



***Bid'ah* as the primary cause for deviation**

The Arabic word **Bid'ah** comes from the root (بدع), it means to originate, introduce, devise, contrive, improvise or to be inventive in a manner not done before. Allāh has used this word in this sense when he said: "**Badī'** as-Samāwāti wa'l-Arḍ" (He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth) i.e. It's Creator without any previous replica or blueprint. Allāh said in another place: "Qul: Mā kuntu **bid'an** mina'r-Rusul" (Say: I was not the only Messenger sent) i.e. Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) was not the only Messenger to carry a divine scripture, but before him many others did so. Being innovative in worldly matters is a sign of technological or creative advancement, but being innovative in religion brings nothing but error and failure. The reason for this is that mankind has been placed in this world to exploit it's resources for the maximum benefit of his religion, but religion has been assigned to him to receive guidance, and not modify or adjust it in order to suit his fancies.

A person who practices an innovation as far as religious matters are concerned is called a **mubtadi'** in Arabic. It roughly means to innovate or introduce heretical doctrines, heresies, or actions with a suspicious origin into the corpus of Islamic belief and practice. It can be technically defined as follows: "*An innovated practice which resembles Islām designed to exaggerate certain acts of worship or misrepresent some aspect of the Shari'ah.*" Those things which are done or those sciences which are learnt for the sake of understanding Islām or better practising it is not termed as Bid'ah. The science of Arabic grammar, the principles of Tafsīr and the formulas of jurisprudence is studied to understand Islām today. These sciences were not present in the earliest period of Islām, but its foundations are to be found in Shari'ah. A Bid'ah has neither absolutely no legal basis nor precedent in Islām.

An innovated act outwardly resembles an Islamic practice, but in reality it is different. The examples of these are many:

1. A person vows that he will fast, but attaches a condition that he will do it standing only. He likewise imposes certain baseless conditions on his vow which has no legal validity only to aggravate himself.
2. To believe it is compulsory and part of the Dīn to celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and some of the awliyā of Allah like Shaykh

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, Mawlānā Jalāluddīn Rūmī etc..

3. A person adopts certain type of worship or incantation or talisman (wazīfah) for himself which is recited or practised on certain days or certain times only. It can not be done in no other time besides this.

An innovated act is always practised in a way that has no precedent. If such an act indeed has a precedent, it is merely a custom. The person involved in innovation does so thinking that he is indeed practising upon the Sunnah. Soon, he becomes convinced of it and the truth of the matter becomes clouded unto him. He loses cognizance of the fact that he has deviated, and this makes repentance more difficult for him. In order to alleviate his symptoms of deterioration, a **mubtadi'** would normally cling to a person's personality, invoke him, and try to legitimize his devotion through this medium.

The Arabs of the age of ignorance had outrageously distorted the teachings of Prophet Abraham (عليه السلام), and started giving weird explanations to their doings. For worshipping idols, they rationalized as follows: "We do not worship them except to gain proximity to Allāh." On the occasion of pilgrimage, they simply refused to pass through 'Arafah saying; "We can not leave the sanctity of the Ḥaram." They would make Ṭawāf around the Ka'bah in a state of stark nudity reasoning that they could not perform such a great devotion while wearing the clothes in which they habitually sinned.

The innovator, by doubly exerting himself in his devotions, thinks that he will achieve spiritual consummation in doing so. True, Allāh said: "I have naught created mankind and Jinn-kind but for my worship." He pushes this verse to its extreme, devising his own motions of 'ibādah, not realising that what the Sharḥ had stipulated is more than adequate. In his enthusiasm he underestimates the power of the Shari'ah, and through a bold show of his love to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ), he introduces a whiff of innovation in his daily devotional practices.

The human psyche is such that it always welcomes something new. It looks forward to a break in monotony. It becomes easily bored with an uninterrupted and monotonous chain of repetitive events so when a new thing is introduced to it, it becomes refreshed. This is why innovative actions are so readily accepted.

Acts of Bid'ah can take the form of **omission** or **commission**. If a one prohibits a certain action upon oneself which is already prohibited in the Shari'ah or for which provision has been made to prohibit, there is no problem. One, for example, can prohibit the food prepared by a certain person upon himself because of its harmful effects on the mind and body. If a person fears an onset of uncontrollable sexual craving if he happens to consume his normal quantity of food, he can abstain from it as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) had said: "O assembly of youth, whoever of you can manage to marry, let him marry, and whoever can not do so should fast." Likewise, a person who abstains from products which he doubts is commendable.

