

**HADHRAT ABDULLAH IBN MAS'OOD**  
(Radhiyallahuanhu)

**THE BID'AH**  
**OF**  
**HALQAH THIKR**  
and

**A BAYAAN BY**  
**HADHRAT MUFTI SA'EED PALANPURI SB**  
(Shaikhul Hadith - Daarul Uloom Deoband)

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# HADHRAT ABDULLAH IBN MAS'OOD (Radhiyallahu anhu) AND THE BID'AH OF HALQAH THIKR

Among the strongest *dalaa-il* (proofs and arguments) in refutation of bid'ah acts such as collective Thikr performances in the Musajid which appear in the form of ibaadat, is the expulsion of a *halqah zikr* group from the Musjid by the illustrious Sahaabi, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

A group of people engaging in *halqah Thikr* were reciting *Lailaha illallaah, Subhaanallah, Alhamdulillah and Allahu Akbar* in chorus. They all recited the Thikr loudly and congregationally. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), the eminent Sahaabi of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), branded the group as Mubtadien (bid'atis) and ordered their expulsion from the Musjid.

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is the strongest and most direct rejection of any superficial act presented in the form of ibaadat. Any act which was not ibaadat to the Salf-e-Saaliheen but presented as ibaadat is bid'ah in the light of the Qur'aan, Sunnah and practice of the Salf-e-Saaliheen.

The type of loud collective Thikr (*Ijtima' jahri Thikr*) programmes which have of recent developed in the Musajid under the aegis of those who are associated with the Deoband School and the Chishti Silsilah, come conspicuously within the scope of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's condemnation.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has laboured in vain to dismiss the hadith and action of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood in the attempt to justify the loud collective Thikr performances in the Musajid. Once Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was informed of a group of people engaging in a peculiar form of Thikr. The leader of the group instructed his companions to recite *Laa-ilaha illaallaahu* 100 times. Then in chorus the group recited. Then he instructed them to recite *Subhaanallaah, then Allaahu Akbar*, each 100 times. This they did in unison. Meanwhile they were counting the number with pebbles. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), addressing them said:

*"Use the pebbles to count your sins. I guarantee that none of your virtuous deeds will be destroyed (by counting your sins). Alas! O Ummah of Muhammad! (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). How swiftly have you fallen in ruin! The Sahaabah of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are still numerous in your presence. The garments of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) have not become old and his unbroken utensils are still present. But you have opened the door of deviation."* (Musnad-e-Daarmi)

Allaamah Qaadhi Ibraahim narrates as follows:

*"I am Abdullah Bin Mas'ood. I take oath by Him (Allah) besides whom there is no deity. Verily, you have produced a dark bid'ah or you have surpassed the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).", i.e. in knowledge and practice"* (Majaalisul Abraar)

Shaikhul Islam Ibn Daqeeq presents the *riwaayat* as follows: *"I am Ibn Mas'ood. So, whoever knows me, knows who I am. Whoever does not know me, then know that I am Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood. Do you think that you are more guided than Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)*

*and his Ashaab? Verily, you have innovated a dark bid'ah, or you have acquired greater status in knowledge than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).” Ibn Mas'ood has refuted this act notwithstanding the probability of it coming within the scope of Thikr in general.” (Ahkaamul Ahkaam)*

Allaamah Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Khawaarzami narrates:

*“Thikr bil Jahr is haraam since it has been authentically reported that Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had expelled a group from the Masjid. They were reciting Tahleel and Durood loudly, and he commented: ‘I deem you to be nothing but mubtadieen (bid'atis).” (Shaami)*

In sheer desperation, the venerable Mufti Sahib, clutching at straws, first seeks to dismiss the entire Hadith by citing the version of Allaamah Aalusi in Ruhul Ma'aani. He also refers flabbily to some doubts cast by Allaamah Suyuti regarding the narrators of the Hadith. On the basis of these figments of conjecture, the venerable Mufti Saheb, concludes: “Thus it is clear that these words are not proven to be the words of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu).”

Despite his claim of lack of proof, the venerable Mufti Sahib in the very next line inexplicably contradicts himself by saying:

*“However, on the other hand we find that these words of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) are narrated in Sunan-e-Daarmi, Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani, thus how can it be said that these words are not proven to be those of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu)? From the narrations of Sunan-e-Daarmi, Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani it is proven that this incident (i.e. of the group of people who were occupied in making loud zikr in the Masjid) did take place; however it is not proven from any narration that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) commanded them to leave the Masjid. Yes, the narrations of Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq Tabraani suggest that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) commanded them to disperse. However one narrator from amongst the chain of narrators of this Hadith has been omitted. Therefore the fact that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) made them leave the Masjid is not proven from any authentic narration.”*

This strange warped argument is bereft of validity. First he maintained that “these words are not proven”. Then the Mufti Sahib himself questions this averment, and presents reliable Muhadditheen who have recorded the narrations in this regard. On the basis of the appearance of this narration in Daarmi, Musannaf of Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani, the venerable Mufti Sahib concedes: *“it is proven that this incident did take place.”* Now on what basis does the Mufti Sahib claim that *“this incident did take place”*? Obviously on the basis of the three reliable Hadith Kutub which he has mentioned. After admitting the proof for the occurrence of this incident, the venerable Mufti Sahib astoundingly claims the expulsion of the group is not proven. If the ‘expulsion is not proven, on what basis is the incident proven?

The incident comprises the expulsion as well. If the narration describing the incident is proven, then automatically the expulsion too is proven. The proof for the ‘incident’ accepted by the venerable Mufti Sahib, is the proof for the expulsion as well.

With regard to the narration in Sunan-e-Daarmi, the venerable Mufti Sahib has committed a grave injustice with his fleeting reference to it, and by a distorted presentation to convey the impression that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (radhiyallahu anhu) was not annoyed with them nor objected to their bid'ah. The hadith is recorded in Sunan Daarmi as follows:

*“Al-Hakam Bin Mubaarak narrated to us that Amr Bin Yahya said: ‘I heard my father narrating from his father who said: ‘We were seated at the door of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood before the evening Salaat. When he would come out, we would walk with him to the Masjid. Then (while we*

were waiting), Abu Musa Ash'ari (A Sahaabi) came and said: 'Has Abu Abdur Rahmaan (i.e. Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood) emerged?' We said: 'No.' Then he sat with us until he (Ibn Mas'ood) came out. When he emerged, we all stood up. Abu Musa said: 'O Aba Abdir Rahmaan! I have just now seen in the Masjid an act which is displeasing to me, (but) Alhamdulillah, I did not see anything but goodness.' He (Ibn Mas'ud) said: 'And what is that?' Abu Musa said: 'You shall soon see. I saw some groups in the Masjid sitting in a halqah (circle) waiting for the Salaat. In every halqah there is a man, and in their hands are pebbles. (i.e. in each group-leader's hand is a pebble). He says: 'Recite takbeer 100 times. Then they will recite takbeer 100 times. Then he says: Recite tahleel 100 times. Then they recite tahleel 100 times. Then he says: Recite Tasbeeh 100 times. Then they recite Tasbeeh 100 times.'

Ibn Mas'ood said: 'What did you say to them?' Abu Musa Ash'ari said: 'I said nothing to them in anticipation of your opinion or your command.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Why did you not command them to count their sins (with the pebbles), and assure them that their virtues would not be ruined (by counting their sins instead of making Thikr in this way)?'

