

## THE PHENOMENON OF MISCONCEPTION ABOUT BID'AH (INNOVATION) IN CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM SOCIETY

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**Abstract:** 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 contemporary Muslims society and ease the way for Muslims into progress. This paper therefore, intends to examine the concept of Bid'ah, highlights it is types and discuss the concept of bid'ah from the Qur'an the Sunna. Contextual analysis method will be used. Therefore, the exploration of legacies through Arabic literatures will be and analyze several academic writings from some relevant journals and paper works. The paper reveals that, there are evidences that new practices are not rejected, but are accepted and even rewarded. However, the practice concerned should be compatible with the dictates of the Shari'ah, otherwise it will be rejected. The opinion of those who condemn any new act without qualification comes from a misunderstanding of the sources of the Qur'an and Hadith. It clarified that, the introduction of new things into the religion ensures that Islam can apply itself to any given time and situation, and some new things have even been essential for its preservation and propagation. Thus "an innovation would become a bad bid'ah only, when it is in contradiction to any specific commandment of the Qur'an or specific hadith of the prophet, in all other cases, the bid'ah is termed as a good Bid'ah. It recommends that, the worldly innovations such as science and technology are not matters to be shunned or avoided.

**Keywords:** *bid'ah*; misconception; innovation; contemporary; Muslim society; Islam

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### A. Introduction

In modern times, there are assertions from certain groups that this or that practice is an innovation in religion, sometimes even accompanied by accusations of it amounting to Kufr or Shirk. In current times, the issue has become a hotly debated among contemporary Muslim society perhaps because of the times Muslims live in today and the challenges they face. Indeed there exist innovations in Islam, unfortunately however many of such assertions are based on the notion that no good can exist in them simply because they were not current at the time of the Prophet or his companions. It has been the opinion of the vast majority of the 'Ulama throughout the ages that there is *Bid'ah* is of two types, that which is permissible, and that which is not.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this article to reiterate the correct position, that innovations or newly introduced practices in the religion of Islam can not only be permissible, but also rewarded, hopefully providing clarification to

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<sup>1</sup> M. M.M. Zarif1, M.A.M. Nizah, Anita Ismail & Adibah Mohamad "Creating Creative and Innovative Muslim Society: *Bid'ah* as an Approach" *Asian Social Science*, (9)11: 2013

the many people who have been confused about the issue. It will also address two main points: Is there what is referred to as "*Bida'a Hasana*" or "Good Innovation"? And how do to categorize the innovations made by many of the companions of the Prophet during his lifetime through suggestions and new creations or inventions that the Prophet simply acknowledged and accepted. Innovations, like the building domes and minarets of Mosque, second *Azhan* of Friday prayers, compilation of the Qur'an into one single book among numerous others which have become integral parts of the Islamic practice.

## B. Result and Discussion

### 1. The Meaning and the Concept of *Bid'ah*

*Bid'ah* is an Arabic word that comes from the root *Al-Bada'* meaning to create something without precedence.<sup>2</sup> Linguistically *Bid'ah* is anything new that previously did not exist while in *Shari'ah* terminology it means anything that has been introduced into the Islamic beliefs and actions of the Muslims that is in direct opposition to the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*, or anything that distorts the *Sunnah* or claims to be better than the *Sunnah*.<sup>3</sup> Generally, *Bid'ah* means an innovation, creation, novelty, any new act, invention, creation or addition of any religious matter which is not originally found in Islam. It is not innovation in general life like, the invention of cars, planes, electricity etc.<sup>4</sup> For aspects of worship or ritualistic behaviors in Islam there must be something in the Qur'an or *Hadith* to explain and confirm its practice.

The Prophet has therefore, cautioned Muslims against any innovation that opposes the Qur'an or the *Sunnah* in the following *Ahadith*: "The best speech is the Book of Allah and the best guidance and example is that of Muhammad, and the worst of all things are the newly invented things (in the religion), for every religious innovation is an error and a misguidance".<sup>5</sup> In another *hadith*, he says: "He who innovates something that is not in agreement with our matter (religion), will have it rejected".<sup>6</sup> Another *hadith* also reported that, he says: "...Verily he among you who lives (long) will see great controversy, so you must keep to my *Sunnah* and to the *Sunnah* of the rightly-guided Khalifahs cling to them stubbornly".<sup>7</sup> Yet another *hadith* says: "Beware of newly invented matters,

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<sup>2</sup> Wehr, Hans: *Arabic-English Dictionary*, Spoken Language Services, Inc, 1994, 57 and al-Masri, Jamaluddin ibn al-Manzur. *Lisan al-'Arab*, 8:6