On the other hand, if one abstains from doing anything which the Shari'ah had

allowed thinking it legal to do so, this falls under the category of Bid'ah. Allāh says: "O you who believe, do not prohibit what Allāh has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Verily Allāh does not love those who transgress the limits." This verse was revealed when a few of the Companions prohibited sleep upon themselves by night, some forbade eating by day, and some refused to having any conjugal relations. They prohibited these natural inclinations of the body upon themselves with no legal sanction, nor did it benefit them in the least. By doing so, they broke away from the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and entered into the realms of Bid'ah.

Innovation in religion can be condemned rationally ('aqlan) and transmitted textual evidence (naqlan), and there are no qualms to say that the one who practices Bid'ah has deviated. There are **five rational reasons** for abhorrence towards Bid'ah in religion.

1. It is known through experiment as well as experience that the mind can not fathom what is good or what is bad for mankind without external help, be it in worldly or religious matters. When Adam (عليه السلام), the first of mankind was placed in this world, he was in full possession of his mental faculties. Yet, he did not know how to survive in his surroundings. Allāh taught him all these worldly skills and trained him the vocational arts. This fact can be proved when Allāh said: "And we taught Adam the names of everything." Following Adam (عليه السلام)'s example, his children followed in his example in doing so ever since.

As time passed, mankind made progress on his physical surroundings, but neglected his spiritual habitat. Thinking of aspects like resurrection, the hereafter, and its rigmarole was plainly beyond comprehension. This is the reason why Allāh, time and time again, pitied His creation and sent Prophets to mankind to remind them over and over again. Their main mission was plainly to shift the focus of events from a rational point of view to one dependent on divine revelation. But mankind always forgot. This indicates that mankind can not grasp what is of benefit or harm to himself with the aid of his intellect alone. An innovator breaks this general rule of nature, and bethinks that he can unravel the realms of the unseen through his limited thinking capacity.

2. The Shari'ah of Islām (The Sacred Law) has been perfected. Allāh says: "Today I have perfected for you your religion, and has completed upon you my favour and have become satisfied with Islām as your religion." There is a famous tradition by 'Irbad ibn Sariyah (رضي الله عنه): The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) admonished us, such an admonishment that our eyes started overflowing, and our hearts started pounding. We asked: "O Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ), this seems like a parting sermon, what do you propose for us to do." He replied: "I have left upon clear whiteness, its night is like its day. Whoever sways from it after me will be destroyed. Whoever lives on after me will witness many upheavals, so hold steadfast to my practice and the practice of the **Rightly-Guided Caliphs**

after me.” The Ahl al-Sunnah are unanimous in the fact that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave this world until he conveyed everything which was necessary for religious matters. A **mubtadi'** through his continuous introduction of new aspects into religion attests to the fact that Islām is not complete, hence his desire to always add on things.

Ibn Majishun says that he heard Imām Mālik saying: “Whoever innovates in religion thinking it to be a virtuous matter, he has indeed accused the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) of being deceitful in delivering his message.”

3. The practitioner of innovation undermines the Shari'ah and causes unnecessary trouble for himself. Allāh had shown his servants a very specific path with a very specific methodology to tread, and has left the duty of calling towards it and forbidding from all things averse to it for mankind. Islam teaches that goodness arises from following this path and evil and corruption is the result of abandoning it. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was sent in this world as a mercy unto mankind, the **mubtadi'** rejects this notion as he insists that are some additional duties to be performed in order to attain salvation. Once when 'Adi ibn Artat asked 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz for some advice regarding the Qadariyyah menace, he responded as follows: “I exhort you to fear Allāh, in adopting moderation in your affairs and following the practice upon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Abandon all types of innovations which have become prevalent and do not support them. Hold fast to the Sunnah, for the Sunnah was devised by one who is well-aware all the other divergent paths which are slippery, full of deficiencies, and riddled with excesses. Be content for yourself what the Sahabah were content for themselves for they did everything with knowledge, and were possessed of insight. They refrained (from innovations) having more stronger knowledge than us, and through a grace which was more benevolent. Whoever had innovated after them have deviated from their path and have absolved themselves from them. The Sahabah were our predecessors, they have left adequate directives - everything besides this is thrash.”
4. The practitioner of innovation elevates his actions to the status of the true Shari'ah. Allāh had devised a Shari'ah and made its mandate incumbent upon all mankind. The Shari'ah has the potential to solve all human problems. If mankind could devise a shari'ah of their own in order to solve all their problems, there would have been disruptions between themselves, and there would have been no need to send guides in the forms of Prophets, the pious and the reformers. A **mubtadi'** seeks to devise another shari'ah claiming to produce the same and even better results than the divine Shari'ah as encoded by Allāh.
5. The practitioner of innovation follows his desires. When intellect is not in harmony with the Shari'ah, it becomes the following of desires. If anything has no rational basis, it is reduced to error manifest. Allāh addresses Prophet Dawud (ﷺ) in the Qur'ān thus: “O Dawud: We have appointed you as a

