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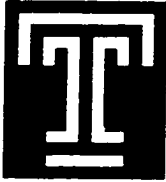
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Innovation and Tradition in Islam: A Study on Bid'ah As An Interpretation of The Religion In The Indonesian Experience

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Accepted by the Graduate Board of Temple University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

Date 6/5/98

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(Dean of the Graduate School)

**INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN ISLAM:
A STUDY ON *BID'AH* AS AN INTERPRETATION OF THE RELIGION
IN THE INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE**

A Dissertation

Submitted to

the Temple University Graduate Board

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

Ahmad Haris

May, 1998

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ABSTRACT

INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN ISLAM: A STUDY ON *BID'AH* AS AN INTERPRETATION OF THE RELIGION IN THE INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE

Ahmad Haris

Doctor of Philosophy

Temple University, 1998

Major Advisor: Dr. Khalid Blankinship

For many Muslim reformists, *bid'ah* (innovation) has been seen in an almost wholly negative light. Yet to reject *bid'ah* is to deny a dynamic force in life and to reject the spirit of the human intellect and reason (*ijtihād*), of which many of the reformists claim to be proponents. Thus, there are many discrepancies found in the way alleged innovation has so far been approached. New approaches are needed to shed some new light on this centuries-old question.

With special reference to Indonesia, the present-day largest Muslim country, this study has established new outlooks on *bid'ah*. First, it initially offers a "Qur'ānic conception of *bid'ah*," stating that the Qur'ān does not necessarily reject innovation altogether. One of the evidence is God being *al-Badī'* (the Innovator), an attribute with which Muslims are to emulate.

Second, the inspiring *Bid'ah Hadīth*, which says that "every *bid'ah* is an error," is thoroughly examined. Under the light of the Qur'ānic conception above and the

peculiarity of the Arabic language, the *Ḥadīth* is understood as a warning only against unwarranted innovations.

Third, this study establishes the positive relation between *bid'ah* and *ijtihād*, and shows that *ijtihād* can be a valid tool to justify or reject *bid'ah*. Thus, *ijtihād* can safeguard the religion against reprehensible innovations. By analyzing some actual alleged *bid'ah* practices, such as the *slametan* (Indonesian ritual meal) and other "religious" gatherings, it is found that many of these practices are justified through *ijtihād*.

Finally, works on *bid'ah* have only discussed the *bid'ah* issue theoretically. They rarely include field research in order to discover what people really understand by *bid'ah*. This study is complemented with such research, which makes it more comprehensive. Thus, it offers a new and better judgement on the issue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The accomplishment of this work would have not been possible without supports from many institutions and people to whom I wish to express my gratitude. First, my home institution, the State Institute for Islamic Studies (I.A.I.N.) in Jambi, has released me from my teaching obligation to let me pursue my degree at Temple University, Philadelphia. Similarly, several ministries and officials of the Republic of Indonesia have given me their full support. I am particularly thankful to Dr. Tarmizi Taher, Prof. DR. H.M. Chatib Quzwain, Drs. H. Abdurrahman Sayuti, Drs. H. Hasif Kalimuddin Syam, H.M. Saman Chatib, S.H., Drs. H. Zainul Imran, Drs. H. Mailudin Adn., DR. H. Sulaiman Abdullah, and Mr. Is Isnaidi. Temple University has also given me significant financial supports that enable me complete the required courses.

Second, my appreciation also goes to the respondents in Jambi from whom I draw important data for this study. Help and supports from my family should also be mentioned, without which my field research might have been more difficult. In the United States, I should acknowledge the supports of my friends in whose company the whole process of my study has become less stressful. Among them are the families of DR. Alwi Shihab, Dr. Nizar Shihab, Syahran Kasim, Ahmed Ahmed of Makkah Masjid, and the Indonesian

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Muslim community in New York. To all of them, I give my sincerest thank.

Third, I learn a great deal of academic insights and approaches from my professors at the Department of Religion, Temple University. I am specifically indebted to Professors Khalid Blankinship, Mahmoud Ayoub, and John C. Raines, who have been my supervisors since my first day at Temple (Sept. 1992) and who are the members of my Dissertation committee. I would like also to thank Professor Howard M. Federspiel of the Ohio University, the external reader of my Dissertation, whose expertise on Indonesian Islam has contributed much to the fine improvement of this work. The skillful editing of Rev. Judith Buck-Glenn of Temple University has also made this work closer to the American English style. I sincerely thank her for some invaluable lessons of writing and reasoning.

Finally, I thank my wife Rafidah (Era) and my son Ahmad Afwan Alwi (Aal) who had to live for some time without my presence. Now, their presence in the final stages of my study has given me a fresh spirit of life that I will share with them to create a brighter future.

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Arabic Letters	Transliteration	Diacritical Signs
ا	ʾ	
ب	b	**Short Vowels:**
ت	t	ـَ a
ث	th	ـُ u
ج	j	ـِ i
ح	ḥ	
خ	kh	**Long Vowels:**
د	d	آ ā
ذ	dh	اُو ū
ر	r	اِى ī
ز	z	
س	s	**Dipthongs:**
ش	sh	اُّو uww
ص	ṣ	اّو aww
ض	ḍ	اَو aw
ط	ṭ	اَّى ayy
ظ	ẓ	اِّى iyy
ع	ʿ	اَى ay
غ	gh	
ف	f	
ق	q	
ك	k	
ل	l	

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م		m
ن		n
و		w
ه		h
ي		y
ة		ah
ال	(article)	al

(even before the
anteropalatals)

Note: All Indonesian names are written in their Indonesian
spellings. Thus, 'Abd Allāh, for instance, will be
spelled Abdullah; Syamsuddin for Shams al-Dīn; or Ar-
Raniri for al-Ranīrī.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of Inquiry

The Qur'ān (the Book of the Revelation of God) and the recorded ḥadīth (the words and deeds of the Prophet Muḥammad [570-632]), comprise, for Muslims, the adherents of Islam, the two primary sources of their religion. Revealed to the Prophet over a period of 23 years (609-632), the Qur'ān consists of sacred stories, codes, and moral exhortations which spell out the tenets of Islam, mostly in general terms but sometimes in detail. Due to this more general nature of the Qur'ān and in conjunction with it, the Prophet came to explain and elaborate on the injunctions of God by his ḥadīth, which constitutes his *sunnah* (literally: Tradition). Like the Qur'ān, and justified by it, the *sunnah* is also intended to be observed and followed by Muslims.

Taken together, both the Qur'ān and *sunnah* also function as the two "standard" sources--the *Sharī' ah* (injunctions)--of Islam to which Islamic beliefs and practices go back.[1] Viewed in this regard, any belief or practice in the religion which finds no direct reference

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[1]*Sharī' ah* is widely understood as the totality of Allāh's commandments that comprise the whole of the religious, political, social, domestic and private life of Muslims, and the activities of the tolerated members of other faiths so far as they may not be detrimental to Islam. See, for instance, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 4th impression (1995), s.v. "Sharī' a."

from these sources is often considered as non-Islamic. The most popular term used to designate such belief and practice is *bid'ah*, which literally means "innovation." For many Muslims, an accusation of *bid'ah* is a serious one, for it may indicate one's deviation from Islam--a word whose literal meaning is submission.

Judging by the standard sources, *bid'ah* was not a significant issue during the Prophet's lifetime. This condition is fairly easy to understand, for God's Revelation (*wahy*) and the Prophet's *sunnah* were still being revealed to answer and anticipate the initial developments in Islam. But towards his final days, the Prophet is reported to have warned his followers (ummah) against *bid'ah*. This warning is found in a hadīth which will be identified later as the *Bid'ah Hadīth*. This warning may be considered as an indication of the growth of *bid'ah* or simply as a prophecy regarding later developments in Islam.

The condition, however, changed after the Prophet's death which marked the end of additions to both the Revelation of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*. His Companions, for instance, were challenged by several newly-emerging problems and issues which needed immediate solutions. One such problem concerned the preservation of the Qur'ān itself, a concern which arose during Abū Bakr's reign (632-634) because of fear of losing Qur'ānic passages after many Qur'ān reciters (*huffāz*) were killed at the battle of al-

Yamāmah.[2] In his reply to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's proposal
to collect the Qur'ān into a single volume, Abū Bakr (d.634)
is reported to have said: "How could you do something which
the Prophet never did?" Zayd ibn Thābit (d.665), the
Prophet's scribe, is also quoted as having said something
similar when the proposal was brought to him.[3] Although
both Abū Bakr and Zayd finally agreed to the proposal, their
initial reactions indicate their concern about avoiding
innovation or *bid'ah* in Islam.[4]

Another early concern regarding *bid'ah* was further
exemplified by the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb
(d.644), when he gathered the Muslims who prayed the Ramaḍān
night prayers, called the *tarāwīḥ* (literally: fanning), into

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[2]In al-Wāqidī's reports, out of 1200 Muslims who were
killed in the apostasy war of al-Yamāmah, 700 were the
ḥamalat al-Qur'ān (the memorizers of the Qur'ān). See
Muhammad ibn 'Umar al-Wāqidī (d.207/822), *Kitāb al-Riddah*,
ed. Yaḥya Wahib al-Juburi (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī,
1990), 146.

