

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

But monasticism they invented, We ordained it not for them,
only seeking Allah's Pleasure. (Qur'an, al-Hadid, 57: 27)



THE

NOVELTIES

English Version of the Urdu treatise

"Na'iy Na'iy Batain"

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmed

M. A., Ph. D., Gold Medalist

International Series

5

Idara-e-Mas'udia, Karachi

(Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

(1)

Almighty Creator Who is Ever-shining with new Splendour every day,¹ He, raised the choicest and most accomplished personality among the mankind the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Allah's Peace and Grace be upon him) whose very arrival in the annals of mankind was the signal of the ever increasing Mercy of Allah.²

Through the agency of Divine Mercy, colourful manifestations of prosperity and welfare are visible every where, in all directions and in all branches of existence in the realm of mankind; new building structures, new abodes and settlement new cities, countries fresh horizons hitherto undiscovered and untapped avenues in the upper world and on this very earth provide feasts to our sights and imaginations. Looking around we find new and attractive birds and cattle, grown up tall and stout trees and plants with fresh leaves, branches, flower and fruits. Similarly, musing and travelling in the world of imagination, we come across fresh ideas, thoughts, ideologies, sentiments and emotions, sensibilities etc. Our wishes and desires wear new cloaks with floral designs which attract our own sights, augmented and enhanced by newly composed melodies whose tunes fill our ears with ineffaceable sweet musics, or heart-throbbing drum-beats. In short, wherever and whenever our Godgifted faculties of sound and sight are turned we find ourselves lifted to unprecedented heights and scenic beauties. There is no stopping to this uncontrolled entrance into newer and fresher universe, within us and around; all these spectacles lead us irresistibly to but one destination, that of the Pleasure of Allah through the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*.

We, as humble servants of Allah, are always under gratitude to His Affection and He is so much inclined towards us, as a grace and mercy, that whenever we remember and glorify Him, He too remembers us.³ Whosoever obeys His Beloved Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) He extends His

¹ Qur'an, *al-Rahman*, 55:29

² Qur'an, *al-Zuha*, 93:4

³ Quran: *al-Baqarah* 2:152

own love towards him.⁴ One who sacrifices his life in the path of Allah, He awards him with an eternal life.⁵ Surely, He is most Merciful and Benevolent, such that if His righteous servants regard anything as good and worth adoration, He too accords His assent in the same way⁶ (in order to strengthen and conform to their Belief and submission towards Him). This shows how dearly He regards and loves His servants. He is ever gracious to accept any endeavour made by His devotees to earn His Pleasure, He responds with an affirmation signifying His acceptance of the prayers from His ever submissive servants. He rewards them, not alone with due return for their endeavours but also with a prize exceeding worldly measure and evaluation.⁷

The Holy Qur'an says: *Then in their wake, We followed them up with (others of) Our Apostles: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary, and bestowed on him the Gospel; and we ordained in the hearts of those who followed, compassion and Mercy. But the Monasticism which they invented (as a BID'A) for themselves, We ordained it not for them — only seeking Allah's pleasure,⁸ and they observed it not with right observance. Yet we bestowed on those among them who believed their due reward. But many of them are evil - doers.⁹*

From this verse the following positive good points can be deduced:

- (1) Any new thing (by way of creed and enactment as a religious sanction) may be introduced and inducted in the ordination of the *Din*, purely with the honest intentions of seeking the Good pleasure of Allah.
- (2) The thing which is inducted in the *Din* for the pleasure of Allah, must be adhered to as a regular practice (not for the sake of timely observance) and must not be given up.

⁴ Qur'an, Aal-i-Imran, 3:31

⁵ Qur'an, al-Baqarah, 2:154

⁶ Mo'atta Imam Muhammad, p.104

⁷ Qur'an, al-Hadid, 57:27

This holy verse affirms the truth of the saying, *"the thing which the Muslims Umma declares and believes as 'good and benevolent, is also affirmed as such by Allah (Mo'atta Imam Muhammad, p.104)*

⁸ Qur'an al-Hadid 57:27

- (3) If such new inductions or innovations (*BID'A*) are performed regularly for the pleasure of Allah, there is due reward and blessing from Almighty Allah.

From the foregoing it can be inferred that in the case of goodly and virtuous *Bid'as* introduced with heart felt sincere intention, Divine Approbation and Assistance is invariably accorded as a sign of pleasure of Allah. With a view to corroborating and by way of illustration of the truth of this, following three *Ahadith* (Traditions) are presented which will set aside any miscomprehension or ambiguity arising in this behalf.

(1) The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) used to offer prayers (*salat*) in different directions within the precincts of the Holy Kaaba. Hazrat Umar (Allah's pleasure be with him) suggested that the place within the shrines known as *Maqam-i-Ibrahim* (The place where Prophet Ibrahim stood), be appointed for offering the prayers. The suggestion received the Divine support and it was ordained through the Revelation: *Take ye (the believers) as your place of worship, the place where Ibrahim stood (Maqam-i-Ibrahim)*¹⁰ Thereafter the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) offered his prayers at this very place. Nowadays the Imam of Kaaba leads and offers his prayers by standing at this place,

(2) If we reflect over the commands of offering the 5-times obligatory prayers a day it will be seen, in the light of Traditions, (*Ahadith Sharifa*) that at first the Prophets of Allah used to offer these prayers on their own to seek the Pleasure of Allah. Later on these prayers were made compulsory or obligatory (in commemoration and in obedience and as a mark of respect to the Prophets of Allah). How these FIVE-TIMES daily prayers were gradually adopted and Divinely Commanded as regular obligatory prayer (*Farz*) may be presented in the following details.

- (i) The Morning prayers (*Salat-al-Fajr*) was first offered by Hazrat Adam (Allah's peace be upon him).
- i) The Noon prayer (*Salat-al-Zohr*) was first offered by Hazrat Ibrahim and Hazrat Ismail (Allah's peace be upon them)
- (iii) The After-noon prayer (*Salat-al-Asr*) was first offered by Hazrat 'Uzair (Allah's peace be upon him).

¹⁰ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah* 2:125

- (iv) The Evening prayer (*Salat-al-Maghrib*) was first offered by Hazrat Dawood (Allah's peace be upon him).
- (v) The Night prayer (*Salat-al-Isha*) was first offered by the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him).¹¹

Then, these all prayers offered by the Holy Prophet, (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) became *sunna* of the Holy Prophet and were finally commanded as regular obligatory prayers at specific 5-times a day.

It will be seen that certain regular practices adapted and maintained by chosen servants of Allah on their intuitively inspired motives in order to seek the recognition and pleasure of Almighty Allah, received Divine Affirmation and were accorded eternal maintenance as a reward from the Presence of Allah and declared as part of Faith to be believed as such and to be practised with the same earnestness and zeal as those of their innovators with the same goal and purpose in view which these pious souls had before them, namely the Pleasure of Allah. More over, it may be also usefully borne in mind that these innovations or new things introduced were given the same recognition and high estimation as were the hall-marks of their authors in the annals of human dignity and righteousness.

