

الإبداع في كمال الشرع وخطر الابتداع

Series of the Writings of His Eminence The  
Shaykh (8)

## **Manifesting The Comprehensiveness of Islam And The Danger of Heterodoxy**

By His Eminence Shaykh

Muhammad ibn Sālih Al-‘Uthaymīn

May Allah forgive him, his parents, and all  
Muslims

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate,  
the Most Merciful

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His  
assistance, ask for His forgiveness, and we repent to  
Him. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our  
souls and from our bad deeds.

Whoever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and  
whoever He leaves to go astray, none can guide. I  
bear witness that there is no deity worthy of  
worship except Allah alone, Who has no partner,  
and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant  
and messenger. Allah sent him with guidance and  
the religion of truth. He delivered the message,  
fulfilled the trust, advised the nation, and duly  
strove for the sake of Allah until he died. He left his  
nation guided to the right path that is as bright as  
daylight; thus, whoever deviates from this path is

doomed to perdition. By means of it, he made clear what the Muslim nation needs in all its affairs. It is so clear that Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

ما ترك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم طائراً يقلب جناحيه في السماء إلا ذكر لنا منه علماً.

“The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) did not even leave a bird flapping its wings in the sky except that he mentioned to us knowledge regarding it.”

A polytheist once told Salmān al-Fārisi (may Allah be pleased with him): “Your Prophet taught you even how to relieve yourselves!” He replied: “Yes, he forbade us from facing the Qiblah [the direction of prayer] while relieving ourselves, or to clean our private parts with less than three stones, or to use the right hand to clean the private parts, or to use dung or bones to clean them.”

Indeed, you can see that Allah has clarified all fundamentals and subdivisions of Islam in the Qur’an. He explained in details all types of monotheism, and even the etiquette of assemblies and asking permission to enter places; Allah says:

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَقَسَّعُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ }

{O you who believe, when you are told to make room in the assemblies, (spread out and) make room. Allah will give you (ample) room (from His mercy)}

### [Al-Mujādilah: 11]

وقال تعالى: { يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّى تَسْتَأْذِنُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا ۚ هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ }

{O you who believe, enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them; that is better for you, in order that you may remember. And if you find no one therein, still, enter not until permission has been given to you. And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you. And Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.} [Al-Nūr: 27-28]

Even for the etiquette of clothing; Allah Almighty says:

{وَالْفَوَاحِشُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ اللَّاتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ }

{And women of post-menstrual age who have no desire for marriage – there is no blame upon them for putting aside their outer garments [but] not displaying adornment}

### [Al-Nūr: 60]

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَرْوَاجُكَ وَبَنَاتُكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا }

{O Prophet, tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be

abused. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.} [Al-Ahzāb: 59]

{وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ}

{And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment.} [Al-Nūr: 31]  
{And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.} [Al-Baqarah: 189]

There are many other verses that manifest the comprehensiveness and perfection of this religion, which stands needless to any addition, just as it is not liable to any deficiency.

For this reason, Allah Almighty said describing the Qur'an:

{وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ}

{And We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything} [Al-Nahl: 89] Everything people need, either in this life or in the Hereafter, was made clear by Allah Almighty in His Book, be that in an explicit text or an implication, spoken or understood from context.

Dear Brothers,

Some people, when they interpret the following verse:

{وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ}

{And there is no creature in the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Book anything. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered.}

[Al-An'ām: 38], they interpret the term 'Book' in the following part of the verse:

{مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ}

{We have not neglected in the Book anything} to mean the Qur'an. The correct interpretation is that the Book here refers to the Preserved Tablet. As for the Qur'an, Allah Almighty described it in a way more eloquent than negation in the following verse:

{وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ}

{And We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything} [Al-Nahl: 89] This is clearer and more eloquent than saying:

{مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ}.

{We have not neglected in the Book anything}.

Someone may argue: where do we find the exact number of the five daily prayers as well as the number of Rak'ahs [units] in each prayer in the Qur'an? How could it be possible that we cannot find the number of Rak'ahs of each prayer though Allah says about the Qur'an: {And We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything} [Al-Nahl: 89]?