[3]This story is narrated, for instance, by Muḥammad ibn
Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d.870), *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans.
Muhammad Muhsin Khān, vol. 6 (Turkey: Hilāl Yayinlari,
1971), 477-478. For a critical discussion on this issue, see
John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'an* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[4]See, for instance, Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī
(d.1448), *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, eds.
Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khatīb et al., vol.8 (Cairo: al-Maktabat
al-Salafiyyah, 1987), 268-269; and Abū 'Abd Allāh al-
Zanjānī, *Tārīkh al-Qur'ān*, with a foreword by Aḥmad Amīn
(Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī li al-Maṭbū'āh, 1969), 62-64.

one congregation.[5] This is contrary to the practice by the Prophet who prayed these prayers alone. However, he was later joined by his Companions for several nights after which the Prophet did not appear at all. Commenting on his own initiative, 'Umar said the famous phrase: "This is the good *bid'ah*" (*ni'mat al-bid'ah hādhihī*).[6]

With the passage of time, and after Islamic literature began to emerge, Muslim scholars began to take on the issue of *bid'ah* in very serious expositions and to write about it.[7] Among the earliest treatises on *bid'ah* are *Al-Bida' wa al-Nahy 'Anhā* by Ibn Waddāh (ca.815-899), *Kitāb al-Hawādith wa al-Bida'* by al-Turtūsī (1059-1126), and *Kitāb al-Bā'ith 'alā Inkār al-Bida' wa al-Hawādith* by Abū Shāmah (1203-1267).[8] These efforts were followed by such scholars as Ibn

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[5]Ramadān is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims are required to fast during the day and are encouraged to perform various worships at night, including the *tarāwih* prayers.

[6]See, for instance, al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, 3:127; and Mālik ibn Anas (d.795), *Al-Muwatta'*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, vol.1 (al-Qāhirah: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1986), 114.

[7]According to Rispler, the emergence of what he calls the "*bid'a* literature" in the third century Islam (or the 9th century C.E.) occurred during the crystallization of Islamic law, at the time when this literature "could not be admitted into *fiqh* books." See Vardit Rispler (Haifa), "Toward a New Understanding of the Term *Bid'a*" *Der Islam* 68 (1991): 322.

[8]Muhammad ibn Waddāh, *Al-Bida' wa al-Nahy 'Anhā*, ed. Muhammad Dahmān (Cairo: Dār al-Safā, 1990); Abū Bakr al-Turtūsī, *Kitāb al-Hawādith wa al-Bida'*, ed. 'Abd al-Majīd Turkey (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1990); Abū Shāmah, *Kitāb al-Bā'ith 'Alā Inkār al-Bida' wa al-Hawādith*, ed.

'Abd al-Salām (ca.1182-1262), who wrote *Qawā' id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām*,[9] Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), the author of *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* and *Al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*,[10] al-Shāṭibī (d.1388) with his *Al-I' tiṣām* and *Al-Muwāfaqāt*,[11] and al-Turkumānī (d.unknown) who wrote *Kitāb al-Luma'* in

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Mashhūr Ḥasan Salmān (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Rāyah, 1990).

[9]Al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salām, *Qawā' id al-Aḥkām fī Maṣāliḥ al-Anām* (Dimashq [Damascus]: Dār al-Ṭabbā', 1992).

[10]Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm li Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm*, ed. Nāṣir ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-'Aql, 2 vols. (Al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1991). In Indonesian translation, see Ibn Taymiyah, *Tidak Meniru Golongan Kafir*, trans. Abdul Hamid (Solo: CV. Pustaka Mantiq, 1993). For an English translation, see Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taimiya's Struggle Against Popular Religion, with an Annotated Translation of His* Kitāb Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm Mukhālafat Aṣḥāb al-Jaḥīm (The Hague: Mouton, 1976). Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, with a foreword by Ḥasanayn Muḥammad Makhlūf, 5 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1966).

[11]Abū Isḥāk Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāṭibī; *Al-I' tiṣām*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Shāfī, 2 vols. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1991); and *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, ed. Muḥammad al-Khadr Ḥusayn (Cairo: Muḥammad ibn Ṣabīḥ, 1969).

1397.[12] Since al-Shāṭibī, many works on this issue have been produced, even to the present day.[13]

Concerns regarding *biḓ ah* have also arisen in Indonesia, an island country with the present largest Muslim population in the world.[14] Though their initial stage has not been verified, such concerns could have emerged there as early as the fifteenth century C.E., the century of the Wali Sanga (literally: nine saints), a group of saints believed to be responsible for the spread of Islam, particularly in Java. The concern involved with the publication of a heterodox teaching by Siti Jenar (d.unknown), another saint

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[12]Idrīs ibn Baydakīn ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Turkumānī al-Hanafī, *Kitāb al-Luma' fī al-Ḥawādith wa al-Bida'*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1986). For a brief description of this book, see Hamburg S. Labib, G.F.R., "The Problem of the Bida' in the Light of an Arabic Manuscript of the 14th Century," in *Proceedings of the 26th International Congress of Orientalists, 1964*, v.26, n.4 (1970): 275-279. Labib's comment (p.279), however, that the problems of *biḓ ah* are no longer accute today--between 1960s and 1970s--due to "the continous progress of modernisation," needs to be revised, since at least from the Indonesian context below, concerns on *biḓ ah* are as alive as ever. See also Maribel Fierro, "The Treatises Against Innovations (*Kutub al-Bada'*)" *Der Islam* 69, n.2 (1992): 238-239.

[13]For a critical discussion of works on *biḓ ah*, see Fierro, "The Treatises," 205-246. According to Rispler, "Toward a New Understanding," 323, the structure and general message between medieval and modern books on *biḓ ah* are basically the same, in which quotations from earlier leading authors are frequently found.

[14]It is reported that 87.21% of Indonesia 200 million population are Muslims. See, for instance, Tarmizi Taher, *Pancasila Heading Toward the 21st Century for the Enhancement of Religious Harmony*, originally a public lecture delivered at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut (March 6, 1997): 1.

(*walī*) of the century, who publicly claimed himself as the
Truth, a claim shocking to Muslims, who regard God alone as
The Truth.[15]

Attention to *bidʿah* issues became more apparent and
intensified in the late nineteenth and the first half of the
twentieth century, when Middle East reformist ideas began to
spread through Indonesia. In Sumatra, the *Kaum Muda* (The
Young Group), a reformist movement, was sponsored by three
well-known figures: Syeikh Muhammad Jamil Jambek (1860-
1947), Haji Abdullah Ahmad (1878-1933), and Syeikh Abdul
Karim Amrullah or Haji Rasul (1879-1945), who introduced the
reformism of the Egyptian Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905).[16]

As defined by Federspiel, *Kaum Muda* is

> The modernist Muslim movement of the twentieth century
> which emphasized revitalization of Islamic thinking,
> particularly toward scientific and sociological
> modernization of Muslim societies, but based on a
> modern interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Traditions
> of the Prophet.[17]

The opposite movement is known as *Kaum Tua* (The Old Group)
which is defined as

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[15]See p.60 below.

[16]See Hamka, *Pengaruh Muhammad 'Abduh di Indonesia*
(Jakarta: Tintamas, 1961): 10-11.

[17]Howard M. Federspiel, *A Dictionary of Indonesian
Islam*, Southeast Asia Series, no. 94 (Athens: Ohio
University Center for International Studies, 1995), 124. For
a detailed study on the *Kaum Muda* movement, see Taufik
Abdullah, *Schools and Politics: The Kaum Muda Movement in
West Sumatra (1927-1933)* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia
Project, 1971).

The traditionalist Muslim group of the twentieth
century that insists on application of the teachings of
the great religious teachers of the Islamic past. While
not denying the need for modernization in general,
members of the group deny that religious principles
need review; those principles simply need to be
applied.[18]

According to Siradjuddin Abbas (1905-1980), a renowned

Indonesian Muslim traditionalist, both terms emerged as a

result of religious debates and conflicts over the issues of

bid' ah.[19]

In Java, concerns regarding bid' ah at both individual

and organizational levels were promulgated by such reform

organizations as Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad, and PERSIS.

Muhammadiyah (Followers of Muḥammad) was founded in 1912 by

Kiyai Haji Ahmad Dahlan (1869-1923). One of its divisions,

called the Madjlis Tardjih (Council of Opinions), was

responsible for explaining religious issues, one of which is

bid' ah.[20] In 1958, this division published a small booklet

entitled Risalah Bid'ah (Treatise on Bid' ah) which was

apparently prepared shortly after the national conference of

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[18]Federspiel, Dictionary, 124.

[19]Siradjuddin Abbas, 40 Masalah Agama, vol.3 (Jakarta:
Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1974), 150-151.