vicegerent in the earth, so judge between the people with justice and do not follow your desires lest Allāh swerves you away from the straight path. Verily there is a taxing punishment for those who swerve from the path of Allāh for they have forgotten the day of reckoning." In this verse, there are but two options in Islām: truth or following of desire, and numerous other verses of the Qur'ān the antonym of truth has only been given as following of desires, no other reason.

A **mubtadi'** pursues his desires without guidance from Allāh which is the Qur'ān and Sunnah. He often gives his own desires preference to the commands of Allāh thinking himself to be on true guidance. This is the worse of deviation, a cloaked or disguised deviation. It amounts to alleging that Allāh did not send the Shari'ah in its totality.

The **textual reasons** for decrying Bid'ah in Islām can be divided into **five categories**:

1. Condemnation of Bid'ah in the Qur'ān:
2. Condemnation of Bid'ah in the Sunnah:
3. Condemnation of Bid'ah according to the sayings of the precursors:
4. Condemnation of unsolicited opinions (ra'y al-madhmun):
5. Position of a mubtadi' in the eyes of the shari'ah:

1. **Condemnation of Bid'ah in the Qur'ān:**

Allāh has mentioned numerous verses in the Qur'ān which condemns the slightest form of deviation. From amongst these are: "He is that Being Who has revealed the Book unto you wherein there are established verses, these are the essence of the Book, and the other are the ambiguous ones. Those who have a perversity in their hearts pursue the ambiguous verses seeking to create discord in pursuit of its meaning, and only Allāh knows it's meaning." This verse is the greatest verse decrying Bid'ah. When it was revealed, 'Ā'ishah, (may Allāh be pleased with her) the wife of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), asked him as to its meaning. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) replied: "When you see people investigating (in another narration: disputing) the ambiguous verses, these are the ones whom Allāh have referred to in the verse. Beware of them." Such people have no intention to gain intelligible guidance from the established verses, but rather hanker behind those verses whose meanings are veiled to unravelling of whose meaning is not a source of guidance or concern.

Abū Ghālib narrates that once he was in Syria when Muḥallab sent seventy detached heads of the members of the deviant sect **Khawārij** and placed it an the entrance of Damascus. Abū Umāmah happened to pass by the heads, he was

shocked and sobbingly said: "Glory be to Allāh, what has the king done to the son of Ādam! They are the dogs of hell and best type of people to be killed under the sky. Glad tidings be for those who killed them." Abū Umāmah then turned towards me and said: "O Abū Ghālib, you are living in a land where such people abound. Seek the protection of Allāh from them." Abū Ghālib then asked him for his apparently perplexing reason for crying. He explained: "I first cried out of pity for them for they were first Muslims." He then recited the above verse until he reached "And Allāh only knows its meanings," and pointing towards the heads said: "These people had a perversity in their hearts." Thus, Abū Umamah had placed the **Khawārij** in the category of **innovators** due to their futile investigation and misinterpretation of the ambiguous (Mutashābihāt) verses of the Qur'ān.

The above verse was originally revealed regarding the Christians of Najran concerning their belief of Prophet 'Isa saying that he was either Allāh himself, His son, or the third of the trinity. They arrived at this conclusion through misinterpreting certain unclear verses of the Qur'ān, totally ignoring those verses providing clear-cut guidance on the subject.

Ibn Wahb (one of the Tabi'in) says that he heard Imām Malik saying that there is no verse in the Qur'ān more heavier upon the innovators than the following verse: "On that day some faces will be aglow, while some will be darkened." Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنه) and Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) have opined that those whose faces will be blackened are the innovators.

