

Refuting The Notion of Bid'ah Hasanah In Worship

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Introduction

The issue of whether there is "good innovation (bidah hasanah) in Islam and whether Muslims are permitted to invent and devise affairs into the religion to help them become closer to Allaah, as is claimed, is a hotly contested issue, and in this series we will deal in depth inshaa'Allaah with the various arguments used in this regard. Before proceeding, we should give some background, through the following points:

Part 1 - Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani on the Usage of the Word Bid'ah in Its Linguistic Sense

Point 1: The word "bidah" (innovation) and "muhdathah" (newly-invented matter) have both been used by the Messenger (alayhis salaam) in a blameworthy sense and all Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah are agreed that bidah in the religion (in matters of worship and getting closer to Allaah) are all forbidden because Allaah completed the religion through the Messenger (alayhis salaam) and the Messenger left nothing which brings a Muslim closer to Paradise except that he has already informed us of (either in its foundation, or in its detail)¹

Point 2: We have to make a difference between using words with their linguistic meanings and with their Shariah meanings because the Shariah, when it uses certain words and terms, intends meanings above and beyond the mere linguistic meaning and definition. To give some examples, the word salaah, prayer, literally means du'a, supplication. This is its pure linguistic meaning. However, in the Shariah, it means much more than supplication and refers to a collection of inwards states and feelings, statements and outward actions without which there can be no prayer, as defined by the Shariah. Another example is charity, linguistically it actually means purity, yet in the Shariah, it has a conceptual meaning that goes beyond the linguistic meaning. Often Shariah terms qualify, restrict, or expand the linguistic meanings, and hence when using

¹ The Completion and Perfection of the Shari'ah.

From that which distinguishes Ahl al-Sunnah, those upon the way of the Righteous Salaf, is that they have firm and unwavering conviction in the absolute completion and perfection of the Shari'ah, in all respects, in belief, worship and methodology. This itself is founded upon clear and manifest revealed texts. This cannot be said about the innovators and those who introduce and persist upon what has no basis either in its foundation, or in its details and particulars, from the Book and the Sunnah. For their tongue of disposition necessitates that the Shari'ah is deficient and in need of completion.

Allaah, the Exalted said: **And I created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone). (51:56)**

To this end, Allaah revealed Books and sent Messengers and Prophets to mankind who came with legislations that inform and instruct them as to how to worship their Lord. The deen of all Messengers of Prophets is Islaam and whilst they are all upon a single united creed as it relates to faith and monotheism, their legislations varied, because they were suited and appropriate for a given people, time and place. Then Allaah sent the last and final Messenger, Muhammad, whose message is universal. As such, the legislation that he was given was perfected, completed and universal.

This day have I perfected your religion, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. (5:3)

Ibn Katheer commented upon this verse:

'This is from the greatest of the favours of Allaah, the Exalted, upon this ummah in that He perfected their deen for them so that they are not in need of any deen besides it, and nor of any prophet besides their Prophet - may the prayers and peace of Allaah be upon Him. And for this reason Allaah, the Exalted, made him the seal of the prophets and sent him to the men and jinn and humans, there is no halaal except what he made halaal and there is no haraam except what he made haraam, and there is no deen except what he legislated. And everything he informed about, it is true and the truth, there is no lie in whatsoever or any discrepancy, just as Allaah, the Exalted says, **"And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth (sidq) and in justice (adl)" (6:115)**, meaning truthful in the information and just in the commands and prohibitions. So when He perfected the religion for them, the favour upon them became complete.'

The completion of this favour is something that the Jews themselves recognized. Tariq bin Shihab narrates:

'The Jews said to Umar (bin al-Khattaab), "Indeed, you recite a verse in your Book which if it had been revealed to us, the gathering of the Jews, we would have taken that day as a day of celebration!" He (Umar) said, "And which verse is that?" and they said, **"This day have I perfected your religion, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."** (5:3). Umar said, "By Allaah, indeed I know the day upon which it was revealed to the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) and the hour in which it was revealed. It was revealed to the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) on the evening of the day of Arafah on the day of Jum'ah. Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

This is an evidence to show that the Messenger (alayhis salaam) had indeed fulfilled his trust and conveyed the entire message with no deficiency or shortcoming therein. Ibn Amr narrates that the Messenger of Allaah (alayhis salaam) said:

'There was not any prophet before me except that it was a duty upon him to direct his nation to every good he knew for them and to warn them from every evil he knew for them.' Reported by Muslim in his Sahih. The Messenger (alayhis salaam) also said: 'I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise or distances you from the Fire except that I have informed you of it. Related by Ibn Kathir in his tafsir of Surah Kahf (18:17).

The Messenger (alayhis salaam) also said: 'By Him in whose hand is my soul, I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Fire except that I have commanded you with it and have I left anything which brings you closer to the Fire and distances you from Paradise except that I have prohibited you from it. Related by Ahmad and Ibn Khuzaymah.

And the companion Abu Dharr al-Ghifaree stated, with what explains what has preceded:

'The Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) left us whilst there was not a bird flapping its wings in the sky except that he mentioned knowledge regarding it to us. Reported by al-Tabarani in al-Mu'jam al-Kabir (no. 1647).

The Messenger (alayhis salaam) spoke severely and constantly of the newly invented matters and innovations in the religion, even though there was not any innovation present. Jaabir bin Abdullah narrates: 'When the Messenger (alayhis salaam) would deliver a sermon, his eyes would be come red, his voice would be raised, and his anger would be severe, as if he was admonishing an army... and he would say, "To proceed, indeed the best speech is the speech of Allaah and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad and the worst of affairs (in the religion) are the newly-invented matters, and every innovation is misguidance." Reported by Muslim.

All of this was perfectly understood and known by the Companions which is why there occurs from them, warnings from the newly-invented matters and the advice to suffice with what is in the Sunnah, and such statements of the Companions will be presented in other articles

terms, once must be operating upon the Shariah defined meaning to avoid confusion and ambiguity.

Point 3: The issue we are facing here then is that in various statements of the Scholars (which are used by others to justify bidah in matters of worship), how is the term bidah being used and defined and what is being included within it (or excluded for that matter)? This is the area in which deliberate confusion has been created by the Innovators of today, and they use as argument the sayings of certain Scholars which they do not really understand and who in no way at all, intended what these people intend by misrepresenting their statements to justify their own departure from the Sunnah of the Messenger (alayhis salaam) and the way of the Companions.

This should now set the scene for this series of articles and we will demonstrate by Allaah's permission, that in reality, these scholars (like al-Shafi'i, al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, Ibn Hajar, al-Nawawi and others) are innocent of the deception and lies of those who claim to be following them in their understanding of bidah

It is known that the innovators, and in particular the Sufi grave-worshippers of our times, rely upon the statements of some Scholars who applied the five rulings (wajib, mustahabb, mubah, makrooh, haram) to the topic of bid'ah, or who may have spoken of innovation (bid'ah) as being both good and bad. What they do not reveal though is that these scholars are simply using the word "*bid'ah*" in its broader linguistic sense, and not strictly in its Shari'ah sense. If we consider this, then we can say that the differences between them and between those who say that all innovation is evil (meaning by that the Shari'ah definition only) is largely a difference of wording only, and that the former scholars are simply including other matters into the broader linguistic definition of bidah. At the same time, we can see clearly in their other speech (and their fatwas and rulings) that they warn against innovation (in worship) and opposing the guidance of the Messenger and performing worship in a manner other than that known in the Sunnah or adding to it or changing it.

The purpose of this brief article is to put on the record that Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has alluded to this point, and we will then use this article as part of others when we build our case in order to demolish the roots and foundations of the innovators of our times who have played out this deception of confusing between what is a rejected bidah idaafiyyah² and between what some

² The Two Types of Innovation: Haqeeqiyyah and Idaafiyyah

The Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have explained that innovation is of two types. That which is **haqeeqiyyah**, meaning proper innovation, in every sense of the word. It has absolutely no association to or basis in the Shari'ah. It is when a person seeks nearness to Allaah through something that the Messenger (alayhis salaam) never sought nearness to Allaah with at all, in its very foundation. From the examples of this type of innovation is seeking nearness to Allaah through celebrating birthdays, or through dancing and music, or through acting. As for that which is **idaafiyyah** (relative), this is when a person seeks nearness to Allaah on account of something by which nearness is in fact sought with Allaah in its foundation (asl), but to which he adds something which takes it away from the form that it came with in the Shari'ah and this is done in respect to six matters:

- al-kam (number)
- al-kayf (form)
- al-jins (type, species)
- al-sabab (cause, reason)
- al-makan (place)
- al-zaman (time)

And an illustration of each is as follows:

al-kam (number): This is when a person worships Allaah through altering the number as it relates to acts of worship, such as praying four rakahs for maghrib, or stoning the jamarat in Hajj ten times instead of seven, or making dhikr of Allaah through adkhaar a certain number of times that is not established in the Sunnah, such as repeating it five times, when the Sunnah says three and so on.

al-kayf (form): This is when a person changes the form and nature of the act of worship, such as performing an act of worship in unison (such as dhikr) when in the Sunnah it is not done like that, or making sa'ee before the tawaaf in Umrah, or performing wudhu by washing his feet first. All of this is a departure from the form of the act of worship as it has come in the Shari'ah.

al-jins (type, species): This is when a type or species is mentioned in relation to an act of worship is changed. For example, instead of sacrificing a sheep, a person sacrifices a gazelle or some other animal, which is not from the species specified in the Shari'ah.

al-sabab (cause, reason): This is when a person performs an act of worship due to a reason or cause to which it has not been attached in the Shari'ah. For example, a funeral prayer is not performed when an eclipse occurs and the eclipse prayer is not performed in relation to other events. Likewise specifying the performance of tahajjud prayer on the night it is claimed that the Messenger ascended to the heavens is another example, and likewise making expiation (by fasting) because of breaking one's promise. Associating acts of worship with reasons or causes not established in the Shari'ah is a common form of innovation.

al-makan (place): This is when a person stops at a place other than Arafat during Hajj (on the day of Arafat), or makes tawaf and sa'ee at other than the respective places, or when a man makes i'tikaf in other than a mosque.

al-zaman (time): This is when a person performs acts of worship outside of their legislated times such as sacrificing the animal at the very beginning of the days of Hajj, or specifying the sacrifice of an animal within Ramadan when the Shari'ah has not specified that, or fasting the Ramadan fasts in another month. It can also be when a person specifies an act of worship for a time that the Shari'ah has not specified such as

Scholars enter into the linguistic usage of the word bid'ah of matters of public interest (which may relate to religious or worldly affairs) or what does in fact have a basis in the Shari'ah, such as the tarawih prayer revived by Umar bin al-Khattaab which is established to have been a Sunnah, but was abandoned by the Messenger for a specific reason).

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani Explains the Usage of the Word Bidah in the Language of the Scholars

Ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Bari (Maktabah Salafiyyah print, 13/278) in the book Heading Fast to the Book and Sunnah, in the chapter "*What is disliked of delving and displaying in knowledge, exaggeration in the religion and innovations,*" the following:

"As for innovations, it is the plural of innovation and it is everything which does not have any prior example. Linguistically, [the word] encompasses what is both praiseworthy and blameworthy. In the usage of the people of the legislation (i.e. Scholars) it is specifically for what is blameworthy and if it is used in connection to what is praiseworthy, then it is upon its linguistic meaning."

And Ibn Hajar also said (13/253):

"And "the newly invented matters", with the fathah on the daal, is the plural of novelty and what is intended by it is what has been newly-introduced and does not have any basis in the legislation. It is referred to in the usage of the Shari'ah as innovation. As for what has a basis indicated by the Shari'ah then it is not an innovation. For "innovation" in the usage of the Shari'ah is blameworthy as opposed to its usage (with its) linguistic (meaning), for everything that has been newly-invented without any prior example is named "bid'ah" irrespective of whether it is praiseworthy, or blameworthy."

The point is made very clearly in that where the word "bid'ah" is used for praiseworthy matters, it is being used with its (broader) linguistic meaning, and Ibn Hajar makes a clear differentiation between its use in the legislative sense (as meant by the Shari'ah) and its use upon a purely linguistic meaning. The following diagram will help us to understand what is going on here and where we are leading towards:

making a particular remembrance or recitation of a surah of the Qur'an at a particular time of the day or day of the week, such as when a person specifies the recitation of Surah Mulk on a Wednesday, believing it to be righteousness and nearness to Allaah to do so.