[20]See, for instance, Deliar Noer, The Modernist Muslim
Movement in Indonesia: 1900-1942 (London: Oxford University
Press, 1973).

the Madjlis held between December 27, 1957 and January 1, 1958.[21]

Al-Irsyad (Arabic *al-irshād*: The Guidance), was founded in 1915 by Ahmad ibn Muhammad Surkatī al-Anṣārī (d.1943), an Arab of Sudanese origin. Surkatī was concerned primarily with the issues of *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, insisting that original interpretation (*ijtihād*) was preferrable to total acceptance to previous authority (*taqlīd*). The debate spilled over into some discussions of questionable practices, such as visiting the tombs and making *tawassul* (a fervent plea) through dead prophets and saints which Al-Irsyad regarded as *bidʿah*.[22]

PERSIS (Acronym for *Persatuan Islam* [Islamic Unity]), was founded in 1923. Ahmad Hassan (1887-1958), an independent Muslim thinker and merchant who joined this organization in 1925, eventually became one the its leading members, especially concerning religious issues. For its purpose of purifying Islam, this reformist organization published several magazines in the 1930's such as *Pembela Islam* (Islamic Guardian), *Al-Lisan* (The Tongue), *Al-Fatwa* (The Legal Decision), and *Soeal Djawab* (Question and

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[21]Madjlis Tabligh Muhammadiyah, *Risalah Bid'ah ke 1* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Pimpinan Muhammadijah, 1958).

[22]See, for instance, G.F. Pijper, *Beberapa Studi tentang Sejarah Islam di Indonesia 1900-1950*, trans. Tudjimah and Yessy Augusdin (Jakarta: UI-Press, 1984), 122.

Answer).[23] Like Al-Irsyad, stress was on *ijtihād* and many practices, beliefs, social customs and local traditions were labelled as polytheism (*shirk*), disbelief (*kufr*), or *bid'ah*. The concern of the prominent thinkers of the movement with the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth were so totalistic that they question most aspects of worship and communal life of Islam as practiced in Indonesia.[24]

At a much more individual level, elaborative concerns on *bid'ah* were expounded by such scholars as Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (1904-1974) and Moenawar Chalil (1908-1961). Ash-Shiddieqy explicated the concept of *bid'ah* by writing in 1931 a book entitled *Criteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah* (The Criterion for [Determining] between the *Sunnah* and the *Bid'ah*).[25] Meanwhile, Chalil published in 1955 a book entitled *Kembali kepada AlQur'an dan As-Sunnah* (Return to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*),[26] reprising a reformist theme which was promoted by such earlier reformists as Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1787).

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[23]See, for instance, Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia*, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, no.9 (Ithaca: New York, 1970), 11. Most of the issues in these magazines are published in Ahmad Hassan et al., *Soal-Jawab tentang Berbagai Masalah Agama*, 3 vols., 9th imprint (Bandung: C.V. Diponegoro, 1996).

[24]See chapter 6 and appendix A below.

[25]T.M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah*, 2nd ed. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1967).

[26]K.H. Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali kepada AlQur'an dan As-Sunnah*, 8th imprint (Jakarta: PT. Bulan Bintang, 1991).

In the last few decades, many books concerning bid'ah have been published in the Indonesian language. Many of these are translations from works by such scholars as ibn Bāz, al-'Uthaimin, al-Qaḥtānī, al-Ghazālī, and al-'Āmilī.[27] There are a very few original works by such Indonesians as Imron AM., Umar Hasyim, and Badruddin Hsubky.[28]

On the one hand, the rich literature that reflects concerns regarding *bid'ah* both in the larger Islamic world and in Indonesia indicates not only the vibrancy of the issue but also its significance to the minds of many Muslims. On the other hand, this literature seems to have ignored several problems or issues which none-the-less highly significant. Since the Qur'ān is the first of the two primary sources of Islam, the issue of *bid'ah* must naturally

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[27]See, for instance, Sheikh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz, *Waspadalah Terhadap Barang Bid'ah*, trans. Ibnu Soemadiy (Surabaya: PT. Bina Ilmu, 1983); 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz et al., *Fatwa Ulama Besar Saudi Arabia tentang Firqah Najiyah dan Harakah Islamiyah*, trans. Bukhari Burhanuddin (Jakarta: Khazanah Ilmu, 1996); Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaimin, *Kesempurnaan Islam dan Bahaya Bid'ah*, trans. Ahmad Masykur MZ (Jakarta: n.p., 1993); Sa'īd al-Qaḥtānī, *Hukum Mengkafirkan Menurut Ahlus Sunnah dan Ahlul Bid'ah*, trans. Ja'far Umar Thalib (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1993); Sheikh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Bukan dari Ajaran Islam*, trans. Suranto (Solo: CV. Pustaka Mantiq, 1995); Ja'far Murtaḍa al-'Āmilī, *Perayaan Maulid, Khaul, dan Hari-hari Besar Islam Bukan Sesuatu yang Haram*, trans. Masykur Ab. (Jakarta: Pustaka Hidayah, 1995).

[28]Imron AM., *Peringatan Khaul Bukan Dari Ajaran Islam* (Jakarta and Surabaya: PT. Bina Ilmu, 1977); Umar Hasyim, *Tawassul, Hadiah Pahala, dan Mengajar Orang Mati* (Jakarta and Surabaya, PT. Bina Ilmu, 1978); KH. Badruddin Hsubky, *Bid'ah-bid'ah di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1993).

first be referred to it. Indeed many works on *bid' ah* refer to several verses of the Qur'ān, but these are mostly general, such as concerning the obligation to obey God's commands and prohibitions. Thus, the question of what more specifically the Qur'ān has to say about *bid' ah* has been only vaguely answered.

Secondly, this literature depends heavily on the ḥadīth of the Prophet, particularly the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*. But a full examination of the authenticity of this *Ḥadīth* has never been undertaken. Moreover, a comprehensive interpretation of this inspiring *Ḥadīth* has not been fully explored, so that a distorted understanding of it is often presented.

Thirdly, there has never been an attempt in the literature to see *bid' ah* in the light of *ijtihād*, which is considered necessary due to the limitedness of both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. The collection of the Qur'ān and the *tarāwīḥ* prayer, in the cases cited earlier, are not mentioned in the two sources but are solved by the Companions through their *ijtihād*. Thus, although these actions are considered innovations, they nevertheless seem to be related to the idea of *ijtihād*.

Finally, most of the literature emphasizes theoretical discourses on *bid' ah*. How these discourses are really perceived, understood, and realized in an actual society is almost completely ignored.[29] Thus, there has been an

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[29]See also Fierro, "Treatises," 239.

imbalance between the presentation of *bid' ah* as a concept and as a practice and how the two are interconnected.

These issues are significant not only because they constitute an inseparable part of *bid' ah* discourses but also because a more comprehensive understanding of the discourses may well depend on how they are exposed and elaborated. The present study attempts at examining these discourses within a particular scope and context so that it becomes a specific but detailed study that critically complements what has been written on *bid' ah*.

Scope and Context of the Study

The present study is an attempt to discuss *bid' ah* as a concept and a living reality. As a concept, *bid' ah* has been commonly understood as a term designating a new matter confronting Islam after the death of its Prophet. The term itself has long been used in Arabic, even when the Revelation was still in progress at the time of Muḥammad. The fact that the Qur'ān contains some of its derivatives offers particular interest to this study on what the related verses have to say about *bid' ah* as a concept.

Moreover, the ḥadīth does indeed elaborate more than the Qur'ān in employing the term *bid' ah* as a concept. Nevertheless, it does come with somewhat general forms that stimulate some suggestive interpretations. Two sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) ḥadīths will be elaborated in this presentation for two

reasons. First, they are indeed sound ḥadīths, and consist of sentences that are interpretive and somewhat define the meaning of *bidʿah*. Secondly, they seem to be the inspiration for many works on *bidʿah*.

In addition, the relation between *bidʿah* and *ijtihād* will be examined. This investigation was first inspired by a ḥadīth that seems to equate the concept of *sunnah* with that of *bidʿah* and to call for an *ijtihād*. *Ijtihād* itself consists of means or methods, two of which are relevant to the present study. The first is known as *maṣlaḥah mursalah* (literally: the deliberate benefit), a method which aims at securing a benefit or preventing a harm according to the understanding of the objectives (*maqāṣīd*) of the *Sharīʿah*. The second is called *istiḥsān* (juristic preference) which is used mainly by Abū Ḥanīfah (d.767) or the Ḥanafī school of law and which has a close relation with *bidʿah* as a concept. *Istiḥsān* is understood as a method of exercising personal opinion in order to avoid any rigidity and unfairness that might result from the literal enforcement of the existing law.

As a living reality, *bidʿah* will be discussed in the contexts of local customs, known as ʿ*ādah* or ʿ*urf* in Islamic jurisprudence. The adoption of *adat* (the Indonesian spelling of ʿ*ādah*) to Islamic practices has been an important feature of Islamic legal history. But Islamic jurisprudence is almost never concerned with *bidʿah*, even as it deals with

features of customs and law developed outside of law, known by the terms *adat* or '*urf*. The present study attempts to see the relation between *bid'ah* and *adat*, in which the latter is sometimes a euphemism for the former in reality. The discussion will be supplemented by some examples of actual popular religious practices which also function as supporting details for concepts and analyses proposed throughout this study.