In another cogent verse denouncing innovation, Allāh says: "This is the straight path, so follow. And do not follow other paths lest you deviate from the straight path." The '**path**' spoken off in the Qur'ān is the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and the '**other paths**' are all those beside it. It does not mean committing sins and being disobedient to the commands of Allāh as these are not done continuously or with a sense of justifying it, but it means the path of deviation and innovation. When this verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) drew a long line in the soil, and drew shorter lines protruding from the right and left of it. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) then pointed out that the long line was the straight path while all the other smaller ones are deviated pathways to which the shayṭān are constantly inviting to.

Another verse is the following: "And unto Allāh leads straight the way, but there are ways that turn aside: if Allāh had willed, He could have guided all of you." The 'path leading to the straight way' is the path of truth, and all paths besides it are bifurcated. According to Mujāhid, it means the moderate path, free of excesses and deficiencies.

The following verse has a commentary from the Ḥadīth. Once the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) asked 'Ā'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her): "O Ā'ishah, tell me who are

the people mentioned in the verse 'Verily those who segregated their religion and splintered into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allāh, he will in the end inform them of their doings,'". I answered that Allāh and His Messenger know best. He (ﷺ) said: "They are the one who follow their desires and the innovators, the deviated ones from my nation. O 'Ā'ishah, for every sin there is repentance, but there is none for the innovators and those who follow their passions. I have acquitted from them and they from me."

Once Imām Abā Ḥanīfah met 'Atā ibn Rabah in Makkah and was asked: "From where do you come from?" Imām Abū Ḥanīfah replied: "From Kūfah." 'Atā ibn Rabah then pressed on: "You come from the city which has segregated itself into sects?" He replied: "Yes." 'Atā ibn Rabah continued: "From which sect are you?" "From those who do not speak ill of the predecessors, believe in Qadar, and do not brand anyone as a Kāfir by virtue of merely committing sins," Imām Abū Ḥanīfah rightly replied. 'Atā ibn Rabah exhorted thus: "You have recognized the truth, stick to it."

It is reported when caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه) was surrounded by the rebels, he one day stepped out of his residence to clarify his position. At this the rebels started mercilessly pelting him with stones interrupting his speech. All of a sudden, the voice of one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) could be heard from within her house. She was saying: "Your Prophet (ﷺ) has acquitted himself from those who have broken up into sects," and she recited: "Verily those who segregated their religion and splintered into sects, you have no part in them in the least. Their affair is with Allāh, he will in the end inform them of their doings." Qādi Ismā'il thinks that it was the voice of Umm al-Mu'minīn, Salamah. He also says that everyone who innovates in Islām will fall under the scope of this verse.

Mutarriif ibn Shikhir said: "If all the types of desires were one, one could have said that truth might be in it. When the desires sprout into numerous forms and factions, and the intelligent one can make out that truth is not divisive by nature."

Imām Bukhārī has narrated on the authority of 'Umar ibn Mus'ab (رضي الله عنه) that he asked his father of the meaning of the verse: "Shall we not inform you who will at a loss with his deeds," are they the Khawārij. He replied: "No, they are the Jews and Christians. The Jews rejected Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), and the Christians rejected paradise saying that there is no food and drink therein." He continued, the Khawārij are those of whom Allāh say: "Those who break to covenant of Allāh after fortifying it." In another narration, the following verse has been cited: "When they strayed, Allāh turned their hearts away." Mus'ab ibn Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) said that they are meant in this verse as they had strayed from the truth and started making baseless interpretations of the Qur'ān. Likewise does all the innovators fall under the umbrella of this verse as they

subject the Qur'ān to their own whimsical understanding.

In the above verse, an indication is given that such people will think that they are on guidance, but they will be not.

'Abd al-Humaid narrates on the authority of Imām Ḥasan al-Baṣrī that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever abandons my practice is not of me." He then recited the following verse: "Say: If you love Allāh follow me, Allāh will love you."

Whenever ibn Sirīn used to recite the following verse: "When you see a person engaged in vain discourse regarding Our signs, turn away from them unless they turn to different theme. If Satan ever makes you forget, then after recollection sit not in the company of those who do wrong," he thought that it referred to those who follow their desires and passions. Abū al-Jawza used to say: "I would prefer my house to be full of monkeys and swine than having such a person as a neighbour."

There are many more verses of the Qur'ān which speaks of the evils of innovation, but the above is sufficient.