<sup>3</sup> A. Umar Faruq, "Innovation and Creativity in Islam" *Nawawi Foundation Papers*, Retrieved from <http://www.nawawi.org/> on September 10, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Islamic Research Foundation International, Inc., "*Bid'ah* (with citations from the Qur'an and *hadith*)", Retrieved from, <http://euraktiva786.wordpress.com/2009/06/24/bidah-with-citations-from-the-quran-and-hadith/>, on January 10, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Abi Da'ud, Sulayman ibn Ash-'Ashath As-Sajastani: *Sunan Abi Da'ud*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, *Kitaab us-Sunnah*/4607

<sup>6</sup> Mohamed Bin Ismail al-Bukhari: *Sabih al-Bukhari*, Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, 1987, 5/2697, Muslim bin al-Hujjaj bin Muslim al-Qushairi: *Sabih Muslim*, Cairo, 1393A.H, 6/1718

<sup>7</sup> B. Abdulahi, Abd-ar-Rahaman At-termidi: *Sunan Tarmidi*, Dar Dayan Li at-Turath, Cairo, 1987, 2676

for every invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray, and every going astray is in Hell-fire".<sup>8</sup> Also, he says: "I have left behind me two things, if you cling to them you will never go astray. They are the Book of Allah and my Sunnah" (al-Hakim) and "...so cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs after me, even if it be with your teeth"<sup>9</sup>

These *Abadith* should be understood as every innovation introduced into the Islamic creed is misguidance. This is due to the fact that nobody can enlighten Muslims more than the Prophet did. He was the last Prophet and the religion was completed with him. This is confirmed by the Qur'an 5:3: "This Day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam As your religion". As a result, many scholars said that when a person innovates something and adds to the religion something that does not already belong to it, he implies that the religion is lacking and in need of improvement, or the implication is that Allah did not complete and perfect it His religion. Hence, the prophet taught Muslims all needful to know about Allah, nobody can take away from what was revealed to him, nor can they add anything to it.<sup>10</sup> Every creedal formulation unknown to the Prophet and his Companions that was later introduced is in the fire. This is confirmed from *hadith* of Mu'aawiyah Bin Abu Sufyaan who narrated that the Prophet says: "Those people of the book who came before you split into seventy two sects, and soon Islam will split into seventy-three sects. Seventy-two of them will be in the fire and one will be in Paradise, and that is the *Jamaa'ah*". In another *hadith*, he was asked who are the saved group? He responded: "Those who are upon that which me and my companions are upon today". That is those that departed from the *Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah* only did so because they invented new beliefs.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in Islam, creedal innovations must be avoided at all costs. One must always seek and then adhere to the known position of the *Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah*.

## 2. The Types of *Bid'ah*

The vast majority of the classical Scholars of Islam classified bid'ah in to two types: the praiseworthy and the blameworthy.<sup>12</sup> Imam Shaafi further explained that, whatever is accordance with the *Sunnah* is praiseworthy and whatever vies with it is blameworthy. Furthermore, he classified the new matters in to two viz: Whatever differs with the book of Allah, the Sunnah, or the Ijmaa'a, is

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<sup>8</sup> Muslim bin al-Hujjaj bin Muslim al-Qushairi: *Sahib Muslim*, 867 and Al-Nasā'ī, Ahmad bin Shu'aib al-Nasā'ī: Sunan al-Nasā'ī al-Kubrá (Edt. Dr. 'Abdul Ghaffār Sulaimān al-Bandārī and others), Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1991, 1578)

<sup>9</sup> Mohamed Bin Ismail al-Bukhari: .....*Sahib al-Bukhari*, 2:127

<sup>10</sup> M. N. D. Al-Albani: *Abkam al-jana'iz wa bida'iba*, Maktabah al-Ma'arif. Al-Albani, 1991

<sup>11</sup> A. H. Al-Baihaqi: *al-Madkhal ila al-Sunan al-Kubra*, Riyadh: Maktabah Adwa' al-Salaf. Al-Baihaqi, 1999

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Hajar, Ahmad bin 'Ali al-'Asqalānī: *Fath-ul-Bārī Sharh Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (Edt. Ahmad bin 'Ali), Dār al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1379H, 1996, 370-372

an innovation of misguidance and whatever new matter which is good and does not differ with anything from that Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijmaa'a is not blameworthy".<sup>13</sup>

The similar definitions were expounded by other great classical scholars, such as Imam al-Bayhaqiyy, Imam an-Nawawiy, and Izzudin Ibn Abdus-Salaam and Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalaniyy, among others. For instance, Izzudin Ibn Abdus-Salaam categorised it into five types:

**a. Al-Waajibah (obligatory):** Such as the recording the Qur'an and the laws of Islam in writing when it was feared that something might be lost from them; the study of the disciplines of Arabic that are necessary to understand the Qur'an and sunna such as grammar, word declension, 'Arabic syntax and lexicography which helps to understand the speech of Allah and His Messenger because the preservation of the Shari'ah is obligatory. Such is the much needed explanation of what is difficult to understand, the codification of the science of Fiqh and working to distinguish between the authentic and rejected traditions.