This study focuses on the Indonesian context. Besides having the present largest Muslim population of any nation, this country represents a unique process of Islamization, in which Islam spread gradually and in a relatively peaceful process. At the same time, Indonesia also serves as an outstanding representative of an Islam that has gone through a cultural dialogue with local *adats* and existing practices. More importantly, concerns on *bid'ah* in Indonesia, as illustrated above, clearly show the vibrancy and significance of the issue in this region, although the way it has been presented requires a critical examination which this study tries to provide. Thus, Indonesia is an excellent test case for how *bid'ah* is perceived as a concept as well as a living reality.

Within the Indonesian context, Jambi has been chosen as the main sub-context of this study. The population of this

province is mainly Muslim,[30] but Muslims in this central
Sumatran region are heterogenous, consisting of many ethnic
groups, such as the Jambi Malays, the Bugis, the Borneos,
the Javanese, and the Minangkabaus. In a sense, Jambi thus
represents a "lesser Indonesia" which, roughly speaking,
consists of more than 300 ethnic groups. The choice also has
two practical aspects. First, since the purpose of this sub-
contexting is to get examples of actual and living
understanding of *bid' ah* as a concept and practice, it is
important to chose a region that provides such examples, and
Jambi, where much of the literature on *bid' ah* is widely
available, appears to be a good representative choice.
Secondly, Jambi is the area best known to the present
writer, and this is helpful to the process of investigation
for this study.

Reviews of Related Literature

There are two kinds of literature that serve as primary
sources for the present study. The first consists of works
written in Arabic concerning *bid' ah* or which have
substantial discussion on it. The list of these works is
long, but some are very elaborative and have had a
significant influence upon other works of the same genre.

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[30]According to 1995 statistics, out of the 2,179,300
total Jambi population, 2,038,376 (93.35%) are Muslims. See
Pemda Tk.I Jambi, *Jambi Dalam Angka, 1995* (Jambi: Biro Pusat
Statistik, 1995), 45, 212.

The other kind of literature consists of works written in Indonesian where *bid' ah* is the main focus, or a chief focus. The following is a review of some of the Arabic and the Indonesian works, complemented by a review of some English works for the purpose of comparison.

Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's *Al-Bida'* is a simple discussion on *bid' ah* as a concept, which is followed by some examples of alleged *bid' ah* practices. It is, however, merely a collection of sayings of the Prophet, the Companions, and the Successors, particularly those that come from Mālik ibn Anas to whose school the author is attached. With this structure, the reader is allowed to make his own interpretations and conclusions. Nevertheless, Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's work has been a source of inspiration and reference for later studies such as the works of al-Ṭurṭūsī, Abū Shāmah, and al-Shāṭibī.

Al-Ṭurṭūsī's *Kitāb Al-Ḥawādith* is more elaborate than Ibn Waḍḍāḥ's work above and has more examples of alleged *bid' ah* practices. From the opening pages, this book emphasizes the reprehensibility of *bid' ah* even before giving a single definition. The work also offers a wide range of interpretations, some of which seem only remotely related to *bid' ah* even at a second look. The first chapter, for instance, discusses the Qur'ānic verses which describe the fall of previous communities, such as the Jews, because of their disobedience to the commandments of God.[31] This work,

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[31]Al-Ṭurṭūsī, *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith*, 80-89.

however, is useful in order to see how *bid ah* was perceived in medieval Islam, and for the typical examples of alleged *bid ah* that inspired the writing of the book, which also seems to have a Mālikīte inclination.

Another important medieval work on *bid ah* is Abū Shāmah's *Kitāb al-Bā ith*. The structure of this book follows those of the earlier works on *bid ah*, in which the theoretical discussion of the issue is followed by some examples of alleged *bid ah* practices. But in this particular treatise, the division between "condemned" and "praiseworthy" *bid ah* is elaborated. Being a Shāfi'īte, Abū Shāmah was probably convinced by a similar division made by al-Shāfi'ī (d.819), which was used by many generations of *ulamā'* (Muslim religious scholars) after him. In its treatment of the division, however, this work stresses "condemned" *bid ah*, particularly concerning the supererogatory prayers (*salāt al-raghā'ib*).

The most popular work on *bid ah* is perhaps al-Shāṭibī's *al-I' tisām*. This is probably because it is an exhaustive work, painstakingly written with the clear intent to discuss and settle "once-and-for-all" the issue of *bid ah*. Unlike previous works, there is hardly any notes or explanations to al-Shāṭibī's extensive analysis and interpretations which are, alas, sometimes contradictory.[32] Unfortunately, many

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[32]See, for instance, a review by 'Aṭiyyah, 14-15, whose work is reviewed next.

of his admirers and followers failed to recognize the inconsistencies. Moreover, the lines of interpretation he cited to support for his arguments from the Qur'ān, the ḥadīth, and the sayings of early 'ulamā', in fact show the generality and interpretability of these sources. Al-Shāṭibī's work, however comprehensive it may be, is but one interpretation of the sources and is certainly not "the final word" on the subject.

A much more moderate and systematic analysis of *bidʿah* is written by 'Izzat 'Aṭiyyah, a modern Egyptian scholar of Islam. His work, *Al-Bidʿah: Taḥdīduhā wa Mawqif al-Islām Minhā*, is originally a doctoral dissertation defended with distinction in 1971 at the al-Azhar University in Cairo, one of the oldest and most prestigious of Islamic learning institutions.[33] 'Aṭiyyah traces the historical development of *bidʿah* from the time of the Prophet to the period after 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (d.655). He also elaborates on the concepts of both *sunnah* and *bidʿah*, particularly in terms of their differences. But he seems to be an apologist for the Sunnis, because he launches a clear attack against the Khārijītes and the Mu'tazilītes, in two of his main negative examples. Nevertheless, this is a good work available in Arabic which consults, and thus represents a good summary of, earlier interpretation, and interpretability of sources.

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[33] 'Izzat 'Alī 'Īd 'Aṭiyyah, *al-Bidʿah* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadīthah, 1973).

The reader might almost wonder if, except for a limited part, this is a work of tarjīḥ (preferring one conclusion after consulting several others).

Some of this Arabic literature, particularly al-Shāṭibī's al-Iʿtiṣām, inspired several important works of Indonesian literature on the same issue. Two such Indonesian works are worth reviewing here for their specific, but extensive, elaborations. They are Ash-Shiddieqy's Criteria and Chalil's Kembali, mentioned earlier.

Ash-Shiddieqy's Criteria seems to be the first elaborative work on bidʿah in the Indonesian language. Its structure is quite similar to that of 'Aṭiyyah's work, which came much later, where the discussion, or rather the distinction, between sunnah and bidʿah is the main emphasis, as the title itself suggests. The last part of the book consists of suggestions as to how to deal with bidʿah in order to support the religion of Islam.

This widely-read book is very significant in that it represents the attempt to transfer a discussion of bidʿah issues from the Arabic context to that familiar to the Indonesian people. The many reprintings of this work indicates its high demand among many Indonesians whose understanding of bidʿah may have been heavily shaped by it. However, its dependency on the Arabic sources, particularly al-Iʿtiṣām, has positioned it as a general "translation" of the sources or, in particular, an expansion of Shāṭibīsm.

Moreover, neither balanced discussion nor the spirit of *ijtihād* are shown by the author who is considered as a great *mujtahid* (the one who does *ijtihād*) of the country.[34]

Chalil's *Kembali* is another important treatise on *bid'ah* although this subject concerns only a portion of the work. Its generality is shown from the subjects discussed there which include the position and function of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and the sources of Islamic law in which the concepts of *sunnah* and *bid'ah* are elaborated. Some principles of the law are also discussed, such as *ijmā'* (consensus), *qiyās* (analogy), *taqlīd*, and *ijtihād*.

With regard to the issues of *sunnah* and *bid'ah*, Chalil is not different from Ash-Shiddieqy in his Shāṭibīsm. But Chalil's spirit of *ijtihād* is at least obvious in his discussions of the principles of law. Unfortunately, however, he seems to have failed in relating this spirit and these discussions, which he is so eager to propound, to the concept of *bid'ah*, so that each subject seems to have a separate and unrelated paradigm.