2. Condemnation of Bid'ah in the Sunnah:

The sayings of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) form the second most important source to condemn innovations in religion. There are numerous such sayings, but the following few would suffice our purpose:

1. 'Ā'ishah bint Siddiq (may Allāh be pleased with them both) says that she heard the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) saying: "Whoever introduces in this matter of Our's something foreign to it, will be rejected." In the narration of Muslim: "Whoever practices any deed which we have not commanded will be rejected." Scholars have said that this tradition amounts to a third of Islām as it combines all types of factionalism, and deviation and disobedience has been addressed both at once in it.
2. Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to always mention the following in his sermon: "Thereafter: the best of speech is the Book of Allāh, the best of guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad. The worst of affairs are the innovations, and every innovation is a deviation." In another version, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to say: "There will none to misguide one who Allāh guides, and there will be none to guide one who Allāh misguides. The best of speech is the Book of Allāh, the best of guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad. The worst of affairs are the innovations, and every innovation is a deviation." In the version of Imām Nasā'ī: "And every deviation will be in Hellfire." It is said that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) would employ these same words in his sermon.

3. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever invites towards guidance, he will receive the full reward of those who follows him without their reward being diminished in the least. Whoever invites towards a sin, he will receive the full punishment as those who listened to him without their punishment being diminished in the least." In the version of Imām Muslim: "Whomever initiates a good practice that is followed, he will receive its full reward without it being diminished from the actual doers themselves. Whoever initiates an evil practice which is followed, he will receive its full burden without it being diminished from the actual doers themselves."
4. Imām Tirmidhi and others have narrated on the authority on 'Irbad ibn Sāriyah (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) once delivered such a moving sermon that the hearts were quivering and the eyes welled with tears, as if it was a parting advice. He (ﷺ) said: "I exhort you to fear Allāh and obedience of those in charged, even if he be an Abyssinian slave. Whoever will live after me will witness many upheavals. Hold steadfast to my practice and the practice of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs after me, hold firmly onto with your teeth. Beware of the novel innovations, for every novelty is a deviation, and deviation is error."
5. Huzayfah ibn al-Yaman (رضي الله عنه) narrates that he asked the Holy Prophet (ﷺ): "O Apostle of Allāh, will there be a period of evil after this period of goodness?" The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) answered: "Yes. A people will tread a path other than mine, and will follow the guidance of one other than mine." I asked: "Will be another evil after this evil: "A people will invite towards the fire of hell, whoever listens to them will be flung therein." I asked: "Describe them, O Apostle of Allāh." He replied: **"Yes, they are of our kind, and will speak our language."** I asked: "What do you command me to do if I have to meet them?" He replied: "Adhere to the community of Muslims and their leader." I asked: "If there is no community and no leader?" He said: "Distance yourself from these sects, even if it means staying at a bark of a tree until death overtakes you."
6. In the Sahifah, the following tradition appears: "The place between then mountains of 'Air and Thawr in Madīnah is sacred (ḥurum). Whoever innovates therein or grants refuge to an innovator therein, then upon him is the curse of Allāh, the angels, and of all mankind. No obligatory nor optional prayer of his will be accepted."
7. It is narrated in the Muwatta of Imām Mālik on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that once the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) entered the cemetery and recited: "Peace be upon you, O settlement of believers, if Allāh wishes we will join you shortly... Some people will be driven away from my pond like how a stray cow is driven away. I will be shouting towards them: Come, come," and it will be said to me: " They had changed after you (left them)." I will then say: "Away with

them, away with them.” Some scholars have opined that the **innovators** are meant here, and some the renegades from Islām.

8. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) once said: “Allāh will not suddenly snatch knowledge away from the people, he will uplift knowledge by uplifting the scholars. A time will come when not a single scholar will remain, people will appoint the ignorant as their leaders. They will be asked and they will answer without knowledge, they will be misguided and they will misguide others.” This tradition has been narrated through numerous different chains in Bukhārī.
9. Imām Muslim has reported on the authority of ibn Mas’ūd (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever pleases him that he meet Allāh tomorrow as a believer, let him observe the five daily prayers when they are called out. Allāh has given your Prophet (ﷺ) practices of guidance, and (the prayers) are from these practices of guidance. If you start performing them in your houses like how these people who delay do, you will be abandoning the practice of your Prophet (ﷺ). If you have to ignore any of the practices of your Prophet (ﷺ), you will be misguided.” In another tradition: “If you leave the practice of your Prophet (ﷺ), you will fall into disbelief.” Regarding these practices of guidance, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I am leaving behind two weighty things: the first is the book of Allāh wherein is guidance and light. Whoever holds steadfast onto it and grips it will be on guidance, and whoever errs in it will be misguided.”
10. It is reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There will appear in my Ummah liars and deceivers who will present innovations to you that neither you nor your ancestors had heard about. Beware of them, they do not involve you.”
11. **Imām Taḥāwī** has narrated the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Six people I have cursed, and Allāh as well as every Prophet (ﷺ): the exaggerator in the religion of Allāh, the one who denies the predestination of Allāh, one who believes in fatalism, one who degrades the one whom Allāh has exalted and exalts who Allāh has degraded, the one who abandons my Sunnah, the one who makes lawful the unlawful injunctions of Allāh, and the one who abuses my household whom Allāh had sanctified.”
12. Imām Taḥāwī has also narrated the following tradition on the authority of Mu’ādh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه): “When innovations are introduced in my Ummah and my Companions are abused, let the scholar display his knowledge. Whoever does not do this, let the curse of Allāh, the angels, and the entire mankind be upon them.”