The answer: Allah Almighty made it clear to us in His Book that we are obliged to follow what the Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said and what he guided us to do:

{مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا}

{He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah; but those who turn away – We have not sent you over them as a guardian.}

[Al-Nisā': 80]

{وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ}

{And whatever the Messenger has given you – take; and what he has forbidden you – refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.}

[Al-Hashr: 7] So, everything that the Sunnah explained was indicated by the Qur'an, because the Sunnah is one of the two parts of revelation that Allah sent upon His Messenger and taught him, according to the saying of Allah Almighty:

{وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا}

{And Allah has revealed to you the Book and wisdom, and has taught you that which you did not know. And the favor of Allah has ever been great upon you.} [Al-Nisā': 113] Accordingly, anything mentioned in the Sunnah is definitely indicated in the Qur'an.

Dear Brothers,

If this is decided, then did the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) pass away before explaining all the details concerning Islam? Absolutely not.

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) comprehensively clarified the religion; either by his spoken words, his deeds, or tacit approval of others' deeds; and either initiating the approval himself or through replying to a question. Sometimes Allah would send a Bedouin from distant places in the desert to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) to ask him about a certain thing in religion, which the Companions of the Prophet, who continuously accompanied him, would not dare ask. Because of that, the Companions used to be delighted when a Bedouin came to ask the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) about some issues.

A proof that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) left out nothing that the people might need, whether in their acts of worship or their transactions with each other or their livelihood, without clarifying it

is the verse in which Allah says:

{الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا}

{This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.} [Al-Mā'idah: 3]

Once this is established, then you, Muslim Brother, should know that an invention of a religious act in Islam, even with a good intention, is considered not only a misguidance, but also a direct contestation of the religion of Allah; and the inventor is accusing Allah of lying when He says:

{الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ}

{This day, I have perfected your religion for you...}

[Al-Mā'idah: 3] This inventor who invents a religious act, which is not part of Islam, is implying that Islam was not completed and that it needs his invention with which he seeks to draw closer to Allah, the Exalted.

It is quite strange that a man invents a new belief regarding the Essence of Allah, Exalted be He, or His Names or His Attributes, and then claims that, by doing so, he is glorifying and exalting Allah

as well as adhering to the saying of Allah Almighty:

{فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلّٰهِ أُنْدَاداً وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ}

{So do not set up to Allah rivals while you know.} [Al-Baqarah: 22]! It is astonishing how a person like this invents a new belief in Islam regarding the essence of Allah, which none of our

righteous predecessors and leading scholars adopted, and then he claims that he is glorifying and exalting Allah and following His saying:

{فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَاداً}،

{So do not set up to Allah rivals}, and he accuses whoever does not follow him in this regard as drawing a resemblance between Allah and His creatures or similar wicked descriptions.

It is also astonishing how some people invent heterodox beliefs in Islam in relation to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him),

and claim thereby that they are the ones who love and praise him, and that whoever disagrees with them in that religious innovation of theirs is considered hateful of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), among other accusations that they make against anyone who disagrees with their heterodox belief regarding him.

What is indeed astonishing is that such people say: we are the ones who glorify Allah and venerate His Messenger.

In fact, when they innovate heterodox beliefs in the religion of Allah and the Sharia (legislation) brought forth by His Messenger (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), they are – undoubtedly – putting themselves ahead of Allah and His Messenger. They do so while Allah Almighty says:

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْذِرُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ}

{O you who believe, do not put [yourselves] before Allah and His Messenger but fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.} [Al-Hujurāt: 1]

Dear Brothers,

I ask you and appeal to you by Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, to answer from your conscience rather than your emotions, and from your religiousness rather than your traditions: what do you think of those who innovate heterodox beliefs in the religion of Allah, whether related to the Essence of Allah and to His Names and Attributes, or related to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and then they say: We are the ones who glorify Allah and venerate the Messenger of Allah?