Other Indonesians' writings on *bid'ah* consist of individual collections of legal decisions (*fatwās*). A. Hassan, for instance, was one of the most active producers

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[34]For Ash-Shiddieqy's stand on *ijtihād*, see, for instance, Yudian Wahyudi, "Hasbi's Theory of *Ijtihād* in the Context of Indonesian *Fiqh*," M.A. Thesis (Montreal: McGill University, 1993).

of such decisions which have been collected in his volumes of *Soal-Djawab* (Questions and Answers).[35] Like Ash-Shiddieqy's and Chalil's works above, these volumes have also been reprinted several times, indicating their demand and popularity among the Indonesians. Siradjuddin Abbas is another example of the productive *fatwā* issuers. His *40 Masalah Agama* (40 Religious Issues) has also gained popular place in Indonesia.[36]

While Hassan is an independent thinker, basing his arguments strictly on the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, Abbas, as he himself admits, is an ardent Shāfi'īte whose legalistic approach is dominant in his lines of thoughts. Thus, his views may well be regarded as a representation of the views of the common Indonesian 'ulamā' or of those associated with the Nahdlatul 'Ulama' (N.U.: The Revival of 'Ulamā').[37] This traditionalist organization, founded in 1926 by K.H. Hasyim Asy'arie (d.1947), attaches itself to the four schools of law with a dominant adoption of Shāfi'ism. Thus, it is the main home of the Indonesian traditionalists.

In a larger context, discussions on *bid'ah* are available in English works, two of which are worth mentioning here. The first is Deliar Noer's *The Modernist*

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[35]See note 23 above.

[36]See note 19 above.

[37]See Abbas' introduction to his *40 Masalah*, 1: 8-10, where a list of early Indonesian 'ulamā' of the Shāfi'īte is mentioned.

Muslim Movement.[38] This work, probably the most extensive
on the subject of the modernist movement in Indonesia,
discusses the history of socio-religious and political
developments in reformism in Indonesia during the first half
of this century. As one of the many issues raised during the
period under discussion, *bid'ah* is presented scatteredly in
this book under the groups and movements which are, indeed,
the main concern of the author. His discussions, relevant as
they are to understanding the decisive developments in
Indonesian Islamic history, nevertheless tend to emphasize
the political aspects of the development rather than
individual issues, such as *bid'ah* which was indeed a
hallmark of it.

The second work is Federspiel's *Persatuan Islam.*[39]
Like Noer's, this book is also concerned with the history
and activities of the organization and the political
connections that it played in the early 20th century
Indonesia. Unlike Noer's work, however, which is quite
general to accommodate all aspects of the 42-year
development (1900-1942), Federspiel's book is focused on
only one particular reform organization, so that it is able
to elaborate such religious issues as *bid'ah* which was, and
has been, one of the main concerns of the organization. This
is clear from his discussions on Hassan's views concerning

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[38]See note 20 above.

[39]See note 23 above.

some practices considered to be *bid'ah*. As far as *bid'ah* is concerned, this book presents some personal and organizational views on *bid'ah*, which seem relevant to the topic of the book but which must be supplemented with other views on the issue in order to get an undistorted understanding of it.

Under the umbrella of such literature (Arabic, Indonesian, English), the present study, despite the limitation of its context, attempts to present a new and comprehensive outlook on *bid'ah*. As will be explained next, this study is significant not only as a critical complimentary to the literature, but also as a genuine contribution to the discussion and understanding of *bid'ah*.

The Significance of the Study

The present study can make a significant contribution to Islamic studies at least from five perspectives. First, unlike any other work on *bid'ah*, some of which are described above, this study goes deep into the discussion of the Qur'ānic verses which have the *bid'ah*-derived words. The idea for this effort comes from the commonly adopted conviction that the Qur'ān is the source of all matters,[40] that such an important concept as *bid'ah* must have a Qur'ānic outlook. The effort has led to a suggestion that,

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[40]See, for instance, Q.S.6:38 and 16:89.

perhaps for the first time, there is a "Qur'ānic conception of *bidʿah.*"

Second, this study offers a critical analysis on a particular hadīth, the *Bidʿah Hadīth*, which seems to have inspired works and thoughts on *bidʿah.* Together with discussions of other related hadīths, it also gives insightful and coherent interpretations on *bidʿah.* The result is challenging to those who oppose *bidʿah*, in terms of the ways the hadīths are presented and interpreted.

Third, despite their common features, including the discussion of some means of *ijtihād* such as *maslahah* and *istihsān*, many works on *bidʿah* emphasize the differences between these means and *bidʿah* while overlooking the seemingly inherent relation between them. This study provides a balanced view in seeing the relation; that is, *bidʿah* may be seen as a result of an *ijtihād* and can be either justified or nullified by it. This alone introduces a new outlook on the paradigm for both *bidʿah* and *ijtihād.*

Fourth, some examples of the popular religious practices in this study provide a picture of how some of the alleged *bidʿah* practices may actually have a textual basis (the Qur'ān and the hadīth) which is drawn through *ijtihād* or legal interpretations. This is indicative of the interpretability of the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the hadīth in the light of Muslims' actual contacts to the realities of their surroundings.

Fifth, unlike other works on *bid'ah*, the present study is supplemented by a field research that enables it to provide an actual and living understanding of a certain people concerning *bid'ah*. It also suggests to what extent the textual studies on *bid'ah* have been transformed or grasped in the non-textual forms of understanding of the subject. It therefore contributes empirical data to the discourses which have otherwise remained highly theoretical.

In short, this study tries to establish that the religious innovation in Islam, *bid'ah*, is a part of actual interpretation and realization of the religion in reality.

Research Methodology

The present study combines both library and field research. Library research is necessary for the foundations, analyses, and suggestions this study attempts to establish. All relevant literature which makes up the primary and secondary sources has been consulted in order to get a comprehensive outlook on the subjects discussed throughout this work.

The field research is an inseparable part of an empirical study such as this. The primary research took place in Jambi from late 1994 to early 1996, but earlier observation and experience are also adopted, for they provide a historical continuity and coherent argument. This research is classified into three types: (1) participant

observation, where field notes are taken; (2) interviews with selected respondents; and (3) questionnaires. All of these are set up to gather empirical data which is needed for the present study.

The respondents are adult Muslims who live in the Jambi province. They were selectively chosen by considering their Islamic education and acquaintance with *bid'ah* issues. Moreover, they consist of diverse ethnic groups available in Jambi such as the Jambi Malays, the Bugis, the Borneans, the Javanese, and the Minangkabauis. Furthermore, they are taken from, or have relation to, such Islamic institutions as *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) and the I.A.I.N (State Institute for Islamic Studies) of Jambi or Muslim organizations such as the Muhammadiyah, the Nahdlatul 'Ulama', and the M.U.I. (*Majelis* '*Ulama' Indonesia* [The Council of Indonesian '*Ulamā'*]). The final and effective number of respondents is 100 persons, which is relatively enough to establish some patterns of their understanding concerning *bid'ah* issues, but which may not by any means be used for a strict generalization. The names of these respondents are listed in Appendix C.

The questionnaire, translated in Appendix B, was designed in relation to the subjects discussed in this study. The numbers of questionnaires sent out was more than 200, but only half of them were answered and returned. The returned answers are of two types: (1) the multiple-choice-

like answers and (2) the essay. While the latter is adopted as a part of empirical analysis throughout the study, the former is counted with percentage, whose numbers are given in the text. The reference to these answers is labelled as "The 1995 Jambi *Bid'ah* Survey," since they were mainly gathered in that year. An early seminar of this Survey was held in Jambi, on Tuesday, July 30th, 1996, with the coordination of the Jambi Council of Indonesian 'Ulama' (M.U.I. Jambi).

Except for chapter 2, this study is not concerned with historical approach or analysis. This is to avoid repetition of such earlier studies as Noer's *The Modernist Muslim Movement* and Federspiel's *Persatuan Islam*, which have adequately summarized the nature and development of reform movements in Indonesia where *bid'ah* was part of the issue. Rather, this study concentrates primarily on textual analysis of the thoughts and ideas found in the consulted literature. At the same time, the field research provides an empirical setting by which the analysis is both tested and deepened. The results of this research are not explained in a separate section. They are adopted together with the suggestions from the library research and presented throughout this study.

Problems Anticipated

As far as the literature is concerned, the Arabic works are the most resourceful for such a study on *bid ah*. Thanks to his six-year *pesantren* education, which emphasizes Arabic comprehension, the present writer does not encounter a major problem in understanding written Arabic.[41] As he is also an Indonesian, the Indonesian literature on *bid ah* is at his full disposal. The problem is that such literature, particularly detailed ones such as Ash-Shiddieqy's and Chalil's works mentioned above, is scanty. The deficiencies this condition creates can only be made up--which he did--by consulting less elaborate literature on the issue such as the individual *fatwās* of A. Hassan and Abbas as well as the Indonesian translation of some of the Arabic works. Finally, as the subject of *bid ah* is least elaborated in European languages such as German and French, the writer is not hampered by his unfortunate lack of mastery of such scholarly languages. Meanwhile, English materials on the subject have been more helpful in giving some insights than in creating a significant problem to this study.

By way of comparison, the field research for this study is more problematic, particularly concerning the number of

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[41]This *pesantren*, founded in 1976, is named "Ar-Riyadh" (from Arabic, *al-riyād*, the garden) and located in 13 ULU, Palembang. It is owned and managed by an Arab family of the al-Habsyi clan. The present writer got his religious instruction, including Arabic, primarily in this boarding school from 1979 to 1985.

the respondents. The anticipated respondents were sometimes reluctant to answer the questionnaire or to have an interview. As mentioned earlier, about half of the total questionnaires distributed were not returned, without any explanation. Some made apologies, offering excuses as that they are not eligible or competent to answer the questions regarding *bid' ah*, although it is clear that they are actually respected and learned teachers in their community.