3. Condemnation of Bid'ah according to the sayings of the precursors:

There are many sayings of the Ṣaḥābah, the Tabi'ūn and other pious people of the golden era of Islām who have denounced innovation in the strongest terms.

From amongst the numerous sayings, the following have been selected:

1. Once 'Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) delivered a sermon and said: "O people, the Sunnah has been shown to you, and the compulsory duties have been prescribed for you, and you have been left with clear instructions except if you go astray left and right." He then intertwined his fingers into each other and said: "Beware of being misled regarding the verse of *Rajm* (stoning to death of the adulterer) that some says: "We do not find it in the Qur'ān." The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) made *rajm* and we had also made *rajm*."
2. It is reported that once Huzayfah (رضي الله عنه) stood up and said: "O you assembly of reciters, be steadfast (on Islām), for you have greatly strayed. If you trod left and right you will be misled." It is narrated that once Huzayfah (رضي الله عنه) entered a Masjid, he stood up, and addressing the people said: "I fear two things for the people: that they prefer those things which they think to be correct over those things which they know is correct, and that they be misled unknowingly." On another occasion, he picked up two stones, joined them together and asked a friend of his: "Can you see any light between these two stones?" He replied: "O Abū 'Abdullah, we can not see much light between them." Huzayfah (رضي الله عنه) then continued: "I take an oath of that Being in whose possession is my life, innovation will become so rife that only that amount of truth will prevail as to the amount of light between these two stones. By Allāh, an innovator will divert from his innovation a bit and people will scold him thus: "You have misplaced the Sunnah." When elaborating on the ills of society, he said: "The first thing to be lost will be trust (amānah), and the second will be concentration (khushū') in Ṣalāh. The rungs of Islām will be dislocated one by one and you will have intercourse with your wives during their monthly cycles. You will follow the path of deterioration of those before you inch for inch without any variation. This will continue until a time will come when one group will exclaim: "Why are there five times Ṣalāt?" The ones before you were also misled in this way. Allāh only speaks of three times in the Qur'ān: "And establish prayers and the two ends of the day and in a portion of the night." Another group will say: "Those who bring faith on Allāh are like the Angels. There can be no hypocrite or apostate amongst them." It is only befitting that Allāh will raise these people with the anti-Christ (Dajjāl)." This saying reinforces the tradition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) as narrated on the authority of Abū Rāfi' (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "One of you will be resting on his hinds when he will hear one of my commands or prohibitions. He will say: "I do not know of it, I do not know of it. It is not present in the Book of Allāh that we should follow it." The Sunnah is there to

explain the Qur'ān. Whoever clings onto the Qur'ān without taking recourse to the Sunnah, he will be misled in understanding the Qur'ān."