The majority of innovations are idaafiyyah (relative) and it is why innovation is deceptive and appealing because it does not appear to be inherently evil, rather it appears as goodness, resembling the Shari'ah in its essence or foundation, but opposing the Shari'ah in the abovementioned matters. And this is what indicates the great evil of innovation in that it is alluring and hardly appears to be misguidance. It is for this reason that the Messenger (alayhis salaam) would make a recurring warning against innovatoin, their misguidance and evil.

Understanding the Nature of the Argument of the Innovators in Justifying Innovation

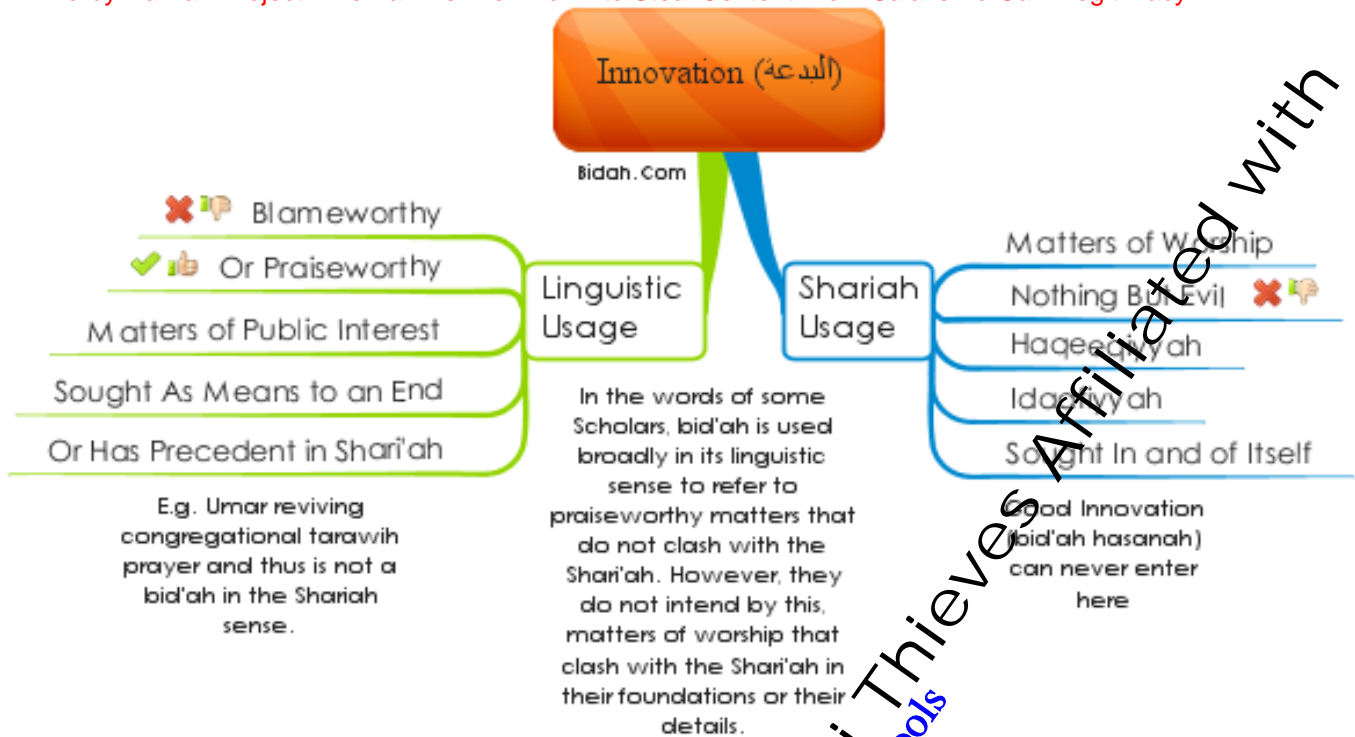
A point worthy of mentioning here, and it will be addressed in other articles too, is that:

One of the arguments used by the grave-worshippers and innovators is that what they perform of innovations have a basis (asl) in the Shari'ah and as such they are "good innovations (bid'ah hasanah)" and not "evil innovations." Then they make use of the statements of certain scholars which they wrongly believe support them in this classification. This is not the place to address that particular doubt, but the point we wish to make here is that when you present all of the examples and illustrations given above such an individual will never be able to dispute the fact that all acts of worship have come in the Shari'ah restricted and specified in terms of their number (kam), form (kayf), type (jins), sabab (reason), zaman (time) and makan (place). In practical experience, we have never come across anyone who is able to dispute this matter, especially when given the practical examples of how acts of worship which have a foundation in the Shari'ah are done in a way other than what the Shari'ah has come with. Given a person's acceptance of this matter of fact, their claim that their innovation is "good" because it has a foundation in the Shari'ah is invalidated. Rather, it is an evil innovation (as are all innovations in the religion) because it is in opposition to the Shari'ah in its form and detail.

That the Salaf rejected innovations which in their basis have a foundation in the Shari'ah but in their details depart from the Shari'ah is a matter that is firmly established in the narrations, and such narrations will be presented in their own right in other articles.

Refer to:

- **al-'tisam** of Imam al-Shatibee
- **al-Ibdaa' Fi Bayaan Kamaal al-Shar'** of Shaykh Ibn al-Uthaymin



These two statements from Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (rahimahullah) allow us to develop a context by which we can understand the true and real intent of those who have spoken of "good bid'ah". It is this context that the dishonest innovators and deviants wish to conceal and remove as part of their ploy to deceive the common folk in order to justify their multitude of relative innovations (bidah idafiyyah) which are censured in the Shariah and which they try to justify by confusing them with matters which have been entered into the linguistic application of this term by a number of scholars.

We will address the sayings of Imam al-Shafi'i, al-Lzz bin Abd al-Salam, al-Nawawi, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali and others in due course inshaa'Allah.

Deception Alert: The innovators present the statements of some of these scholars like al-Shafi'i and al-Lzz bin Abd al-Salam to the people by citing them through Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's citation of them in Fath al-Bari (Kitab al-Tayhid) and they have a particular deceptive purpose in mind for this: To make it look as if Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's view is one of total corroboration and acceptance, despite the fact that when we see the entire section, we see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's clarification of the matter shows that his view and definition of bidah (as defined by the Shariah) is one that agrees with that of al-Shafi'i and that of the Salaf in general. This will be covered in a separate subsequent part in this series inshaa'Allah.

The Saying of Ibn Kathir

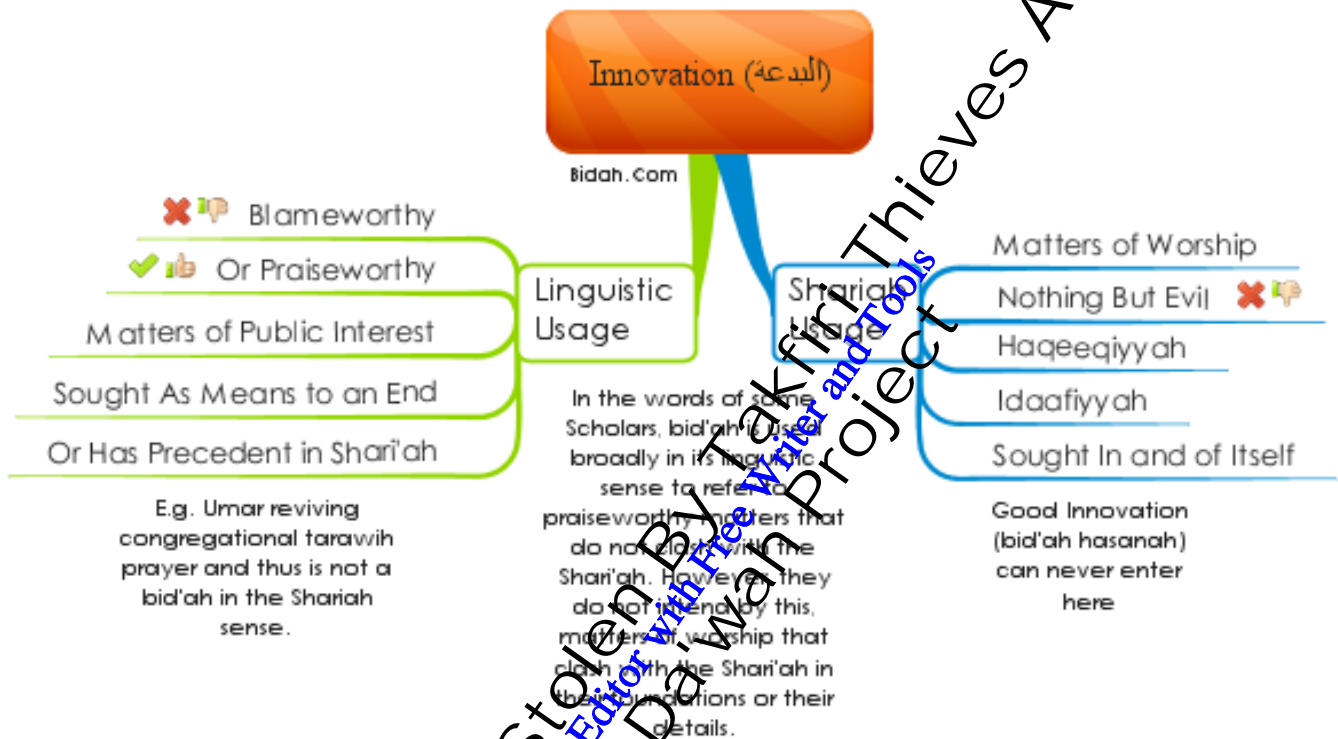
In support of the above, we find Ibn Kathir said in explanation of the verse (2:117):

"And bidah is of two types. Sometimes it is a bidah shar'iyyah (with its Shariah meaning), such as his saying, "For every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance..." and sometimes it is a bidah lughawiyah (with its linguistic meaning), such as the saying of Amir al-Mu'minin Umar bin al-Khattaab regarding his uniting them together for the Tarawih prayer and making them maintain this practice, "What an excellent innovation this is....."

This indicates that there is no such thing as "good bidah" in the Shariah, and where bidah is spoken of in a praiseworthy sense, it is only being spoken of with its linguistic meaning. To distinguish between these two makes it much easier for us to grasp the nature of the perception of some of the Shafi'ite jurists in their classification of bidah. This we will investigate in the following articles in this series.

Part 2 - Understanding Matters of Public Interest (Al-Masalih Al-Mursalah)

Here we wish to tie the noose a bit more tightly around those who take isolated and vague statements of the Scholars and thrust them upon the common-folk **upon other than what those Scholars actually intended and meant**. This will be done by discussing the issue of al-masalih al-mursalah (matters of public interest). It is important to grasp the difference between the bid'ah condemned in the Shariah and between what enters into matters of public interest and to which a purely linguistic application of the word bid'ah has been applied by some scholars (such as al-Shafi'i, al-Nawawi and others). Imam al-Shatibee has addressed this matter in detail in his book al-I'tisam. We will try to present things as concisely as possible here. As a reminder, try to keep this diagram in your mind as you proceed through these articles:



What is public interest (Maslahah Mursalah)?

To understand this we need a few background principles. From them is that there is a necessary binding relationship between the Shariah and matters of personal and public beneficial interest because **this is what the Shariah has come to actualize**. This is embodied in the fact that a) The Shariah is founded upon actualizing all beneficial interests for the servants and repelling all harmful matters from them in worldly and religious matters, and b) That this Shariah has not omitted any beneficial matter of interest at all, ever, meaning that it has either specifically mentioned it, or it has mentioned broad principles that encompass it in a non-specified way. The Shariah has come to protect the five necessities, which the preservation of 1) religion, 2) life, 3) reason, intellect, 4) lineage and 5) wealth and it is with respect to these five areas that the masalih mursalah relate to.

We see in the Shariah certain rulings such as the prescribed punishments which are aimed at protecting wealth, life and honour, which are all beneficial interests considered by the Shariah. And we also see that there are other interests that the Shariah has not recognized and has ignored them such as the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes or fornication as enjoyment outside of marriage, so these are unlawful to pursue (this is because their limited, subjective, personal interest or benefit is overwhelmed by their broad harm). **However, there are many beneficial interests which do not have any specific evidence from the Book, Sunnah, consensus or analogy**. Nevertheless, there may be universal Shariah principles that indicate beneficial interests beyond what is specifically mentioned and legislated. This is what is called *maslahah mursalah* and this refers to "a beneficial interest (maslahah) that is non-specified, left

open (mursalah)." Whilst such beneficial interests may be indicated by the spirit of the Shariah and universal principles (such as "that by which an obligation cannot be fulfilled is itself an obligation", "there is no harm or reciprocating harm", "leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt", "repelling evil comes before actualizing good" and so on), because of the nature of human life and progress, specific situations and matters may arise and may not be covered or mentioned specifically by the Shariah rulings. This is because the environment, state and condition that the people live in may change from time to time and place to place, and progress takes place in many areas of life, culture, civilization, technology, industry and so on.