Are those worthier of being regarded as glorifying Allah and venerating the Messenger of Allah, or those who do not deviate as much as an inch from the Sharia of Allah? The latter say regarding the revealed Sharia: we believe what we were told, and we listen and obey regarding what we were commanded to do and what we were prohibited from doing. Regarding the rulings alien to Sharia, they say: we refrain and we avoid. We may not put ourselves ahead of Allah and His Messenger, and we may not introduce into the

religion of Allah what does not belong in it. Which of the two is worthier of being considered loving Allah and His Messenger and venerating Allah and His messenger? Certainly, it is those who say: we believe and acknowledge what we were told, and we listen and obey regarding what we were commanded to do and we refrain from what we were prohibited from doing. They say: we are of far less value than to introduce into the Sharia of Allah what does not belong to it, or to innovate into the religion of Allah what is not part of it. There is no doubt that those are the ones who have realized their insignificance versus the almightiness of their Creator. They are the ones who glorify Allah and venerate His Messenger, and they are the ones who showed their sincere love of Allah and His Messenger. It cannot be the ones who invent heterodox beliefs into the creed, or into words or deeds.

It is astonishing that those people are aware of the saying of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him):

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَمَحْدَثَاتِ الْأُمُور؛ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بَدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ»،

“Beware of invented matters [in religion], for every invented matter is a Bid'ah, and every Bid'ah is a misguidance, and every misguidance is in Hellfire.” They know that the phrase “every invented matter”

is inclusive and comprehensive as indicated by the most expressive term of inclusiveness; namely, the term 'every'. The one who spoke that word of inclusiveness is the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) who knows exactly the indication of this term, for he is the most eloquent speaker ever and the sincerest in advice. He says nothing without intending its meaning.

Hence, when the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:

«كَلِّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَالَّةٍ»

"Every invented matter is a misguidance," he knew what he was saying and he knew what it meant. And he spoke those words out of giving perfect advice to his nation.

If a statement features the following three elements altogether: perfect advice and will, perfect eloquence, and perfect knowledge,

it indicates that the statement is intended to have the meaning it indicates. After realizing this inclusiveness, is it correct to divide invented matters into three categories or five categories? This can never be correct.

The claim made by some scholars that there is a 'good Bid'ah' is based on either of the following scenarios:

1- It is not a Bid'ah, but they mistakenly think it is.

2- It is a Bid'ah, and consequently it is bad; but they do not realize that it is bad.

So, everything claimed to be a good Bid'ah should be met with the above response.

Accordingly, there is no leeway for the advocates of Bid'ah to claim that their Bid'ah is a good one.

Meanwhile, we hold in our hands that sharp cutting sword that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) left to us; his statement: "Every Bid'ah is a misguidance". That sharp sword was made in the workshop of prophethood and messengerhood. It was not made in a context of confusion; rather, it was made in the context of prophethood; formulated by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in an eloquent way. So, it is not possible that someone who is holding that sharp sword be matched with someone advocating a Bid'ah and claiming that it is 'good' while the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) says: "Every Bid'ah is a misguidance".

As if I can detect a voice echoing in your minds, saying: What do you say then about what the Commander of the Believers, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) – who was guided to the truth – when he ordered Ubay ibn Ka'b and Tamīm ad-Dāri to lead the people in Night Prayer in Ramadan? 'Umar came out while the people were gathered behind their imam

and said: "What a good Bid'ah this is! And the one that they miss because of sleeping [meaning prayer in the last part of the night] is better than this one [which they pray in the first part of the night]."

The answer to this question is of two aspects:

First: it is impermissible for anyone to oppose the words of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) by any means;

not even by the words of Abu Bakr, who is the best of this nation after its Prophet, nor the words of 'Umar, who is the second best of this nation after its Prophet; nor the words of 'Uthmān, who is the third best of this nation after its Prophet; nor the words of 'Ali, who is the fourth best of this nation after its Prophet; nor the words of anyone else, because Allah Almighty says:

{فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ}

{So let those beware who dissent from the Prophet's order, lest trial strike them or a painful punishment.} [Al-Nūr: 63] Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him) said: "Do you know what trial [in this verse] is? Trial is polytheism; perhaps if someone rejected some of the sayings of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), he might incur some deviance in his heart and thus be doomed."

Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) said:

“Stones are about to rain upon you from the sky; I say, ‘the Messenger of Allah (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) said so and so’ and you say ‘[but] Abu Bakr and ‘Umar said so and so!’”

Second: we know undoubtedly that the Commander of the Believers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb (may Allah be pleased with him) was among those who immensely glorified the words of Allah Almighty and His Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him).

He was known for committing to the limits of Allah Almighty to the letter, and he was described as one who obeyed the word of Allah Almighty very seriously. And many of us know the story of the woman who disagreed with him about dowry money – if that story is proved to be true. That woman argued with him using the following verse from the Qur’an:

{وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا  
أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا}

{But if you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a great amount [in gifts], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin?} [Al-Nisā’: 20] ‘Umar instantly decided against his intention to limit the dowry; but the authenticity of this story is questionable.

However, what is meant here is to show that 'Umar was extremely observant of the limits of Allah, and he would not transgress them; as it is unbecoming of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) – being who he was – to contradict the words of the master of all humans, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), and to describe a Bid'ah as 'good' while that Bid'ah was the one meant by the Prophet in his statement: "Every Bid'ah is a misguidance".

Rather, the Bid'ah that 'Umar described as a 'good Bid'ah' must be interpreted to have another meaning other than the one meant by the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in his statement: "Every Bid'ah is a misguidance".

'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "What a good Bid'ah this is!" to refer to the gathering of people behind a single imam after they were previously dispersed [in the Night Prayer Ramadan]. The source of standing for voluntary Night Prayer in Ramadan was the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). In an authentic narration by Al-Bukhāri and Muslim, 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) led the people in the Night Prayer for three nights and did not lead them in the fourth night, and he said:

«إني خشيت أن تفرض عليكم، فتعجزوا عنها»

“I was afraid it would become obligatory upon you, and you would not be able to keep it up.”

Observation of the Ramadan Night Prayer in congregation was the practice of the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him). ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used the word Bid‘ah to describe it because people after the Prophet stopped leading the people in night prayer and they became dispersed in the mosque; some would pray individually, others would pray in pairs, and some would pray in small groups. So, the Commander of the Believers, ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), decided, based on his sound reasoning, to gather people in congregation behind a single imam. Hence, this practice qualified as a Bid‘ah (innovation) in relation to the previous dispersion of worshipers. It can be classified as a nominal extra Bid‘ah rather than an original outright one. ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) started it because it was a practice observed at the time of the Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him), but was abandoned since then until ‘Umar reinstated it.

Following this reasoning, innovators cannot cite the statement of ‘Umar as a justification for what they considered to be a good Bid‘ah.

Someone may argue: there are innovated matters that Muslims accepted and practiced though they were not known at the time of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) such as schools, book authorship, and similar matters.

These Bid'ahs are deemed good by Muslims. They practiced them and perceived them to be beneficial. That said, how could you reconcile between the almost unanimously agreed-upon act by Muslims and the statement of the leader and Prophet of Muslims and the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds:

«كُلُّ بَدْعٍ ضَلَالَةٌ»؟

“Every Bid'ah is a misguidance”?

The answer is: In fact, this is not a Bid'ah. It is a means to something permissible. Means, generally speaking, differ according to time and place.

One of the established legal maxims states that means take the rulings of their objectives. The means to a lawful action are lawful while the means to an unlawful action are unlawful as well. Likewise, the means to a forbidden action are forbidden. Even if doing something good is a means to evil, it would be considered prohibited evil.

Listen to the following words of Allah, Exalted and Glorified:

{وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ}

{And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge.}

[Al-Anām: 108] Insulting the idols worshiped by the polytheists is not inherently an enmity but rather a rightful truth. However, insulting the Lord of the worlds is undue enmity and transgression. Therefore, since the praiseworthy insulting of the idols of the polytheists is a possible means to insulting Allah, the former became prohibited.