(3) It is reported by Hazrat Zayd bin Sabit, the Scribe of the Revelation (*Katib-i-Wahi*) that one day Hazrat Abu Bakr called him when Hazrat Usman was also present. Hazrat Abu Bakr, said while pointing to Hazrat Umar, *"He says that the fighting with infidels at Yamamah has reached violent level, and there is danger to the lives of Companions who are the bearers of the Holy Qur'an in their hearts (having committed it to memory as Huffaaz). If unfortunately they are martyred in the crusade, an important wing of the protectors of the Qur'an will be lost. It is high time that some measures be taken right now to preserve and safeguard the Holy Book of Allah. In his opinion (the speaker is Hazrat Umar) I (Hazrat Abu Bakr) should take steps to collect and preserve the Qur'an from whatever places and persons it may be available"*, (as many Companions have memorised the revealed passages on their own after listening them from the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). Hazrat Abu Bakr kept silence for a while then said, *"How can I*

Mirqat Sharh al-Mishkat, chapter al-Mawaqit, vol. II, p.124 .
Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, vol.I p.120

undertake the work which the Holy Prophet did not do in his life time".

Thereupon Hazrat Umar answered *"By Allah! This is a work of greater significance"*. Continuing his discourse Hazrat Abu Bakr said, *"(Hazrat) Umar stressed more and more to undertake the mission (of collecting and preserving the Holy Qur'an) to such an extent that Almighty Allah expanded and opened my breast and I seconded Umar's proposal and consented to what he had expressed and stressed"*.

When, as a first step in this connection, Hazrat Abu Bakr desired Hazrat Zayd to accept this trust, he (Zayd) replied in the same cadence what Hazrat Abu Bakr had said to Hazrat Umar *"How can I undertake the work which the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) had not himself done?"*

Now, when the Providence had expanded the breast of Hazrat Abu Bakr, he said to Hazrat Zayd who was hesitant to assume the work of such a high magnitude (mission to collect and preserve the Holy Qur'an) *"By Allah! This is the work of a greater significance"*.¹²

This happened when Hazrat Zayd was stressing upon both Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar to take measures for safeguarding the Holy Qur'an when Almighty Allah expanded and opened the breast of Hazrat Zayd. Thereupon Hazrat Zayd agreed and he stood up with renewed vigour and devotion to undertake the mission of collecting and preserving the Holy Qur'an. From the above mentioned *Hadith* it is learnt that a thing or a work which the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) did not do himself, but did not disapprove or forbade can be undertaken provided the intention or the will behind it is to seek the pleasure of Allah. It carries some benefits for the people who wish to do some good thing on spontaneous inspiration or urge out of free will or without any self interest. The Tradition (*Hadith*) under reference pointedly makes the mention of the ponderous silence by the great Caliphs and highly honored Companions to assume the responsibility of a task or mission which had no precedence in the life of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him), but when the everlasting benefits of a such an undertaking was revealed, then each of them swore, in the Name of Allah that this is the mission of far greater significance and must be taken forthwith, which they did.

¹² Bukhari Lahore vol. II, p.836

The Holy Qur'an permits such acts which inspire the individuals concerned as arising out of free-will for the Pleasure of Allah. There is a word *tatawwu'* meaning *to do any good deed out of one's own-free will* which also brings self pleasure in consequence thereof. The under noted two verses from the Holy Qur'an bring forth the significance of the word in respect of deeds the goodness of which and the approbation whereof have been vouched by the Divine Revelation.

(1) The first verse reads thus (translation): *"And if any one obeys his own impulse to Good, be sure that Allah is He Who recognises (the worth of the deed) and is aware (thereof)."*¹³

(2) The second verse says: *"But he that will give more out of his free will, it is better for him".*¹⁴

(2)

There is mention of goodness and evil at various places in the Holy Qur'an which exhort believers to adopt good and shun evil, both these being enacted out of free will to earn the blessing of award for goodness and escaping the punishment as a requital for doing evil. But the impulses in both the cases should be spontaneous and out of free-will. Even otherwise the consciousness of a man endowed with *Eiman* is by itself ever vigilant to the genuine Good and Evil and the purity of his heart and head lead him to righteousness and prevent him from crossing over to evil. That is the reason why there are no hard and fast rules and regulations for impulsive behaviour of an individual whatever his status in life. He is free to adopt any course and introduce or invent new things or bring forth new ideas. There is always a reward for a good as there is deterrent for committing evil. Even the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) always had the convenience and willingness of any person of any grade of society while enlightening with any tenets which permitted choice of obedience. He will not insist on anything which might cause discontent in his heart. Once a *Beduin* came to the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) and enquired about the

¹³ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*, 2:158

¹⁴ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*, 2:184.

prayers (*salaṭ*). He replied, "5-times daily prayers and what ever prayers you may offer as your heart pleases".¹⁵

This means that the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has allowed virtues to be performed as the pleasure of heart demands.¹⁶

The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has expressly allowed performance of deeds of worship and other acts of righteousness in consonance with hearts pleasure and the Companions who acted with a spirit of true obedience (irrespective of the quantum of virtuous deeds) were conveyed the glad tidings for reward and blessings in this world and in the Hereafter.

While stressing upon the happiness/pleasure of heart, the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) in another *Hadith* is reported to have said, "Any one who introduces blissful venues in Islam, there is reward for him in the Presence of Allah, after this there is his share of reward of those who act on his guidance, while the reward of the followers shall not be reduced. Similarly, if any one introduces evil ways in Islam, there is punishment for him for his misdeed There is also his share in the punishment of those who act on his evil ways, while the evil of the followers shall not be reduced"¹⁷

The path of righteousness and guidance as well as the ways to go astray, or in other words, what is Good and what is Evil, have been concisely indicated in the opening Chapter of the Holy Qur'an - Surah Fatiha. In that short Surah the broad lines of both these paths have been presented indicating at the same time who are the blessed and fortunate persons who receive the reward of their righteousness and who are the unfortunate persons who drive themselves away from the straight path of guidance (*Sirat-i-Mustaqim*) and are condemned to disgrace in the world and eternal punishment in the Hereafter. The righteous servants of Allah thus become the models and examples for

¹⁵ al-Bukhari, Lahore. vol.III, P.723

¹⁶ For further study please see the following references:
Muslim, Karachi, vol. VI, p.133 ; Bukhari, Lahore, vol. I, p.586
; Ibid, vol. I, p.501 ; Muslim, vol.I, p.173 ; Ibid, vol.I, p.174 ;
Tirmidhi, Karachi, vol. II, p.334 ; Bukhari, Lahore, vol. II,
p.1097 ; Muslim, Karachi, vol. I, p.331 ; Bukhari, Delhi, vol. II,
p.854 , Tirmidhi, Karachi, vol. I, p.865.

¹⁷ Muslim. Delhi, vol.I, p.327 ; Mishkat, Karachi, p.33.

others to follow them and earn the Pleasure and Praise of Allah the Almighty ¹⁸

The path of Good conduct (*Sunnat-i-Hasana*) and the way of evil (*Sunnat-i-Saiyyi'ah*) mentioned in the *Hadith* have also been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an at various places ¹⁹ This is what in other words, has been termed as Good (*Khayr*) and Evil (*Sharr*) ²⁰

(3)

We have mentioned in the foregoing two commonly used words '*Sunnat-i-Hasana*' (Good) and *Sunnat-i-Saiyyi'ah* (Evil). In this context there is yet another term *Bid'a* (this term has been discussed in its broad perspective in the earlier pages of this Treatise) which has gained currency in our religious discourses and discussion, not as a straightforward hypothesis but as a genesis of controversy.

