evil as such and grant us the favor of avoiding it.

﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

○ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): 'If you love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' Say: 'Obey Allâh and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allâh does not like the disbelievers.'" (3:31,32)²

¹ They collected small rocks and one of them would say, "Praise Allâh a hundred times," and they would do that, and so forth.

² *Al-Khutab Al-Minbariyyah*, by Shaikh Salih Al-Fozan, vol. 1, p. 171