

Punishing the Heretical Muslims: Why and How?

Being a summarized translation and annotation from *Hajrul-Mubtadi'* of Ash-Shaykh Bakr Aboo Zayd, may Allâh be merciful unto him

By: Is'haaq b. AbdirRaheem, Aboo Aamir Al-Atharee - May Allaah forgive his both parents

First Published: Rajab 01, 1434, (11 May, 2013)

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Jumadal Uula, 1442 A.H

[December 2020 C.E.]

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Jumadal Ula, 1442 A.H. [December, 2020]

Ede, Nigeria.

Typeset: Al-Jazaree Concepts, publishers of www.simplysalafiyah.com, Nigeria.

Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

Introduction

Among what has weakened the Muslims is the improper attention given to the concept of *Al-Wala Wal-Bara* (loving and hating because of Allâh), between the Muslims and the Kuffaar, on one hand, and between the people of Sunnah and people of Bid'ah, on the other hand. This abnormality has led to the rise of such devilish slogans as 'mutual mercy,' 'uniting the minds,' 'eschewing differences and extremism,' 'humanity call' and other superficially beautiful but inherently destructive terms to Islam and the Muslims.

The aim of this piece is to educate the Muslims as to the legitimate ways they can remain protected from the touch of heresies that have spread among the Muslims. Da'wah in the path of Allâh must be free from heresies, *khurafaat* (unfounded stories), desires and misguidance. The belief and methodology of the Salaf must be implanted with obeisance to the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

One of the ways the Ummah of Islam can regain its lost heritage is by upholding the principle of *Al-Wala Wal-Bara* which entails apportioning legal punishment to the people of Bid'ah after warning and attendant neglectfulness from them. To do this is to enthrone the Sunnah and remove corruption and heresies from the land.

The Great Jurisprudence (*Al-Fiqh al-Akbar*) of Islam entails punishing the people of Bid'ah and desires; it possesses a lofty position in the Deen. In fact, it is the apex of *al-amr bil-ma'roof wa nahy 'anil-munkar* (commanding good and forbidding evil). According to the Qur'aan, Sunnah and the Consensus, punishing the people of Bid'ah (when they are

neglectful) is among the great foundations of the Deen. Many books of Aqeedah, such as *I'tiqaad Ahlis-Sunnah Wal-Jamaa'ah*, contain this fact.

The Salaf had dealt with the people of Bid'ah in various ways; in reportage, testimony, praying behind and over them (when they died), preventing them from assuming big positions such as being made the Imâm or judge, issuing warning about them and their Bid'ah, threatening them with isolation, among several other ways as stated in the books of Islamic Aqeedah.

This piece is specifically about how to censure (unrepentant) people of Bid'ah; that it is among the Usool of Islam. In this work, the principles guiding the concept shall be looked at. The work is written to safeguard the Sunnah, despise the Bid'ah and its people, and to protect the people of Sunnah from falling into heresies. An effort like this (at every point in time of Islam) is among the imperativeness of the Deen.

Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) talked about this phenomenon, inter alia: *'...heads of Bid'ah among the people of heretical thoughts opposing the Qur'aan and Sunnah, or those who came with acts of worship alien to the Qur'aan and Sunnah; to expose their state and warn the Ummah about them is an obligation as agreed by all the Muslim (scholars). It was said to (Al-Imâm) Ahmad (may Allâh bestow mercy on him): 'A man who fasts, prays or secludes himself (in the mosque), and a man who talks about the people of heresies, who is more beloved to you? He replied, 'The man who fasts and prays does that for himself alone, as for the one who talks about the people of Bid'ah, he benefits all the Ummah; he is better.'*

the people of Bid'ah who occupy the hearts." See *Majmool'fatawa* 28/131-232.

The Islamic motive behind abandoning the heretics

Both the one abandoning and the one being abandoned benefit from the act of abandonment, so also the generality of the Muslims. The concept, as stated earlier, protects the Sunnah from getting mixed with Bid'ah and desires. It always puts every sensible Muslim on the alert. It also ensures the prevention of the spread of Bid'ah. It makes the innovator to feel subjugated and weakened thus prevented from spreading his Bid'ah further. Allowing innovations (in the Deen) and innovators to reign is like empowering them in the sight of the Muslim public – which is generally short-sighted and can be influenced by anybody that comes on board with any strange thing. Therefore, the person of Bid'ah must be restrained from spreading his heresies; restraining him is more important than restraining epidemics.