The literal meaning of the word '*Bid'a*' is to introduce or invent a new thing and, in general connotation, it stands for rareness/newness or novelty, creation, renewal. Apparently, all these shades of expression do not contain in themselves anything outrageous, controversial or antagonistic. Yet somehow in the unbalanced and inimical discussion of certain religious aspects of superficial nature, the word has been dragged to something despicable or contemptuous. We would discuss in some details the pros and cons of the word *Bid'a* and try to point out the significance of the word, how the healthy aspects of this word have been or are being driven into something unhealthy or injurious from ideological and practical points of view. Apart from every consideration in interpreting or evaluating the term '*Bid'a*' we must keep in mind that one of the *Attributory Names of Almighty Allah* is also *Badi'* (the Inventor or Creator) as the oft-repeated verse of the Holy Qur'an is also *Badi'-al-Samawat-i-wa al-Arz* (the Creator of the heavens and the earth) ²¹,

¹⁸ Qur'an, *al-Fatḥa*, 1:5-7

¹⁹ Qur'an, *al-Fussilat*, 41: 24 ; *al-Nisa*, 4:79 ; *al-Qasuss*, 28:84 ; *al-Shu'ra*, 26:23 , *Al-Imran*, 3:120 . *al-An'am*, 7:160 ; *al-Baqarah*, 2:245.

²⁰ Qur'an, *al-Qalam*, 68:12 ; *al-Ma'arij*, 70: 21 ; *al-Aadiat*, 100:8 ; *al-Baqarah*, 2:184 ; *al-Nisa*, 4:149

²¹ Qur'an, *al-Baqarah*, 2:117 ; *al-An'am*, 6:101

Therefore, we must not be so much swept away in our emotional/ideological outbursts that we begin to hate the word *Bid'a* even if there be anything against our wishes in the interpretation of this word.

Man is the supreme creation of Almighty Allah, and there are good as well as bad men in the human species. But we do not condemn the human beings at large simply because some men are not what we wish them to be. The qualities of good and bad are not confined to human species only. It is the natural formula of creation that there are both the qualities in every organic creation, human beings, animals, plants, any thing having life, whether big or small. Among all these creatures we only choose and like those which we find in tune with our own mental set up. Even the human utterances and behaviour have these qualities. Allah the Almighty has endowed us with the faculty of discrimination whereby we can distinguish between good and evil. In adopting the good and avoiding the evil lies the very essence of development. It is synonymous to momentum which means development and progress. In its literal significance the word '*Bid'a*' stands for creating or introducing new and novel things, physical or metaphysical, material or spiritual etc etc. If, therefore, we denounce every and any thing which is new without any precedence before, then we will have to condemn every writer, artist, designer, etc as '*Bid'a*' or guilty of *Bid'ai*. The fact is that the creative activity in any individual community or nation is the motive force or propensity without which the individual or the group of individuals remain static or stagnant which is a prelude to drying up the very spring of progressivism and which irresistibly leads to destruction and annihilation.

Proceeding further in the estimation of the word '*Bid'a*' we may repeat once again that the word stands for doing anything for the first time (without any precedence), to introduce or familiarise something, not existing before, to invent, to create or bring forth something new or fresh. The Holy Qur'an has used this word '*Bid'a*' in this very sense and in the context of new creation ²² Almighty Allah has proclaimed Himself as '*Ahsan-ul-Khaliqin* (The best and the most perfect of those who create)'. ²³

²² Qur'an, *al-Hadid*, 57:47 ; *al-baqarah*, 2:117 ; *al-An'am*, 6:101 ; *al-Ahqaf*, 46:9.

²³ Qur'an. *al-Momnun*, ? : 14

No Doubt four kind of innovations have been condemned in the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Traditions. They are as follows:-

- (1) Those which are against the Holy Qur'an.²⁴
- (2) Those which tresspass the practices and conduct adopted by the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him).²⁵
- (3) Those affairs/mannerisms which are contrary to the practices displayed by the Four Noble and Righteous Caliphs of Islam (*Khulafa-i-Rashidin*).²⁶
- (4) The things which directly or indirectly do not have their origin and roots in the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Traditions.²⁷

If we take only one portion of these *Ahadith* to justify our view while leaving the rest, (which act is by itself a self doception) that it naturally be assumed that the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has forbidden any new thing in the *Sharia*. That would amount to declare that the *Sharia* or *Din* is static and frozen at the initial stage in which there is no place for dynamic endeavour which means denial of improvement and development. Take for example, the Qur'anic verse saying, "O you who believe do not go near the *Salat* 'while you are in the state of intoxication"²⁸. It will be sheer mischief, if any one only recites the opening part of the verse, leaving the basic reason for keeping the Momins away from the *Salat* while in a state of intoxication. Incidentally, this was the very first commandment for gradual and step by step prohibition leading to total ban on drinking wine, which process also shows that gradual steps were taken anew by issuing changes in the commandments for ultimately banning use of ligour once and for all!

Similarly, the Qur'anic verse relating to enquiry by Hazrat Ibrahim (Allah's peace be upon him) from Allah to know how the dead will be revived (resurrection), not as a matter of disbelief (*Ma'azallah*) but merely for the satisfaction of the heart, where-upon he was commanded to place different parts of the tamed birds on every mountains²⁹ and call them. The mountains

²⁴ Mishkat, vol. II, p.69

²⁵ Bukhari, vol. II, p.1080

²⁶ Mishkat, vol. II, p.242

²⁷ Bukhari, vol. I, p.371 ; Muslim, vol. II, p. 77

²⁸ Qur'an, *al-Nisa*, 4:43

²⁹ Qur'an, *al-baqarah* 2:260

mentioned in this verse are the specific different ones and not *all the mountains scattered in the World*.

To illustrate further the distinction between the *Bid'a* (or sunna) *Sayi'a* (evil innovation or practice) and the *Bid'a* (sunna) *Hasana* (goodly innovation and practice) in the *sharia* we might refer to the undemoted, *Hadith*, and the incident connected therewith:

Two officers from the court of the Governor of Yemen, with long moustaches and clean shaven faces, presented themselves before the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). The Holy Prophet disapprovingly looked at their faces, and told them. "*Woe unto you both! Who had ordered you to adopt this unbecoming fashion*"? They replied, "*It is the order of our Lord — Kisra, the king of Persia*"? The Holy Prophet said, "*But my Lord, the Creator has commanded me to grow beard and clip and trim the moustaches*".³⁰

From this *Hadith* it is evident that the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) did not approve any thing which did not conform to his *Sunna* which is nothing but the mode of conduct based on the Divine commands. It must be pondered that when the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) looked at those untidy faces of the foreign diplomats with an sight of disapproval, what would be his feelings when Muslims of all grades in the modern world roam about unabashely wearing faces not different from those of the foreign non-Muslims? The fact is that the above quoted *Ahadith* point to the self styled outlandish innovations which are in contravention to commandments of the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunna*. Therefore, if we insist that all innovations including those which derive their authority and authenticity from the Holy Qur'an and *Sunna* and bear the same basic principles as are inherent in the Holy ordinances, then such an attempt would clearly amount to unfortunately lowering and tarnishing the Supreme Most Excellence and Dignity of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). Such an uncalled for proposition from any Muslim or Momin will be unthinkable.