Then he went and we accompanied him until we came to one of the halqahs. He stood by them and said: 'What is this that I am seeing you do?' They said: 'O Aba Abdillaah! These are pebbles with which we count the takbeer, tahleel and tasbeeh.' Ibn Mas'ood said: 'Then count your sins. I assure you that your good deeds will not be destroyed in the least bit (by counting your sins with the pebbles). Alas, O Ummah of Muhammad! How swiftly have you been ruined? These are the Sahaabah of your Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), who are still numerous among you. These are his clothes which have as yet not become old. These are his utensils which are not yet broken. (By this he indicated the close proximity to the age of Rasulallah – sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I take oath by That Being in Whose Hand is my life! Are you perhaps on a way which is more guided than the Millat of Muhammad? Or have you opened a doorway to deviation (dhalaalah)?' They said: 'Wallaah! O Aba Abdir Rahmaan! We intended nothing but goodness." Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood said: 'There were many who intended goodness which they never attained. Verily, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said to us: "Verily, there will be people who will recite the Qur'aan, but it will not go beyond their throats." By Allah, I do not know if perhaps most of you are from among them.' Then he turned away from them. Amr Bin Salmah said: 'I saw most of the people of these halqahs fighting against us (the Sahaabah) on the day of the Battle of Nahrawaan with the Khawaarij."

From the slipshod and sketchy manner in which the venerable Mufti Sahib has presented a shadow of this narration of Sunan Daarmi, the injustice is apparent. The narration emphatically registers the annoyance and criticism voiced by Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) when he beheld the bid'ah halqah Thikr which had been innovated. Hence, he described their act as the opening of the doorway of *dhalaalah* (deviation). While the actual words of expulsion which appear in other versions of this narration in other Hadith kutub, are not to be found in this particular narration of Daarmi, the fatwa of *dhalaalah* is stated emphatically by Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Should it be momentarily assumed that he did not physically expel the bid'atis from the Masjid, which according to the venerable Mufti 'is not proved', then at least the Mufti Sahib should concede that the '*fatwa of dhalaalah*' and his displeasure and other comments of criticism are proved beyond any shadow of doubt.

It is highly improper to refute the expulsion merely because the words describing it do not appear in Daarmi. The expulsion of the innovators is described in narrations appearing in other books of Hadith. There is no valid reason for faulting the claims of expulsion. And, even if the expulsion version is intransigently denied without basis, then too, the fact that the halqah Thikr

was branded ‘*dhalaalah*’ by this *Jaleelul Qadr* Sahaabi should be adequate for the comprehension of every unbiased Mu’min in quest of the Haqq.

Confirming the expulsion of the *halqah group of innovators*, the following is recorded in *Fataawa Bazaaziyyah*: “It is mentioned in Fataawa Qaadhi that raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. Verily, the narration from Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is Saheeh (authentic). He had heard a group had congregated in the Musjid. They were reciting Tahleel and Durood on Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) aloud. Then he reprimanded them and said: ‘We did not practise this during the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). I do not see you but as innovators (mubtadi-een).’ He continued repeating this statement until he expelled them from the Musjid.”

The venerable Mufti Sahib says: “Yes, the narrations of *Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and Tabraani* suggest that *Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (Radhiyallahu anhu)* commanded them to disperse.”

There is no substance in this argument. Assuming that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had not expelled the group, but had only ordered them to disperse, in which way would his action serve the cause of the venerable Mufti Sahib? Whether he ordered dispersal or expulsion, the reason for his action is the same. He entered the Musjid and saw the *halqahs* engaging in Thikrullah. He intervened, stopped them, severely castigated and reprimanded them as all narrations pertaining to this episode confirm. The salient factors in these narrations in *Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq* as well as in the narrations in the other kutub of Ahaadith, are:

- Do you think that you are more guided than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)
- You are hanging on to the tail of dhalaalah (deviation).
- You have innovated a dark bid’ah.
- Have you surpassed in knowledge the Sahaabah of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? If you have acted in conflict with the tareeqah of the Sahaabah, then you have gone far, very far astray.

The Hadith in *Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq* states: “Then he (*Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood*) ordered them to disperse.” In this narration there is no ‘suggestion’ of dispersal as the venerable Mufti Sahib claims. There is an explicit command to break up the *halqahs* and to disperse. Reading this narration in conjunction with other versions which explicitly mention expulsion, it should be obvious that the expulsion was preceded by dispersal of the groups inside the Musjid.

Even on the assumption that they were not expelled, but only dispersed, then too, the conclusion is clear, namely, Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) having branded their specific form of loud *halqah* Thikr as a dark bid’ah, terminated the activity. The participants were ordered to disperse. When at least the break-up of the *halqahs* and the dispersal of the groups are confirmed, then what constrained the Mufti Sahib to say that the narration only ‘suggested’ dispersal? The sheer desperation in the quest for ‘proof’ which in reality does not exist culminates in irrationality.

This narration pertaining to the dispersal/expulsion of the innovators is also narrated in *Al-I’tisaam* with an *Isnaad* which varies from the different Chains of Narration mentioned in *Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq*. The narration in *Al-I’tisaam* reads: “*Abdullah (Ibn Mas’ood)* passed by a man in the Musjid who was instructing his companions to recite tasbeeh ten times and tahleel ten times. Then *Abdullah* said: ‘Either you are more guided than the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or you are astray.....Have you been guided to that to which your Nabi was not guided? Verily, you have taken firm hold of the tail of deviation (*dhalaalah*).’”

The following narration also appears in *Al-I'tisaam*: “It was mentioned to Abdullah Bin Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that some people in Kufa were reciting tasbeeh with pebbles in the Masjid. He then approached them. Everyone among them had a heap of pebbles in front of himself. Then he (Ibn Mas’ood) struck them repeatedly with the pebbles until they were expelled from the Masjid, and he said: ‘Verily, you have produced a dark bid’ah and you have (conveyed by your actions) that you have superseded the Ashaab of Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in knowledge.”

This narration also appears in the kutub, *Al-Mudkhal*, *Az-Zuhd Li Ibnul Hambal*, *Talbees Iblees*, etc., and has been used by these authorities in refutation of bid’ah. They all have accepted the authenticity of the narration, hence it is presented as a basis for refuting bid’ah and practices which superficially appear as ibaadat.

In another desperate and ludicrous attempt to dislodge these narrations, the Mufti Sahib states: “However, one narrator from amongst the chain of narrators of this Hadith has been omitted. Therefore the fact that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (radhiyallahu anhu) made them leave the Masjid is not proven from any authentic narration.”

The Mufti Sahib’s claim is baseless. It is absurd to reject the authenticity of the Hadith merely on account of the name of one narrator not being explicitly mentioned in one Hadith. There are other Chains of Narration for this Hadith, which mention all the names of the narrators. In fact, in one *Isnaad* the person who had directly informed Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was another senior Sahaabi, namely, Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash’ari (radhiyallahu anhu).

The name of the supposedly ‘missing link’ is explicitly stated in the Hadith which is recorded in *Hulyatul Auliya* where it is mentioned as follows: “Qais Bin Abi Haazim and Abuz Za’raa’ narrated it from Abdullah Bin Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu). Then Abuz Za’raa’, referred to as ‘the man’ who came to him. Then he said: Musayyib Bin Najeeh came to Abdullah.” The full *isnaad* is: Sulaiman > Ali > Abu Naeem > Sufyaan > Salmah Bin Kuhail > Abuz Za’raa’ who said that Musayyib Bin Najeeh came to Abdullah Bin Mas’ood.....” (Hulyatul Auliya)

The claim of the ‘unknown’ narrator is thus dispelled. And, even if he is unknown, the accumulative effect of the different *Asaaneed* elevates the status of the Hadith.. Furthermore, this Hadith is presented by numerous Authorities of the Shariah in refutation of innovations. It has thus satisfied the criterion of *Talaqqi bil Qubool* which is a principle on the basis of which a narration is authenticated. The accreditation by the Fuqaha validates the Hadith and it is then not reliant on even an *Isnaad* for its authenticity. This principle has already been explained earlier on.