As a result there may arise issues that would become issues of public interest (as defined by the preservation and protection of life, religion, intellect, property and honour), and they may be legislated to protect that interest as long as certain conditions are fulfilled, which are generally specified as follows:

- That it must not clash with the Shariah texts or with an ijmaa' consensus)
- That it returns back to the goals and objectives of the Shariah with the aim of protection of a beneficial interest indicated by the Shariah (life, religion, intellect, honour, wealth)
- That it is not in relation to any rulings that are already established in the Shariah, which have been legislated specifically for that particular interest.
- That it is verified that it is an actual, true and real beneficial interest and not a presumed or suspected one, in other words it must be verified that legislating it will bring about good or repel a harm.
- That it is a matter of public interest and is not for any personal benefit for any particular individual or group of individuals.

So the maslahah mursalah is:

Making consideration of matters which are of public interest (acquisition of good or removal of harm) for which there is no specific evidence or basis (in relation to it specifically) in the Shariah, but which in a general sense would agree with universal Shariah principles and goals. Consideration is made of them in order to help protect and preserve the five necessities (life, religion, intellect, wealth and honour).

At this point it would be useful to give an example or two to illustrate the above points and considerations.

There are many accidents happening and people are being injured or killed due to reckless driving. So legislation is enacted to impose fines for speed violations. Is there any public interest involved? Does this serve a public interest that the Shariah aims to protect. Is there any conflict with any Shariah text? Will the benefit be realized? So after consideration of these matters a ruler will implement legislation, and this legislation is not sought in and of itself but rather it is simply a means to attain an objective that the Shariah itself mentions, in other words it is from the wasaa'il (means to an end) and not the maqaasid (actual goals, objectives sought in themselves). Now this legislation is down to purely circumstantial reasons. Let's say in another country, public transport is excellent and most people don't use cars, or that everyone is sensible and drives carefully. Here there is no need for such legislation.

A small town has rapidly expanded to such a degree that many people are not able to hear the call to prayer. So loudspeakers are used to tackle this issue. Does this relate to an objective the Shariah seeks? Does it clash with any Shariah text? Will the beneficial interest definitely be realized? After these considerations, loudspeakers will be used, and again, this policy is not sought in and of itself, it is a means (waseelah) to an end, and the actual use of the speakers is not considered religion or worship, but simply a facilitating means for an already existing Shariah objective.

Here, one can understand the rulings that the rightly-guided caliphs made such as Umar treating three pronouncements of divorces as one, that is not treated as innovation (bid'ah) in the Shariah sense, but as a matter of public interest. Likewise the gathering of the Qur'an into a single book (mushaf), this was a means to an end to serve a Shariah objective, it is an innovation from a linguistic sense, but not from a Shariah sense, and it is simply a waseelah (means) which a Shariah objective (preserving the religion) is fulfilled. Al-Shatibee gives this example in al-I'tisam. So this helps to explain what is a matter of beneficial public interest, and one can clearly see the difference between this and between the bid'ah which is condemned in the Shariah and which relates to matters of worship by which a person seeks nearness to Allaah, taking it as a path to be followed in religion. One should also note that these issues of al-masaalih al-mursalah are not to be considered as Shariah rulings (haram, wajib etc.), but they are considered additional and new legislations which serve the goals (maqasid) of the Shariah. If they are issued by a ruler, then one must obey the ruler in those matters. One must also follow these rules if not doing so leads to harm.

Differences Between al-maslahah al-mursalah and Bid'ah

There are some common grounds between al-maslahah al-mursalah and al-bidah. Firstly, they are both new, and invented, linguistically speaking, not being present in the time of Prophethood and secondly, they both do not have any specific evidence from the Shariah and as such it is only generalized texts or principles that are used as evidence for them, or in the case of bid'ah, doubts which appear to be evidences but are not.

As for the differences then:

Firstly, the maslahah mursalah is aimed at bringing about or preserving a benefit or protecting from or removing a harm. This means it is a means to an end (waseelah) and not an end in and of itself, and it is used to reach and acquire Shariah defined objectives (which are preservation of life, religion, intellect, wealth, honour). As for bidah, it is **sought in and of itself** as a goal, as it is believed that it brings about nearness to Allaah, in its own right and is from the religion. **Secondly**, bidah is related uniquely to matters of worship and the matters of the religion associated with them, as opposed to the maslahah mursalah. **Thirdly**, the maslahah mursalah has a rationally understood meaning behind it, which is unlike the affairs of worship to which bid'ah is related. What is meant here is that affairs of worship cannot be fathomed through reason and rational answers cannot be given as to why there are five prayers, and why they are at specific times, or why a person's wudhu is invalidated by relieving himself and why he must wash his hands, face, arms and feet (for wudhu), despite the fact that no impure thing touched them, yet if any impure thing touched his body, it would not invalidate his wudhu, all he has to do is to remove the impurity. So how does that make sense from a rational perspective? So affairs of worship do not follow reason. As for the maslahah mursalah, since it relates to the acquisition or preservation of a benefit or repulsion of harm, it has a rational meaning behind it that can be understood and fathomed. Al-Shatibee gives ten examples to illustrate the difference between the maslahah mursalah and what is bidah, wherein he clarifies this point and from the examples he gives of the maslahah mursalah is the compilation of the Qur'an into a single book (for the preservation of the deen), and the Companions agreeing upon eighty lashes for the one drinks alcohol (for the preservation of intellect, wealth etc.), and likewise killing a group of people as retribution for their collusion in killing a single individual (for the protection of life). All of these can be understood and have a rational meaning behind them. **Fourthly**, bidah imposes a further burden upon the people in terms of something above and beyond what is in the Shariah, and as for the maslahah mursalah, that actually facilitates the affairs for the people, by protecting from harm or removal of hardship or protecting a beneficial interest. **Fifthly**, bidah essentially clashes with the objectives of the Shariah (it takes people away from ittibaa'), whereas the maslahah mursalah supports and comes under the objectives of the Shariah (of the preservation of the five essentials). **Sixthly**, the maslahah mursalah is unique in the sense that the reason why it did not take place in the time of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) or the Companions is because of the absence of what may have

required or necessitated it, or the cause that may have required it was present but there was something preventing from it being considered. This is unlike bidah, because bidah was never acted upon or introduced despite the fact that **every reason, cause and motive was present, without any preventative barriers, for it to take place, and yet it did not take place.** To illustrate, every reason was present to commence celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) after his death, because of his absence, and there was nothing to prevent that. However, it was never done by the Salaf at all. This makes it a bidah. Another illustration there was no reason to add a second athaan for Jumu'ah in the time of the Prophet (alayhis salaam), however, Uthmaan added a second aadhaan because of reasons that required it, which is the increase in people and expansion of the city. Thus, he added an already existing act of worship (aadhaan), without changing anything from it or adding to it, in order to fulfil a Shariah goal, which is preservation of the religion, and by which the people were notified that the time for Jumu'ah has entered such that they should make preparations and not be late. So this does not enter into a bidah because such reason was not present in the time of the Messenger (alayhis salaam), and had it been, revelation may have been sent legislating this aadhaan. However, as the Messenger (alayhis salaam) ordered the Ummah to follow the Sunnah of the rightly-guided caliphs, then whatever affairs they instituted are treated to be from the Sunnah and not from the blameworthy bidah.

Once all of this is clear, when we see the word bid'ah used for that which is praiseworthy in the speech of some of the Scholars (like al-Shafi'ee for example), then either it is not an blameworthy innovation (from a Shariah point of view) because it has a precedent (like the revival of the tarawih prayer), or it is simply a matter of beneficial public interest which does not clash with the Shariah texts but agrees with the goals of the Shariah, and if being labelled as bidah is from a linguistic sense only, in which case it is a "good bidah" in the terminology of those scholars who use this terminology. **All of this has absolutely no connection to innovations in worship**, which all of the Scholars are united about, that there is no such thing as "good innovation" in matters of worship, be they haqeeqiyah (proper, in every sense of the word) or idaafiyyah (relative, where they have a basis from one aspect but depart from the Sunnah in their details). This is clear even in the speech of those like al-Izz bin Abd al-Salaam when one takes a much wider perspective and view when looking at many of his fatawas that relate to affairs of worship. So the deception that is really taking place is that the Innovators have simply pounced upon the fact that there is to be found in the speech of these Scholars a classification (by which they intended one thing) and have twisted it and used it for another thing (which those scholars themselves did not actually intend it for).

Refer to:

- **al-I'tisaam** of al-Shatibi
- **al-Ibdaa' Fee Madaari al-Ibtidaa'** of Alee Mahfoodh
- **Usool Fil-Bida' wal-Sunan** of Muhammad al-Adawee
- **al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah** (8/21)
- **Qawa'id Ma'rifaat al-Bida'** of Muhammad al-Jizani

Part 3 - the Statements of Imaam Al-Shafi'i

We have to understand that there are two orientations as it relates to how bidah is defined and how bidah is defined will affect the nature of any scholars' speech on the subject. As for the first orientation then they use the word bidah (بدعة) to refer to every newly-arising thing which is not found in the Book and the Sunnah, irrespective of whether it relates to worship (ibaadah) or custom (aadah) and regardless of whether it is praiseworthy or blameworthy. This understanding and usage of the term bidah is known from Imam al-Shafi'i and his followers were influenced in this such as al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, al-Nawawi, Abu Shaamah, and likewise from the Malikis, al-Qarafi and al-Zarqani, and from the Hanafis Ibn Abideen, and from the Hanbalis, Ibn al-Jawzi. The other orientation is the one which states that bidah (بدعة) is applied only to religious matters and thus it can only ever be blameworthy and evil, and in this they are applying the Shariah meaning for the word bidah.

The Statements of Imaam al-Shafi'i

Deception Alert: The innovators present the statements of some of these scholars like al-Shafi'i and al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam to the people by citing them through Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's citation of them in Fath al-Bari (Kitab al-Tawhid), and they have a particular deceptive purpose in mind for this: To make it look as if Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's view is one of total corroboration and acceptance, despite the fact that when we see the entire section, we see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's clarification of the matter shows that his view and definition of bidah (as defined by the Shariah) is one that agrees with that of al-Shatibi and that of the Salaf in general. This will be covered in a separate subsequent part in this series inshaa'Allaah

Al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Hajar and Ibn Taymiyyah (and others) have cited the statements of al-Shafi'i, so we can document them here for the record. Al-Bayhaqi relates in Manaqib al-Shafi'i (1/469) with his isnad that Imam al-Shafi'i said:

The newly-invented matters are of two types: The first of them is that which has been introduced from that which opposes [something from] the book, or [something from] the sunnah, or a narration, or [a matter of] consensus. This is the misguided innovation. And the second is that which has been introduced of goodness and there is no opposition to anyone of these things [qur'an, sunnah, athar, ijmaa']. This is the newly-invented matter which is not blameworthy.

Ibn Hajar also mentions it in al-Fatawa (Maktabah Salafiyyah edition, 13/253):

Al-Shafi'i said:

Bidah is of two types: praiseworthy and blameworthy. Whatever is in agreement with the Sunnah it is praiseworthy and whatever opposes it is blameworthy.