The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has said about his own august personality, "I have been endowed with *jawami' al-kalim* (Comprehensive Words with the Comprehensive Universal Knowledge) and Discourse"³¹ (as if an

³⁰ Abd al-Wahab: al-Tabqat al Kubra, Egypt

³¹ Muslim Kitabul Masajid, p.107

ocean has been pressed and filled in an earthen pitcher). About the knowledge of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) the Holy Qur'an itself bears elequent testimony, "He teaches the Book of Allah to mankind"³² (wherever they may be). Therefore, to derive meanings and interpretations of debased and tarnished nature from the knowledge and erudition of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) is to be guilty of under-estimating his august position and personality which even the angels of the highest ranks can not reach. Surely the words and the discourses of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) contain the gems and pearls of wisdom, guidance, erudition and all the excellences of the entire universe. Such an unbecoming and degrading thinking can not be expected even in respect of the most wretched fool. *We have to the lofty Esteem raised your Mention* (in the annals of mankind for all times to come).³³

Being new a thing does not become undesirable nor being old is a qualification of any thing simply because it is old, goodness and evil is relative to a thing itself and not being old or new

(4)

The issue becomes further clear, removing any doubt or ambiguity in respect of anything being *Haram* (prohibited and unlawful) or *Halal* (permissible and lawful), when we keep some *Ahadith* before us. It is mentioned in one *Hadith*. *'Halal is that which Almighty Allah has declared Halal, (Similarly) Haram is that which Almighty Allah has declared as such. And one who maintains silence, that is an act of pardon or remission of guilt and error.'*³⁴

In another *Hadith* it is said, *'Somethings have been declared 'haram', do not violate their state of being Haram. For some things limits have been imposed, do not tresspass the said limits; and somethings have been deliberately left unmentioned, do not argue and dispute about them.'*³⁵ It must be kept in mind that in matters in which the Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet

³² Qur'an, *al-baqarah*, 2:129 ; *Aal-Imran*, 3:164 ; *al-Jum'a*, 62:2

³³ Quran, *al-Inshirah*, 94:4

³⁴ Miskat, Kitab al-At'ima, Chapter II.

³⁵ Miskat, Kitab al-At'ima Chapter II

(Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) have not expressly declared as *haram* or *halal* the same may be assumed as reticently tolerable. In a sense, such affairs are '*mubah*', doing of which is permissible and the avoidance thereof is not to be questioned. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has also advised the Companions to refrain from asking questions about these things, lest they involve themselves in some sort of inconvenience. Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) as a mercy and affection for the Believers kept their convenience and comfort in the performance of their life routines. It is for this reasons that the Holy Qur'an addresses the Believers in this forthright manner.

"O you who believe! ask not questions about things which is made plain to you may cause you trouble. But if you ask about things when the Qur'an is being revealed, they were be made plain to you. Allah has forgiven them. He is Most Forgiving and Most Forbearing".³⁶

It is reported in the Muslim that one day, the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) was delivering sermon about Haj, making it known as being obligatory upon the believers; one Companion enquired if the Haj was declared obligatory each year. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) kept silence. The questioner repeated the question and again the Holy Prophet, maintained the silence about the answer but added to warn the Companion and through him all the Companions present there, saying, *"If I remain silent on your question, do not insist open a positive answer. If I had said 'yes' to your question, the Haj would have been made compulsory for each year which you would not be able to abide by it."*³⁷

From the above quoted verse and the Traditions, it is clear that in matters about which there is outright permission or avoidance, the same may be taken up without hesitation or under enquiry, and the affairs about which there is no clear prohibition the same may be taken as justifiable or otherwise, but a verdict of *haram* or *halal* can not be given. To assume this authority amounts to claiming powers of divinity or prophethood. The Holy Qur'an has said:

³⁶ Qur'an, *al-Maida*, 5:10

³⁷ Tirmizi vol I p-401; Muslim, vol. II, p-403

'And say not for any false thing that your tongues may put forth, this is lawful, and this is forbidden, so as to ascribe false things to Allah. Surely those who ascribe false thing to Allah will never prosper.'³⁸

And, as has been stated earlier, that in respect of such things/affairs for which there is no specific restraint on being undertaken and a silence has been thought appropriate, there can be any opinion for their being good or bad and each assessment shall be deemed valid on the ground which prompt such an assessment. It must be kept in view that specific reasons have been clearly defined for arriving at a decision as being good or bad. This means that either side of the decision must be based on the guidelines explained in the *Ahadith* and not on personal whims of likes and dislikes. Some more *Ahadith* are also set forth below to make the issue still clearer

(1) The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) on some occasion offered *Travih prayer*, during the month of Ramazan consecutively for 2 or 3 nights and stopped them lest the *Travih* in each night during Ramazan be declared as obligatory (*Farz*) which shall then become binding on the believers like other regular prayers.³⁹

Hazrat Umar knew at heart how dearly the Holy Prophet desired that the Believers may realise the significance and blessings of the *Travih* as a regular practice during Ramazan, but as stated in the foregoing Hadith, the Holy Prophet deemed it advisable for the sake of *Umma* not to offer *Travih* on consecutive nights for more than 2 or 3 nights Keeping the desire of the Holy Prophet in view, the Great Caliph Hazrat Umar issued orders in the Islamic state to offer *Travi Prays* for all consecutive nights during the Holy Month of Ramzan, declaring at the same time, "it is very good *Bid'a*."⁴⁰ The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) said, "No doubt, there had been innovators in te past nations. If there is any innovator in my *Umma*, that is Umar"⁴¹ (may Allah be pleased with him). i.e. Hazrat Umar will be the starter of the *Bid'at-i-Hasana*, which are permissible under the law.

(2) According to another Hadith, "One who introduces *Bid'a* of deviation from Truth which is against the pleasure and

³⁸ Qur'an, *al-Nah'*, 16:116

³⁹ Bukhari, chapter *Fazl man Qama Ramazan*

⁴⁰ Mishkat, chapter *Qiyam-i-Ramazan*

⁴¹ Mishkat vol III. Lahore. p.227 chapter *al-I'tisam bi al-Kitab*

approval of Almighty Allah and the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) the evil of such a Bid'a shall also devolve on the head of the introducer alongwith the evil of the person who actually practices that Bid'a.⁴²

From these *Ahadith* it becomes clear beyond any doubt that every new innovation, or a new thing in the Sharia which receives, the approval of Allah and His Prophet, bears the indication of their pleasure and approval, is good or of positive nature; likewise every new thing in the religion which is against the pleasure and approval of Allah and the Holy Prophet or which does not carry the glimpse or indication of their approval, is bad or of negative nature, and as such it must be avoided.⁴³

As a matter of fact any *Bid'a* by itself does not become despicable at its very inception, unless it is introduced with the sole intention of creating mischief, by giving it a deceptive name which can be accepted as desirable outwardly. The ill effects of *Bid'a* come to surface when a good-intentioned innovation is taken as some thing obligatory and it is practised as such, although the innovator and his followers know it very well that this *Bid'a* is not mentioned in religious commandments. Any act of goodness invariably has the idea of some good behind it, which would lead to further good results in future. But over-indulgence in these new things often gives way to corruption and misuse. But by that time the new-innovation becomes known as an act of *Din*, and those who adopt it, as some thing indispensable, they go so deep in their practice that they begin to criticise those who do not subscribe to their views and often cut off social connections. Even if the newly introduced '*Bid'a*' retains its basic goodness, it is at its best not more than a '*mustahab*'; it is never an act of *Farz*, whereas the maintenance of fraternal relation with other co-religionists is even more desirable like a *Farz* as the Qur'an and Sunna both lay great stress on this. This means that the adherents of *Bid'a* prefer to stick to '*Mustahab*' at the cost of *Farz*. Surely this is not to be admired. The best course in this respect should be to allow others to practise *Sunnat-i-Hasana* what they choose, without severing connections with fellow beings or calling them names. One should not harbour mistrust and suspicion against those who do not go round to accept and follow his point. Differences of smaller significance ought to be tolerated; in due course these

⁴² *ibid.*, chapter *al-I'tisam bi al-kitab*

⁴³ *ibid.* chapter *al-I'tisam bi al-Kitab*

shall be patched up. This is what true religious spirit is which is not disturbed by the acceptance or refusal of *bid'as*.