Al-Imâm Ash-Shaatibee (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) while talking about the impermissibility of honouring the people of Bid'ah, said 'Sheltering him is honouring him, no doubt...the *Sharee'ah* commands us to despise him as much as we can such as beating and killing (as may be necessary and when we have the authority to do so). Therefore honouring him is abandoning what the *Sharee'ah* says and turning to what opposes it...honouring him destroys Islam in two ways: it makes him think he is the best among the Muslims, and that what he is upon in terms of Bid'ah is better than what others do; consequently people will follow him and turn away from the people of Sunnah. Two, if he is honoured because of his Bid'ah, that will embolden him to come up with more innovations that will eventually cause death to the Sunnah; and when the Sunnah is dead, that is the actual death of Islam.' End of quote.

Manners of carrying out *hajr* of the heretics

It is part of isolation to desert sins and their culprits be they innovators and sinners. This is what is known as *hajr tar'k* which every Muslim is expected to carry out. Allâh the Mighty said:

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى
يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِثْلُهُمْ

‘and it has already been revealed to you in the Book (this Qur'ân) that when you hear the Verses of Allâh being denied and mocked at, then sit not with them, until they engage in a talk other than that; (but if you stayed with them) certainly in that case you would be like them...’ [An-Nisa: 140].

He Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) said:

وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

‘...the *Muhaajir* is he who abandons what is forbidden by Allâh.’ Recorded by Al-Bukhaaree.

But when the recommended legal punishment is inflicted upon the people of Bid'ah, desires and sins, we call that *hajr ta'zeer*. This is aimed at correcting the culprits and to make them repent. *Hajr ta'zeer* is the focus of this work and this is what we say goes down to the foundations of the Deen.

Hajr can also be carried out to correct a worldly wrong. For instance, a Muslim may desert his fellow Muslim for any other interpersonal wrong done to him but the period of desertion cannot exceed three days except as otherwise stated in the Sharee'ah. Examples include that of a father to his son, or a husband to his wife. It was authentically recorded that he

Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) deserted his wives for a lunar month!

Said the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam), as reported by Anas bn Maalik,

وَلَا يَجِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجُرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثِ

'It is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother for more than three (days).' Recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

This kind of *hajr* is aimed at inculcating good habits in the people being abandoned.

[However abandoning the people of *bid'ah* and innovations has no day limits; it can be perpetual.]

Conditions to be met before *hajr*

Hajr should be carried out because of Allâh alone, and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam). No doubt, some people carry out *hajr* because of reasons more than the requirement of the Deen; such *hajr* will be of no effect as desired by the Deen.

Description of *hajr*

The basic rule is that *hajr* is done totally towards the innovator in the following ways:

Not sitting with him,

Not being his neighbour,

Not honouring him,

Not talking to him,
Not making tasleem to him,
Not mentioning his name,
Not giving him a cheerful face,
Not listening to his speech or read his works,
Not seeking his counsel,
Etc.

The Position of deserting innovations in 'aqeedah

As stated earlier, it operates upon the principle of *al-Wala Wal-Bara* which translates into loving and hating because of Allâh. The rule stipulates that the true friends of Allâh should be loved while the cronies of Shaytaan should be hated.

Anas bn Maalik (may Allâh be pleased with him) reported from the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam),

ثَلَاثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ بِهِنَّ حَلَاوَةَ الْإِيمَانِ : أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سَوَاهُمَا ، ((
وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لَا يُحِبُّهُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ، وَأَنْ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ أَنْ أَنْقَذَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ ، كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ
يُقَذَّفَ فِي النَّارِ))

'Three things whoever finds himself in them has attained the sweetness of faith: That he should love Allâh and His Messenger more than whoer is beside them, and that he loves a person basically because of Allâh, and that he hates drifting back into unbelief after Allâh has saved him from

it such as he hates being thrown into the fire.' Recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Muslim, Ahmad and others.

Also on the authority of Aboo Umaamah Al-Baahilee who said the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) said,

من أحبَّ الله ، وأبغَضَ الله ، وأعطَى الله ومنع الله ، فقد استكمل الإيمانَ

'Whoever loves, hates, gives and holds back because of Allâh has got the complete faith.' Recorded by Aboo Daawud and authenticated by Ash-Shaykh al-Albaanee in *As-Saheehah* 380.