Ibn Nu'aym related it with its meaning through Ibrahim bin al-Junaid from al-Shafi'i. Also from al-Shafi'i is what al-Bayhaqi related in his Manaqib, he said:

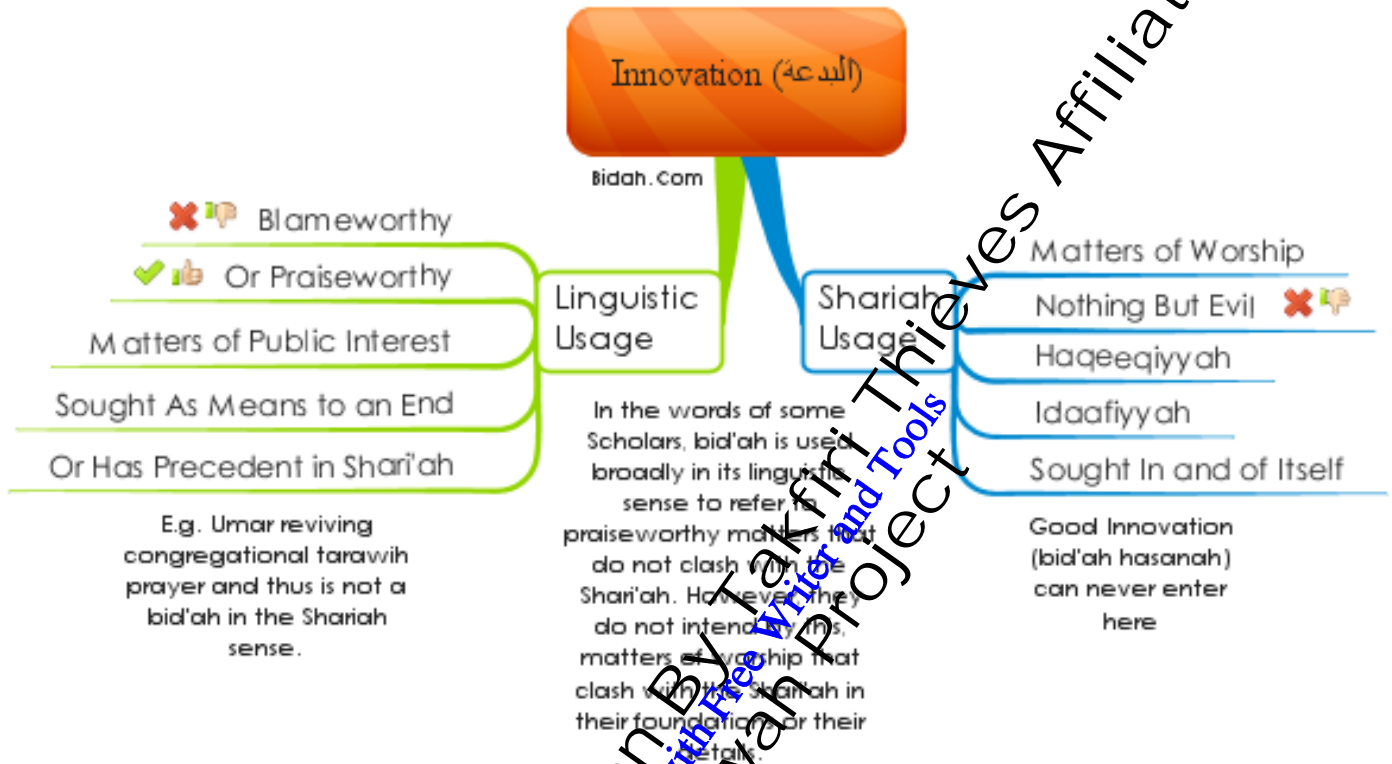
The newly-invented matters are of two types: The first of them is that which has been introduced from that which opposes [something from] the book, or [something from] the sunnah, or a narration, or [a matter of] consensus. This is the misguided innovation. And the second is that which has been introduced of goodness and does not oppose any of these things [qur'an, sunnah, athar, ijmaa']. This is the newly-invented matter which is not blameworthy.

Understanding These Statements Correctly

We have already established in **Part 1** from **Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani** that whenever the term 'bidah' is used to refer to a praiseworthy matter it is being employed with its broader linguistic meaning. Ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Bari (Maktabah Salafiyyah print, 13/278)

As for innovations, it is the plural of innovation and it is everything which does not have any prior example. Linguistically, [the word] encompasses what is both praiseworthy and blameworthy. In the usage of the people of the legislation (i.e. Scholars) it is specifically for what is blameworthy and if it is used in connection to what is praiseworthy, then it is upon its linguistic meaning.

This explanation leads us to the following diagram which makes things easier to visualize:



What al-Shafi'i is referring to goes beyond and outside of the scope of the Shariah definition of bidah, and this is established by the fact that his followers (such as al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam) make it clear in their particular classification of bidah that they enter matters which go beyond affairs of worship and enter into wasaa'il (means) and masaalih mursalah (matters of public interest). The statement of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam will be discussed in the next article, along with al-Shatibi's clarification and rebuttal of it. The late Salafi Shaykh of Qatar, Ahmad bin Hajar Aal Butami (d. 1423H), who is Shafi'i in fiqh, explains in his book *Tahdhir al-Muslimin anil-Ibtidaa' wal-Bida' fil-Din* (Dar al-Imam al-Bukhari, 1428H, p. 114):

As for the saying of Imam al-Shafi'i, "*Bidah is of two types: praiseworthy and blameworthy. Whatever is in agreement with the Sunnah it is praiseworthy and whatever opposes the Sunnah is blameworthy*", the intent behind "praiseworthy innovation" is what has been innovated of beneficial matters relating to worldly affairs and [affairs of] habitation, livelihood such as the use of radio, electricity, airplanes, cars and using the phone and what is similar to that of good and beneficial inventions. This is because they are not harmful (in and of themselves) and do not lead (in and of themselves) to any evil that comes to the people, or to the performance of what is haraam or destroying any foundation from the foundations of the religion. And Allaah, the Sublime and Exalted, has permitted His servants to invent whatever they wish to look after their worldly interests. He, the Exalted said, "**And work good that you may be successful**" (2:77).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah states in *Majmu' al-Fatawa* (20/163):

And from here, the misguidance of the one who innovated a path or belief -claiming that faith cannot be completed except without it - becomes known, alongside the knowledge that the Messenger did not mention it. And whatever opposes the texts, then it is an innovation by agreement of the Muslims, and that which is not known to oppose [the texts], then it is not always

called 'bidah' (in the blameworthy Shariah sense). Al-Shafi'i (rahimahullaah) said: Bidah is of two types: A bidah that opposes [something from] the book, or [something from] the sunnah, or [a matter of] consensus, or a narration from some of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), this is the misguided innovation. And a bidah which does not oppose any of these things [qur'an, sunnah, athar, ijmaa']. This is what can be good (hasanah), due to the saying of Umar, "What an excellent innovation this is".

This statement or what is similar to it has been related by al-Bayhaqi with in authentic chain of narration in al-Madkhal...

Al-Mubarakfuri wrote in Tuhfatul al-Ahwazi (7/366):

For his saying (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam), "Every innovation is misguidance" is from the concise, profound words (jawaami' al-kalim), nothing exits from them, and it is a mighty foundation from the foundations of the religion. As for whta occurs in the speech of some of the Salaf of considering some of the innovations to be good, then that is in relation to linguistic (usage of) bidah, not the Shariah (usage). From (the examples) of that is the saying of Umar (radiallaahu anhu) regarding the tarawih (prayer), "What an excellent innovation."

And Ibn Katheer said in his tafseer (Dar Tayyibah, 1422H, 1/398):

And bidah is of two types. Sometimes it can be a legislative innovation (bidah shar'iyyah), such as his saying, "Every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance" and sometimes it can be a linguistic innovation (bidah lughawiyyah), such as the saying of Amir al-Mu'minin Umar bin al-Khattaab, (radiallaahu anhu) about his bringing them together for the tarawih prayer and their continuance upon that, "What an excellent innovation this is."

From what has preceded it should now be very clear that in the usage of some of the Scholars, they employ the word bidah with its linguistic meaning to include praiseworthy matters which either **a)** already have a specific precedent in the Shariah and are therefore not 'bidah' in the legislative (Shar'iyy) sense or **b)** matters which pertain to public interest (maslahah mursalah) which do not clash with the Shariah but rather are in agreement with it and its objectives and are considered praiseworthy (such as building schools). This should be kept totally separate and distinct from the censured and condemned bidah in matters of worship which can be innovation from all angles, in every sense of the word (bidah haqiqiyyah) or from some angles only (bidah idafiyyah). Or in other words: Every innovation in the arena of the acts of worship which do not have any basis or foundation in the Book or the Sunnah or from the rightly-guided Caliphs or Companions, in either their foundations, or their details, then it is a blameworthy, repulsive bidah in the Shariah.

Imam al-Shafi'i Did Not Permit Departure from the Sunnah

It is appropriate here to show that Imam al-Shafi'i was a follower of the Sunnah and did not permit departure from the Sunnah into bidah, and that al-Shafi'i's statements cited above are no proof whatsoever for those people who claim attachment to him, but misunderstand his words (regarding the linguistic use of the term 'bidah') and confuse them with the bidah idafiyyah. The example that can be given here is what is cited by Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari from al-Shafi'i in relation to touching the corners of the kabah. In Kitab al-Hajj, al-Bukhari brings a chapter heading titled "On the one who does not touch except the two Yemeni corners" and in his commentary Ibn Hajar discusses the various narrations in this regard that pertain to Mu'awiyah (radiallaahu anhu) touching all four corners and Ibn Abbaas (radiallaahu anhu) advising him that only the two corners are to be touched. Mu'awiyah states, "There is nothing from the house (ka'bah) that is abandoned." Ibn Hajar cites al-Shafi'i (see 3/473-474):

And al-Shafi'i responded to the saying of the one who said, "There is nothing from the house (ka'bah) that is abandoned" with (the response) that: We have not left touching the (two corners)

out of abandoning the house, and how can a person be abandoning it when he is making tawaf around it. **Rather, we follow the Sunnah both in performance (fi'l) and abandonment (tark),** and if not touching them both constitutes abandoning them, then not touching what is between the corners would also be abandonment of it, yet there is no one expressing this [view].

Al-Shafi'i indicates this is the practice of the Messenger (alayhis salaam) - to only touch the two corners - and Ibn Hajar says (3/474) that to kiss the first (the stone) and touch the second (Yemeni corner) only (and not touch or kiss the other two) is the view of the majority.

The point of evidence here is that upon the argument of the Innovators that "good innovation" is allowed so long as it has a basis in the Shariah then why did al-Shafi'i show rejection against this because it can be argued that since touching the other two corners is already established in the Sunnah (so we now have a basis) why cannot we innovate and touch the other two corners and none of this would clash with the Shariah and it would be "good innovation". This is because they do not understand the statements of al-Shafi'i correctly, who does not allow any innovation whatsoever in the matters of worship because matters of worship are not the same as matters included within the broader linguistic usage of the term 'bidah' (like the masalih mursalah) which is how al-Shafi'i makes application of the term 'bidah.'

In reality, what they are upon is the bidah idafiyyah in matters of worship (ibadah) and they attempt to make it appear that what they are upon of reprehensible innovation which has no evidence for its particulars and details from the Sunnah is of the same category as what is entered into a purely linguistic usage of the term 'bidah' by some of the scholars. So their deception is clear walhamdulillah.

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Part 4 - Al-Izz Bin Abd Al-Salam's Classification of Bid'ah

The Statement of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam

The position of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam is well-known and he was the first to make this classification of bidah. He was followed in this by others such as al-Qarafi, and they were both refuted by al-Shatibi in al-I'tisam, which we shall take a look at shortly.

Deception Alert: The innovators present the statements of some of these scholars like al-Shafi'i and al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam to the people by citing them through Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's citation of them in Fath al-Bari (Kitab al-Tawhid), and they have a particular deceptive purpose in mind for this: To make it look as if Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's view is one of total corroboration and acceptance, despite the fact that when we see the entire section, we see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's clarification of the matter shows that his view and definition of bidah (as defined by the Shariah) is one that agrees with that of al-Shatibi and that of the Salaf in general. This will be covered in a separate subsequent part in this series inshaa'Allaah

Ibn Hajar explains in al-Fath (13/253):

And Ibn Abd al-Salam said at the end of [his book] "al-Qawaid":

Bidah is of five types. That which is obligatory (wajib), such as being concerned with the [knowledge of] grammar by which the speech of Allaah and His Messenger is understood, because the preservation of the Shariah is obligatory and [the preservation] does not come about except through that, hence it becomes a precursor to what is obligatory. Similarly, explanation of what is obscure, strange (from the texts in terms of words), and compiling the principles of jurisprudence, and arriving at the distinction between what is authentic and weak [from the narrations]. The unlawful (haram), that which has been devised by those who oppose the Sunnah from the Qadariyyah, Murji'ah and Mushaabi'ah. The recommended (mandubah), every act of goodness that was not specifically established (maintained) during the era of the Prophet, such as congregating for the tarawih prayer, building schools and hospices (for the poor) and speech about the praiseworthy tasawwuf and setting up gatherings for debate [to arrive at the truth] when Allaah's face is sought through that. The permitted (mubah), such as shaking hands after the morning and late afternoon prayers, and being liberal in taking pleasure through food, drink, clothing and abode. And some of that could be disliked (makrooh), or opposed to what is most befitting, and Allaah knows best.