(5)

Now we examine the issue of '*BID'A*' from another angle. Every new thing must have any of these qualities, (I) either it is good or (II) it is bad or (III) it is neither good nor bad. We get the guidance from the Holy Qur'an and *Ahadith* that we should act or follow things which are good and avoid those practices which are non-beneficial in their nature, and as for things which are neither good nor bad we have our own option either to adopt or ignore them. The quality of a thing being good or bad does not depend on its being old and new, but purely of its being useful or otherwise. To condemn every thing as unacceptable simply it is new (and therefore a *Bid'a*) is beyond commonsense. To introduce new things by way of invention is the sign as well as guarantee of development of the nation being dynamic, progressive, the healthy trends to ensure betterment from stage to stage. Likewise the nation or community which is deprived of this spirit of dynamism, remains subdued and becomes slave to the traits of lethargy, thoughtless indulgence in non-beneficial staticism. To be endowed with inventive genius is a great mercy of Almighty Providence.

The easiest way to cause decay and dearth in the reserves of motivational energy of any nation is through deadening its energy and spirit, which prefers to live a life of leisure and pleasure, comfort and ease, the inevitable consequences being that the gateway of success and progress passing through the heart, gets closed and to make sure that such a step has been successfully taken is by placing an embargo on progressive thinking and intellectual dynamism. Islam as a dynamic religion responding to natural urge of moving forward from step to step, encourages newer and newer inventions and research activities in every field of human activity, material as well as spiritual, over the surface of the land and deep down the sea, to discover pearls and gems to enrich and embellish the life.

If the logics of dynamism be condemned simply to justify the assertion that every new invention or innovation is *Zalala* (deviation) and a curse then through the same force of logic it will have to be accepted that every old thing is a boon even if it has lost the point of its utility and usefulness. Such an

assumption is sheer nonsense which no man of vision will ever accept as true! Human intellect inspite of being a Divine gift is prone to misjudge and misconceive whereas the Divine Wisdom manifested through *Wahi* (Revelation) is ever progressive, dynamic and fruit bearing at all moments. Now, it can be safely stated that anything and everything which answers the call of the Divine Revelation whether old or new, is a boon and blessing from the Almighty Allah and anything and every thing which does not come to the required standard of demands of the Revelation whether old or new, is a curse and must be discarded.

Time is ever on march, it is dynamic, undergoing change every moment, Man as the supreme creation of the Providence and the chief exponent of Nature's potential can not remain unaffected by the irresistible passage of time; he also undergoes change at every moment of his existence. From the cradle to the grave is one long drawn line of existence interspersed by moments in the Time-Sequence terms as past, present and future as a manifestation of Divine Will to assert its overlordship on every particle strewn all over the surface of existence including the human species meeting the same fate as any other particle waddling in the infinite Spatial Chaos — the Universe.

This world of ours and its splendour or barrenness depend what its dwellers and planners who are blessed with the supreme most dignified title of Divine Viceregency think and do about it. Every action and deed of ours brings the result what it was intended to bear as the small seed of a plant contains the genesis of the flower and fruit of its species. There can never be the mal-admixture of the seed and fruit of different species. Therefore, the nature and quality of the resultant outcome has the same qualities which lay in the very genesis or intent of that action even before it was practically under taken. Any ignorance in this behalf or any wishfull thinking as to the outcome of the deed other than that what it bore at its base will be harmful. Such a phenomenon we daily observe in the world of seed and plant where the fruit and the flower demonstrate as to what the intent of the grower was.

The same can be said in the world of deed and its requital, both in this world and in the Hereafter. To arrive at a correct estimate of any phenomenon taking place before our eyes, we must have the depth in the knowledge and observance of that phenomenon. Therefore, in the absence of these pre-requisites or a faulty and prejudiced approach towards the problem, our

conclusions in this respect shall never be sound and acceptable to the people at large. We must admit that the truth or otherwise of any verdict presented by us should have the support and approval of at least that segment of our society which we regard as fair and unbiased.

Our own conclusion or opinion about our deeds can be self-deception which will further lead us into the wrong channel or the depth of marshy lands of self elevation from which there is hardly any way out.

As far as the debate of the *'Amal-i-Khair* (good deed) and *'Amal-i-Sharr* (bad deed) is concerned, it is continuing since human intellect was allowed freedom to choose what suited its convenience and pleasure. The result is that with the exception of some deeds of definitive character under the commands of Qur'an and *Sunna*, almost the entire paraphernalia of human behaviour has assumed the controversy of its pros and cons and there seems no end to it.

It is therefore imperative that we should seek solution to this vexing problem in the Holy Qur'an and the *Ahadith* of Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). There are many good deeds (*Amal-i-Khair*) which can be deduced from the verses of the Holy Qur'an. Since these deeds are of implied nature, the people at large are not aware of them. In other words, it can be said that in our society there are many deeds which have their origin in the Holy Qur'an; likewise there are many virtues which have their root in the *Ahadith*, while there are numerous deeds of goodly nature which the righteous servants of Allah have voluntarily imposed upon themselves to earn the Pleasure of Allah the Almighty, but our shortsightedness and ignorance do not allow us to probe in depth the lustrous beneficence hidden in them and conveniently overlook them by calling them as *Bid'a* (self invented innovations).

We are often tempted to look at these practices which the Friends of Allah and Saintly personage voluntarily imposed upon themselves for seeking the Pleasure of Allah, as some thing uncalled for in the *Sharia*. This is not a healthy approach because this is merely a superficial and not the indepth study of the motive and inspiration behind these new practices. The fact is, that these are not un-Islamic and contrary to Qur'an and *Sunna*. For an unbiased approach in this matter we must first mould our lives in the life-patterns of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and assume that austerity and honesty in our

thoughts and behaviour; only then the Truth will be revealed in its real essence as to what is really good or bad *Bid'a*. Without this sincere and honest searching on our part, we shall remain groping in the darkness of self-deception. This is deviation and misguidance in totality. Only then we shall realise that Islam is the perfect religion which guides and caters for all our needs in the mundane and spiritual spheres or in other words the *Din* and the *Dunya*.

The basic demand in this respect is the adoption of good deeds (*'Amal-i-Swalih*) which will lead to Salvation in this world and the Hereafter as the famous *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) declares "*the world is the cultivating field for the Hereafter*"⁴⁴ which testifies the truth that what we sow in this world, so we would reap in the Hereafter. Unless, there is good in this world in the deed-funds there can not be 'good' in the reserved fund, for the other world which further means that the good of the world is the good of the Hereafter⁴⁵

Islam keeps vigilance on the deeds of its adherents even in small matters of daily routine, by providing guidelines - through Qur'an and *Sunna*. This is the spirit behind the above quoted *Hadith* and the verse of the Holy Qur'an. Below we quote a *Hadith* which relates seemingly to a simple matter but contains gems of guidance when the essential moral of this *Hadith* is kept in view as a guide-lines for all deeds, trivial or important in nature. This is the *Hadith* which deals with a relatively routine matter, but a compliance or non compliance of guidance provided by this and other *Ahadith* of this class in respect of daily routines will determine our fortunes.