Among what is intrinsic in the principle of *Al-Wala Wal-Bara* is, disavowing the people of Bid'ah and desires; it is obligatory. The disavowal is indefinite until they come back to what is proper.

Al-Imaam Abu Ismaa'eel As-Saaboonee (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said about *Ahlu-Sunnah* in his work, *Al-Aqeedah* pp 100-102, '*They (Ahlu-Sunnah) detest the people of Bid'ah who introduce into the Deen what is not part of it. They would not love them nor accompany them. They would not listen to their speech, sit or debate with them...and they (the scholars of Sunnah) agreed as to (the need to) subjugate the people of Bid'ah by disgracing, despising and estranging them...*'

If a person is seen sitting with people of desires, he should be warned to desist from the act otherwise the same rule should be applied to him.

Ar'fah bn Al-Abd, a popular poet, said, '*Do not ask after a man but his friends/everyone follows the ways of his friends.*'

Proofs for Hajr from the Qur'aan and Sunnah

Proofs have been cited from the Book of Allâh so also from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam). Meanwhile this add-up may serve some good purpose:

Al-Imâm Al-Bukhaaree (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) has the following chapters in his *Saheeh*:

'Chapter of What is Permissible of Hajr Towards a Sinner,' 'Chapter of He Who Does Not Say Tasleem to A Sinner and Does Not Reply His Greeting Until He Repents Clearly....'

Also in *Sunan Abee Daawud* there come the following chapters, **'Chapter of Abandoning sittings of People of Desires, and Hating Them,' 'Chapter of Avoiding Making Tasleem to People of Desires.'**

Even in the popular *Riyaadus-Saaliheen* of al-Imaam an-Nawawee, there is this chapter, **'Chapter of Prohibition from Hajr between Muslims Save Bid'ah of A Deserted Person or An Open Transgressor.'** In *Shar'hus-Sunnah Al-Bar'baahaaree*, there is **'Chapter of Abandoning the People of Desires.'**

Now some of the narrations from the Sunnah:

On the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allâh be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) said,

سَيَكُونُ فِي آخِرِ أُمَّتِي نَاسٌ يُحَدِّثُونَكُمْ بِمَا لَمْ تَسْمَعُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ فَأَيَّاكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ

'There shall be some people in the last of my Ummah who shall tell you what you have not heard nor your (righteous and knowledgeable) fathers; be wary of them, be wary of them.' Muslim recorded it in the *Muqaddimah* of his *Saheeh*.

Commenting on the hadith above, al-Baghawee said, *'The Prophet did inform that this Ummah would split, and that innovations (in the Deen) would appear. He said safety lies in obedience to his Sunnah and the Sunnah of his Companions. Therefore, it is upon the Muslims to abandon and disavow any person who exhibits acts of desire and innovation, or makes jest of any object of the Sunnah. Muslims should abandon such people while alive by not greeting them when they meet, or respond to their greetings until they stop their Bid'ah and come back to the truth.'*

Another narration:

On the authority of Ibn Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) said,

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ مَجُوسٌ وَمَجُوسُ أُمَّتِي الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا قَدَرَ إِنْ مَرَضُوا فَلَا تَعُودُهُمْ وَإِنْ مَاتُوا فَلَا تَسْهَدُهُمْ

'Every Ummah has its own Majoos (fire worshippers). The Majoos of this Ummah are those who say there is no predestination. When they are sick do not visit them and when they die do not follow their funeral.' Recorded by Ahmad and others, and declared hasan by Ash-Shaykh al-Albaanee in Saheeh Al-Jaami (5163).

Also on the authority of Alee bn Abee Taalib (may Allâh be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) said,

الْمَدِينَةُ حَرَمٌ مَا بَيْنَ عَيْرٍ إِلَى ثَوْرٍ فَمَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِيهَا حَدَثًا أَوْ آوَى مُحَدِّثًا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

'Madeenah is sacred; from Ayr to Thawr. Whoever introduces a Bid'ah therein or harbours an innovator, upon him is the curse of Allâh, the angels and whole of mankind.' Recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

It was also recorded that the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) once deserted Zaynab bint Jahsh (may Allâh be pleased with her) for close to two months when she said, '**I gave you that Jewess**' – referring to Safiyyah bint Huyay (may Allâh be pleased with her). [Aboo Daawud recorded the incident as reported by Aaishah (may Allâh be pleased with her)].

He (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) also forsake a man who erected a dome until the man demolished it. [Aboo Daawud recorded it on the authority of Anas bn Maalik (may Allâh be pleased with him)].