I used the above example as evidence of how the means share the rulings of their objectives. Schools and the authorship of knowledge, though they are innovated matters that did not exist at the time of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), are not objectives but means, thus sharing the rulings of their objectives.

Consequently, if someone builds a school for teaching prohibited knowledge, the building will be unlawful, and if he builds a school for teaching permissible knowledge, the building will be lawful.

If someone asks: How do you reply to the saying of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him):

«من سنَّ في الإسلام سنةً حسنةً فله أجرها، وأجر من عمل بها إلى يوم القيامة»، و«سنَّ» بمعنى: شرع؟

“Whoever introduces a good practice in Islam, there is for him its reward and the reward of those who act upon it until the Day of Judgment.”?

The answer: The very individual who said “whoever introduces a good practice in Islam” is the same one who said “every Bid‘ah is a misguidance”. The truthful Prophet cannot make contradictory statements that falsify one another.

Different statements [of the Prophet] cannot address a single topic with contradictory implications. Anyone who thinks the words of Allah Almighty or the words of His Messenger are liable to contradiction should reconsider, because this thought is driven by either inadequate research or negligence; there can never be any contradiction in the words of Allah Almighty or the words of His Messenger (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him).

That said, what proves that there is no contradiction between the statement that “every Bid‘ah is a misguidance” and that “whoever introduces a good practice in Islam...” is that the Prophet said ‘in Islam’ whereas Bid‘ah does not belong to Islam, and he uses the word ‘good’, whereas a Bid‘ah is not good. There is a significant difference between introducing a good practice and introducing a Bid‘ah.

There is an acceptable response in this regard: that the meaning of ‘introducing a good practice’ is

to revive an act of Sunnah that was abandoned and someone made it come to life again.

Following this reasoning, introducing a good practice would be nominal and relative – just as Bid‘ah is nominal and relative – with regard to whoever reintroduces a practice of Sunnah after it had been abandoned.

There is a third response indicated by the occasion when the statement was made; namely, the story of the delegation who came to the Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) suffering severe destitution.

The Prophet (may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) called upon people to donate to them. A man from the Ansār came with a parcel full of silver coins and he placed it before the Prophet whose face glowed with happiness and joy. The Prophet then said:

«من سنّ في الإسلام سنّةً حسنةً فله أجرها، وأجر من عمل بها إلى يوم القيامة»

“Whoever introduces a good practice in Islam, there is for him its reward and the reward of those who act upon it until the Day of Judgment.” In this sense, introducing a good practice means implementing that practice, not legislating it, because legislating a practice is prohibited by the statement: “every Bid‘ah is a misguidance”.

Dear Brothers, let it be known that true adherence is not achieved unless the deed is in conformity with Sharia in six matters:

First: the reason for it: if someone performs an act of worship for a reason that is illegitimate, it becomes a Bid'ah and will not be accepted by Allah.

For example, some people stay up for voluntary night prayer on the eve of the 27th of the month of Rajab on the pretext that it is the night of Mi'raaj (Night journey to Heaven) of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Certainly, Night Prayer is an act of worship, but when performed because of the anniversary of Mi'raaj, it becomes a Bid'ah since it has no authentic grounds in Shariah.

And this description; i.e., conformity of acts of worship to Sharia with regards to the reason for performing them, is a very important indicator that shows that many acts that are believed to be acts of Sunnah are actually acts of Bid'ah.

Second: type; the act of worship must conform with the Sharia as far as its type is concerned. If someone were to worship Allah with an act of worship whose type is not legislated, it would be rejected.

For instance, if someone offered a horse as a sacrificial offering, this offering would be invalid because it violates the Sharia-mandated type for

sacrificial offerings that must be from the livestock: camels, cows, sheep and goats.

Third: number; if someone wishes to increase an additional obligatory prayer, this would be a rejected Bid'ah, because it violates the Shariah-mandated number [of prayers].