Once a Companion was passing on the way wearing a long sized *Tahband*, (a cloth worn round the loins) the lower edge of which was touching the ground while walking as it was down the ankles. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) also happened going the same way. He noticed this careless attitude of the Companion. He told the Companion to raise the *Tahband* above the ankles which is the graceful mannerism when wearing long cloth trousers. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) said, '*Is there no moral*

⁴⁴ *Ithaf al-sada al-Muttaqin Li al-Zubadi*, Beirut, vol VIII, p-539
Kashf al-Khifa li al-'Ajuni, vol I p-495

⁴⁵ Qur'an, *al-baqarah*, 2:201

*lesson for you to follow, as a model in the conduct displayed by me (i.e. Uswa-i-Hasana)*⁴⁶

Though wearing clothes is a normal routine matter in personal life; but when it trespasses the express desire of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him), it becomes an act of *Bid'at-i-saiyyia* (An evil bearing innovation).

Certainly Islam does not permit segregation of *Din* from *Dunya* (worldly affairs) because all deeds originate in its bounds and under its influence on which depend the reward or punishment in the Hereafter. Any one who fails to fulfill his worldly obligations in social or domestic spheres will be answerable before Almighty Allah and he closes the doors of Divine beneficence upon himself. This is never the preaching of Islam. In fact it is the very negation of Islam. The Divine blessings lie in the Judicious performance of the religious and mundane obligations and not one at the cost of the other!

(6)

We were discussing the subject matters of *Bid'a*, in the affairs of the World (*Dunya*) and the Religion (*Din*) whether it is the matter of habit or prescribed religious practices. If these are of goodly nature, there is reward for one who performs them, and, if the situation is otherwise, the consequences will have to be faced. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has already informed *Umma* of the numerous '*Bid'as*' which will emerge from time to time in the future⁴⁷ These *Bid'as* are in almost all conceivable fields of human behavior namely, religious, moral culture and civilization, social, educational, comprising of both the categories viz *Bid'at-i-Hasana*, (goodly innovation), *Bid'at-i-Saiyyia* (evil bearing Innovations). This demonstrates the rare prophetic knowledge of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) who was witnessing the events of the world which were turning out into concrete reality

⁴⁶ al-Shama'il al-Tirmizi, Lahore, p-9

⁴⁷ Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Siddiq, in his Book on the study of innovations and inventions has mentioned lot of innovations and inventions from the books of *Ahadith*. The book has been translated in Urdu by Maulana Ahmad Mian Barkati entitled *Islam aur Asri Ejjadat* (Lahore 1981).

as a result of movements of the multifarious factors with shapes of the things to come till Eternity. This also proves that these *Bid`as* were inevitably destined to take place, warning us at the same time to adopt such of them if they bear blessing and reject them without hesitation if they portend to be of evil nature.

If we cast our eyes around us we will notice that we have consciously adopted not only the *Bid`as* of the goodly nature, but also those of the evil bearing which (latter) are incidental of the non-beneficial nature under some sweet sounding social, cultural or religious jargons. Yet we are not tired, as a habit, to call names and criticize *Bid`as* as a means of deception and deviation! This contradiction in our approach is really undefinable and inexplicable! This is what is commonly known as vagaries of human nature!

Now we wish to give description of some well known and generally used *Bid`as* of both the categories good as well as evil to confirm the hypothesis that longer the period of currency of these *Bid`as* (both good & evil) the securer they become, extending their spheres of usage.

Good Bid`as

First and to begin with, let us take some of the examples of *Bid`at-i-Hasana* (Goodly) to show how long and wide they are practiced so much that any change in this behalf will create confusion and even opposition. These *Bid`as* have become integral parts of belief in primary sectors of our life especially in education and social fields and we have accepted them as such without any murmur and discontent. It also suggests that had we taken them as *Bid`a* we would not have dared to declare 'all *Bid`a* is anti-goodness'.

- (1) The Holy Qur'an: inscribing the Holy Qur'an in the present Arabic letters (Alphabets), signs of vowel pronunciation (*E`rab*) on words, Dividing the Qur'an in 30 parts and each part in quarter (*Ruba*), half (*Nisf*), 3 quarters (*Thalasa*). None of these "innovation" existed in life-time of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) known as "*Khair-ul-Quroon*" (Best of the History periods).
- (2) Mosques (Masajids): construction of towers (*minar*), installation of electrical appliances; Installation of decorative paraphernalia for example chandelier

- (Fanoos); Mosaic flooring, spreading carpets, air-conditioners — all these are later innovations.
- (3) Installation of loud speakers for the purpose of *Azan*, offering prayers, delivering sermon, and speeches before the prayer (*Namaz*) etc etc.
 - (4) Use of telescope for sighting the 'new moon' (even by going up in the clouds in aeroplanes but, it appears this method has since been discontinued) sending telegraphic message of sighting the new moon, announcement on the radio and T.V, use of siren at *Iftar* and *Sahri* or drum beating etc etc.
 - (5) Editing the books of commentary of Holy Qur'an and Jurisprudence, preparing the curriculum and syllabus; (written) examination of students and declaration of results, awarding shields, cup etc.
 - (6) Holding conferences, conventions (religious meetings) *Qirat* competition, award of cash & Book prizes.
 - (7) Provision of uniforms to defence personnel, salutation to National Flag, singing National Anthem and standing as a mark of respect.

These are some of the numerous "*Bid'as*" which we have willingly accepted, and continue to do so. If some one takes recourse to criticise and ban them, he will perhaps be declared as insane or crazy.

Evil Bid'as

But there are some new things or *Bid'as* currently practised in our society although these have been expressly forbidden in the Holy Qur'an. They have become part of joyous function and cultural celebration, without being criticised and protested by any knowledgeable cricles. Some of these *Bid'as* are enumerated below

(1) The most outrageous *Bid'a* in the realm of the goyernance of Islamic countries is that we have adopted the laws of the foreign/alien non-Muslims instead the Laws of Allah and His Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him).

(2) Heads of Islamic countries have made alliances, agreements with the atheist countries whereas the Holy Qur'an

has expressly forbidden any alliance with these anti Islamic communities.⁴⁸

(3) To remain bare-headed and shave the beard is contrary to what the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) practised and the Companions did the likewise as it was the desire and command of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). He always covered his head with cap and turban (*amama*) and stressed upon the followers for keeping beard⁴⁹ He had himself maintained a well-grown thick beard.⁵⁰ He had told his Companions (*Umma*) to keep low trimmed moustache and grown beard.⁵¹ But we are openly doing against his teachings and following the practices of Hindus, Jews and Christians. Strangely, we find no *Bid'a* or *Shirk* in these practices.

(4) Our women folk roam about in fashionable dresses with heavy make up of the modern taste and choice, forgetting that there is forbiddance to move about in dazzling display⁵² (of beauty) and not to move about without veils⁵³ they should draw their veils over their bosoms⁵⁴ and avoid appearing before strangers to display their embellishments⁵⁵ they should cast their outer garments over their persons⁵⁶ and lower their gaze when they move out from their home⁵⁷ The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has forbidden the Muslim women to apply perfumes whenever they go out⁵⁸ Hazrat Ayisha (May Allah bless her) observed the *purdah* so strictly that when even a blind Companion Ibn-i-Ishaq came to her (to ask something) she withdrew in privacy (and conversed from behind the curtain).⁵⁹

⁴⁸ Qur'an, *al-Nisa*, 4:893 ; *Aal-i-Imran*, 3:28,139,144 , *al-Maedah*, 5:151 ; *al-Ankabut*, 29:41; *al-Mumtahina*, 60:1

⁴⁹ Nisai, vol. II, p-274.

⁵⁰ Muslim, vol.II, p.359

⁵¹ Bukhari, vol. II, p.875 ; Abu Dawud, vol., p-122 ; Muslim, vol. I, p.129

⁵² Qur'an, *al-Ahzab*, 33:33

⁵³ Qur'an, *al-Ahzab*, 33:33.