Al-Shatibi also quoted (Maktabah Dar al-Tawhid, 1/319) from al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam from his book al-Qawaid, and from that we can look at all the various things al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam entered into his classification:

- Wajib (obligatory): knowledge of grammar (to preserve the religion), clarifying obscure, strange words used in revealed texts, compiling and laying down foundations of jurisprudence (fiqh), speech in criticism and appraisal of the narrators to distinguish sound from weak narrations refuting the innovations.
- Muharram (unlawful): the beliefs of the factions of innovations like the Qadariyyah, Murji'ah and others.
- Mandub (recommended): setting up hospices, schools, dams (or other structures for irrigation), every instance of goodness that was not found routinely in the first era (of Islam), the tarawih prayer, speaking about the detailed affairs of that tasawwuf which is praiseworthy, debate and discussion and gathering to discuss issues, where only Allah's face is sought.
- Makruh (disliked): decorating mosques, and decorating the Qur'an.
- Mubah (permitted): shaking hands after the morning and late afternoon prayers, taking pleasure in food, drink, clothing and residence, wearing shawls and widening the sleeves.

It is important to inspect this list very carefully and to look at the things he has included here, and this will be made clear by looking at al-Shatibi's rebuttal and explanation of it. We can see clearly by the examples given that none of this supports the innovated matters of worship (be they haqiqiyah or idafiyah in terms of their innovatory status).

Imam al-Shatibee's Refutation Of This Classification

Imam al-Shatibee has responded to both al-Qarafi and his Shaykh, al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam with an excellent clarification and refutation which clearly shows their error to anyone who has any sense of justice and desire for truth. He said (Maktabah Dar al-Tawhid, 1/321 onwards) - after citing this view from both al-Qarafi and al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam:

And the Answer: This classification is an invented matter, there is no Shariah evidence which points to it (at all). Rather it is self-defeating, because the reality of bidah is that no Shariah evidence points to it, neither from the Shariah texts, nor from its principles. Because if there had been something from the Shariah which indicates the obligation (wujooab), recommendation (nadab) or permissibility (ibaahah) of anything, then it would not be bid'ah, **and this practice would have been within the generality of the actions which are commanded (in the Shariah) or in which a choice has been granted.** Hence, combining between these matters as innovations and between the [Shariah] evidences indicating their obligation, recommendation or permissibility is combining between two contradictory affairs.

As for the makruh (disliked) or the muharram (unlawful), there is acknowledged from the angle that they can be innovation, but not from another angle since if an evidence indicated the prohibition of a matter or it being disliked, that would not establish that it is a bidah because of the possibility that it is a sin such as killing, stealing, drinking intoxicants and what is like them.

Hence, there is no innovation about which this classification can ever be imagined, except for [the two classifications] of being disliked and being prohibited, upon what is being said in the relevant chapter [pertaining to them] inshaa'Allaah. So what al-Qarafi has mentioned about the agreement about rejecting innovation is correct, but his classification therein is not correct. And it is strange that he cites consensus (on rejecting innovation) then he clashes against that with opposition (to it) alongside his awareness that (this position of his) makes the destruction of that consensus binding upon him!

This is a very clear observation that if the Shariah or its principles indicates something to be obligatory, recommended or permissible, then it simply comes within the confines of the Shariah and entering it under the label of 'bidah' (meaning, from purely a linguistic point of view) is self-defeating and of no merit. Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam himself said, as cited by al-Shatibi (1/319):

The path to knowing that [i.e. the particular classification] is that the innovation should be looked at in light of the Shariah principles, so if it enters under the principles of obligation, then it is obligatory (waajibah)...

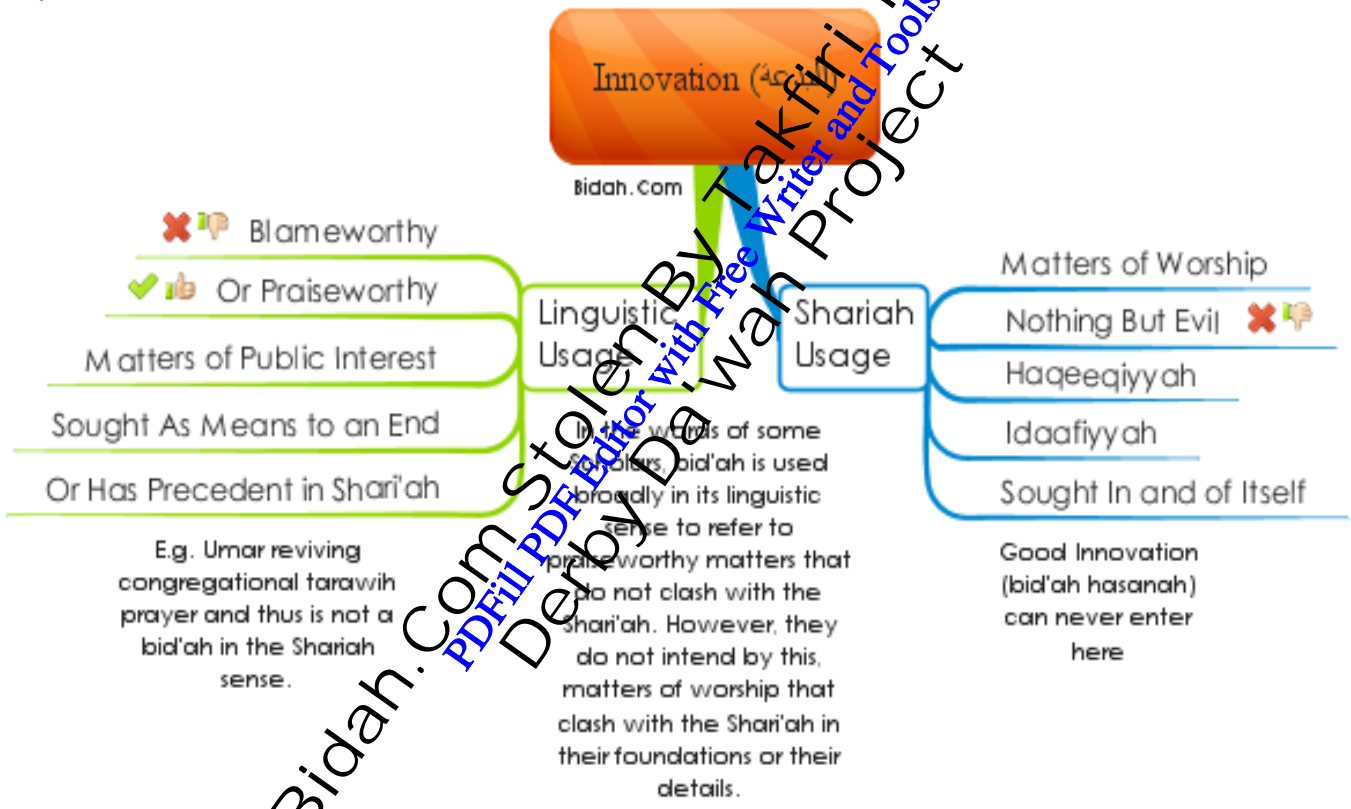
Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam is saying that it is by referring the newly invented matters (i.e. linguistically, anything that is new, both praiseworthy and blameworthy) to the Shariah principles and looking at what they would enter into (of the five rulings), and so they would take the appropriate ruling depending on which one they would enter into. And this is what al-Shatibi indicates is pointless and self-defeating, not having any purpose at all, since the bidah that the Shariah intends can never be wajib, mustahabb or mubah. Later, al-Shatibi, discusses each example provided under the five categories and addresses each one (see below).

Al-Shatibi continues (1/322):

And just as he (al-Qarafi) followed his Shaykh this classification without reflection, then it is

apparent from Ibn Abd al-Salam that he labels the matters of public interest (al-masalih al-mursalah) to be "innovations" built upon - and Allaah knows best - that they do not have any specific [explicit] mention in specific texts, even though they are conciliatory with the general principles of the Shariah. So from this (starting point) he made the general principles to indicate that these matters are deemed good. Hence, his referring to them with the word "innovations" (الابدع) is from the angle of the absence of specific evidence for a specific issue, and then considering them as being good from the angle that they enter into [general] principles [in the Shariah]. And when he depended upon these principles, then these actions became equal to him to those actions which come under specific texts, and therefore he became from those who [simply] speak with the matters of public interest (al-masaalih al-mursalah), but he labelled them as "innovations" in wording, just as Umar (radiiallaahu anhu) labelled the unification of the people for the prayer in Ramadan in the mosque as "innovation", as will some soon inshaa'Allaah.

Basically, what al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam did is to consider certain actions which do not have specific texts for them through general Shariah principles such as *"That without which an obligation cannot be fulfilled is itself an obligation"* as a result of which they were deemed as "good" and then entered them under the label of with its linguistic meaning. In reality, these affairs are simply matters of public interest (masalih mursalah). Our diagram is appropriate here again to help us visualize the matter:



Al-Shatibee Addressing the Example Given by al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam

Al-Shatibee addresses the various examples that were used by al-Izz, and we will simply summarize the points made by him (refer to 1/323 onwards in al-I'tisaam):

Al-Shatibi says that the affairs he entered under mandub (recommended) do not enter into innovations at all and that is clear by the examples which he gave. Salat al-Tarawih: This is established from the Messenger (alayhis salaam), and he quotes the narrations in this regard from the Sunan of Abu Dawud. He explains that the Messenger (alayhis salaam) stopped praying tarawih in the mosque after three days because he feared it might be made obligatory on the Ummah which may cause them hardship, citing the hadith of Aa'ishah (radiallahu anhaa) in Sahih al-Bukhari. Al-Shatibi says that these texts prove that this action was in fact a Sunnah, and that because the era was one in which revelation was still being received, he stopped it for that reason, it was not an absolute withholding. So when revelation stopped, the affair was eventually returned

to exactly how it was, congregational tarawih prayer in the mosque behind a single imam. Al-Shatibi explains that Umar (radiallaahu anhu) called this action a "bidah" only on account of the outward appearance of the matter, in that the Messenger left it and it did not occur in the era of Abu Bakr (radiallaahu anhu). So when this word is used in this sense, there is no problem with such a term, however, this does not make it permissible to use this statement for permitting the blameworthy innovation that the Shariah condemns, because this is clearly distorting the words from their proper places (i.e. distorting the words of Umar).

As for what he (al-Izz) entered into the wajib (obligatory), then the examples he gave are from the angle of the principle, "*that without which an obligation cannot be fulfilled is itself an obligation.*" Hence, it is not a condition in these matters that the Salaf must have acted upon them, and nor that there must be a specific basis for them in the Shariah, because these matters and examples are from the subject of al-masalih al-mursalah (matters of public interest by which the five necessities, life, religion, intellect, wealth and lineage are protected). Al-Shatibee gives an example by saying that if a person was to travel for the obligatory Hajj by flying in the air, or walking on the water, he would not be considered an innovator, because the objective is to reach Makkah to fulfil an obligation.

As for the example of the mubah (permitted) of shaking hands after the morning and late afternoon prayers, then as for saying it is an innovation, this is granted, but as for them being permitted (mubaahah), then this is prohibited because there is no specific evidence in the Shariah which indicates the specification of those times.

Refer to al-Shatibi's lengthy discussion in al-I'tisam, we have only provided a summary of some of the issues he discussed but which serve as an illustration for them all.

Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, Sticking to the Sunnah and Avoiding Bidah in Matters of Worship

Alongside everything which has preceded which should now make clear that there is absolutely nothing for the Innovators in the mere fact that al-Shafi'i and al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam applied the word 'bidah' with its broader linguistic meaning which allows them (the innovators) to justify their reprehensible innovations in matters of worship be they bidah haqiqiyah or bidah idafiyyah. This will be made even more clearer by looking at some fatawa of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam in relation to matters of worship. Through this we will illustrate that these contemporary innovators also misrepresent the position of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam because even though he made an erroneous classification of 'bidah' upon its broad linguistic meaning into five types, he did not intend or mean by that what the innovators of today have wrongly employed this classification for, which is to oppose the Sunnah in the affairs of worship and to depart from what the Salaf were upon and to justify their multitude of innovations in affairs of worship not known to the Companions or the Salaf.

In Part 5, we will look at a sample of fatawa of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam to prove this point inshaa'Allaah.

Part 5 - Al-Izz Bin Abd Al-Salam on Adherence to the Sunnah and Avoiding Innovation in Worship

In this Part, we will provide a sample of fatawa from al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam (from his book "*al-Fatawa*", Dar al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1406H) which will help to establish the following points:

Firstly: That al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam's classification is simply a classification of whatever may enter into the linguistic meaning of bidah (anything which has no prior example and which may be praiseworthy or blameworthy). It is not intended as part of any justification or to be used as a principle for justification of innovation into matters of ibadah (worship) which are not from the Prophetic Sunnah in their foundations, or their details. **Secondly:** That al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam shows rejection against the bidah idafiyyah (that which has a foundation in the Shariah from one aspect, but opposes it from others) and encourages following the Sunnah and leaving that which opposes it, and that it is better to follow the Sunnah than to innovate. **Thirdly:** That the contemporary innovators who make use of the speech of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam do injustice to him and twist his words in a way he did not intend them to be used. This can be seen when we look at the general spirit of avoiding and abandoning that which does not agree with the Sunnah or is not founded upon an authentic hadeeth which we see coming across in his fatawa. **Fourthly:** Whilst noting importantly that al-Izz was the first to speak of this classification which itself is innovated (as explained by al-Shatibee), and al-Shafi'i himself only spoke of bidah with its linguistic meaning and mentioned it can be blameworthy (what the Shariah intends) or praiseworthy (what enters into matters of public interest or itself has a specific precedence in the Sunnah).