**b. Al-Muharramah (forbidden):** that is whatever opposes the Sunnah such as the false innovated beliefs introduced and any other astray sect that has innovated something into the creed, giving positions of authority in Islam to those unfit for them, and devoting ones time to learning the beliefs of heretical sects that contravene the tenets of faith of Ahl al-Sunna.

**c. Al-Mandub (recommended):** Every excellent goodness that was not established during the lifetime of the Prophet [for example, the gathering for the *Taraweeh* prayers, the building of schools, spiritual retreats, speeches regarding the praiseworthy aspects of *tassawuf*... and anything else done purely seeking the Face of Allah.<sup>14</sup>

**d. Al-Mubah (permissible):** Such as the shaking of hands after the Fajr and 'Asr prayers, sifting flour, using spoons and having more enjoyable food, drinks, clothes, and a wide house...

**e. Makruh (offensive):** the fifth category is that of innovations that are permissible, such as embellishing mosques, decorating the Qur'an and having a backup man (*muballigh*) loudly repeat the spoken Allahu Akbar of the imam when the latter's voice is already clearly audible to those who are praying behind him.<sup>15</sup>

This classification was overwhelmingly accepted by majority of Islamic scholars. For instance, Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghimari<sup>16</sup> confirmed that, this classification was established on a firm basis in Islamic jurisprudence and legal principles and it was confirmed also by Imam Nawawi, Ibn Hajar

<sup>13</sup> Imam Nawawi: *Tabdib al-Asma' wa al-Lughat*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, Beirut/Lebanon, n.d, 2,23

<sup>14</sup> R. Stapley and R. Bedeir: *The translation of Tabzeebu Dalilul Faliheen Sharbu Rijadis Saliheen (The Meadows of the Righteous)* by Imam An-Nawawi, Dar-Al-Manarah, El-Mansoura, n.d, 2, 23 and N.H.M Keller: *The Concept of Bid'a in the Islamic Shari'a* Muslim Academy Trust, 1995, 20

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad al-Jurdani: *Al-Jawabir al-lu'lu'iyah fi sharh al-Arba'in al-Nawawiya*, Damascus, 1328 A.H, 220-21

<sup>16</sup> Abdullah al-Ghimari in G.F. Haddad, Fiqh – Jurisprudence, Retrieved from, <http://www.sheikhnotes.co.uk/2015/06/why-should-i-follow-madhab-what-is.html>, on January 10, 2022

Asqalani,<sup>17</sup> and the vast majority of Islamic scholars. One may not support the denial of this classification by clinging to the *hadith* which says: “Every innovation is misguidance”,<sup>18</sup> because the only form of innovation that is without exception misguidance is that concerning tenets of faith that contradicted the beliefs of the early Muslims. As for innovation in works, meaning the occurrence of an act connected with worship or something else that did not exist in the first century of Islam, it must necessarily be judged according to these five categories.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, Imam Abu Bakr al-Aajuri, the great Shaafa'i scholar explained: (Kitaab us-Shari'ah) “Innovations in the Creed are misguidance, being that it opposes the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and differs from the statements of the true believers”.<sup>20</sup> In most cases, innovations conflict with divine law by implying a need for human additions or deletions. Even an invented practice which did not contradict the Shari'ah or imply any change was disliked by the majority of early scholars. They used to avoid any innovation, even though some types were allowable. It is thus, clear that the early generation of Muslims cautiously avoided all innovations which even had the remotest connection to the Islam for fear of changing the religion to the slightest degree. However, there were some new practices which did not contradict the *Shari'ah* or change it; these practices were allowed. One can therefore, deduce from the given evidences that, there are two types of bid'ah, praiseworthy and blameworthy.

Therefore, the first type is innovation in the matter of things pertaining to worldly life. Things like technology, electricity and transport would come under this category. These things are permissible and in many cases could even be called desirable. The second type of innovation pertains to matters of the deen. In matters of religion bid'ah is not permissible and it can be dangerous to introduce new things in our religion. Because of the danger there are many quotations and traditions from the Sunnah of the Prophet that point this out.