⁵⁴ Qur'an, *al-Nur*, 24:31.

⁵⁵ Qur'an, *al-Nur*, 24:31.

⁵⁶ Qur'an, *al-Ahzab*, 33:59

⁵⁷ Qur'an, *al-Nur*, 24:31

⁵⁸ "Prophet of Islam" (Tolstoy), Lahore, 1920, p.44

⁵⁹ Tabaqat Ibn-i- Sa'ad, vol. VIII, p-49

In spite of all these glaring warnings and commandments our apathy towards Holy Qur'an and Sunna has reached the extent that we seldom feel remorse over our behaviours. On the other hand we indulge in these *Bid'as* as if they are part of our life.

(5) The most uncalled for lavish display and waste of wealth is witnessed on the occasions of the weddings and the ceremonies attached therewith. Some people welcome such opportunities as occasions to demonstrate how rich and open minded they are when they indulge in these extravagant displays, without paying attention to what the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna say in this regard. There is clear warning against squandering wealth in the manner of a spendthrift, for spendthrifts are brothers of the Devil (Satan)⁶⁰ But no one thinks twice over these satanic deeds.

(6) In order to demonstrate how advanced and modern-minded they are, there are some women especially in the age group of 20-30 who do not hesitate to put on gents clothing's of the western civilization. This is against the Islamic spirit and contrary to natural inborn instinct. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has cursed these women⁶¹. His displeasure in this respect is so severe that he has asked the inmates to turn such women out of their homes⁶². He has also said that the woman who shows herself off as a male is not amongst us,⁶³ and the fragrance of the paradise shall not reach such women⁶⁴. In the face of these clear *Ahadith* what is the reaction of the male folks of the society is seen by and known to every one. But no one raises a finger as a protest against these grave unbecoming acts.

(7) In the name of family planning modern scientific measures are being employed to control growth of population. The most immoral and unIslamic method is the use of contraceptives and the forced abortions. The supporters of family planning present only the rate of growth of population and hide the figures of the rate of deaths, for natural and other causes which in a sense keep the balance between the births and deaths in the population. Moreover, the family planning scheme is against the Islamic concept of governance of the

⁶⁰ Qur'an, *al-'Asra*, 17:26-27 ; *al-A'raf*, 7:31 ; *Ibrahim*, 14:141.

⁶¹ *al-Bukhari*, vol.II, p-874.

⁶² *al-Tirmizi*, p-396.

⁶³ *Musnid Ahmad bin Hambal*

⁶⁴ *al-Nisai*

world in respect of food and humanity. The Qur'an has emphatically asserted that the provision of subsistence to every living creature on the earth is in the hands of Almighty Allah and He knows and provides the requirements of each and every living creature (including the worms and insects living even in the darkest depth of the earth and the heighest mountains)⁶⁵ The fact and undeniable truth is that every creature destined to come in the world will definitely come inspite of all restrictions.⁶⁶

(8) Making pictures and taking photographs is very common in our society. Ulema and common people are equally involved, rather interested in these innovations. No one sees any moral or religious irregularity in these activities. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) never approved the keeping or making pictures in the house. On the other hand, he himself removed pictures etc. of high personages which were hung or made on the walls of the Holy Kaaba⁶⁷. He ordered to remove the painted curtains placed on the doors of his *hujra* and it was tom into pieces⁶⁸. In short, wherever he noticed any picture, he ordered it to be removed⁶⁹. Once Hazrat Ali (May Allah honour his visage) went to the house of a person who had invited him. But when Hazrat Ali saw a curtain having painting/pictures, he returned without attending the dinner⁷⁰. All these things have been clearly mentioned in the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him),⁷¹ but no one notices any *Bid'a* or infidelity in them.

(9) Drinking wine, organising musical concerts,, free mixing of men and women in these and other meetings, clapping, unchecked laughter, all these things have been forbidden in the Qur'an and the *Ahadith* but we see nothing objectionable in these affairs as *shirk* and *bid'a*.

⁶⁵ Qur'an, *al-Hud*, 11:6

⁶⁶ al-Bukhari, vol.II, p.784

⁶⁷ Sirat bin al-Husham, p.2, 274

⁶⁸ Muslim, vol. II, p-201 and sunan Abu Daw'ud, vol.II, p-217

⁶⁹ al-Bukhari, vol. II, p-880

⁷⁰ *al-Nisai*, vol. II, p-256.

⁷¹ al-Tirmedhi, p.369 ; Ibn-i-Maja, p.268

(7)

Now See !

(1) The critical minded persons regard as unIslamic organising ceremonial functions to commemorate the most august occasion in the history of mankind known as the *Jashn-i-Wiladat* (Birth Day Celebrations) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). If we look from Qur'anic point of view, Allah the Almighty has expressly mentioned the occasions of birth and deaths of the Apostles,⁷² some in details and others in brief, which nevertheless highlight the occasions as commemorative and reverential because they are covenanted with great events of History. Such days are regarded as worth remembering and paying special attention. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) was born on Monday. He used to keep fast on Mondays as token of Thanks giving to Almighty Allah.⁷³ The righteous servants also began to celebrate this most auspicious Day of the year. But these so-called critics did not approve this expression of joy and called it as '*shirk* and *bid'a*' while, on the other hand, they find nothing objectionable when functions and ceremonies of birth days and wedding days are held in their own circles and in their families. When their own children arrange birth day of their 'dadies and mummies' they not only attend these functions whole-heartedly but also provide financial and moral support to make such functions really memorable. They light candles and cut cakes much in the same way as do the Jewish and Christian community members, singing songs and clappings alongwith the children who are dressed in funny clothes and caps. They like such functions but dislike to celebrate the Birth Anniversary of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him), alas! — On the other hand?

If any one of the devotees is blessed with the Vision of Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) in the dream. He celebrates the occasion. It is reported that Hazrat *Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani* had the vision (*Ziara*) of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) in a dream some time between 1030 and 1033 AH. To celebrate and commemorate this most

Quran, *Maryam*, 19.15, 33

'bn-i-Athir' *Usd al-Ghaba*, Lahore vol I p 21-22

blissful occasion he advised his family members to arrange festivities by ordering preparation of different varieties of foods etc.⁷⁴

(2). To these critics the recitation of and listening to the poetical verses in praise of the Holy Prophet (Naats) appears as *Bid'a*, while the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) had himself praised the poetical verses⁷⁵. He listened and appreciated about 100 verses of Umaiya bin Abi Salat from the father of Umroo bin Shareed,⁷⁶ while he himself recited some verses.⁷⁷ He arranged the pulpit (*Mimbar*) for Hazrat Hassaan bin Thbit and listened to the verses recited by Hazrat Hassaan from that pulpit⁷⁸. His own uncle Hazrat Abbas recited the first versified *Milad Nama* and he listened to it.⁷⁹ Besides, such great Companions Ka'ab bin Malik, Abdullh bin Rawaha, Ka'ab bin Zahir also presented poetical eulogies which the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) listened and appreciated. All the recorded events and occasions are mentioned in the Books of *Ahadith* and other volumes of Islamic literatures. But some-how the modern minds including the educated ones object to these simple, and religious assemblies, and call them as *shirk* and *Bid'a*! While they see nothing wrong in listening and watching the radio and T.V. programs of songs and dances, they can not tolerate the recitation of religious composition on these very media. One of my friends told me that an educated person was listening to the songs on the T.V and later on when a program of recitation of *Naat* was announced the same educated man asked his children to close the T.V as the program of *Bid'a* was to begin. We can pray Almighty to grant them purity of vision and Intellect so that they may see and understand the path of goodness. (*Amin*)