Important: It is essential, whilst reading what follows below, to note that there is a general spirit within the answers to the questions below which strongly indicates (alongside what we established in Part 4) that al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam does not intend by his classification of bidah in the way that he did to justify and allow innovation into the affairs of worship and a departure from the Sunnah of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) and the way of the Companions. Let's take a quick look at illustrative examples given by al-Izz once again and this was cited from al-Izz by Imam al-Shatibee in his book *al-I'tisaam* (1/319 onwards):

- Wajib (obligatory): knowledge of grammar (to preserve the religion), clarifying obscure, strange words used in revealed texts, compiling and laying down foundations of jurisprudence (fiqh), speech in criticism and appraisal of the narrators to distinguish sound from weak narrations, reporting the innovations.
- Muharram (unlawful): the beliefs of the factions of innovations like the Qadariyyah, Murji'ah and others.
- Mandub (recommended): setting up hospices, schools, dams (or other structures for irrigation), every instance of goodness that was not found routinely in the first era (of Islam), the tarawih prayer, speaking about the detailed affairs of that tasawwuf which is praiseworthy, debate and discussion and gathering to discuss issues, where only Allah's face is sought.
- Makruh (disliked): decorating mosques, and decorating the Qur'an.
- Mubah (permitted): shaking hands after the morning and late afternoon prayers, taking pleasure in food, drink, clothing and residence, wearing shawls and widening the sleeves.

We are concerned only with the wajib, mandub and mubah, since that is what today's Innovators are attached to.

As for the **wajib** (obligatory) these are all clearly from the masaalih mursalah (non-Shariah defined matters of broad public interest as it relates to one of the five necessities, in this case, preservation of religion). This has nothing to do with innovating in matters of worship (ta'abbud) or justifying the departure from the Sunnah in the form and detail of worship. As for the **mandub**

(recommended) we can again see that these come under the topic of the *maslahah mursalah*, and as for the example of the *tarawih* prayer, then that has a very specific proof in the *Sunnah* because it was done by the Messenger (alayhis salaam). For someone to innovate a new act of worship or to practice an existing one in a way that is different to what is in the *Sunnah*, one must bring a specific proof. As for the **mubah (permitted)**, then these are merely matters which are permitted in the *Shariah* (shaking hands, eating food, wearing clothes) [and are not from the affairs of worship] but they are being performed in a new way. This has got nothing to do with matters of worship (*ibaadah*) which the Innovators try to justify, which are opposed to the *Sunnah* in either their foundation, or their details.

With this clarified, we can now move on to a sample of *fatawa* from al-Izz Ibn Abd al-Salam which indicate a general spirit that is opposed and different to what the Innovators of today are upon.

1st Example:

In this first example note how al-Izz is asked about two matters. One that relate to an issue legislated and permitted in the *Shariah* (shaking hands), and one that relates directly to a matter of worship (raising hands in *du'a*). There occurs in the book *al-Fatawa* (pp. 46-47):

The Issue: shaking hands following the morning and late afternoon prayers, is it recommended (*mustahabbah*) or not? And supplication after the salutation in every prayer for the *Imaam*, is it recommended or not? And if you say it is recommended, then should he (the *Imam*) turn with his back to the *qiblah* or should he make *du'a* turning to the *qiblah*? And should he raise his voice or lower it? And should the one supplicating raise his hands or not? Because this is in other than the places in which it is established that the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) raised his hands?

The Answer: shaking hands following the morning and late afternoon prayers is from the innovations, except for the one who arrives [intending to meet] with the one whom he shakes hands with before the prayer. Shaking hands is legislated when approaching (and meeting someone).

Note how he says that shaking hands after *air* and *asr* prayers is from the innovations, alongside our knowledge that he included them within the innovations which are *mubah* (permitted) elsewhere. He states that this practice is from the innovations unless it is between two people whose intent it is to meet, and then when the prayer finishes they shake hands, meaning that this would take it out of being from the innovations, since shaking hands when meeting someone who arrives is a legislated matter. So he distinguished between the two situations

Then he said (speaking about a matter related directly to worship):

The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) used to perform the legislated *adhkaar* after the prayer, would seek forgiveness three times and then depart. And it is related that he said, "*O Lord, save me from the punishment on the day that you resurrect your servants.*" And all goodness is in making *ittibaa'* (following) of the Messenger. Al-Shafi'i preferred (loved) that the *Imam* should depart after the prayer.

It is not recommended to raise the hand in the *qunut*, just as it is not raised in during the [recitation of] the supplication of *al-Fatihah*, and nor between the two prostrations, and there is no authentic *hadeeth* in that regard.

Likewise, the hands are not raised during the supplication of *al-tashahhud*, and nor is it recommended to raise the hands in supplication except in the situations that the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) raised his hands. No one wipes his face with his hands after the supplication except an ignoramus.

And prayers upon the Messenger in the *qunut* is not authentic, and it is not desirable that anything should be added into the *qunut* beyond what the Messenger of Allaah (used to say) and nor

In relation to what is part and parcel of an act of worship we see here that al-Izz mentions all goodness lies in following the Messenger (alayhis salaam) and that one should not add anything into the qunut above what the Messenger used to say, and he mentions that hands should only be raised in those instances in which the Messenger used to raise them. What we are seeing here, as we said, is a general type of spirit regarding matters of worship which is very different to other matters.

2nd Example:

The next question is about making mention the Companions in the sermons which is something the Salaf never did. This occurs in the book al-Fatawa (pp. 47-48):

The Issue: Is it recommended for the khatib to mention the Companions in the sermons upon what has become the habit in our times using rhymed prose? Or is abandoning it more befitting due its agreement with [what] the Salaf [were upon]? And when a man sends prayers upon the Prophet, it is recommended for him to send prayers upon His family, and when he sends prayers upon his family, are his companions entered into that or not? And which if them is more befitting to be said, "O Allah send prayers upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and his companions" or "... upon the companions of Muhammad and his family." And if mention of the companions is recommended then why did not the Prophet, the Companions and the rightly-guided caliphs after him mention it? What is the preferred position with you, may Allah protect you?

The Answer: Mentioning the Companions, the rightly-guided caliphs and the rulers is a disliked innovation (bidah ghayr mahbubah), and nothing is to be mentioned in the sermons except what agrees with their objectives such as praise, supplication, exhortation, instilling fear and reading the Qur'an. When he (the khatib) is asked about a Shari'ah ruling and answers, there is no harm in that, especially if it is in relation to the Jum'ah prayer. Likewise, (speaking and advising) if he saw someone who came and sat and did not pray the two rakahs for the entering the mosque, as was done by him (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam). And it is more befitting that sending prayers is restricted to the Messenger, upon what is authentic in the hadeeth, and nothing is to be added to it by mentioning the Companions or other than them. And the family of the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) in the view of al-Shafi'i is Banu Hashim and Banu Abd al-Muttalib. And it is authentic that the Messenger of Allah (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) specifically stated his wives and offspring to be included in the sending of the prayers, and Allaah knows best.

From this we can see that what the Innovators claim that "*Whatever has a basis in the Shariah is not considered the disliked and reprehensible innovation, but is good innovation (bidah hasanah)*" is not upon what the Scholars intend. In this example one can argue that remembering the Companions and praising them and respecting them has a basis in the Shariah, and hence to mention them in the sermons is nothing but a bidah hasanah which the Shariah permits. In his answer he clearly states that mentioning the Companions, the rightly-guided caliphs and the rulers is an undesirable innovation, and that only certain things ought be in a sermon (which fulfils the goals and objectives of the sermon). He states that is more befitting that a person only sends prayers upon the Messenger (alayhis salaam) in the manner that is authentically related in the ahaadeeth, and not to add anything further to it. We see here something different to what the Innovators argue about "bidah hasanah" which is that if something has a supportor basis in the Shariah then it is a good innovation, not a bad innovation. Applying that argument here would be that mentioning and praising the Companions has a basis in the Shariah (no disagreement there), and since it has a basis in the Shariah, if we were to mention them in the sermons this would be a good bidah (here they have taken something which has a foundation in the Shariah and then altered its form with respect to how it is done). However, we do not see al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam allowing this, and it is clear that he considers this from the undesirable innovations. Again, if you go back and have a look at what al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam includes as examples within his

classifications of bidahs that are wajib (obligatory), mandub (recommended) and mubah (permitted), you will clearly see that he intends something different to what the Innovators intend by wrongly using his classification to justify innovating into the deen of Allaah that which is not from it. So our point here is that we clearly see a different type of spirit from al-Izz bi Abd al-Salam to what we see from the Innovators.

3rd Example:

This next issue is about whether using a bright prayer mat is disliked when one can pray on a normal mat or on the earth, following the Salaf in that. Also when one is absolutely certain that the prayer mat is clean and one is not certain whether the mat in the mosque is pure, is it better to pray on the prayer mat or not, and is it required upon him to know with certainty if the mat in the mosque is pure or not? This is in al-Fatawa (pp. 68-69):

The answer is as follows:

It is not unlawful to pray on a bright and marked prayer mat, but it is disliked upon a bright, adorned one, and likewise upon an exquisite one, because prayer is a state of humility and serenity. The people in the mosque in Makkah and Madinah never ceased to pray upon the earth, sand and pebbles, out of humility to Allaah. And the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) never prayer upon al-humrah (red mat) except rarely, and perhaps that was due to a reason. **But it is better to make ittibaa (follow, imitate) the Messenger (alayhis salaam) in the both the minor matters of detail and the major ones from his statements and actions. Whoever obeyed him will be guided and Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic will love him, and whoever departed from obedience to him and guiding himself by him will be distanced from what is correct to the extent of his distance from making ittibaa' of him.** And whoever had doubt about the impurity of the earth or the mat, then pray upon that whose purity he is certain of is more befitting since that is a condition in the validity of the prayer, and Allaah knows best.

We see here that despite what we know of al-Izz's classification into bidah into the five Shariah rulings, he still emphasizes sticking to the way of the Prophet (alayhis salaam) in all matters, large or small, and that when it comes to matters of worship, he clearly entices sticking to the Sunnah and avoiding what opposes it, either in its foundations, or in its particular details.

4th Example:

There occurs in the book al-Fatawa (pp. 69-70):

The Issue: In wearing thawbs with widened sleeves and enlarged turbans is there any harm or innovation that necessitates rebuke [in terms of] cost and excessiveness in the beautification of the embroidery, quilting and hems, [is this] harmful upon the people of piety or not?

The Answer: It is more worthy for a person to seek guidance by the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) in being moderate in dress. And excessiveness in widening the sleeves and [excessiveness in] the dress is an innovation, and exaggeration and and wastage of wealth. And the thawbs should not go past the ankles, for what is below the ankles is in the Fire...

Note again how he encourages sticking to the Sunnah and seeking guidance by the way of the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) even in matters not directly connected to worship, in this case, widening the sleeves and other such matters, going to excesses in that regard, alongside our knowledge that he actually considers the widening of the sleeves to be an innovation (in the linguistic sense) that is permitted. Once more, we see a general spirit in his answers which indicates the opposition to innovations and enticing sticking to the way of the Messenger (alayhis salaam), even in matters in which he considers elsewhere to be permitted innovations.

5th Example:

There occurs in the book al-Fatawa (p. 100):

The Issue: Is it permissible for a person to write an amulet consisting of the Qur'an and then hang it around his horses hoping for protection alongside his strong presumption that it will be torn and fall into what is impure?

The Answer: This is a bidah and subjecting the Book of Allaah to belittlement on account of what would be touching it of impurity. The Companions did not used to do anything from that, and Allaah knows best.

Upon the argument of the Innovators, one would say that since the Qur'an is known to be a protection, which indeed is a foundation and a basis clearly established in the religion, then one could write it on paper as an amulet with the aim of applying its protective effect to one's animals (livestock or horses). So this would be a "good innovation (bidah hasanah)", because it is being based on something which has a foundation. But we see again an answer from al-Izz, mentioning it in a blameworthy way (as a bidah), in addition to it being a means of subjecting the Qu'ran to belittlement.