In *Ihkaamul Ahkaam*, the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is also cited in refutation of bid’ah. The Hadith is accepted as authentic, hence it is said in *Ihkaamul Ahkaam*: “Similarly, is the narration which is reported from Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu), which is recorded by Tabarani in his *Mu’jamah* with its Sanad from Qais Bin Abi Haazim.”

Fataawa Rahimiyyah also presents this Hadith in refutation of Bid’ah. Thus it is mentioned: “It is Mustahab to recite Takbeer along the route to the Eidgah, but not collectively in unison. Since it is not the established method of reciting it, the Fuqaha said that it is not permissible.”

In *Ahsanul Fataawa* Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad (rahmatullah alayh), after narrating the various versions and different *Asaaneed* of the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu), as well as the arguments of those who claim that these narrations are weak or unsubstantiated, says: “Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu), after branding as *mubtadi-een* (bid’atis) those who had engaged in loud collective Thikr, and reprimanding them, expelled them from the Masjid.” Commenting further, Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad said:

“Those who legalize Thikr sessions (loud collective Thikr) have presented three arguments against this narration of Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu):

- (i) There is no substantiation for this narration in the books of Hadith.
- (ii) This narration is in conflict with other authentic Ahaadith which explicitly permit Thikr bil jahr.
- (iii) The group of people (mentioned in the narration) must have added some act of bid’ah, hence they were expelled.

The first argument is incorrect because Tabaraani has narrated it with several *Asaaneed*. Besides this, most of the Fuqaha-e-Kiraam authenticated and validated this narration with the statement: “Verily the narration from Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is Saheeh.”

The second argument is an invalid refutation. (There is no conflict as alleged). Therefore, the third averment is applicable.” – *End of Ahsanul Fataawa’s comments*.

As far as the authenticity of the narration is concerned, the claims of it being unauthentic are baseless. A synopsis of the discussion on this issue is:

- Many Muhadditheen have narrated the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) in their compilations.
- No solid grounds for denouncing the authenticity have been produced. The only flimsy argument presented is that one narrator is ‘unknown’. This claim too is devoid of substance as the name of the supposedly unknown narrator is stated in one narration. There has been no serious assault on the *Isnaad*.
- The Hadith is narrated by different Chains. The accumulative effect is the elevation of the status to authenticity.
- The Authorities of the Shariah have utilized this Hadith as a strong basis for criticizing and refuting bid’ah, notably, loud collective Thikr in Musjids.
- The strongest argument in favour of the authenticity of the Hadith is the acceptance of the narration by the Fuqaha. They have utilized this Hadith in substantiation of their Fiqhi rulings. This by itself is the evidence for the authenticity of the Hadith.

Thus, the following appears in Qaadhi Khaan: “Raising the voice with Thikr is haraam. Verily, it has been authentically narrated from Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) that a group of people had gathered.....” Hadhrat Mufti Rashid Ahmad (rahmatullah alayh), Author of Ahsanul Fataawa, states: “Most of the Fuqaha had authenticated the Hadith with the comment: “*Verily, the narration has been authentically narrated from Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu)....*”

There is therefore, no scope for the claim that the Hadith of Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is not authentic.

*Ahsanul Fataawa* after presenting the aforementioned three arguments tendered in refutation of the narration of Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu), concisely dismissed the arguments as baseless. We have already expanded on the ‘authenticity’ question. Regarding the second argument (mentioned above), the venerable Mufti Radhaaul Haq Sahib states:

“*Answer 2: Ulama have stated that even if the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (radhiyallahu anhu) is proven, it contradicts many other authentic Ahaadeeth of Rasoolullah (Salallahu alaihi wasallam). There are also other narrations of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) which contradict this statement of his. For example, Hazrat Abu Waa-il (Radhiyallahu anhu) says: “Some people are of the opinion that Hazrat Abdullah Bin Mas’ood*

*(Radhiyallahu anhu) was not in favour of the practice of loud Thikr, but this was not so.....' Thus we see that the actions of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) contradicts his words, therefore preference would be given to his actions over his words."*

Firstly, the averment, "Preference would be given to his actions over his words", is an incorrect 'principle'. The principle is the other way around, namely, preference should be given to words over action. For example, a particular action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which conflicts with his commands, may not be cited to cancel the commands he has issued. Thus, Rasulullah's act of allowing Hadhrat Aishah (radhiyallahu anha) to view the Habshis engaging in a singing performance or his action of not reprimanding a group of females whom he had heard singing, may not be presented as proof for the alleged permissibility of singing and music. These isolated actions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) cannot be presented in refutation of the mass of Qur'aanic and Hadith evidence – Rasulullah's explicit commands – prohibiting music. There exists valid interpretation for the seemingly contradictory action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

Similarly, assuming that there is a contradiction between the words and actions of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), then preference will be given to his explicit words and commands, not to his actions which appear in conflict with the Qur'aanic and Sunnah evidence. His seemingly contradictory action will have to be incumbently reconciled with the clear commands and meanings of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, as well as with his own teachings and expressions.

Secondly, the claim of contradiction between the words and actions of Hadhrat Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is fictitious. The current dispute is not on the question of loud Thikr being permissible or not permissible. The permissibility of loud Thikr is not refuted. However, the venerable Mufti Sahib has diverted the discussion from the real issue of contention and has dwelt on another uncontested question, namely, permissibility of loud Thikr.

It is glaringly incorrect to say that Ibn Mas'ood's expulsion of the innovators is in conflict with his words and practice of audible Thikr. These are two different issues and different practices. There is no conflict here. Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) condemned, reprimanded and expelled the group, not on the basis of loud Thikr. He expelled them because of the new innovated form of the Thikr – *the halqah form in which they were reciting loudly in chorus*. This was a form which had no origin in the Sunnah, yet it was being given prominence and publicly portrayed as if it was a Masnoon act of ibaadat. If he had not nipped the bid'ah in the bud, the practice would have become entrenched in the Ummah. Citing from *Rasaa-il*, Mufti Rashid Ahmad of Ahsanul Fataawa states: "If the expulsion from the Masjid was literal, then it is probable that it was on account of their belief that (their new act) was ibaadat, and (on account of) teaching people that it is bid'ah. It is possible for a permissible act to become impermissible because of some accretion."

In fact, the venerable Mufti Sahib concedes the probability of an accretion which constrained Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) to evict the innovators. Thus, the Mufti Sahib says: "it was in order to prevent the door of innovation from being opened." This is precisely the primary reason for the criticism against the current loud collective Thikr programmes being conducted in the Musajjid. If the danger of the door of bid'ah opening existed during the time of even the Sahaabah, hence Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) deemed it appropriate and imperative to resort to the extreme measure of preventing the Thikr programme and expelling the perpetrators from the Masjid, then to a much greater degree does this danger exist in this age.