He (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) also deserted Ammaar bn Yaasir (may Allâh be pleased with him) by not responding to his greeting. The latter was guilty of perfuming his cloth with *khalooq* (a blended perfume of saffron). [Aboo Daawud and others recorded it].

The story of the man who was wearing a gold ring is well-known. The man came to the presence of the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) and he turned away from him (as it came in a narration. In another narration, he actually seized the ring from him and threw it away) until the man threw it away. The incident is recorded by al-Imaam Al-Bukhaaree in *Adab Al-Mufrad*.

So also is the story of Ka'b bn Maalik and his friends who unjustifiably stayed away from the Taabuk Expedition. The Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) and his Companions abandoned them for a long period of time until Allâh accepted their repentance.

Yet there are several other incidents from the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam).

How the Salaf related with the innovators

As for the practice of the Companions, this was very common.

Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him) saw Ziyad bn Hufayr put on a pallium (a type of cloth worn specifically by the Christians and Jews) and allow his moustache grow heavy, he did not respond to his greeting until he removed the pallium and reduced the moustache. The incident was recorded by Abu Nuaym in *Hilyatul-Auliya*.

[Today, Muslims see no problem with a Muslim man who knowingly shaves his beard].

Ibn Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him) deserted a man whom he told should stop throwing pebbles around the place, having told him that the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) prohibited the act. The man did not listen and Ibn Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him) said, '*I will never talk to you again.*' Recorded by al-Haakim.

Ibn Mas'ood (may Allâh be pleased with him) saw a man laughing as a funeral passed by, he said, '*I will not talk to you again.*' Al-Imâm Ahmad recorded it in *Az-Zuhd*.

Al-Qaadee Aboo Ya'laa (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, '*The Companions and the Taabi'oon agreed as to severing ties from the people of Bid'ah.*' There is a similar statement from al-Imâm Al-Baghawee, al-Ghazalee and Ibn Abdil-Barr; they all say there is a consensus over that.

Ibn Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him) sent a message to the people denying predestination as thus, '*I am free from you and you are free from me.*' Recorded by Muslim.

Al-Fudayl bn Iyaad (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, '*Be wary of whoever sits with a person of Bid'ah; such will lack wisdom. I love that there is a fortress of steel between me and a person of Bid'ah. That I eat with a*

Jew or a Christian is more loving to me than I sit with a person of Bid'ah.' See Shar'hus-Sunnah 130.

He (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) also said, *'Whoever leads a person to an innovator has deceived Islam. Be wary of sitting with people of Bid'ah, they dissuade from the truth.'*

Abdullah bn al-Mubarak (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Be wary of sitting with an innovator.'*

Sufyaan Ath-Thauree (s) said, *'Whoever listens to a person of Bid'ah has left the protection of Allâh. Such will be made to rely on it (i.e. that Bid'ah).'*

Al-Imâm Al-Laalikaa'ee (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) brought a report from Aboo Zur'ah (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) that he said, *'I did see Sabeegh bn Isr (the one beaten by Umar for asking unnecessary questions about the Qur'aan) in Basrah going about like a stray donkey. Anytime he came to a sitting of knowledge, the people there would stand and leave him. If he managed to sit where he was not known, those who knew him (from the other sitting) would call out: 'See the one beaten by Ameerul-Mu'mineen.'"*

Ibn Abee al-Jauzaa (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'That I sit close to monkeys and pigs is more beloved to me than I sit close to any of them (i.e. people of innovations).'*

Ibn Taawus (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) once covered his ears with his fingers when he heard a Mu'tazilee speaking.

Abdur-Razzaaq (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) forbade people to listen to Ibrâhîm bn Abee Yahya al-Mu'tazilee. He said, *'The heart is weak and the Deen is not about who dominates (in argumentation).'*

Younus bn Ubayd (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) used to say, *'Do not sit with a ruler nor an innovator.'*

Yahya bn Abee Katheer (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'When you meet an innovator on a route, take another road.'*

Ibrâhîm bn Maysarah (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Whoever honours an innovator has taken part in destroying Islam.'*

Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) forsook Abdullah bn Umar As-Sar'khasee for a period of time because the latter ate with a person of Bid'ah.