6th Example:

There occurs in the book al-Fatawa (pp. 172-173):

This question is about a man who compiles together all the verses in the Qur'an which contain "laa ilaaha illallaah" and then reads them as he would a surah.

The Answer: As for gathering together all the verses of tahleel, if he intends recitation of them, and arranges them in order of the chapters they come in, then there is no harm, but if he reverses the order, then it is disliked, because reversal of the order, even if it occurs in the verses of a single surah, then it is haram. And if it occurs in the surahs during prayer, it is disliked. If he intends just pure remembrance (dhikr) and not recitation then there is no harm in that, **except that the like of this is not done except by the common folk and guiding [oneself] by the Salaf is more befitting that introducing innovations.**

This again is clear, note his final remark, and we hardly need to comment on that, and when he says that guiding oneself by the Salaf is more worthy than introducing innovations, he means here innovation (bidah) in worship (ibaadah), and is not speaking about bidah in its general, broad linguistic sense. This indicates to us that the particular perception and understanding in the mind of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, is not the same as those innovators of today who try to employ his statement (of classification of bidah into wajib, mandub and mubah) in a way he did not intend at all.

Summing Up

At this point it is worthy that we make sure you understand where we are going here:

Firstly, al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam is an Ash'ari Sufi, upon the creed of the Jahmiyyah in Sifat, and he innovated a five-fold classification of bidah (upon its linguistic sense) rejected by the clear-cut statements of the Messenger (alayhis salaam), and the Companions, who spoke only of bidah in its Shariah sense, and declared that all bidah (in the Shariah sense) is misguidance. But that classification by al-Izz has been used by the Innovators to justify their heretical innovations in worship.

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Secondly, despite this innovated classification, by looking at the specific examples given by al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam of what he includes under his various classifications of bidah (with its linguistic meaning), we can see that they are not referring to matters of worship (ibadah). Please take another look at the beginning of this article and this will be very apparent.

Thirdly, we can see by the sample of his fatwas, that there is completely different spirit to be found in his answers than what is found amongst the Innovators who cling to his words (regarding the classification of bidah with its linguistic meaning into five types based upon the ahkaam shar'iah [wajib, mandub, mubah, makruh, haram]) and try to use them to justify innovations in the matters of worship. This does not appear to be the intent of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam by what he included as examples in the wajib, mandub and mubah categories, as is apparent in these fatwas.

We are now ready for Part 6 inshaa'Allaah.

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Part 6 - Al-Izz Bin Abd Al-Salam's Refutation of a Claimed 'Bidah Hasanah' and Refutation of the Doubts of Contemporary Innovators

The Debates Between al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam and Ibn al-Salah Regarding the Innovated Salat al-Ragha'ib

In the seventh century hijrah (after 600H) a written debate took place between al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam (d. 660H) and Ibn al-Salah (d. 643H). It is related that al-Izz, when he took occupation of leadership and giving sermons ended many of the innovations that the khawass and common people were upon (Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubra 5/80) and from those affairs was the prayer called *Salat al-Ragha'ib*, and he explained that it is **an evil innovation**.

This raises a very important and helpful situation which is that as there is a **great dispute** between the true followers of the Sunnah, the followers of the Righteous Salaf and those grave-worshipping Sufis of today [who make lip-service in their claim of following the Messenger (alayhis salaam)] about the understanding and application of term "bidah (البدعة)", then we find here a **great acid test** to find out the truth from the falsehood and the genuine from the fake. Since, these innovators claim attachment to al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, and in particular his classification of bidah (into wajib, mandub, mubah), then what better way to distinguish between what he actually means by it and how today's Innovators twist it except by taking an actual innovation he himself refuted so we can see his particular understanding and application of the word *bidah* in action in broad daylight, such that there can not be any dispute or argument thereafter.

So we have our **acid-test kit** ready, and we await for the great moment of truth. We advise all readers (those who have been misled or who hold on to doubts) to put aside all whims and desires and accept the truth when it becomes clear and to fear the perversion of the heart, for when one deliberately and obstinately rejects the truth which stares him in the face, Allaah causes his heart to become perverse and misguided and make him blind to the truth.

What is Salat al-Ragha'ib

This is an innovated form of prayer which involves many repetitions of certain Surahs (Surah al-Ikhlās and Surah al-Qadr) and certain remembrances in twelve rakahs at the end of which there are two prostrations (after the tasleem). It is supposed to be done on a Friday night, preferably in the month of Rajab, preferably when one has been fasting and performed just prior to breaking one's fast. This was being practised by the people in the time of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, and it was found in popular books such as *Ihya Ulum al-Din* of al-Ghazali. So he wrote a tract in refutation of it. Ibn al-Salah had a different view and considered it an acceptable ibadah (act of worship) and so he wrote a defence of it by writing against al-Izz's tract. Al-Izz then wrote another response and refuted Ibn al-Salah. Now al-Izz was not the only one who rejected it, it was also rejected by Abu Saamah Shihab al-Din al-Maqdisi (d. 665H), Abu al-Khair Qutb al-Din Muhammad al-Zubaydi (894H), Abu Bakr al-Turtushi, Ali bin Ibraheem al-Attaar, al-Nawawi, Ibn Taymiyyah, Zakariyya al-Ansari and others.

This debate has been referred to bin al-Yaafi'ee in *Mar'aat al-Janaan* (5/144):

'There occurred between him (al-Izz) and the Shaikh of Dar al-Hadith, the Imaam Abu Amr bin al-Salah very severe, intense disputations about that (the prayer) and each of them wrote in refutation of the other. And the investigating (scholars) judged the position of the Imam Ibn Abd al-Salam to be correct, and they testified for him with manifestation of the truth and correctness in those [raging] wars and battles.

A manuscript of these written debates is present and dated 712H being written by Ahmad bin Yahya bin Basharah, they comprise of three tracts (al-Izz's first tract, then Ibn al-Salah's refutation, then al-Izz's counter refutation). The manuscript also contains a fatwa of al-Nawawi in this very

This Contents of this Document Were Stolen From Bidah.Com (Salafi Publications) By Takfiri Thieves from the Derby Da'wah Project. The Takfiris Are Known to Steal Content From Salafis To Gain Legitimacy. matter. Al-Subki also cites the first tract of al-Izz in his Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah al-Kubraa (5/105-107) but it is deficient and not complete.

The three tracts together are very valuable and should really be translated fully, however, because that is outside the scope of this article, we are going to make a summarization of the essential points, and where certain statements are crucial, we will translate them and refer to the relevant page number in the published version.

Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam's First Tract

Before continuing, please remember that vague, deceptive slogan used by the Innovators, "If something has a foundation in the Shariah, then it is not counted as a blameworthy innovation but is a praiseworthy innovation" in order to confuse and deceive the people, and watch it dissolve and disappear like salt in water, as you read on. Al-Izz begins (p. 3) by explaining that innovation is of three types:

This is on the opening page, We will give a summary translation of it here:

First: That which is *mubah* (permissible) such as taking liberties in foods, drinks, clothing and marriage. He says there is no harm in this. It is clear from this that he has simply referred to matters which have the ruling of being *mubah* in the Shariah but with respect to which some excess is found, an innovated type not found before, and in this there is no harm he says. Clearly, there is no sanction here for any type of innovation in worship. **Second:** That which he says is *hasan* (good) and which he says is "every innovated thing which is in agreement with the principles of the Shariah, not opposing any of them." Then he gives examples such as the tarawih prayer. This in reality is not an innovation, because it has a precedence in the Sunnah, the Messenger prayed it in congregation in the mosque. But, leaving this aside, which has its own explanation as indicated, it is interesting to note what he gives as examples for this type. He mentions (p. 4) building hospices, schools and other deeds of goodness which were not found in the very first period, and which are in agreement with the Shariah in terms of the principles of cooperation upon piety and righteousness. Likewise, being occupied with the Arabic language, which is innovated, but without which the Qur'an cannot be reflected upon, and understanding its meanings. He says that innovating this is in agreement with the command to reflect upon the Qur'an and understand its meanings. Likewise, compiling the hadeeth, dividing them into that which is *hasan*, *sahih*, *mawdu' da'if*, that this is a good innovation because it preserves the speech of the Messenger (alayhis salaam) from anything which is not from it, or that something should be expelled from it which is from it. Likewise, laying down the principles and foundations of fiqh (jurisprudence), all of these examples are innovated affairs which are in agreement with the foundations of the Shariah and do not oppose anything from them. **Third:** He says "*that which is in opposition to the Shariah or necessitates [falling into] opposition to the Shariah.*" Pay attention to this as it is important. He says that entering into this category is the Salat al-Ragha'ib. And he explains (pp. 4-5) that this is for two reasons, the first that it is fabricated and a lie upon the Messenger (alayhis salaam) and secondly because "*alongside that, it opposes the Shariah from numerous angles...*"

He then explains (pp. 5-6) that it opposes the Shariah from numerous angles, some of which are connected to the Scholars and others which are connected to the common-folk. Those which are connected to the Scholars are of two types: a) that when a scholar prays this prayer he makes the common-folk think it is from the Sunnah, hence, by his action, he is lying upon the Messenger (alayhis salaam), and action can take the place of the tongue, b) that when a scholar prays it he is causing the common-folk to lie upon the Messenger (alayhis salaam) by them saying that it is from the Sunnah, and lying upon the Messenger is not permissible. As for what relates to the common-folk, he mentions eleven angles altogether, most of which relate to supporting the innovators in their innovations, opposing the Sunnah, opposing khushoo (in the prayer). Of significance though is what he mentions in angle eight, as it relates to the two prostrations that are said to be from

this prayer after the tasleem (salutations):

"For the Shariah has not made mention of nearness to Allaah with any isolated prostration which does not have an explained reason for it. **This is because nearness to Allaah has specified reasons, conditions, specified times and pillars without which it is not valid.** So just like nearness is not sought to Allaah by standing at Arafah and Muzdalifah and throwing stones at the pillars and making sa'ee between Safa and Marwa without being in the relevant state of devotion at the specified time, alongside its reasons and conditions, then likewise nearness is not sought to Allaah by any single prostration, even if it is nearness (i.e. prostration in and of itself is devotion, nearness), it does not have any valid reason (underlying it). **Likewise, nearness is not sought to Allaah through prayer or fasting in every time and moment. And perhaps the ignoramuses will seek nearness to Allaah by which which makes them distant from him, without them even perceiving it.**

Al-Izz here has explained that just because something, in its foundation, is an act of worship, it is not accepted unless it conforms to the Shariah in all its details and particulars. This dismantles that spurious, vague argument which we are demolishing in this article, as is clear to anyone with a sincere heart. A little later, al-Izz says (p. 9):

"And that which indicates the innovated nature of this prayer is that the Scholars who are the notables of the religion and leaders of the Muslims from the Companions, the Successors and the followers of the Successors, and other than them who have compiled books on the Shariah, alongside the severity of their eagerness to teach the people the obligations and the sunnahs, it has not been quoted from a single one of them that he mentioned this prayer (salat al-ragha'ib) and nor other than it in their book(s), and it was never addressed in their gathering(s). And practical experience makes it impossible for the likes of this to be Sunnah whilst it escaped those who are the notables of the religion, and examples for the Believers...

This is exactly what Ahl al-Sunnah say about a large number of the innovations practiced by today's Sufi grave and saint worshippers. So things should be coming more and more clearer now... and a page later, al-Izz drops a bombshell on the contemporary swindler, when he says (p. 10):

"And it is not for anyone to use as evidence what has been reported from the Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) that he said, *"The prayer is best of positions"* **because that is specific to a prayer that does not oppose the Shariah from any angle whatsoever, yet this prayer opposes the Shariah from the angles already mentioned.** And what goodness lies in opposing the Shariah?! And it is regarding the likes of this that he (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said, *"The most evil of affairs are the newly-invented ones, and every innovation is misguidance."* May Allaah grant us success in responding (to Him and His Messenger) and following (the Messenger), and protect us from deviation and innovation.

After this (p. 11) al-Izz goes on to mention how it has reached him that two men have given fatwa striving to affirm and corroborate this (innovated) prayer, he declares them to be in error, following desires and declaring to be hasan (good) what is not good in the purified Shariah and he advises them to return to the truth for "returning to the truth is better than wallowing in falsehood."

This is the essence of the first tract of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam and we can make some quick observations and points here:

First: Destruction of the claim that the "good innovation" intended by those Scholars who use this term refers to innovations in worship. Rather, they are referring only to affairs which come under al-maslahah al-mursalah - a matter of public interest, that is not specifically mentioned in the Shariah, but which is supported and comes under the general principles of the Shariah and its goals of preserving the five necessities (life, religion, intellect, wealth and lineage).