### 3. Proof of Good *Bid'ah* from the Qur'an

The Qur'an, the primary source of Knowledge in Islam, has a most important proof of the permissibility of beneficial introductions into the Religion. In the first instance, the verse of Qur'an, which gives a comprehensive appreciation of the concept of *bid'ah* is in chapter Al-Hadih verse 27: “Then in the footsteps of these Messengers we sent (other) Messengers and We sent 'Isa son of Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) after them and gave him the Injeel (the Gospel). And We created kindness and mercy in the hearts of those who were (the true) followers (of 'Isa [Jesus]). And they themselves invented the innovation of monasticism (living the life of a recluse and committing to

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<sup>17</sup> Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani: *Al-isabah fi tamyizih'l-sahabah*, Maktabatu'l-Riyadh al-haditha, al-Riyadh, 1378 A.H

<sup>18</sup> Mohamed Bin Ismail al-Bukhari: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ... 3/ 49: 861

<sup>19</sup> Adilla Ahlal-Sunna wa al-Jamaa, 145-47 in Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi: *Ma'ani al-Atbar*, Beirut: Tasweer, n.d, 145-47

<sup>20</sup> Imam Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Ajurri: *Kitab al-Shari'ah*, Beirut, Dar Al Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, n.d.

asceticism and austerity). We did not prescribe it for them. But they (introduced this innovation of monasticism) merely to seek Allah's pleasure. Then they could not practically keep and maintain that check which was its due (i.e. could not continue its spirit and discipline). So We paid those of them their reward who believed (and continued the innovation of monasticism to seek pleasure of Allah). And most of them (who left it and changed their ways) are disobedient." The above verse of the Qur'an not only mentions about the *Bid'ah* of Monasticism, introduced by the true followers of Jesus but, it also specified three important things regarding this Bid'ah:

a. Those who adopted this *bid'ah*, were originally the true follower of Isa (Jesus). It was new practice, which they adopted on their own but not based on the holy commandment.

b. The Qur'an says that they adopted this *bid'ah* of Monasticism just for the sake of pleasure of Allah. If a *bid'ah* as a whole was totally to be rejected, then almighty Allah would have never said that, "they did it just to seek the pleasure of Allah", in the the Qur'an.

c. Qur'an says "once they adopted this *bid'ah* of Monasticism, then, it was necessary for them to fulfill all its conditions." But, Qur'an says that, most of them could not fulfill all the necessary conditions of Monasticism, it was their own failure.

d. Then, the Qur'an states that "some of them who fulfill the necessary requirement of the *bid'ah* of Monasticism, and continue to seek the pleasure of almighty Allah, were rewarded. This way, almighty Allah declared this Bid'ah to be "*bid'ah Hasana*", which means good Invention. "So, those who fulfilled the requirements of Bid'ah of Monasticism, got their reward from almighty Allah, it means, a *bid'ah* does not necessarily mean a bad *bid'ah*, it can also be a good *bid'ah*. There is an important point to consider here. The practice of monasticism has been abrogated and cancelled in Islam, but the principle contained in this verse of the acceptability of a new act performed with the correct intention and fulfilling certain conditions is not abrogated, but remains. The new practice introduced for the pleasure of Allah, in the principles of Islamic jurisprudence becomes a *bid'ah* of guidance; that which violates the laws of Shari'ah becomes a *bid'ah* of misguidance.

Imam Al-Kurtabi Al-Maliki explains that, regarding the above verse of Qur'an. He says: "As, this *bid'ah* of Monasticism was created by the pious people of the *Ummah* of Isa and those who fulfilled all the conditions of this *bid'ah*, got their reward from almighty Allah.<sup>21</sup> The above verse clarifies that the *hadith* which says "all new innovations are *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is an evil act" has some exceptions. This Qur'anic verse gives a basic principle that, if anybody invents a good *bid'ah*, then, it is mandatory on him to fulfill all its requirements, in order to get the reward from it, the one who deviates from it, will lose his reward." This is the religious concept of *bid'ah*, directly from

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<sup>21</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Qurṭubī: al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran, Publish: al-Resalah, Beirut, Lebanon, 2003

Qur'an, which is the highest authority in Islam.” No *hadith* (in its interpretation) can be against any verse of Qur'an; in fact *hadith* always verifies and clarifies the Qur'an.