There is hardly any piety left in people. The venerable Mufti Sahib himself has claimed that the hearts in this era are hardened and spiritually corrupt. *Islaah of the Nafs* (self reformation) has

become a closed avenue. Even the so-called sheikhs of today lack understanding and expertise in this sphere. It is for this reason that we find them staging public Thikr performances as a subterfuge to conceal their gross incompetence and ignorance in this field. In fact, in giving prominence and in purveying collective loud Thikr performances in the Musaaqid, they are resembling the *juhala* to whom Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) has referred in relation to one such *Ijtimaai'* Thikr programme. (See page 278\*)

There is no doubt that these public performances are developing into entrenched hardcore bid'ah practices, hence even the venerable personalities who practise these non-Sunnah acts in public rush to vindicate their acts of display. They rush seeking the aid of even shaitaani radio stations of the fussiaaq and fujjaar in their desperation to sustain their bid'ah sayyiah. In fact, they not only embark on defending and justifying their unsubstantiated practices, they demote the actual Sunnah acts and bestow preference and higher status to their personal activities portrayed as Masnoon ibaadat which they back up with dreams which in turn are equated to the status of *Shar'i dalai-il*.

If the venerable Mufti Sahib's desperate defence of collective loud Thikr is viewed intelligently, without bias and emotionalism, the extremely low ebb to which he has descended in his quest for 'proofs' will be clearly discerned. When a senior Mufti fails to understand the simple mas'alah of the superiority of silent Thikr being a unanimous ruling of the Authorities of the Ummah since the age of the Sahaabah, and he labours painfully to elevate a permissible act of lower degree to a status above the Masnoon act, then the bid'ah dimension is conspicuous.

The venerable Mufti Sahib as well as others before him have conceded, albeit very reluctantly, that Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's extreme action was to close the door of bid'ah. Yet he sees no need to follow the example of this great Sahaabi to ensure that the evil gate of bid'ah is not opened in our community by initiating practices unsubstantiated in the Sunnah, and in emulation of the Ahl-e-Bareilwi bid'atis.

It has to be reiterated for the sake of greater clarity that Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's action was primarily constrained by the new form of the Thikr programme which the innovators had introduced. He therefore sarcastically instructed them to rather count their sins with the pebbles instead of using them for Thikr.

No one can accuse Hadhrat Ibn Masood (radhiyallahu anhu) of preventing Thikrullaah. Obviously this was not the purpose of the expulsion. He was preventing a bid'ah gaining a foothold in the community. When he did not prevent Thikrullah, the question is: What did he prevent? And, why did he expel 'thaakireen' from the Musjid? Only prejudice clouds the mind rendering it incapable of understanding such a simple issue. The expulsion was not because they were engaging in Thikrullaah. The action was on account of the bid'ah method which they had introduced.

There is therefore no conflict between Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's words and actions. His action was to prevent the door of bid'ah opening, not to prevent any type of Thikr which is lawful.

The venerable Mufti Sahib also presenting another flimsy argument attributed to Allaamah Aalusi (rahmatullah alayh), says: "*According to Allamah Aaloosi (Rahmatullah alaih), it could also be that Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud (Radhiyallahu anhu) prevented these people from making loud zikr in the Musjid as they were screaming when making zikr.*"

Nowhere in the many variants of the Hadith attributed to Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is it mentioned that these thaakireen were screaming when making Thikr. The inference is utterly baseless. There is no indication in any of the many narrations to suggest that they were 'screaming when making zikr'. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood's focus was on the manner in which

the programme was being executed. He clearly informed them that their practice was in conflict with the Thikr practices of the Sahaabah. He did not order them to lower their voices. He branded the whole Thikr practice of these people as a dark bid'ah. He remarked that they should rather use their pebbles to enumerate their sins. If it was *jahr-e-mufrit* which he was targeting, he would have emulated Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and ordered: *"Have mercy on your souls!"*. Thus, there is no substance in the figment offered by the venerable Mufti, viz., these people were perhaps screaming in their Thikr.

Presenting another legless and fallacious argument, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *"The narration of Sunan-e-Daarmi suggests that the people who were making loud zikr in the Masjid belonged to a deviated sect and their only intention was to initiate an innovation amongst Muslims."*

At the juncture when this episode had transpired there was absolutely no suggestion of them belonging to a deviate sect. Years later, these innovators had linked up with the Khwaarij to fight against the Sahaabah. Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was aware that the perpetrators of bid'ah would at a later stage develop into a sect of bid'atis. The Bareilwi bid'atis have developed their own sect. Now the Mufti Sahib is following in the same direction. This is the way in which sects develop. If this new bid'ah of public performances of Thikr becomes entrenched, then in the generations to come, there will be a Deobandi sect of bid'ah. The one bid'ah will lead to another bid'ah. The Deobandi bid'atis and the Bareilwi bid'atis will then become bedfellows and compatriots in a coalition aligned against the Ahl-e-Haqq who condemn all bid'ah and dhalaalah of whatever persuasion and breed.

The Mufti Sahib says: *"their only intention was to initiate an innovation"*. Now what was that act which was an innovation which those people had initiated? Was it their Salaat or their Qiraa't? What exactly was that act which even the Mufti Sahib says is 'an innovation'? Which act did Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) brand as a dark bid'ah? The act of bid'ah for which they were castigated and expelled was their loud collective Thikr in the Musjid. This is the precise reason for the desire in this era to prevent people from staging public performance of Thikr practices which have neither origin nor sanction in the Sunnah.

From whichever angle the practice of the deviates is viewed, even the Mufti Sahib is constrained to concede that their act of public, loud collective Thikr in the Musjid was bid'ah.

All the arguments presented in the exercise to dislodge and dismiss the Hadith of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) are misdirected and baseless. Some of these arguments would have been valid if this Hadith was presented in total refutation of audible Thikr. But this is not the case. The action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) is cited in refutation of bid'ah. Even the venerable Mufti Sahib and everyone else concede that bid'ah is haraam. Hence no one is justified to fabricate grounds for the dismissal of this narration when it is utilized to refute bid'ah, especially after the Fuqaha have authenticated it. Since we are not presenting this narration in an attempt to prove audible Thikr to be prohibited, the entire argument of the venerable Mufti Sahib is bereft of substance and direction.

The Hadith of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated by Tabraani by way of a number of *Asaaneed*, by Daarmi, Musannaf Abdur Razzaaq and by many other authorities, and authenticated by the illustrious Fuqaha does not negate audible Thikr within prescribed limits of the Shariah. Its focus was on elimination of bid'ah and closing the avenue of bid'ah. It is therefore absurd to produce in opposition to this narration, other Ahaadith from which permissibility of audible Thikr could be inferred.

Pursuing a futile argument in the bid to establish a futile aim, the venerable Mufti Sahib says: *“When an action is proven from the Glorious Qur’an or Ahaadeeth, then too it is not pernicious for a Sahaabi to classify it as an innovation.”*

The translator of the venerable Mufti Sahib’s booklet has incorrectly translated. The term ‘pernicious’ means ‘ruinous, destructive’. This word renders the meaning in the context of the discussion atrocious and incorrect. From the several examples the Mufti Sahib tenders to illustrate his statement, it appears that the word ‘proper’ should have been used by the translator. What the Mufti Sahib says is that it is not proper for even a Sahaabi to classify as an innovation an action which is proven on the basis of the Qur’aan and Ahaadeeth. This line of argument is ludicrous.