This unfortunate condition results in the limited number of respondents. Fortunately, however, the final confirmed respondents have good knowledge on the issue and also represent a wide range of diverse ethnic groups, educational backgrounds, professions, and organizational affiliations. Thus, although the respondents' numbers are somewhat limited, their answers are strong and representative enough to establish some patterns of understanding that can help contribute various analysis and suggestions to this study.

Finally, the interviews and participant-observations in the study area, where the present writer is not considered strange or a stranger, have helped build the confidence in the suggestions made in this piece of work whose outlines are given in the following section.

Systematization of the Study

This study consists of seven chapters and three appendixes. Chapter 1 contains the introductory remarks that explain the background for the undertaking of this study, its scope and context, reviews of related literature and in what way this study can contribute, the methodological aspects and the problems anticipated, and the systematic plan this study is going to follow. It is designed to help picture what this work is all about and why and how it is to be accomplished.

Chapter 2 outlines some important historical developments in Islam since its inception in Indonesia to the twentieth century. Discussions on when Islam was initially introduced to the region and who were its preachers dominate the first half of this chapter. The second half talks about the conflicts which came along with the developments and the role of the Middle East in shaping the developments of Islam in this comparatively remote region.

Chapter 3 begins with discussions on the literal understandings of *bid' ah*. This is unavoidable to provide a basis for the following analysis on *bid' ah* some of whose derivative words are mentioned in the Qur'ān and discussed in some works on Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsir*). Moreover, some other related verses are also discussed, as they constitute one of the main arguments in many works on *bid' ah*. This

chapter contains a critical analysis that leads to suggesting a "Qur'ānic conception of *bidʿah*."

Chapter 4 discusses the ḥadīth of the Prophet which can be regarded as the inspiring source to *bidʿah* discourses. It will be mentioned why it is called the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*, the significance of which requires a full analysis of its chains of transmission (*isnāds*) and texts (*matns*). The purpose of this ḥadīth criticism is to establish the most sound and dependable version of the *Ḥadīth*, from which understandings of *bidʿah* are basically derived. A discussion of another ḥadīth is also included, not only due to its popularity and inspiration but also because it seems to provide a coherent understanding to the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*.

Chapter 5 is where the relation between *bidʿah* and *ijtihād*, particularly with the concepts of *maṣlaḥah* and *istiḥsān*, is fully elaborated. This chapter is also supplemented with discussions on *sunnah* and *adat*, the two concepts both of which are as closely related to *bidʿah* as they are to *ijtihād*. Discussions here are quite distinctive to this study, since where many works on *bidʿah* emphasize the *differences* between *bidʿah* and these concepts, this study instead suggests many of their *similarities*.

Chapter 6 contains some important examples of popular religious practices in Indonesia, which are considered by many reformists as reprehensible *bidʿah* but which are seen by traditionalists as having their witnesses from the two

primary sources of Islam. The questions of *slametan*, grave-related issues, celebrations of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*), and the Friday congregational speech (*jum'ah*), are chosen because they represent both popular practices and the concerns of both the reformists and the traditionalists.

Chapter 7 wraps up the conclusions and suggestions which are finally offered by this study. Readers will find this chapter useful for a brief summary of this work, but they may need to refer to individual chapters to comprehend the dynamics of interpretations and analysis which are their prime marks.

This study is finally supplemented with three appendixes. Appendix A contains Ash-Shiddieqy's list of *bid'ah* in matters of worship and belief as mentioned in his *Criteria*.[42] His list is useful in order to see the examples of common Indonesian *bid'ah*, which according to him must be eliminated. Appendix B is the translation of the questionnaire that is used to gather the field data for this study. And, finally, the names of respondents are given in Appendix C.

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[42]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 109-124.

CHAPTER 2

ISLAM IN INDONESIA: A GENERAL SEED OF DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is dedicated to providing a general historical outline to the main focus of this study, which is to examine the complexity of the question of innovation (*bid'ah*) in Islam in the Indonesian context and the conflicts which have happened over this issue. For this purpose, we will examine the process of Islamization, the preachers who contributed to this process, the conflicts that occurred within the process, and the Middle East connection which became not only a source for the conflicts but also for Islamic concepts as a whole.

Prior to the coming of Islam to the region, Indonesia, the major part of the Malay archipelago in Southeast Asia, was dominated by intricate systems of beliefs and practices related to local beliefs (including animism and polytheism), Hinduism, and Buddhism. This is evident from the preservation of these systems, in various degrees, which can still be observed nowadays in scattered places throughout the region. The magnificent temple of Borobudur, in Central Java, testifies to the glorious legacy of Indonesian Buddhist religion, while Hindu temples, such as the Prambanan, can be seen just nearby. In Bali, one is exposed to so many Hindu temples and rituals that the island itself is nicknamed "Pulau Dewata" (Goddess Island). In Sumatra,

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the remains of the great Buddhist Srivijaya kingdom can be found mainly in Palembang and Jambi; some of these remains have been reconstructed although many still stand ruined, often without leaving any significant remaining artifacts.

The advent of Islam apparently did not lead to any attempts to extinguish the already-existing systems, nor did it prevent other systems, such as Christianity, from coming in. As a result, the present Republic of Indonesia expressly recognizes the coexistence of five religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism.[1] Although not officially included, the existence and practices of animism (about 0.31% Indonesians are animists) have been hesitantly tolerated, as may be noticed by those who observe the indigenous culture of the people, especially that found in the interior of the islands. The Kubus in the interior of Jambi and the Dayaks in the interior of Borneo are among the Indonesian spirit worshippers, while some ethnic groups in Minahasa, in the Celebes, still worship their ancestors.

Having been exposed to the several systems of religious beliefs and practices, earlier Indonesians could easily fall into religious syncretism, that is, adopting parts of the different systems to form a single one. One could correctly assume that these Indonesians, generally speaking, were, in fact, syncretists or, at least, adaptationists. To say it

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[1]The latest statistics indicates that 1.83% Indonesians are Hindus, 1.03% Buddhists, 87.21% Muslims, 3.58% Catholics, and 6.04% Protestants. See, Taher, *Pancasila*, 1.

differently, one could hardly find in old Indonesia, a "pure" Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim, who would submit totally to the "original" version of the religion he or she adopted.

This assumption is at work when we study the successful and peaceful process--at least for a number of periods--of Islamization in Indonesia. Early Muslim preachers were able to introduce Islam by adapting the existing belief systems and infusing them with "Islamic" ideas and ideals, as understood by the preachers. With this character, the process evolved for a considerable time during which various developments occurred, many aspects unfolded, and many people played parts on the stage of history.

One such development was the emergence of various internal religious conflicts, which can be marked as a variable of the early Indonesian Islam. These are exemplified by the ongoing conflicts between the "heterodox" and "orthodox" streams of Islamic Ṣūfism, and, later, between those who persisted in maintaining the syncretic features and those who wanted to apply a "purer" Islam.

These conflicts were intensified as a result of the increasing contacts between Indonesian Muslims and religious scholars in the Middle East. Studying Islam in the homeland of this religion, Makkah and Madīnah, the two holy cities often termed as the *Haramayn* (two sanctuaries), which was presumed to be a place of "purer" Islam, these Indonesians began to realize the differences in religious applications

between the two regions, and were convinced that a reform should be undertaken to bring Indonesian Islam closer to the mainstream of Islam, which is termed in English "orthodox."

Islamization: The Easy Way

Islamization in Indonesia may be regarded as one of the episodes on the larger scale of world Islamization which has been going on since the early days, following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, the expansion of Islam under his Companions (the *Ṣaḥābahs*), and the emergence of subsequent Islamic dynasties, such as the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids. As such, and like many other regions, Indonesia's early contacts with Islam probably came through travellers following pre-existent trade routes. During the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (634-644) the Islamic domain, called *dār al-Islām*, already included most of the former Byzantine and Persian empires, and subsequent developments only attested to the rapid growth of both the domain and the population of Muslims. Thus, it is comprehensible that Islamic expansion might go in any direction, and the Asian continent, including Southeast Asia, was no exception.[2]

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[2]For further discussion on the nature of early Islamic expansion, see e.g. W. Wilson Cash, *The Expansion of Islam, An Arab Religion in the Non-Arab World* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1928); H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism, An Historical Survey* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1-15; C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *The Life Styles of Islam: Recourse to Classicism, Need of Realism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 18-36; and Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihād State: The Reign of Hishām*

Many scholars, comprising both historians and Islamicists, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have written on what is presumably the first stages of introduction, penetration, and further development of Islam in Indonesia. The list of their works seems nearly endless,[3] especially if one disregards the relative scope and depth of each; to arbitrarily name only a few, we have at our disposal the works of such scholars as John Crawfurd, Thomas Arnold, D.G.E. Hall, S.Q. Fatimi, S.M. Naquib al-Attas, and A. Hasymy.[4]

One common significance of works such as these lies in what they have contributed toward picturing an important

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Ibn ' Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 11-35.