Also, as regard the Qur'an 5:3: “Today I have perfected your din for you, completed My Blessing upon you, and have chosen for you Islam din” It means that Islamic *Aqeeda* is completed now. Any addition in Islamic beliefs [*aqeeda*] will be considered an evil innovation whereas innovation in Fiqh or *Hadiths* is a Good innovation and *mustahab* in most cases. For instance, when the Prophet appeared, the Islamic laws were made most comprehensive in the Qur'an. Before that, the scriptures of other prophets did not contain so much detail. The basics of Islam were completed during Prophet's time. If a scientist tells more details about the solar system and discovers new planets which were unknown, it will be treated as the development of science. But if someone says that the Sun has hands and eyes and ears, but these are not visible and not similar to human beings, he will be treated as an innovator, liar, because he is reporting against the fact of the matter. The same rules apply in religion. The basic faith of Islam is that Allah is one and Almighty, now, if a group of people say that Allah has limitations, they will be treated as liars.

Imam Ibn Kathir further expatiate the meaning of this verse: “...they do not need any other religion or any other Prophet except Muhammad (SAW)...Therefore, the permissible is what he allows, the impermissible is what he prohibits” (Tafsir ibn Kathir, under Qur'an 5:3).<sup>22</sup> What he means here is the same that do not invent new things which are contradictory to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, by making *haram* into *halal* and vice versa, and follow the Prophet for he has made things clear. Thus “an innovation would become a bad *bid'ah* only, when it is in contradiction to any specific commandment of the Qur'an or specific *hadith* of the Prophet, in all other cases, the *bid'ah* is termed as a good *bid'ah*. For instance, the celebration of Moulid-un Nabi comes under the category of good *bid'ah*, it cannot termed as bad *bid'ah*, because, it does not contradict with any of the commandments of Qur'an and *Hadith*.” There is an oft repeated concept held by some Muslims today, that any practice in religion that was not done by the Prophet or his companions should be rejected because Islam is completed. However one must go beyond slogans and oversimplifications and reach a correct opinion by examining the facts based upon the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. As it has been seen, new practices are not rejected, but are accepted and even rewarded.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. Proof of Good *Bid'ah* from the Sunna of the Prophet

To some scholars quoted the *hadith* that, “every innovation is a *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is an evil act” to mean everything which the prophet did not do, is a *bid'ah*. Ask them that did the Prophet or his companions build domes and minarets of Mosque?, second *Azhan* of Friday prayers?,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibn Kathir Abu 'l- Fida Ismail: *Tafsiru 'l- Qur'an 'l- Azim*, Daru l- Kutubi 'l- Arabiyah Cairo, , 2000, Qur'an 5:3

<sup>23</sup> H. M.Al-Isfahani: *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran* Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, n. d.

compilation of the Qur'an into one single book? If is to go with their definition of *bid'ah*, then all these are evil acts. Therefore, there are a great number of *hadiths*, most of them in the rigorously authenticated (*Sahih*) collections, showing that many of the prophetic companions initiated new acts, forms of invocation (*Dhikr*), supplications (*Dua*), and so on, that the Prophet had never previously done or ordered to be done.<sup>24</sup> Rather, the Companions did them because of their inference and conviction that such acts were of the good that Islam and the Prophet of Islam came with and in general terms urged the like of to be done, in accordance with the Qur'an 22:77: "And do the good, that haply you may succeed", and the *hadith* of the Prophet: "He who inaugurates a good *sunna* in Islam earns the reward of it and all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest". For examples:

- a) It is related from Abu Hurayra that at the dawn prayer the Prophet said to Bilal, "Bilal, tell me which of your acts in Islam you are most hopeful about, for I have heard the footfall of your sandals in paradise", and he replied, " I have done nothing I am more hopeful about than the fact that I do not perform ablution at any time of the night or day without praying with that ablution whatever has been destined for me to pray." (Bukhari and Muslim) Ibn Hajar Asqalani says that the *hadith* shows it is permissible to use personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) in choosing times for acts of worship, for Bilal reached the conclusions he mentioned by his own inference, and the Prophet confirmed him therein (Fath al-Bari).<sup>25</sup> Similar to this is the *hadith* in Bukhari about Khubayb (who asked to pray two rakas before being executed by idolaters in Mecca) who was the first to establish the *sunna* of two *rak'as* for those who are steadfast in going to their death. These *hadiths* are explicit evidence that Bilal and Khubayb used their own personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) in choosing the times of acts of worship, without any previous command or precedent from the Prophet other than the general demand to perform the prayer.<sup>26</sup>
- b) It is related by Bukhari and Muslim that Rifa'a ibn Rafi said, "When we were praying behind the Prophet and he raised his head from bowing and said , "Allah hears whoever praises Him", a man behind him said, "Our Lord, Yours is the praise, abundantly, wholesomely, and blessedly therein." When he rose to leave, the Prophet asked "who said it", and when the man replied that it was he, the Prophet said, "I saw thirty-odd angels each striving to be the one to write it."<sup>27</sup> Ibn Hajar<sup>28</sup> says that the *hadith* indicates

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<sup>24</sup> M. R. Muhamad and M. N. Abd Rahman "Empowering the Muslim Ummah Through Technological Innovation" *International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, 2004, 1(2), 152-162.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani: *Fathu'l Bari bi Sharin al-Bukhari*, Cairo, Mustafa-al-Babi Halbi, 1959, 5, 427.