There is no Sahaabi who ever branded any such proven act or teaching of the Shariah as innovation. It is quite probable that a Sahaabi was unaware of something which another Sahaabi attributed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and on the basis of his unawareness he may have labelled the act bid’ah. Giving an example of his contention, the Mufti Sahib says: *“Similarly Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal (Radhiyallahu anhu) has said that to recite Bismillah aloud in Salaah is an innovation, but this very act is Sunnah to Imaam Shafi’ee (Rahmatullah alayh).”*

This is an extremely poor example proffered for the grave and ludicrous charge of a Sahaabi possibly having labelled as bid’ah an act which is proven by the Qur’aan and Ahaadith. The Mufti Sahib has made this contention in a weird attempt to show that Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood’s prevention and expulsion of the group of bid’ati thaakireen were in conflict with the Qur’aan and Ahaadith in view of the fact that these two primary sources of the Shariah ordain, exhort and emphasise the importance and significance of Thikrullaah. This attempt is untenable in terms of the principles of the Shariah. It is also despicable and lamentable. There is absolutely no justification for entertaining such a suspicion with regard to Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) or any other Sahaabi. All the examples of Sahaabah conflicting with the Qur’aan and Sunnah, which the Mufti Sahib presents are highly erroneous and ludicrous.

The action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhu) was not a measure of preventing Thikrullaah. It was an action to prevent and eliminate bid’ah. It is therefore extremely misleading to have even posited this ridiculous hypothesis. Hadhrat Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) did not clash with the Qur’aan or the Sunnah in his view. The Mufti Sahib’s insinuation is vile in the extreme. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *“All my Sahaabah are just. Whomever of them you follow, you will be guided.”*

It is a preposterous misconception to believe that a Sahaabi’s ruling could be faulted and discounted on the basis of Imaam Shaafi’s view. Despite Imaam Shaafi’s contention of the *Sunniyat* of reciting Tasmiah audibly during Salaat, the fatwa of bid’ah issued by the Sahaabi, Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) has precedence and greater validity. Hence, his view is the Math-hab of Imaam Abu Hanifah and of innumerable thousands of Fuqaha, and of the greater segment of the Ummah. The Mufti Sahib in having resorted to this type of confused argument in his quest for evidence to substantiate the collective loud Thikr performances, has belittled the lofty rank of the Sahaabah.

The crime is of an aggravated nature in view of the fact that the Mufti Sahib is a professed Hanafi who is supposed to uphold the Ruling of Imaam A’zam (rahmatullah alayh) based on the explicit pronouncement of the Sahaabi, Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). But, veering sharply from the Straight Path, he attempts to dislodge Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal and Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood (radhiyallahu anhumah) with the view of Imaam Shaafi (rahmatullah alayh), and with baseless interpretations respectively.

The Sahaabi, Hadhrat Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) cannot be indicted of holding a view in conflict with the Qur'aan and Sunnah. The probability of error is greater in the Shaafi' viewpoint than the view of the Sahaabi. He was fully entitled in holding the view of audible reciting of the Tasmiah in Salaat being bid'ah regardless of the viewpoint of Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh). It is bizarre to insinuate on the basis of Imaam Shaafi's view that the Sahaabi Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) had acted in contravention of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. In fact, Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh), on the very basis of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith proves that it is Sunnah to recite Bismillaah silently in Salaat. Each Math-hab has its own respective arguments. A Sahaabi's lofty status entitled him to brand a practice bid'ah even if such practice is valid in the view of other Sahaabah.

The venerable Mufti Sahib has clearly been unable to understand the basis of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mughaffal's pronouncement of bid'ah, and on the basis of this lack of understanding he entertains the idea that this Sahaabi had erred in saying that reciting Bismillah aloud in Salaat is bid'ah. However, the great Akaabir Ulama have not understood the issue in this manner. They accepted and endorsed Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's view. Thus, Allaamah Khalil Ahmad Ambetwi states in his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah* in refutation of the Ahl-e-Bid'ah who regard unsubstantiated practices as beautiful (Mustahsan) and even superior (Afdhal): *"The Sahaabi, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mughaffal, labelled as bid'ah and rejected loud recitation of Bismillah together with Surah Faatihah in Salaat inspite of Bismillah being a Thikr, and jahr with Thikr is not prohibited. However, since jahr has not been narrated (in the Hadith) at this juncture (of Surah Faatihah during Salaat), he branded it bid'ah. This Hadith is narrated in Tirmizi and other Hadith kutub. According to Imaam Abu Hanifah, reciting Takbeer aloud along the route to the Eidgah on the Day of Fitr is bid'ah because according to him silent recitation of the Takbir is substantiated at this juncture. Hence jahr (reciting aloud) at a juncture unsubstantiated by the Shariah is bid'ah despite jahr with Takbeer and Thikr being mustahsan."*

Elaborating on the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu), it appears in *I'laaus Sunan*: *"The Hadith indicates that abstention from jahr with Bismillah according to them (the great body of Sahaabah and Taabieen) was the inheritance from their Nabi, which their later generations inherited from those before them. This by itself is sufficient for this mas'alah..."*

The venerable Mufti Sahib has not conducted himself honourably in citing the statement of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu), He has attempted to convey the impression of this being an isolated view (i.e. reciting Bismillaah aloud before Surah Faatihah is bid'ah) of a Sahaabi being in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. Hence, he presented Ibn Mughaffal's proclamation of bid'ah as an issue devoid of substance which is unsustainable.

This attempt is a grave injustice committed by the Mufti Sahib. In view of this misrepresentation, there is a need to present some elucidation on this mas'alah so that Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's statement is viewed and understood in proper perspective.

The full text of the Hadith is: *"Ibn Abdullah Bin Mughaffal narrated: 'While I was in Salaat, my father heard me reciting 'Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem'. He then exclaimed: 'O my son! 'You are innovating. Beware of bid'ah!' He (Abdullah) said: 'I have not seen any of the Ashaab of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) abhorring innovation in Islam more than him (my father).' He said: 'I have performed Salaat with Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), with Abu Bakr, Umar and with Uthmaan, but I had not heard anyone of them saying it (i.e. reciting Bismillaah audibly). Therefore, do not say it. When you perform Salaat, then say: 'Alhamdulillah Rabbil Aalameen.'"*

*Ikramah narrated from Ibn Abbaas who said regarding reciting Bismillaah aloud: 'That is the act of the A'raab' (the simple and ignorant village dwellers).' Tahaawi narrated it, and its Isnaad is Hasan – Aatharus Sunan (I'laaus Sunan)*

Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) had proclaimed this act bid'ah on the basis of strong *dalaa-il*. It was not an isolated, weak view of an unknown Sahaabi. It is highly improper for the Mufti Sahib to attempt to dismiss Ibn Mughaffal's bid'ah proclamation with Imaam Shaafi's view. If according to Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh) reciting Tasmiah audibly is 'Sunnah', it does not detract from the validity of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's fatwa of bid'ah, and that is the fatwa which is the view of the Ahnaaf, and which should be the view of the venerable Mufti Sahib whom we understand is a follower of the Hanafi Math-hab.