Second: That those who employ this phrase, "good innovation" to refer to an action which actually has a basis in the Shariah, like congregational tarawih prayer in the mosque, then they are using this phrase (good innovation) purely in its linguistic sense, and these affairs can never be called "good innovations (bidah hasanah)" from a Shariah point of view.

Third: Proof that al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam is refuting what enters into a bidah idafiyyah (relative innovation), that which from one aspect has a basis in the Shariah but which from other aspects differs and opposes the Shariah in its details and particulars. In fact, al-Izz applied the saying of the Messenger "*The most evil of affairs are the newly-invented ones, and every innovation is misguidance*" to this innovated prayer, despite it having a basis in the Shariah (in the sense that prayer itself is from the Shariah).

Fourth: All of the above shows clearly that when al-Izz classifies bidah into wajib (obligatory), mandub (recommended) and mubah (permissible) he did not intend it in the way today's Innovators have misappropriated it for their own ends. It looks like they have merely taken the wording of his classification, and thrown away the actual meaning and intent. Then through that mere wording, they have proceeded to deceive the common-folk. And they have done the same with the statements of al-Shafi'i, al-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar and others.

Ibn al-Salah's Refutation of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam

It is crucial for us to document Ibn al-Salah's rebuttal before we go on to mention al-Izz's counter-response, because it really helps us to **drive the stake into the argument** of the contemporary Innovators. We will simply summarize the response as concisely as possible, but will document the crucial elements by direct citation.

Ibn al-Salah's rebuttal is comprised of a response to an answer posed to him. He brings many points and we list them here:

ONE: He first makes the point that trying to reject this prayer by the argument that the hadeeth is weak or fabricated, and going to great lengths in this regard to warn the people from it is such that Allaah has made an example of such a person by His saying, "**Have you seen him who prevents the slave, when he prays?... Do not touch him but indeed prostrate!**" (96:9-19).

TWO: He argues that this prayer has become common and widespread amongst the people, he admits it only started around the fourth century, and that the hadeeth regarding it is indeed weak, or fabricated, and that just because it is weak, it does not mean that this particular prayer itself is invalid.

Pay attention now, this is where it get's interesting:

THREE: Ibn al-Salah then says:

"Further, the weakness of the hadith does not necessitate the invalidity of Salat al-Ragha'ib, and preventing from it, because it enters into the unrestricted command which comes in the Book and the Sunnah, the unrestricted [command] for prayer. Hence, it is recommended (mustahabbah) on account of the generality of the abundant texts of the Shariah which speak with the recommendation of prayer (in an unrestricted sense) and from them is what we have narrated from Sahih Muslim from the hadeeth of Abu Malik al-Ash'ari that the Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said, "*Prayer is light.*"

Then he goes on to quote the hadeeth, "... *know that the best of your deeds is the prayer*" and after this he cites another hadeeth as support. This hadeeth turns out to be weak, but it is interesting to see how Ibn al-Salah uses it as evidence, the hadith is reported by al-Tirmidhi (who

actually does indicate its weakness) from Aishah (radiallaahu anhaa) that the Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) said, "Whoever prayed twenty rakahs after Maghrib, Allaah will make a house in Paradise for him." Ibn al-Salah argues that since this has been specified between Maghrib and Isha, al-Salat al-Ragha'ib therefore enters into it, and likewise because al-Salat al-Ragha'ib is twelve rakahs, it therefore enters into this hadith! Then he says that all the other particular details and descriptions (meaning the surahs which are recited, and how many times and so on) represent a type of variation and specificity that do not prevent it from coming under this hadeeth or the general command to prayer. Then pay attention to what he says next:

"And how many an accepted prayer is there comprising of a particular description whose description has not been related in a specific text in the Book or Sunnah, it is not said (regarding it), "It is a bidah (innovation" and if someone was to say it is a bidah, he ought to say alongside it that **it is a bidah hasanah (good innovation) due to it returning back to a foundation from the Book or the Sunnah.**

Just stop and pause here for a minute or two, about the significance of what is going on here. Basically, Ibn al-Salah is laying down all those types of arguments which today's Innovators use to justify their innovations in worship! He continues:

"And from the examples of this is that if a person was to pray during the night with fifteen rakahs followed by a single tasleem only, and he read a verse from fifteen surahs, all in succession, making a specific dua in each rakah, then this prayer would be accepted, not rejected, and it is not for anyone to say, "This prayer is innovated, rejected because there has not been related any text from the Book or Sunnah with such a description (for it):"

Again, you need to stop right here and reflect upon the great significance of what is going on here! Look at the form of argumentation. He then says:

"And if a hadith was fabricated for it (i.e. this example he just gave of a particular form of prayer) with a chain of narration by which it was related, we would have invalidated the hadith and rejected it, yet we would not have rejected the prayer. And such is the affair for al-Salat al-Ragha'ib, without any difference, and Allaah knows best.

FOUR: After this, Ibn al-Salah address the objections related to the particular details of this prayer and he makes around six points aimed at justifying the details of the prayer. He addresses the issues of a) repetition of certain specified Surahs, b) the two isolated prostrations after the prayer, c) the requirement of a fixed number in terms of repetition of surahs and remembrances, d) that the amount of repetitions and remembrances required is burdensome, e) that it is done in congregation. He responds to each of these by providing evidence to explain them away (these arguments are all weak and will be refuted by al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam). Then comes the sixth one and this is again very significant and crucial so we will document it here and look at Ibn al-Salah's response to it:

"**The sixth:** That this prayer has become an newly-arisen openly proclaimed symbol (of the religion) and it is prohibited to manifest an open symbol in the religion.

And its answer is: That the issue in that regard returns back to the fact that it is an act of worship which has a foundation in the Shariah, which has become open, manifest and people's aspirations for it have become much. This does not necessitate that the good spirit around it should be killed off by tearing it out from its very root. This is because what the Scholars of the Muslims specialise in is the knowledge of fiqh (jurisprudence) and all other sciences of the religion, of laying down foundations, and making clarifications, and comprehensively addressing matters, and giving attention to detail, and authoring works, and teaching, all of these are open manifest and newly-arising symbols in the religion which were not present at the beginning of Islam. So why don't we say, "That is innovated and it should be avoided and any newly-introduced symbol ought to be

This Contents of this Document Were Stolen From Bidah.Com (Salafi Publications) By Takfiri Thieves from the Derby Da'wah Project. The Takfiris Are Known to Steal Content From Salafis To Gain Legitimacy. rooted out" - and Allaah knows best.

Pay attention again to this form of argument and compare it with what is found with today's Innovators and just wait and see till you read al-Izz's response, and when you have, then you will realize what great fraud has been perpetrated by today's Innovators and how al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam himself is free of these individuals, even if he himself is an Ash'ari Sufi with much for which he is to be refuted and criticized. This was the last of what Ibn al-Salah wrote and then his tract comes to an end, where he remarks:

"So it has become clear with what we have explained and laid down that Salat al-Ragha'ib is not to be put aside the rejected innovations! And that the newly-invented affairs have many different [but] resembling facets, whoever does not distinguish (between them) will be putting them (alongside innovation) without insight!! And Allaah, the Most High knows best.

We can now make summary points and observations here:

First: His acknowledgement that the ahaadeeth with respect to this prayer (Salat al-Ragha'ib) are weak or fabricated (he tends to the latter view). **Second:** His use of non-specific generalized texts that speak of the virtues of prayer as evidence for a specific act of worship with specific details and particulars having no mention in the Shariah, and declaring it to be mustahabb on account of those general texts. **Third:** His claim that this newly-introduced act goes back to an act of worship which has a basis (asl) and support in the Shariah. **Fourth:** Ibn al-Salah is a great scholar and we excuse him for the mistakes in this regard because the matter became confusing for him, and it may have been the case that since the people were attached to this worship, if they were to be discouraged from it they would lose a significant attachment to the religion, and Allaah knows best. In any case, of utmost importance to us, is the arguments he used to defend this practice, which are echoed in the arguments of today's innovators.

This now leads us to the counter-response of al-Izz bin Abd al-Salaam, and here we will see the deceptions and frauds of today's innovators pounded back into the dust from whence they came, and of no avail is it to them to rely purely upon the wording and labelling of al-Izz's classification of bidah (into wajib, mandub and mubah) whilst throwing away or concealing the intended meaning and intent of al-Izz.

Al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam's Counter-Response

Please take a seat and watch as the fraud of the likes of GF Haddad, Faqir, your Abu Layths, your Kellers and others from the generality of the Innovators is laid bare and buried beneath the ocean, walhamdulillah. So here is al-Izz's counter response, we will summarize it and any crucial parts will be documented:

The opening of his response:

"The newly-invented matters are of two types: The first of them is that which has been introduced from that which opposes [something from] the book, or [something from] the sunnah, or a narration, or [a matter of] consensus. This is the misguided innovation. And the second is that which has been introduced of goodness and there is no opposition to anyone of these things [qur'an, sunnah, athar, ijmaa']. This is the newly-invented matter which is not blameworthy.

The **first** type al-Shafi'i is speaking of refers to that which opposes the Shariah and Salat al-Ragha'ib would come under it just as anything else which opposes the Shariah in its details would come under it even if it has support in its basis, foundation as is clear. And as for the **second** type, al-Shafi'i is speaking of the maslahah mursalah (such as compiling the Qur'an, and laying down foundations of fiqh, and being concerned with Arabic, and preservation of hadeeth, and building schools and hospices and so on), and these are the affairs that al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam says are obligatory or recommended in his particular classification of bidah. And all of this has

nothing to do with innovation into matters of worship, which by now should be absolutely clear to the reader. This explains perfectly and fully exactly what is meant by these Scholars in their usage of the terms "praiseworthy bidah" and "blameworthy bidah"

Then at the end of his second tract (p. 40), al-Izz points out that Ibn al-Salah used to previously reject this prayer as a repugnant innovation, and he provides two verdicts given by Ibn al-Salah in that regard and makes a very brief commentary upon them, and then he closes his tract with supplication to Allaah and sending prayers and salutations upon the Messenger (alayhis salaam).

It's time to clean up the debris:

First: al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam has shown rejection against an innovation in his time upon the same usool (foundations) that Ahl al-Sunnah show rejection against all innovations which may have a basis in their foundations in the Shariah, but which opposes the Shariah in the details and particulars, this is what is called bidah idafiyyah (relative innovation). **Second:** He refuted the arguments of Ibn al-Salah, which are the very arguments used today and which are, very ironically, justified by today's Innovators because they claim that certain scholars have spoken of "good bidah (bidah hasanah)" or "praiseworthy bidah (bidah mahmudah)" - terms they clearly have not understood in the least. **Third:** A very clear explanation of exactly what al-Izz means by "bidah hasanah" and it is not what today's innovators claim it is, rather he is speaking about one of two things, either that which is in agreement with the Shariah having a specific evidence for it (like the congregational tarawih prayer) or that which is a maslahah mursalah, such as compiling the Qur'an and the various sciences which developed afterwards which became means (wasaa'il) through which the religion is preserved, and matters of public interest like schools, hospices and so on.

Important Clarification

An important note is due here which is that someone might say and ask: How come al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam and indeed others, may have spoken or acted upon other affairs which are innovations according to you, and yet here you are using their words to clarify what was meant by them when they speak of "good innovation" or "praiseworthy innovation"? And the answer is that the basis of innovations can be weak or fabricated hadeeths which some Scholars may have taken to be authentic as a result of which they are mistaken in that regard, and had they known or come to the conviction that it is a baseless hadeeth they would not have acted upon that action. Then there could be other reasons too, and it is possible that a Scholar show rejection against innovations, yet still be upon innovations himself in other areas. So the fact there may be found that which is considered innovation in our view with some of these scholars - which has its own particular explanation - does not change the correctness of everything which has preceded, and we are simply pointing out the truth that is evident from a Scholar's speech and writing - even if he may have errors elsewhere - and the truth is the lost property of a believer. Further, these scholars in themselves are not the reference point, rather it is the Book and the Sunnah and all their views and opinions are judged by the Book and the Sunnah, so what agrees with them, is accepted and what disagrees with them is rejected. And what we have presented here from al-Izz bin Abd al-Salam, conforms to what is in the Book and the Sunnah and what the Companions and the Salaf were upon with respect to the understanding and application of the word bidah in its Shariah sense.

Conclusion

One of the great doubts and arguments of the Innovators has been dismantled, destroyed and relegated to the dustbin of history, and it is not possible for anyone to continue to use this doubt except out of hypocrisy and wilful opposition and disdain of the Sunnah. Next, we will dismantle and destroy their use of the speech of Imaam al-Nawawi (rahimahullaah), by Allaah's aid and permission.