<sup>26</sup> Mohamed Bin Ismail al-Bukhari: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ..., Vol 4, Book 52

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani: *Fathu'l Bari ... Op Cit*

<sup>28</sup> Ibid



the permissibility of initiating new expressions of *dhikr* in the prayer other than the ones related through *hadith* texts, as long as they do not contradict those conveyed by the *hadith* (since the above words were a mere enhancement and addendum to the known, *sunna dhikr*).

- c) In Shahih Bukhari, it is relates from Aisha that the Prophet dispatched a man at the head of a military expedition who recited the Qur'an for his companions at prayer, finishing each recital with *al-Ikblas* (Qur'an 112). When they returned, they mentioned this to the Prophet, who told them, "Ask him why he does this", and when they asked him, the man replied, "because it describes the All-merciful, and I love to recite it." The Prophet said to them, "Tell him Allah loves him."<sup>29</sup> It will be noticed that all the preceding *hadiths* are about the prayer, which is the most important of bodily acts of worship, and of which the Prophet said, "Pray as you have seen me pray", despite which he accepted the above examples of personal reasoning because they did not depart from the form defined by the Lawgiver, for every limit must be observed, while there is latitude in everything besides, as long as it is within the general category of being called for by Sacred Law. This is the *sunna* of the Prophet and his way and is as clear as can be. Islamic scholars infer from it that every act for which there is evidence in *Shar'ia* that it is called for and which does not oppose an unequivocal primary text or entail harmful consequences is not included in the category of reprehensible innovation (*bid'ah*), but rather is of the *sunna*, even if there should exist something whose performance is superior to it.
- d) It is reported in Bukhari that "One night in the month of Ramahan, when Umar-Ibn Khattab entered the Mosque-of-Nabawi, he saw all the companions were offering the prayers of *Tarawhi* (special prayers in the month of Ramdan) separately or in the form of small groups, He said "how good it would be, If I appoint a single Imam for all of you", so, he appointed Oba'i-bin-ka'ab as the Imam of *Salat-ut-Tarawhi* (Prayers of Tarawhi). Next night, when he entered the Mosque-of-Nabawi, he said "how good is this Bid'ah!" So, Umar was the first person in the *Ummah* of the prophet, who divided the Bid'ah into two types, Ni'mal *bid'ah* (Good *bid'ah*) and Sayyial *bid'ah* (Bad *bid'ah*)".<sup>30</sup>
- e) It is reported in Sahihi Bukhari that Sayyidna Uthman innovated the second *Azhan* of Friday prayers, which is another example of good *Bid'ah*. When hazrath Abdullah saw

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<sup>29</sup> Z. K Muhammed: *Rjyadh as-Salibin*, Lagos, Adawaat al-Islamia Publication, 1985, 387

<sup>30</sup> Mohamed Bin Ismail al-Bukhari: *Sahib al-Bukhari*, ..., Hadith 31, Praying at Night in Ramadaan (Taraweeh)

this innovation of second azhan, he said that “this is a *Bid’ah* (good *bid’ah*)”. This means, every new act can be called as *bid’ah*, but cannot be called as a bad *bid’ah*.<sup>31</sup>