It is 100% correct to follow Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) and hold the bid'ah view notwithstanding Imaam Shaafi's viewpoint. There is an avalanche of authentic and valid *dalaa-il* corroborating the view expressed by Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). Thus, for the Mufti Sahib to tender Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal's fatwa of bid'ah to illustrate his (the Mufti Sahib's) baseless hypothesis, is lamentable. His fallacious hypothesis is: *"When an action is proven from the Glorious Qur'an or Ahaadeeth, then too it is not pernicious for a Sahabi to classify it as an innovation."* Commenting on his own hypothesis, the Mufti Sahib says: *"From this we learn that an action does not become an innovation merely because a certain Sahaabi classified it as such."*

The error of the Mufti Sahib's conclusion is self-evident. As far as the 'certain Sahaabi' is concerned, he is correct and fully entitled to brand an act bid'ah. He does so on the basis of evidence in his possession. When a Sahaabi brands an act a bid'ah, he does not suck it out of his thumb. His fatwa is based on his knowledge of the mas'alah as he had acquired it from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The question of promoting and perpetuating his fatwa was the task of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen to whom we, the Muqallideen submit. The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were the authorities to research all the proofs and issue the final verdict which we have to incumbently accept. Since the view of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) has been upheld by the Aimmah Mujtahideen of the Hanafi Math-hab on the basis of the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, it was a gross and manifest error for the venerable Mufti Sahib to present the bid'ah classification of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu) to illustrate his untenable hypothesis.

The Sahaabi's classification to which the Aimmah Mujtahideen and Fuqaha of the Ahnaaf subscribe, may not be challenged and derogated by a Hanafi Mufti citing as his *daleel* the view of Imaam Shaafi' (rahmatullah alayh).

The other examples which the Mufti Sahib presented to substantiate his hypothesis also suffer the same fate as his misconceived illustration with the Hadith of Hadhrat Ibn Mughaffal (radhiyallahu anhu). In another similar misconceived example to denigrate the classification of a Sahaabi, the Mufti Sahib says: *"For example, Hazrat Ibn Umar (Radhiyallahu anhu) said that Salaatut Dhuhaa is an innovation, whereas it is infact Mustahab."* In terms of the Mufti Sahib's baseless hypothesis, the logic here is: There is consensus that Salaatut Dhuhaa is Sunnat/Mustahab. Despite this, the Sahaabi Abdullah Bin Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) classified it as bid'ah. The inference to be drawn from this line of reasoning is: An act is not bid'ah merely because a Sahaabi branded it bid'ah. The conclusion: Thus, Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Masood's classification of the group of thaakireen as being innovators is incorrect. Their act of loud collective Thikr in the Musjid is not bid'ah despite Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood's classification and his action of expelling them from the Musjid.

This conclusion extrapolated on the basis of the postulation of the Mufti Sahib is baseless since it is raised on a baseless postulate, which is his hypothesis mentioned above. Let us revert to the Salaatut Dhuhaa issue. It is inconceivable for a Sahaabi, especially a Sahaabi of the calibre

of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar, to classify a practice of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as bid'ah and to prevent others from practising such an established well-substantiated Sunnah.

While the Mufti Sahib has attempted to show the 'error' of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar's bid'ah classification, the Akaabireen had a different view. In fact they cited Hadhrat Ibn Umar's classification in refutation of the bid'ah of the Ahl-e-Bareilwis. Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ahmad Ambethwi states in his *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah*:

"It is in Bukhaari that Hadhrat Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) seeing people performing Salaatut Dhuhaa in the Musjid, said that this is bid'ah whereas Salaatut Dhuha is Sunnat and Mustahab, and going to the Musjid is also Mustahab. But, because this Salaat was not to be performed collectively in the Musjid, he branded it bid'ah, and he refuted it."

It is significant that Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil presented Hadhrat Ibn Umar's action in refutation of bid'ah whereas the venerable Mufti Sahib portrays it as an error – the error of classifying a Sunnat as innovation. This is indeed a misrepresentation of the action of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu). When he saw the prominence which was being accorded to a Salaat which everyone had to perform in the privacy of the home, he feared it developing into a bid'ah. Hence, nipping the feared accretion in the bud, he outrightly branded their performance as bid'ah. While the Mufti Sahib appears to be the first person to depict this action as well as the action of other Sahaabah as isolated and erroneous acts in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, the authorities of the Shariah in all ages upheld these classifications by the Sahaabah and provided appropriate interpretations. But, in view of the Mufti Sahib's desperate quest for 'dalaal' to bolster the current loud collective Thikr performances in the Musajid, he felt constrained to derogate even the fataawa of senior Sahaabah.

Another bizarre example which the Mufti Sahib produces to illustrate the imagined conflict of a Sahaabi with the Qur'aan and Sunnah, is his statement: "*In a similar manner, Hazrat Abu Malik Ashja'i (Radhiyallahu anhu) says that according to his father, to recite Qunoot in the Fajr Salaah is an innovation. This is also a Sunnah act according to Imaam Shaafi'ee (Rahmatullah alaihi).*"

It may be a Sunnat act for the Shaafi's. It is not a Sunnat act for the Ahnaaf. The Sahaabi who maintained that it is Bid'ah, possessed the requisite entitlement to have issued his fatwa of bid'ah. It is therefore despicable to present this Sahaabi's view in the bizarre attempt to illustrate the fallacious theory of a Sahaabi's view being in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith. The views of the Sahaabah are all based on valid Shar'i *dalaal-il*. Their views were not products of their whimsical imagination.

Underlying the presentation of such erroneous examples is the motive to illustrate the bizarre inference that Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas'ood's prevention and expulsion of the group of thaakireen was in conflict with the Qur'aan and Ahaadith, hence improper, and not worthy of emulation. This line of reasoning is absolutely absurd from the Shar'i point of view.

There is not a semblance of conflict between the action of Hadhrat Ibn Masood (radhiyallahu anhu) and the Qur'aan Majeed nor with any Hadith whatsoever. In fact, his action was fully in consonance with Rasulullah's numerous commands stated in condemnation of bid'ah.

It should be well understood that a bid'ah can be constituted of several perfectly lawful acts of ibaadat. These acts taken individually will be highly meritorious. However, when given a collective form, the ruling applicable to the accumulation or to the whole new act will differ. Hadhrat Allaamah Khalil Ahmad states in *Baraahin-e-Qaatiah*:

"If the form of the collective action is haraam, then the ruling pertaining to the collection (of acts) will change even if all the individual acts are permissible."

In the loud collective Thikr performances, the following acts are all permissible if done individually:

Thikrullaah, moderate jahr in privacy, non-Sunnah athkaar prescribed by the Mashaaikh. and Tilaawat of the Qur'aan. However, if these acts are combined in a collective form in a public performance in the Masjid, then the whole collection will be classified as bid'ah in the same way as Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) had branded the loud collective Thikr performance in the Masjid bid'ah, and in the way Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) classified the public performance of Salaatut Dhuhaa as bid'ah.

The venerable Mufti Sahib does concede the need "to prevent the door of innovation from being open". The criticism directed to the loud collective Thikr displays in the Masjid is precisely for this purpose – to prevent the door of bid'ah opening up. All such public performances unsubstantiated by the Sunnah ultimately develop into entrenched acts of bid'ah. This was the error of the Ahl-e-Bareilwi, and our Deobandi molvis of this era are now emulating that dangerous example.

## BID'AH

*Bid'ah* is the introduction in Islam of an unsubstantiated act/practice. There is no evidence for it in the Kitaab and Sunnah. Such acts transform the Deen into a new cult, hence perpetrators of Bid'ah will be buffeted away from *Haudh-e-Kauthar* by the Malaaikeh and even by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on the Day of Qiyaamah. Hadhrat Sahl Bin Sa'd (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated: "*Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: 'I shall be the first at the Haudh. Whoever passes by me will drink from the Haudh, and whoever drinks (from it) will never again become thirsty..... Then some groups will approach. I shall recognize them, and they will recognize me. (However) a barrier will develop between me and them. I will say: 'They are from me.' It will be said: 'You do not know what they had innovated after you.' Then I shall say to those who had wrought changes (in my Deen) after me: 'Begone! Begone!'*"

Those who had introduced changes in the Deen with their bid'ah practices will be deprived of the great fortune of Rasulullah's companionship in Qiyaamah. "*Every bid'ah is dhalaalah (deviation), and every act of deviation will be in the Fire*", said Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam).