3. Ibn Wahb is reported to have said: "Grasp knowledge before it vanishes, and attain it from the knowledgeable ones. Learn knowledge as one never knows when it will be of benefit to him. A time will come when you will witness a people claiming to call towards the Book of Allāh, but they would have discarded it behind their backs." He is also reported to have said: "No year passes but a worse one follows it. I do not say that one year or one leader can not be better than the other, but the cream of your scholars and times have passed. A time will come when people will judge matters according to their own understanding, they will be destroying Islām in the process." He also said: "To only intend following the Sunnah is better than exerting oneself in Bid'ah."
4. Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (رضي الله عنه): "I will not abandon any practice knowingly which the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) used to do. If I leave out any practice, I fear that I will be deviated."
5. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mubārak has narrated a story that once 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) was informed that one of his governors, Yazīd ibn Abū Sufyān, used to eat a variety of foods in one meal. He instructed his slave Yarfa' to inform him when Yazīd would dine. When 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was informed of this, he presented himself before Yazīd who invited him to dine with him. First a meat broth was served which 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) accepted. Thereafter, the dried meat of eye was offered, but 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) refused it saying: "By Allāh, O Yazīd ibn Abū Sufyan, do you eat one food after another? By that Being who controls the life of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), if you contradict the practice of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), you will also mislead your people onto another path." Once 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was informed of a person who was fond of going around asking the meanings of various verses of the Qur'ān. Coincidentally this person happened to meet 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) who was having supper at the time. 'Umar invited him to join him, and when he had finished eating, he asked: "O 'Umar what is the meaning of chapter 51: By the Winds that scatter broadcast; And those that lift and bear away heavy weights; And those that flow with ease and gentleness." 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) exclaimed: "You are the one." He stood up and beat him up to such an extent that his turban dropped from his head and further told him: "By Allāh, had I found your head shaven, I would have slain you." He then ordered: "Wear his clothes for him, lift him upon thorns, expel him from here and see to it that he reaches his dwelling."
6. Imām Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: "An innovator does not practice any good, nor prays or fasts but he distances himself further from Allāh." Once, Imām Ḥasan al-Baṣrī whilst explaining the following verse: "Fasting has been prescribed

upon you just as it had been prescribed for the generations before you," said: "The Jews rejected the command of fasting. The Christians distorted it by adding ten more days to thirty days, and shifted its observance to the most convenient time of the year." Whenever Imām Ḥasan al-Baṣrī would narrate this story, he would say: *"A little good done according to the Sunnah is better than a lot of actions done incorrectly."*

7. Abū Idrīs al-Khawlānī once expressed the following wish: "It is better for me to see a fire in the mosque which can not be extinguished then seeing an innovator who can not be rectified."
8. **Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ** said: "Follow the path of guidance, do not let your inferior numbers bother you. Beware of the paths of deviation, do not be deceived by the great numbers of those involved in it."
9. Abū Qulabah: "Do not sit in the company of those who follow their passions, and do not dispute with them. I can not guarantee that they will not wrongly convince you in their deviation and confuse you in the matter of truth." According to many scholars, Abū Qulabah was one of the erudite jurists of his time.
10. **Imām Sufyān al-Thawrī** used to say: *"Words are not effective if not backed up with actions, no words and deeds are effective without an intention, and not word, action, or intention can be correct if they are not in line with the Sunnah."*
11. Ibn Sirīn used to always opine that those who follow their desires are quicker to turn renegade from Islām than others.
12. Yaḥyā **ibn Kathīr** advised that if an innovator is seen using a particular street, you should use another street.
13. Yaḥyā ibn Abū 'Umar Shaybānī said: "Allāh rejects the repentance of an innovator, and an innovator always progresses to a more lower spiritual state."
14. Muqātil ibn Ḥayyān said: "Those who follow their passions are the calamity of the Ummah of Muḥammad. They mention the name of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and his household and used it to bait the ignorant ones and throw them to perdition."

4. **Condemnation of unsolicited opinions (ra'y al-madhmūm):**

Opinions in religion which are arrived at which have no basis in the Qur'ān and Sunnah are called **ra'y al-madhmūm**. More than often they have some semblance to the Shari'ah, but they belong to the species of innovation, that is why they are called ḍalāl (deviations). 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn 'As (رضي الله عنه) narrates that he heard the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) saying: "Allāh will not snatch knowledge away from the people

after he has given it to them suddenly, but he will remove it by uplifting their scholars. Only the ignorant will remain who will be asked questions, and they answer according to their own understanding. They will be thus misled themselves and will also mislead others."