- f) Imam Rajab quotes a *hadith* of *Bukhari* that “the good *Bid’ah* of compilation of the Qur’an into one single book was done by Sayidina Uthman. When hundreds of *huffaz* (the one who memorize the Qur’an) were martyred in defensive wars of Islam, Sayidina Umar came to Sayidina Abu Bak’r and asked, “O Caliph of Muslims, hundreds of *huffaz* have been martyred, if it goes in this way, then we cannot preserve the Qur’an (in their hearts), let us compile the Qur’an in the form of one single book, Sayidina Abu Bak’r said ”O Umar, how can we do an act which the Prophet did not do, Sayidina Umar said “By Lord, this act is for good and it is the requirement of today”, then Abu Bak’r said “Umar continued saying those words, until almighty Allah opened my heart for it”, then both of them went to Zaid bin Sabit and asked him to take the responsibility of compilation of the Qur’an into one single book, he responded in same way, by saying “how can I do an act which holy Prophet did not do?”, they both kept saying “By God, this is for good”, finally almighty Allah opened his heart, as He opened the hearts of Abu Bak’r and Umar”.<sup>32</sup>
- g) Imam Bukhari relates from Abu Said al-Khudri that a band of the companions of the Prophet departed on one of their journeys, alighting at the encampment of some desert Arabs whom they asked to be their hosts, but who refused to have them as guests. The leader of the encampment was stung by a scorpion, and his followers tried everything to cure him, and when all had failed, one said, "If you would approach the group camped near you, one of them might have something". So they came to them and said, "O band of men, our leader has been stung and we have tried everything. Do any of you have something for it?" and one of them replied, "Yes, by Allah, I recite healing words<sup>33</sup> over people, but by Allah, we asked you to be our hosts and you refused, so I will not recite anything unless you give us a fee". They then agreed upon a herd of sheep, so the man went and began spitting and reciting the *Fatiba* over the victim until he got up and walked as if he were a camel released from its hobble, nothing the matter with him. They paid the agreed upon fee, which some of the Companions wanted to divide up, but the man who had done the reciting told them, "Do not do so until we reach the Prophet and tell him what has happened, to see what he may order us to do". They came to the Prophet and told him what had occurred, and he said, "How did you know it was of the

<sup>31</sup> Keller, *Nuh Ha Mim: The Concept of Bid’a in the Islamic Shari’a*, Muslim Academy Trust, 1995, 5

<sup>32</sup> Muslim bin al-Hujjaj bin Muslim al-Qushairi: *Sahih Muslim*, ..., 40679

<sup>33</sup> Keller, *Nuh Ha Mim (1995): The Concept of Bid’a in the Islamic Shari’a* ..., 17

words which heal? You were right. Divide up the herd and give me a share." The *hadith* is explicit that the Companion had no previous knowledge that reciting the Fatiha to heal (*ruqya*) was countenanced by Sacred Law, but rather did so because of his own personal reasoning (*ijtihad*), and since it did not contravene anything that had been legislated, the Prophet confirmed him therein because it was of his *sunna* and way to accept and confirm what contained good and did not entail harm, even if it did not proceed from the acts of the Prophet himself as a definitive precedent.<sup>34</sup>

- h) Bukhari relates from Abu Said al-Khudri that one man heard another reciting *al-Ikhlās* (Qur'an 112) over and over again, so when morning came he went to the Prophet and sarcastically mentioned it to him. The Prophet said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, it equals one-third of the Qur'an." Daraqutni recorded another version of this *hadith* in which the man said, "I have a neighbor who prays at night and does not recite anything but *al-Ikhlās*."<sup>35</sup> The *hadith* shows that the Prophet confirmed the persons restricting himself to this *sūra* while praying at night, despite its not being what the Prophet himself did, for though the Prophets practice of reciting from the whole Qur'an was superior, the man's act was within the general parameters of the sunna and there was nothing blameworthy about it in any case.
- i) Ahmad and Ibn Hibban relates from Abdullah ibn Burayda that his father said, I entered the mosque with the Prophet, where a man was at prayer, supplicating: "O Allah, I ask You by the fact that I testify You are Allah, there is no god but You, the One, the Ultimate, who did not beget and was not begotten, and to whom none is equal", and the Prophet says: "By Him in whose hand is my soul, he has asked Allah by His greatest name, which if He is asked by it He gives, and if supplicated He answers".<sup>36</sup> It is plain that this supplication came spontaneously from the Companion, and since it conformed to what the Sacred Law calls for, the Prophet confirmed it with the highest degree of approbation and acceptance, while it is not known that the Prophet had ever taught it to him.<sup>37</sup>

## 5. Observations

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<sup>34</sup> A. Umar Faruq, "Innovation and creativity in Islam" *Nawawi Foundation Papers*, Retrieved from, <http://www.nawawi.org/>, on September 10, 2021

<sup>35</sup> J. Badi and M. Tajdin: *Creative thinking: An Islamic perspective*. Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2005 and R. A. Codd "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Ijtihad in Legal Reforms in the Muslim World" *Arab law quarterly*, 1999, 14(2): 112-131

<sup>36</sup> R. A. Codd "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Ijtihad in Legal Reforms in the Muslim World" *Arab law quarterly*, 1999, 14(2): 112-131

<sup>37</sup> Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi: *Ma'ani al-Athar*, Beirut: Tasweer, n.d, 119-33