*Bid'ah* is the destruction of Islam, hence Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "*Whoever honours a man of bid'ah has aided (the process of) destroying Islam.*" (*Mishkaat*) Bid'ah is not a trivial crime. It has far reaching evil consequences which uproot the Deen. The Sahaabah were extremely cautious with regard to innovation. Once someone invited a few persons for a feast on the occasion of the circumcision of his son. The Sahaabah objecting said that during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) there existed no such functions.

Commenting on the evil of *bid'ah*, Imaam Ghazaali (rahmatullah alayh) said: "If you do an act (of ibaadat) without the command of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and without following him (in an act), then you have committed a sinful act even if such act is in the form of ibaadat." (*Extract from Fataawa Rahimiyyah*)

Hadhrat Sufyaan Thauri (rahmatullah alayh) said that of all sins, Iblees loves *Bid'ah* the most. Sinful acts produce regret and remorse which constrain Muslims to repent. But *bid'ah* is regarded as 'ibaadat', hence the perpetrators of innovations are deprived of Taubah. It is therefore mentioned in the Hadith: "*Verily, Allah deprives every person of bid'ah from Taubah.*" Why would a bid'ati hasten to Taubah when he believes that his acts of bid'ah are ibaadat?

It is mentioned in *Majaalisul Abraar* that Shaitaan said: "I have broken the back of the progeny of Aadam with sins. They broke my back with Taubah and Istighfaar. I then invented for them such a sin for which they do not repent. These are acts of bid'ah in the guise of ibaadat."

# The Bid'ah of Halqah Thikr

A BAYAAN BY

**Hadhrat Mufti Sa'eed Palanpuri Sahib (Shaikhul Hadith of  
Daarul Uloom Deoband),**

**delivered at Darul Uloom Zakariyya**

".....The second topic is *Ijtima'ii* (congregational) and *Haiat-Ijtima'ii* (specific/peculiar form of congregation adopted for thikr). *Ijtima'ii* of Thikr (congregation of Thikr) is mentioned in numerous Ahaadith. One is: "Whenever people gather to make the Thikr of Allah Ta'ala, the Malaikah enshroud them..." This is *Ijtima'ii*.

What is *Haiat-Ijtima'ii*? I saw this *Haiat-Ijtima'ii* in the UK. There is a Maulana Isma'eel Wadiwala over there. He is a very pious person; a buzrug. I saw his *halqahs* (gatherings); a very pious gathering, something to be viewed. Then Maulana would say: "*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*", prompting everyone to repeat in chorus, "*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*". Then all of them in unison would chant: "*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*". This is Thikr in a specific congregational form (*Haiat-e-Ijtima'ii Thikr*). This is what Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) condemned and this type of Thikr is not correct.

On the other hand we have Thikr of a congregation, i.e. *khalwat dar anjuman* (individual practice in a gathering). For instance, we all are sitting and individually engaged in Thikr. Each person is occupied with his own Thikr; this one with his, that one with his. This is termed *khalwat dar anjuman*; and this *Khalwat dar Anjuman Thikr* is Thikr of a congregation (*Ijtima'ii Thikr*). This is *masnoon*. (*Musallis sitting in a Masjid engaging silently in their respective thikr, dua, tilawat and Nafil Salaat, come within the scope of individual Thikr in congregation – The Majlis*) This is mentioned in the *Nusoos* (documentations of the Shariah), whilst the peculiar/specific congregational form of Thikr was condemned by Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu).

Our Hadhrat Maulana (This is a reference is to Mufti Radhaul Haq Sahib and his book promoting Halqah Thikr in the Musajjid – Translator.) criticized Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood in his kitaab. I read it yesterday. Hadhrat's criticism was distasteful to me. (*It is in fact extremely distasteful and shocking since it is a criticism directed at one of the most senior Sahaabah who had the closest association with Rasulullah – sallallahu alayho wasallam – The Majlis*)

Hadhrat (i.e. Maulana Radhaul Haq) criticised Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) on the assumption that he did not understand this mas'alah (of Halqah Thikr). *Laa haula wala quwwata illabillaah!* If Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) never understood this mas'alah then who else is there to understand it? The two examples which Hadhrat (i.e. Maulana Radhaul Haq) proffered in condemnation of Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu), viz. *tatbeeq* (placing the hands together between the knees in Ruku') and the Imaam positioning musallis to his right and left – are not correct.

How is it possible for Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) who was the Companion of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) on journey and at home, indoors and outdoors, one who kept the pillow, miswaak, shoes and water (for Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam) to be unaware of how to make Ruku' and how to position two musallis!!! How is it

possible for one who enjoyed constant companionship in journey and at home; that Sahaabi whom Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) allowed entry into his home without taking permission, saying: “My presence at home is sufficient for you to enter without formalities”, one who enjoyed such close contact, not knowing glaring aspects of Salaat!!! (*Indeed such an idea is preposterously absurd – The Majlis*) Some suitable interpretation has to be offered.

Similarly, Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood’s condemnation (of Halqah Thikr) was justified condemnation; it was condemnation of the peculiar congregational form of Thikr (*which had been innovated – The Majlis*). He did not condemn the gathering for Thikr. (*Mark and understand the important difference – The Majlis*) Gathering for Thikr is substantiated by the Qur’aan and Hadith. People get together and engage in individual Thikrullah; every person on his own; *Khalwat dar Anjuman*. They sit together, whilst each one occupies himself with his own work. This is permissible on the basis of the *Nusoos*. It is proven from the Qur’aan and Hadith. However, a peculiar form of congregational Thikr, like I have mentioned about Hadhrat Maulana Isma’eel Saheb of the UK, was condemned by Hadhrat Ibn Mas’ood.” (*At this stage, Mufti Radhaul Haq raised an objection*).

*Mufti Radhaul Haq* : Hadhrat! You said that I criticised Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Mas’ood. What I wrote was that it was his personal view.

*Mufti Sa’eed Palanpuri*: That in fact is criticism. What you had written is in fact criticism. It has nothing to do with personal view. It is conspicuously obvious that a Sahaabi who had such close association with Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), could not have been unaware of salient and obvious aspects of Salaat? How can that be possible? You will have to offer some interpretation for this. You will have to proffer a plausible explanation.

*Mufti Radhaul Haq*: Then we will put it down to *azeemat*. It was a matter of *azeemat* for him.

*Mufti Sa’eed Palanpuri*: No! It was not even *azeemat*. The reality of it is that preservation of all the Ahaadith is compulsory. Understand this discussion well. Preservation of all the Ahaadith is compulsory. However, Hadith is not *hujjat* (Proof in the Shariah); *Hujjat* is the Sunnah. There is a difference between Hadith and Sunnah. Hadith is: *Maa udheefa ilan Nabiyyi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) min qualin aw fi’lin aw sifatin aw taqreerin* (a statement or an action or an attribute or condonation by silence ascribed to Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)). This is Hadith.

And Sunnah is: *At-Tariqatul Maslookatu Fid Deen* (an standard practice in the Deen). Thus, that which was attributed to Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) is Hadith, not necessarily a Sunnah. Those Ahaadith which speak of an action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) done to merely evince permissibility, are Ahaadith, not Sunnah practices. Take the once-in-a-lifetime instance of passing urine standing. It is not Sunnah and, hence Muslims do not urinate standing (*although reported in the Hadith*).