1. Ibn al-Mubārak has narrated on the authority of 'Auf ibn Mālik al-Ashjā'i (رضي الله عنه) that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: "My Ummah will split into more than seventy sects, the greatest amongst them in perversion will be those who will understand religion through dint of their own understanding. They will make unlawful those things which Allāh has made lawful, and will make lawful what Allāh has prohibited." Ibn 'Abd al-Barr says: "This is arriving at conclusions without any basis and opining in religion by means of suspicion. The words of the tradition: "They will make unlawful those things which Allāh has made lawful, and will make lawful what Allāh has prohibited." What is lawful is that which is contained in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah, and what is unlawful is that which is contained in the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah. Whoever does not know this and answers religious questions without knowledge, and draws inductions which has no basis in the Sunnah, this is the meaning of **ra'y madhmūm**.
2. Ibn al-Mubārak has also narrated in one tradition that from amongst the signs of the last day are three. One of them is that knowledge will be sought from the youngsters. It was asked as to who are the young ones. Ibn al-Mubārak replied: "Those who reach decisions on the basis of their personal reasoning."
3. According to ibn Wahb: "Those who voice their personal opinions are the enemies of the Sunnah. When they are asked something, they are shy to say; "I do not know." Beware of them, and let them not ensnare you."
4. Hisham ibn 'Urwah narrates on the authority of his father the following: "The condition of the Banū Isrāil was prosperous until youngsters were born amongst them who were the sons of slaves. They started voicing their personal opinions, and this is how the Banū Isrāil was misled."
5. Darraj ibn Sahm says: "A time will come when a person will fatten his horse until it's fat hangs. He will then ride on it into the cities and will return disheartened. He will look for a person who can inform him of the validity of some action he did, none will be able to answer him except those who will answer on suspicious grounds."
6. Once a person asked Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab something. He answered at it was written down. Sa'id's personal opinion was asked which he also answered and it was written down. Someone asked him: "I am writing your own opinion, O Abū Muḥammad?" Upon this, Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab asked the person to give him his paper. He took it and tore out the portion which held his personal opinion.

7. Mālik ibn Anas (رضي الله عنه) says: "The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) passed away and this affair had been completed and perfected. We should rather follow the sayings of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and not our own conclusions. If opinions are followed, a person will come who has a better idea, followed by another one who has an even better one. Every time a person will come forward with an alternate or opinion, he will be followed. I think this process will never end."

In conclusion, **ra'y madhmūm** is that which is based on ignorance and on the following of the base desires without taking recourse to the original sources of Islām. This type of opinionating has been denounced. However, *if the bases of opinion is the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and it is structured upon the principles of shari'ah, it will not be denounced.*

5. Position of a mubtadi' in the eyes of the Sharī'ah:

None of the devotions of an innovator (**mubtadi'**) is accepted in the eyes of the Sharī'ah. These include his **Ṣalāt**, fasting, his charity, and all other good works. One sitting in the company of a **mubtadi'** is entrusted to himself for protection from sin, and the one who honours a **mubtadi'** assists in tearing down the fabric of Islām. The perpetual cursing of Allāh is upon such a person, he will be barred from gaining **intercession** on the last day, he will be driven away from the **pond**, and he will meet Allāh whilst Allāh will be angry and displeased with him. He will die a humiliating death, his face will be blackened when he will be resurrected, and he will be consigned to the blazing fire.

From amongst the writings of As'ad ibn Mūsā, the following is found: "Beware of being a brother, friend, or acquaintance of an innovator, as one tradition says: "Whoever sits in the company of an innovator, divine grace is removed from him and he is entrusted to himself. Whoever walks towards an innovator, walks towards the destruction of Islām." In another tradition: "There is no deity which is worshipped except Allāh but that Allāh dislikes nothing more than the one who follows his desires." The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had cursed such a person. Verily Allāh does not accept the optional nor the obligatory prayers of such a person. Every time he exerts himself in doing good, he distances himself further away from Allāh. So, avoid their company and disgrace them as the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had distanced himself from them and disgraced them."

The devotions of an innovator not being accepted holds one of two possibilities: that all actions in reality are not accepted, and only those innovated acts are not accepted. The first possibility has **three** probable meanings:

The **first** is that in reality all his actions and deeds are null and void. None of his deeds without any exception is accepted. This is a severe interpretation. Once 'Ali

ibn Abī Ṭalib (رضي الله عنه) delivered a sermon brandishing a sword in his had which had a piece a paper attached to it. He said: "By Allāh! We do not have any Book which we recite except the Qur'ān and that which is contained in this parchment." He enrolled the scroll and the various laws relating to the Zakāt of camels were contained therein. The following was also contained: "Madinah is sacred from between 'Air and Thawr. Whoever innovates therein, may the curse of Allāh, the angels, and of the entire mankind be upon him. No obligatory nor voluntary prayers will be accepted of him."

The **second** possibility is that of the first interpretation is that the deviant principles of his devious practices permeates all his other deeds. The example of this is rejecting the *khavar wāḥid* (isolated tradition) upon which many rules of the Islamic law (aḥkam) are based. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said: "Every action not based on our matter is impropriety."

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