If without created any exception, that every new act is a *bid'ah* and every *bid'ah* is an evil act, then why divided the *bid'ah* into two types i.e. “*bid'ah* in religion” and “*bid'ah* in worldly matters”? If anyone asks, why do classify *bid'ah* into good and bad? Then, one must say, from where was the concept of classification of *bid'ah* into two? Did Prophet classify the *bid'ah* into “*bid'ah* in *deen*” and “*bid'ah* in worldly matters”? If the Prophet did not classify the *bid'ah* into two types, then this classification itself becomes a *bid'ah*, because none of the companions classify the *bid'ah* into “*bid'ah* in religion” and “*bid'ah* in worldly matters”, then how can one classify it? If the classification of *bid'ah*, based on genuine reasoning, into “*bid'ah* in religion” and “*bid'ah* in worldly matters” is acceptable, then the classification of *Bid'ah*, based on Qur'an and *hadith*, into “*Hasana*” and “*Saiyeeda*” is also permissible. Let apply a uniform principle to all the Islamic concepts. Either completely neglect the classification to *Bid'ah*, if this is the case, then all the minarets of Mosques are to be demolished, because they come under the category of good *Bid'ah*, or accept the classification of *Bid'ah*, given to by the great classical Islamic authorities.

Secondly, *Bid'ah* actually means to alter the Islamic Law or Shari'ah i.e when the ruling has already given as *Shari'ah* for any worldly or religious matter but now to force or believe in a different ruling than given by *Shari'ah* or anyone opposing this ruling from their own will or to consider this wrong ruling as the rightful decision or to agree with it, is *Mubdath* (new thing) and every *Mubdath* is *Bid'ah*. In this regard there exists no difference between worldly or religious matter (like to deceive some people say that worldly affairs are not *Bid'ah* but only religious affairs like celebrating Mawlid etc are *Bid'ah*) despite the fact that Allah has already gave ruling about every matter of world or religion and the *Shari'ah* rulings (Classification) about various religious or worldly actions are: *Fard* (Compulsory) *Wajib* (Essential) *Sunnatul Mu'akkida* (and *Sunnat Ghair Mu'akkida* and *Mustabab*) *Aula* (Preferred) *Haram* (Forbidden) *Makro'ah Tabreemi* (near to *Haram*) *Asa'at* (*Makrooh Tanzeebi* and *Khilafe Aula*) *Mubah* (permissible) Any of the above *Shari'ah* order is sufficient enough for all the things in universe, their usage or rejection; and all the beliefs, their approval or disapproval; and all religious matters, their allowance or disallowance; and for all such matters any *Shari'ah* Ruling is already present which be evident and proved by four *Shari'ah* sources, in their general or special terms. This statement is proven by Qur'an, *Hadith* and various great books of Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqah*). There is a *Hadith* which states: Hazrat Salman Farsi narrates that Non-Muslims asked him “Does your Prophet guide you about everything, even tells you how to answer call of nature?” He replied “Yes”<sup>38</sup> i.e. Hazrat Salman Farsi replied “He teaches us everything including how to answer call of nature.”

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<sup>38</sup> Muslim bin al-Hujjaj bin Muslim al-Qushairi: *Sahib Muslim*, ... 13

Thus it is proven that all the matters (religious or worldly or new or old) of this universe are included in that statement by companion of Prophet, it doesn't matter whether they were already apparent in that time or not; and even if these matters have appeared now or some time before, the *Shari'ah* Rulings (classification) about all matters (religious or worldly or new or old) is already present in any case whatsoever.

### C. Conclusion

This paper has examined the concept of Bid'ah, highlighted its types and discussed its concept from the Qur'an and Sunna. It was revealed that, there is an oft repeated concept held by some Muslims today, that any practice in religion that was not done by the Prophet or his companions should be rejected as it is a misguidance and therefore punishable in Hellfire. There were also evidences that new practices were not rejected, but were accepted and even rewarded. However, the practice concerned should be compatible with the dictates of the Shari'ah, otherwise it will be rejected. The opinion of those who condemn any new act without qualification comes from a misunderstanding of the sources of the Qur'an and Hadith, for example by quoting passages out of context or without the true meaning. It clarified that, the introduction of new things into the religion ensures that Islam can apply itself to any given time and situation, and some new things have even been essential for its preservation and propagation. Thus "an innovation would become a bad bid'ah only, when it is in contradiction to any specific commandment of the Qur'an or specific hadith of the prophet, in all other cases, the bid'ah is termed as a good Bid'ah. The paper noted that, 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 contemporary Muslims society and ease the way for Muslims into progress

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