(3). Some educated persons who pose themselves as modernists also criticise the presentation of *Durud-o-Salam* to the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) in standing posture which is admittedly a sign of respect and honour, but these persons also regard it as sign of *Bida't* and *shirk*. (!). We may recall that when the Companions and the kith

⁷⁴ Letters of Imam Rabbani (NO.106), Amritsar, addressed to his son (Murshid of king Aurangzaib Alamgir)

⁷⁵ Mishkat Kitab al-Adab, Hadith No.2

⁷⁶ ibid, Hadith NO.5

⁷⁷ ibid, Hadith No. 10

⁷⁸ ibid, Hadith No. 9

Ibn-i-Kathir, *Milad-e-Mustafa* (Urdu), Lahore p-29-30

and kin offered *salat-o-salam* of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) on his demise in groups and in standing position⁸⁰ the great angels also did the same on this solemn occasion. The Holy Qur'an also indicates that some angels offer Salutation in that posture⁸¹ All these reveal how elaborate arrangements exist not only on the surface of the earth but also up in the heavenly regions for the Divine Blessings upon the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) in which the angels also participate. Viewed in this perspective, those mortals of this globe who look at the Divine disposition with the jaundiced angles only spoil their fortunes and put themselves on the path of Divine displeasure.

The great exponent of Hadith Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Haq of Delhi (India) always recited and offered *Durud-o-Salam* to the Holy Prophet in standing position and regarded this respectful humility as the source of Salvation in the Hereafter.⁸² It is strange on our part that we do not hesitate to offer standing homage to national convention though there is no religious sanction behind them. For example we sing or listen to the National Anthem as also when paying homage to the National Flag, offering *Fatiha* in the assembly on the demise of any of its member, by keeping ourselves in standing condition. Though ironical, yet it is a fact that we willingly stand in line (queue) while purchasing tickets for any personal purpose, without feeling shy for a single moment, in which those critics also participate who see shirk and *Bid'a* in religious ceremonies mentioned above.

(4). The critics (in some cases) do not even approve the collective *Du'a* after the *Farz* prayers of each *Namaz*. They smell some thing wrong (as shirk and *Bid'a*) in these invocations to Divine Mercy, the same is the practice in some Arabic states. The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) has said that the congregational "After *Farz* - *Du'a*" receives recognition and acceptance in the Divine Presence more than individual prayer⁸³ and has commanded such a prayer in every *namaz*.⁸⁴ The Holy Prophet used to move his open hands all

⁸⁰ Abd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, *Madarij al-Nabuwa*, vol.II, p-440

⁸¹ Qur'an, Saffat, 37:1

⁸² Abd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlavi, *Akhabar al-Akhyar*, Delhi 1309, p.309

⁸³ Mishkat, *Kitab al-Salat*, Hadith No.10

⁸⁴ Mishkat *Kitab al-Salat* Hadith No 10

over his face after every *Namaz*.⁸⁵ He used to raise his hand while reciting *Dua* and after completion passed his hands over his face⁸⁶ The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) used to recite rites and verses of invocations in loud voice so that the Companions may join the prayers and receive the blessings of these prayers. But the critics see 'Bid'a' even in these prayers of general benefits.

(5). The critics also do not approve as genuine all that food, drink, fruits etc over which *Fatiha* is recited as a sign of blessing. The Holy Qur'an has warned the so called learned ones who indulge in declaring things as *halal* or *haram* and misleading the people.

*"Why should you not eat on which Allah's Name has been pronounced, when He has explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you, (Haram) except under compulsion of necessity. But many people mislead others under their self desires without knowing the truth, Your Lord (Allah) knows best those who transgress the limits".*⁸⁷

Certainly it is a grave and delicate issue and should not be taken light heartedly or passing judgments on personal whims and conjecture!

(8)

When we study Qur'an and the Hadith and the life pattern of the righteous servants of the past and compare them with those of ours, we find that there is tremendous difference between them and us. *On one hand we do not like things and regard them as shirk and Bid'a' which are not against the fundamentals of Islam and do not cause harm to our religion and on the other hand, we willingly practise those things which are against the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna (glaring examples have already been cited in the earlier pages). It appears that under the cloak of Bid'a and Shirk a systematic planning is underway whereby attempt is being made to confound the believers that sunna as a compact branch of Islamic faith is not free from impurity.*

⁸⁵ Mishkat, *Kitab-al-salat*, Hadith No.23

⁸⁶ *Ibn Maja*, p-284

⁸⁷ Qur'an *An'am*, 6:119

For the last two three centuries a regular conspiracy is afoot which in the common terminology is *Nazar bandi* (spell binding the sight) whereby things can not be seen as they really are. The spell is so devastating that the real *bid'as* which are the negation of the fundamentals of the shariat are passed over as if non-existent, but the simple and devoted practices which are aimed at eulogising the personages and principles are trumpeted about that if these are not checked and removed from our midst, the edifice of Islam (*ma'aa'zallah*) will crumble and collapse. (May Almighty Allah protect us from such misfortunes)

It is a fact that in every phase of the history the majority of Muslim *Umma* has clustered round the personages who were acclaimed as men of learning and righteousness. This has been the direction given in the *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him). These are the very persons who have been defined as on the straight path (*Sirat-i-Mustaqim*) whom Almighty Allah has blessed with Special Favours There is a Hadith of The Holy Prophet (Allah's Grace and Peace be upon him) which exhorts the Muslims to follow the footsteps of these righteous persons⁸⁸

There is yet another verse in the Holy Qur'an which gives clear directive as to what should be our attitude with those who choose to go another way, without paying any heed to the callings to the right direction. It is said, "And one who contends with (goes against) the Apostle of Allah, even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the men of faith (Mumineen) We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell an evil refuge."⁸⁹ In the meantime let us sincerely pray Almighty Allah to enable us to follow the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* (straight path of guidance) which is mentioned as a source of Eternal Bliss at various places in the Holy Qur'an, in *al-Fatiha*,⁹⁰ *Yasin*,⁹¹ *al-An'am*,⁹² *al-Zukhruf*,⁹³ *al-Shur'a*,⁹⁴ *al-Noor*,⁹⁵ *al-Hajj*,⁹⁶ and *al-Nahal*⁹⁷

⁸⁸ Ibn Maja, *Kitab al-Fitan* ch *al-Sawaad-al-A zam* Mishkat vol 1, p-84

⁸⁹ Qur'an *al-Nisa*, 4:115

⁹⁰ Qur'an, *al-Fatiha* 1:5

⁹¹ Quran, *Yasin*, 36:3

⁹² Qur'an, *al-An'am*, 6:153

⁹³ Qur'an, *al-Zukhruf*, 43:43

⁹⁴ Qur'an, *al-Shura*, 7:52

⁹⁵ Qur'an, *al-Nur* 24:46

⁹⁶ Qur'an *al-Hajj* 22:54

Our pious and noble ancestors chose this *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* (right path). We should follow them. We are ordained to do so by Allah. Islam teaches its adherents to follow a pattern of life motivated by tolerance. We should be tolerant and listen to the Divine Command: "Say not to any one who offers you salutation", "you are not man of faith."⁹⁶

We should Pray to Almighty Allah to grant every conscious heart a mark of love (and tolerance) that overshadows the brightness of moon. (Amin!)

Karachi (Pakistan)

Dated 18th Jamadi-al-Thani 1415AH

23rd November 1994

M. Mas'ud Ahmad

Qur'an *al-Nah'i*, 16:121

Qur'an *al-Nisa* 4:94