Likewise, if someone were to pray Dhuhr, for example, five Rak'ahs, his prayer would be invalid according to unanimous agreement.

Fourth: manner; if someone starts Wudū' (ablution) by washing his feet then wiping his head then washing his hands and lastly his face, we would say: his ablution is invalid because it violates the manner prescribed in Shariah.

Fifth: time; if someone sacrifices an animal on the first day of Dhul-Hijjah, his sacrifice will not be accepted, because it has violated the Shariah-mandated time for offering sacrifice.

I heard that some people sacrifice sheep and goats in Ramadan in devoutness to Allah, but this practice is Bid'ah when done in this way; because nothing can be sacrificed in devoutness to Allah except the sacrificed animal in Dhul-Hijjah by pilgrims and non-pilgrims and the sacrificed animal when having a new baby. But sacrificing animals in Ramadan and believing to receive a reward for this sacrifice like the reward for sacrificing in Eid Al-Adha, is Bid'ah. As for slaughtering to get meat for food, it is permissible.

Sixth: place; if someone makes I'tikāf (seclusion in the mosque) in a place other than a mosque, his I'tikāf will not be accepted, because I'tikāf should only be done in mosques. If a woman, for instance, says "I want to make I'tikāf in the prayer place of my house," her I'tikāf would be invalid because it would be a violation of the Shariah-mandated place for I'tikāf.

Another example: if a man wants to make Tawāf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) and he finds the place of Tawāf crowded and decides to make it from beyond the mosque, then his Tawāf is invalid, because the legitimate place for Tawāf is the Sacred House (the Ka'bah).

Allah Almighty said to Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham):

{وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ}

{And sanctify my House for those who circumambulate it.} [Al-Hajj: 26]

Acts of worship do not become good deeds unless they meet two conditions:

The first is sincerity.

The second is adherence, which cannot be achieved except by meeting the six above-mentioned conditions.

I say to those who practice Bid'ahs and who may mean well and wish to do good: if you want what is good, then – by Allah – I know no better way than

the way our righteous predecessors (may Allah be pleased with them) have taken.

Dear Brothers,

Hold firmly to the Sunnah of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and walk the path of the righteous predecessors (Salaf) and do as they used to do, and see for yourselves; would it ever do you any harm?

Let me say – and I seek refuge in Allah from speaking without knowledge – that you find many people who are committed to practicing Bid'ah becoming lax in practicing lawful matters whose legitimacy was established.

After practicing those Bid'ahs, they meet the authentic Sunnahs with indifference. This is all a result of the harmful effects of Bid'ah on the hearts, as its harms are grave and pose immense dangers against the religion. Whenever a people introduce Bid'ah in the religion of Allah, they neglect an act of Sunnah that is at the same level of importance or more important than it, as remarked by some early scholars.

But if one feels that he is a follower not a legislator, he will attain thereby perfect fear of Allah, perfect submission, humility, and worship to the Lord of the worlds, as well as perfect adherence to the Sunnah of the leader of the pious, the master of messengers, and the Messenger of the Lord of the

worlds, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

I advise all my Muslim brothers, who believe that some acts of Bid'ah are good, whether they are related to the Essence of Allah, His Names, His Attributes, or those related to the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and revering him, to fear Allah and abandon Bid'ahs. I advise them to make their deeds based on following the Prophet rather than inventing new acts of worship; on sincerity rather than associating other entities with Allah in worship; on Sunnah rather than on Bid'ah; on what the Most Merciful likes rather than on what the Devil likes.

Let them see for themselves what they will feel in their hearts of safety, peace of mind, liveliness, tranquility, and great light.

I ask Allah Almighty to make us rightly-guided and to be sources of guidance for others, and to enlighten our hearts with knowledge and faith, and to not make the knowledge we have learned from evil consequences,

and to guide us to the path of His faithful servants, and to make us of His righteous allies and His winning party. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and his Companions.

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# **Index**

|                                                                               |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Manifesting The Comprehensiveness of Islam And The Danger of Heterodoxy ..... | 2 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

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