The specific, isolated action of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was due to some exigency. These are Ahaadith, but they are not the Sunnah.

Now, preservation of all the Ahaadith is necessary, but practice will be on the Sunnah. It is for this reason that after *Kitaabul Imaan*, etc. in *Mishkaat* the chapter of *Al’Itisaamu Bil Kitaabi Was-Sunnah* (Holding Steadfast onto the Qur’aan and the Sunnah) is mentioned. The wording is not *Bil Kitaabi Wal Hadith (With the Kitaab and Hadith)*.

Further, read the entire chapter of *Al’Itisaamu Bil Kitaabi Was-Sunnah*. There are six Ahaadith mentioned. Each one exhorts holding steadfastly onto the Sunnah. There is not a single Hadith in it which instructs holding firmly onto Hadith. None of the six Hadith speaks of this.

The virtues of memorizing Hadith, preserving Hadith, transmitting Hadith are cited (in the Kutub of Hadith). However, in so far as steadfast practical adherence is concerned, the word “Sunnah” invariably appears. For this reason we are the *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah*, not Ahlul Hadith.

There is a group known as *Ahlul Hadith*. They feast on every Hadith. Once, Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) came with his grand-daughter (to the Musjid). He performed Salaat carrying her. They (the so-called Ahlul Hadith) also come to the Musjid with their children. The children run in between the Saffs, jump and play around. When questioned they are quick to cite the Hadith. Simpletons! The Hadith merely indicates permissibility occasioned by need.

Sometimes it is possible that a person is in the fields with a child. To leave the child sitting aside is potentially dangerous. Someone may abduct the child. A wild animal may prey on the child. Or a woman may have a child with no one around to look after the child. What must she do? In this situation she can perform her Salaat whilst carrying the child. It is not permissible for her to allow her Salaat to become *qadhha*. The only condition required is for the child’s body and clothes to be clean.

Thus, Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) practically demonstrated this on one occasion for the benefit of all mothers and fathers of this Ummah. He never did this to encourage bringing children to the Musjid. If you happen to bring your kids to the Musjid then seat them one side. Don’t leave to run helter-skelter in between the saffs. Was this the way of Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), like these ghair muqallids who read Salaat carrying their kids and then let them loose to run wildly between the saffs wreaking havoc to everyone’s Salaat? (*Justifying their action they say*): “It comes in the Hadith,” Where does it come in the Hadith to let children run a racquet in the Musjid? Do just as it comes in the Hadith (i.e. when there is a need to bring a child to the Musjid then bring the child, at the same time overseeing the behaviour of the child in the Musjid).

Be that as it may, Rasulallah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) carried out many actions to demonstrate certain masaa’il. Consider what would mothers have done had Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) not practically shown what to do when a person has a child and there is potential danger to the child? Rasulallah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) demonstrated that the child should be carried, and in that state Salaat should be performed. There should not be *amal-katheer* (excessive action). The child is in one’s arms. When going into Ruku’, put the child down to stand next to one. Then lift it up again.

In any case, there is a difference between the Sunnah and Hadith. The Sunnah is: *At-Tariqatul Maslookatu Fid Deen* (the authoritative and standard practice in Deen). Hadith is of general import. And that was that age. Today, all the Ahaadith are preserved in the kutub, even the *mansookh* (abrogated) Ahaadith. The *Mansookh Ahaadith* are also Hadith, but they are not the Sunnah.

In the first era of Islam, however, the whole collection of Ahaadith had to be committed to memory. The mode of writing was not in vogue. Now, if it was a case of memorizing just a statement it does not register in the mind as it should. If, however, it was backed by practice, then based on the practice a person remembers the statement.

Once, a Sahaabi called out five Takbeers in Janaazah Salaat. People enquired after the Salaat. Hadhrat Anas said that Rasulallah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said five Takbeers. After the burial as people were returning he (Hadhrat Anas) said: “Remember this action of mine. Remember these five Takbeers which I called out.”

Once, Hadhrat Maalik Bin Huwairith went to a certain Musjid. The people requested him to lead the Salaat. He replied: “One of you lead the Salaat. And I will inform you why I am not going to

lead the Salaat". He then related to them the Hadith: "Whoever visits a people he should not lead the Salaat. Rather, one of them should step forward to perform the Salaat".

Students pose a question here that the Hadith does draw an exception when permission is granted. And here they even requested Hadhrat Maalik to be the Imaam in Salaat? Why did Hadhrat Maalik not perform the Salaat as Imaam then? The answer is that Hadhrat Maalik did not lead the Salaat so that people may remember the Hadith through this incident. A happening facilitates remembrance.

The same is the case with *Rafa' Yada'in* (lifting the hands during Salaat). There was *Rafa'* in the Salaat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). It is not, however, Sunnah.

*Aameen* loudly was also part of the Salaat of Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as a means of teaching the Ummah. When the age of the senior Sahaabah passed by and the age of the junior Sahaabah came people started to forget those Ahaadith. The junior Sahaabah gave practical effect to those Ahaadith for the sake of preservation. However, everything new is appealing; some people started regular practice of those acts. The age of the Mujtahideen came (and some among them) gave those practices the status of Sunnah. Such differences do occur.

Similarly, *tatbeeq* (placing the hands between the knees in Ruku') was part of Rasulullah's Salaat. Hadhrat Sa'd Bin Waqqas's statement that it is *mansookh* conveys that it was part of Salaat.

There are two people; two muqtadis and no place to stand in front or behind, or not just two but ten and no place either in front or at the back, then how should they stand? Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood explained the mas'alah that in this case, not only if there happens to be just two muqtadis, even if there are ten muqtadis they could stand to the right and to the left of the Imaam. And that action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood which Hadhrat Sa'd commented of being a former practice of the Sahaabah, Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood carried it out for students of the Deen to remember it. The action will thus be instilled into their minds. This is the reality of that practice, otherwise it just cannot be accepted that a Sahaabi who had permission to enter the home (of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam) at all times and whose title was, "The keeper of the pillow, water and shoes", was unaware of the manner of making Ruku'. How can that be possible? If Ibn Mas'ood did not know then no Sahaabi in the world knew.

And if he did not know how to stand in Salaat then no Sahaabi knew. Such a view is erroneous. A suitable explanation has to be searched for. There must have been some reason for him to do so. And the condemnation he levelled was not at a gathering of Thikr; his condemnation was directed at the specific form of congregational Thikr, and his condemnation was correct.

*Question:* In Pakistan Hadhrat Maulana Ihtishaamul Haq would recite *Laa ilaaha Illallaah*, whereupon the whole gathering would repeat in chorus.

*Mufti Sa'eed Sahib:* This is that peculiar form of congregational Thikr which Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) censured. I have mentioned that in the UK Maulana Isma'eel Wadiwala also makes Thikr in this fashion. (*Maulana Ehtishaamul Haq's peculiar act of thikr is not a daleel. His personal practice being in conflict with the Shariah, has to be set aside. The attempt was made to even scuttle the action of Hadhrat Ibn Mas'ood. By what stretch of logic then is Maulana Ehtishamul Haq's personal practice proffered as Shar'i proof? – The Majlis*)

The Thikr of our Akaabir was *khalwat dar anjuman*. Each person would be engaged in his own Thikr. No one had anything to take from another."

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