[3]For a general bibliography, see B.J. Boland and I. Farjon, *Islam in Indonesia: A Bibliographical Survey* (The Netherlands: Foris Publication Holland/USA, 1983).

[4]Sir John Crawfurd, F.R.S., *History of the Indian Archipelago: Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of Its Inhabitants*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1820); T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Delhi: Renaissance Publishing House, 1984); D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964); S.Q. Fatimi, *Islām Comes to Malaysia*. ed. Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963) (By "Malaysia" the author means the archipelago as we indicated above); S.M.N. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1969); A. Hasymy, ed., *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Indonesia*, 3rd imprint (Bandung: PT. Al-Ma'arif, 1993). Originally, this was a collection of works or papers presented at a seminar on the topic, held in Aceh from the 25th to the 30th of September, 1980.

episode of the Indonesia's past from which we can draw in order to understand its present phenomena. While the above mentioned writers mainly dealt with a general history of the Islamization of Indonesia, others, such as van Leur, A.H. Johns, and Drewes, give us a more detailed idea of the region's past involvements with politics and trade, as well as Ṣūfi activities.[5]

The first issue that naturally arises is *when* Islam was first promulgated in Indonesia. This question is important in order to understand how scholars on Indonesia endeavor to establish a significant part of Indonesian history so that the legacy of the past can be accurately grasped. Scholarly discussions concerning this issue have offered us two basic theories: the first concludes that Islam was introduced in the first or second century after *hijrah*,[6] or equivalent to the seventh and eight century C.E., and the second theory offers the period around the thirteenth century C.E. The

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[5]J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague - Bandung: van Hoeve, 1955); A.H. Johns, "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 2, no.2 (July 1966): 10-23; G.W.J. Drewes, "Indonesia: Mysticism and Activism," in *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, ed. Gustave E. von Grunebaum, 284-310 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963).

[6]*Hijrah* literally means "migration." The word is used for two purposes: (1) to indicate the time and occasion when the Prophet Muḥammad migrated from Makkah to Madīnah in 622 C.E., and (2) to refer to the Muslim calendrical system. The abbreviation "A.H." which follows a year stands for "After Hijra" or the Latin *anno Hegirae* (in the year of the *hijrah*). For the meaning and significance of *hijrah*, see, for instance, Nieuwenhuijze, *The Life Styles*, 11-18.

following examination of each theory will give us some idea of how material evidence is considered crucial in establishing--or not--the existence and reliability of historical data.

Material--that is, "sensible"--evidence to support the first theory is somewhat scanty. However, based on what we indicated earlier regarding the general tendency of Islamic expansion, this theory is not baseless. In addition, pre-existing travel routes performed a significant function, by which such an early Islamization process is quite evident. Studying Chinese sources, Groeneveldt,[7] for instance, indicates this probable initial contact by rendering accounts of a very old and extensive commercial relation between Arab merchants and their eastern counterparts. Thus, it is recorded that these Arabs already had trade with Srilanka (Ceylon) in the second century B.C.; with China in the seventh century C.E.; and they were also found in Canton in the middle of the eight century.[8] Another account is also found in the Chinese Annals mentioning an Arab chief

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[7]W.P. Groeneveldt, "Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca Compiled from Chinese Sources," *VBG* vol. 39 (Batavia: W. Bruining, and The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1880): 14-15.

[8]See also Hall, *History*, 190; Arnold, *Preaching*, 363; and Harry U. Hazard, *Atlas of Islamic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), 42.

who was possibly the leader of an Arab settlement in Sumatra before 674 C.E.[9]

After considering various possibilities arising from these accounts, a number of scholars have arrived at the conviction that the year 674 brought the first of the earliest contacts between those who brought Islam and the people of Indonesia.[10] This may not be an "Islamization" in the sense which involves a significant number of people, but the seed of Islamization was already there by the presence of Muslims in the region and their interactions with the people.

Conjectural as it might be, this rendering informs us that not only was the Arab-Chinese, or the Middle-Far East, relation established very early but that the Arabs played a pivotal role in trade and, later, in spreading Islam. However, the lack of material evidence, especially in the Indonesian territory itself, has led other scholars, quite justifiably, to doubt the existence of these Arabs or the significance of any role they may have played.[11] Hence, for these scholars, there is a mutual link between the

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[9]See, for instance, Arnold, *Preaching*, 364; Hall, *History*, 190. Hall, however, condiders as insignificant should there be any such settlement around that date.

[10]See, for instance, Fatimi, *Islām*, 69; Al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, 11.

[11]See, for instance, G.W.J. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?" *B.K.I.* 124 ('S-Gravenhage-Martinus Nijhoff, 1968): 454; Hall, *History*, 190.

sparseness of material evidence, on the one hand, and the trustworthiness of this account of history, on the other.

Nevertheless, Indonesian scholars are among the most enthusiastic scholars in seeking to demonstrate that Islam came in the seventh or eight century C.E. This is obvious from the fact that several seminars have been carried out for that express purpose. The earliest of these was held in Medan in 1963. It basically concluded for the first time that Islam was introduced into Indonesia during the first century after the *hijrah* by Arab Muslims and that the first region to have a contact with the Muslims was the northern part of Sumatra, i.e., the Acehnese region.[12] This seminar was emulated by others in Padang (1969), Aceh (1978 and 1980), Jakarta (1982), and Palembang (1984).[13]

In order to support this theory, it is fascinating to see, for instance, that Hasymy, one of the key figures in these seminars, utilize three sources, two of which are apparently little used by many Western or other historians, namely, *Kitāb Izhār al-Haqq* by Abu Ishaq Mekrani al-Fashi

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[12]See Hamka and M. Said, *Risalah Seminar Sejarah Masuknya Islam ke Indonesia* (Medan: Pertjetakan Waspada, 1963), 87, 207.

[13]See Hasymy, *Sejarah*; IAIN Jakarta, *Seminar Internasional tentang Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1986); K.H.O. Gadjahnata and Sri-Edi Swasoso, eds., *Masuk dan Berkembangnya Islam di Sumatera Selatan* (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986).

(d.unknown),[14] *Kitāb Tadhkirat Ṭabaqāt Jumu' Sulṭān al-Salāṭīn* by Syeikh Syamsul Bahri Abdullah al-Ashi (d.unknown), and the well known *Silsilah Raja-raja Perlak dan Pasai*, with a short note by Sayyid Abdullah bin Sayyid Habib Saifuddin (d.unknown). From these "unconventional" sources, Hasymy informs us that in 173/789 a vessel coming from Cambai, in Gujarat, and full of Muslim missionaries led by an Arab named Nakhoda Khalīfah (d.unknown), arrived at the port of Perlak. Within a period of fifty-two years, Perlak was proclaimed as an Islamic kingdom in 225/840 and its first designated ruler was Sultan Alaiddin Sayyid Maulana Abdul Aziz Syah (840-864).[15]

This is one example of how Indonesians argue for supporting the early-introduction theory. In fact, despite inevitable peculiarities, such as attributing the introduction of Islam to each region in which these seminars were held, the presenters are basically united in embracing the basic theory. As may be expected, this has eventually

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[14]This historian originally came from Mekran (Baluchistan), a province of Pakistan. He settled down later in Pasai, Sumatra, where he wrote the book concerning the history of the rulers of Perlak. Cf. N.A. Baloch, *The Advent of Islam in Indonesia* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1980), 17.

[15]Hasymy, *Sejarah*, 144-146.

become the standard or the Indonesian national version of the early history of Islam in the country.[16]

From their date and their resulting reports, it may be readily assumed that these Indonesian seminars were conducted as a response to an earlier predominantly Western-supported theory,[17] which we call here the second theory, which refers to the period around the thirteenth century as the most feasible initial phase of the Islamization of Indonesia. This theory is fortunate in being able to find diverse material evidence in its support. Among the most illustrious is an Arabic inscription found at Leran, near Gresik, on east Java, which is dated 1082 or 1102. It was written on a gravestone of a Muslim woman, for it reads "Fāṭimah daughter of Maimūn son of Hibat Allāh."[18]

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[16]A series of national textbooks on Indonesian history was published in 1984. Volume 3 deals specifically with the development of Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia. See Marwati Djoened Poesponegoro and Nugroho Notosusanto, eds., *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, vol.3 (Jakarta: PN. Balai Pustaka, 1984), especially beginning pages where narration is made regarding the presence of Muslim societies in Canton and Sumatra during the peak power of the Srivijaya Kingdom around the seventh and eight centuries.

[17]Referring to the Medan seminar of 1963, Drewes, for instance, seems to acknowledge this and adds that, as everywhere, the people want a national historiography of their own, as against the "colonial" one, to satisfy their need for self respect. But this, he notes, was sometimes not handled with in a critical fashion. See, Drewes, "New Light," 434-435. For a criticism against "colonial," foreign historical writings, see, for instance, Baloch, *Advent*, 20-23.