Al-Hasan al-Basree (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Do not sit with people of desires nor argue with them nor listen to them.'*

Aboo Qulaabah (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Do not sit with them, do not mix with them. I cannot guarantee that they will not drag you into their misguidance and make many of what you have known about the Deen confusing to you.'*

Al-Imaam Maalik (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) would not make *Tasleem* to the people of bid'ah. Ibn Daqeeq al-'Eed (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) commented on that, *'That was meant to teach them a lesson, and serve as his disavowal of them.'*

Al-Khattaabee (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Forsaking people of desires and innovations will remain as long as they do not make their repentance and return to the truth apparent.'*

Some other principles guiding deserting people in the Sharee'ah

There should be no exaggeration or going beyond the bounds of the *Sharee'ah*. It must be done with justice – the punishment must be according to the level of the Bid'ah. It must also be noted that not every

person of Bid'ah must be isolated; the public benefit must be weighed, the place and time of the hajr must also be looked at (explanation is coming below, Insha Allâh).

Above all, the person isolating the person of Bid'ah must be sincere in his action; he should not carry it out for ulterior motives.

It must also be noted that Bid'ah is different from ordinary sins, and that Bid'ah is of varieties – *al-mukaffirah* (the one that takes one out of the fold of Islam) and *al-mufassiqah* (the one that makes one a sinner but does not take one out of the *Deen*).

[The notion that any form of Bid'ah takes one out of the Deen is wrong and extreme. Those who exhibit such view have come with what the scholars of the Deen – Salaf and Khalaf – are not aware of. There are many youths in Nigeria, under the influence of a fellow in Ilorin, Nigeria, who promote the view that every form of Bid'ah is unbeliever that takes one out of the Deen. Those youths have several other thoughts alien to the way of the Salaf. May Allâh guide them and their teacher. Their way is a hallmark of the *haddaadis*].

A person of Bid'ah who publicizes his Bid'ah is also different from a person of Bid'ah who does not publicize his Bid'ah with respect to isolation. An open muftadi will invite others to it, so he must be restrained at all *Shar'i* cost.

Bid'ah Haqeeqiyyah (original bid'ah) must also be distinguished from *Bid'ah Idaafiyyah* (attributive bid'ah). Examples of *haqeeqiyyah* are *salaat ragaab*, *salat qadr*, *salat alfiyyah laytal nisf sha'baan*, *maulid nabiyy*, National Celebrations, etc. examples of *Idaafiyyah* are congregational dhikr, congregational prostration of thankfulness, repeating the words of the Imaam in Salat, etc. All of them

are serious Bid'ah but the *haqeeqiyyah* are more serious hence they require severer actions.

So also is how any bid'ah coming from a *mujtahid* (e.g. a scholar) is treated unlike the one from a mere *muqallid*. The one who knows is worse than the one who does not. The one who knows is potent so he must be treated more harshly albeit by other scholars. [It is not safe to argue with a person of bid'ah who is known to have some *shubuhaat* he calls knowledge with him].

As said earlier, the place of the Bid'ah is also a factor that must be considered. Basrah was said to be the home of belief in no *qadar*; Khurasaan was known for *Jahmiyyah* while Kuffah was *Shia*. (The bulk of Iran today is Shia; North Africa is predominantly Sufi, Egypt has a very high tendency towards *Ash'ariyyah*, etc). If the people of Sunnah are dominant in a location, then isolation of people of bid'ah will be effective but if they are not, it may not work.

All in all, be careful about Bid'ah and innovators. Give a proper attention to the concept of loving and hating because of Allâh, and be sincere.

The punishment for whoever aids the innovators

It came authentically from the Messenger of Allâh (salAllâhu alahy wa sallam) that he said,

الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

'A person will associate with those whom he loves.' Recorded by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.

Anas bn Maalik (may Allâh bestow mercy on him) said, *'Nothing brought joy to the Muslims as did this hadith.'*

Just as the innovator is punished, whoever ascribes himself to him knowingly or defends him or praises and extols him, or promotes his books, or hates the people of knowledge who talk against him, or seeks unnecessary excuses for him; such must also be punished; he is an ignoramus.

Said Ash-Shaykh Bakr (may Allâh bestow mercy on him), verbatim, **'In our own time, we are afflicted with people who praise the innovators and spread their works, and would not warn from their errors. Guard yourself from Aboo Jahl, the innovator. We seek refuge in Allâh from misguidance and its people.'**

Warning about spreading innovations

Finally, if Bid'ah and its people are subjugated already, do not talk about them. In this case silence may be golden.

[Once again, this was first published in 2013 on www.simplysalafiyah.com]