[18]See Fatimi, *Islām*, 38-39; Baloch, *Advent*, 29-30. However, Hall, *History*, 190, insists that the stone could have been brought there at a later period, and even were

Another evidence is a report given by Marco Polo who in 1292 visited "Ferlec" (Perlak) in northern Sumatra, where he found many "Saracent [Muslim] merchants" who had converted the local people to the "Law of Mahommet."[19] Polo's report is so convincing to many scholars that the period around 1292 has been considered as the initial stage of Islam in Indonesia.[20]

Further testimony is offered by yet another tombstone, dated 1297, found in Samudra, still in northern Sumatra, which was of Sultan Malikus Saleh, the Samudra's first Muslim ruler. A Moroccan traveller, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (1304-1377), also reported that in 1345/1346 the king of Samudra-Pasai was already a Muslim.[21]

Despite their differences, both the first and the second theories seem to be reconcilable. This can be done from three approaches. First, as many Indonesians would

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this not the case, its inscription only indicates the presence of an Arab or a Persian in the area.

[19]Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo: The Venetian Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, trans. and ed. Sir Henry Yule, rev. Henry Cordier, vol.2, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 284.

[20]See, for example, Bernard H.M. Vlekke, *Nusantara, A History of Indonesia* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1960), 67, where, after quoting Polo's report, he says: "Thus we know exactly when and where the new religion entered the East Indies."

[21]See Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, ed. Ibn Jazī (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1964), 615-618; and *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb, vol.4 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1994), 876-878.

argue,[22] one has to distinguish between the first original contact with Islam in Indonesia, which represents the first theory, and its subsequent significant development, as attested by the emergence of several Islamic kingdoms, which is represented by the second theory. Second, as Groeneveldt and others have noted, the initial contact is sufficiently clear when one employs deductive rendering, resting on the more-provable historical foundation of an old Arab-Chinese trade relation. Later development is clearer with the advance of foreign writings and reports. Finally, as suggested by Johns and Hasymy,[23] local books and annals could, or rather should, be taken into consideration. Certainly it seems that such sources as these should at first be considered existent and bearing a certain reliable truth until or unless otherwise proven. In other words, it may not be accurate to disregard such history simply because it has no recorded or material evidence, worse still because of one's ignorance of sources known to others. But this is not to ignore the fact that material evidence is very critical, for it strongly adds to the reliability of our knowledge of a certain period of history.

Although given with various differences, the tendency to such a reconciliation has become popular. Thus Fatimi,

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[22]See Hasymy, *Sejarah*, conclusion number 2; Gadjahnata, *Masuk*, 269-270. See also Baloch, *Advent*, 1-2.

[23]Johns, "Sufism as a Category," 10-23; Hasymy, *Sejarah*, 144-146.

for instance, summarized the Islamization process into three
developments: (1) the earliest contacts, which occurred from
674; (2) the obtaining of a strong foothold in coastal
areas, beginning from 878; and (3) the achievement of
political power, which led to mass conversions, which took
place from 1204 on.[24] Slightly differently, Al-Attas
divides the Islamization period into three phases: Phase I,
between 578-805, the conversion of the body; Phase II,
between 805-1112, the conversion of the spirit; and Phase
III, from 1112 onwards, the successful continuation of Phase
I and consummation of Phase II.[25]

At the end, this reconciliation is interesting to us
not only because it provides a mid-point between the two
theories, but, more importantly, because of its suggestion
that the spread of Islam in Indonesia took on an
evolutionary character. The process persisted for centuries
--one may legitimately ask whether it has yet been
completed![26] By means of this evolutionary character, Islam

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[24]Fatimi, *Islām*, 69.

[25]Al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, 29-30. See also
Baloch, *Advent*, 56-57, where he claims that "the early
advent and spread of Islam in Indonesia represents both the
internationalism of Islam and the internationalism of the
Malaysian-Indonesian society."

[26]See, for instance, Drewes, "Indonesia," 286; M.C.
Ricklefs, "Six Centuries of Islamization in Java," in
Conversion to Islam, ed. Nehemia Levtzion, 100-128 (New York
and London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979); and
C.C. Berg, "The Islamization of Java," *Studia Islamica* 4
(Paris, 1955), 140-142, where he doubts that Java was ever
"converted" to Islam.

has penetrated to the deep consciousness of the Indonesian Muslims, so much so that they would readily fight, especially if oppressed or attacked, in the name of Islam. The Java War (1825-1830) between Diponegoro (d.1855) and his brother who was helped by the Dutch, was an example of this attitude. Diponegoro was able to convince the Muslim 'ulamā' (religious scholars or leaders) to assist him by regarding the war as a religious war. But at the same time, the lingering process also enabled various "non-Islamic" ideals and practices to be accumulated into the Indonesian Islam, whose final product, one would say, is a blend or syncretism.

One might also readily ask how or why this happened in this manner, the answer to which may not be simple. But it is already conceivable to think of many different people or ethnic groups who had contributed to the lengthy process of Islamization and who might have introduced the religion by various ways and in different forms. Thus, the question of who preached Islam in the early days, which will be dealt with shortly, becomes important.

The Preachers: A Search for Identity

As has probably occurred everywhere in the Muslim world, the task of preaching Islam is not the privilege of only certain people. From a number of Qur'ānic verses,[27] we

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[27]For example, Q.S.3:104,110; 12:18; 16:125; and 41:33.

can perceive the idea that Islam encourages each of its adherents, regardless of nationality and occupation, to invite others to the path of God, i.e., to embrace Islam voluntarily and, accordingly, to practice the religion. Thus, in this regard Islam is a missionary religion, a characteristic without which its spread might seem unthinkable.[28] This early tradition continues with the modern advent of the zealot Muslim preachers of India and Pakistan, the Tablīghī Jamā'ah, whose members will spend a certain appointed number of days calling other Muslims to comply with the strict attachment to Islam that they themselves epitomize.

This teaching of Islam might well have constituted the underlying spirit of every Muslim involved in the early preaching of Islam in Indonesia. With this in mind, the first preachers may have been the Arabs, Indians, Persians, or even the Chinese, whose trade relations with the Indonesians had long been established. Similarly, they may have been Ṣūfis, traders, political leaders, or ordinary people.[29]

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[28]See, for instance, Cash, *Expansion*, 213-237; and Blankinship, *End*, 11-35, where emphasis is put on the concept of religious struggle (*jihād*) as the motivating factor for the Muslim missions.

[29]Cf. Johns, "Sufism as Category," 17.

Justification for this hypothesis is taken from the early relations between Indonesians and other people.[30] Relations with the Chinese, for instance, have been clearly mentioned as occurring from early days, although our sources do not give any indication of the existence of early Chinese Muslim preachers around the seventh or eighth century.

As far as Indians are concerned, their relation with the Indonesians is ancient. According to an Indian scholar, even before the Common Era the people of India were aware of the lands of Southeast Asia, which were generally called *Suvarnabumi* or *Suvarnadvipa* ("the Land of Gold"). This is indicated in ancient Hindu literature which, although mythical in nature, gives insights to an old awareness by Indians of the region. From those early days, Indian traders and merchants were tempted to go there to gain wealth.[31] Many scholars have argued that when a number of Indians had been converted to Islam, they would have utilized the already established-connections to spread Islam, and places such as the Deccan, Malabar, Bengal, Cambay, and the

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[30]For a comprehensive and critical discussion on this issue, see, for instance, O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce: A Study of the Origins of Srivijaya* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967).

[31]R.C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), 8-9. See also George Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan B. Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), 16; and D.R. SarDesai, *Southeast Asia: Past and Present* (Boulder and San Francisco, Westview Press, 3rd ed., 1994), 15-16.

Coromandel coast could have become centers from which Indian merchants spread their new faith.[32]

Concerning the relation with the Arabs, it is believed with a great degree of certainty, as discussed earlier, that they played a significant role. They were not only the first to embrace Islam but also doubtless the main group through whom Indians and Chinese were converted. However, they might not have had a "direct" route from Arabia to the Indonesian archipelago. During the seventh or eight century, the existing sea-route provided them no chance to proceed except from the coasts of India where they might have stayed for a considerable period, waiting, for instance, for the monsoons to pass. As a consequence of prolonged stays, many conversions of local people could have taken place and these newly converted Indians could also have joined the Arabs in their further journeys to the archipelago.

Nevertheless, many Indonesian scholars tend to promulgate the view that Islam was brought "directly" from Arabia to Indonesia, at least as concluded in the seminars of Medan and Aceh.[33] From their discussions, it is implied that "the Arabs were the first" to introduce Islam to the

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[32]See Arnold, *Preaching*, 364-366; Hall, *History*, 191; Vlekke, *Nusantara*, 67. For more discussions on this issue, see G.E. Marrison, "The Coming of Islam to the East Indies" *JRASMB* 24 (1951): 28-37; Brian Harrison, *South-east Asia: A Short History*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 51-52; and E.S. De Klerck, *History of the Netherlands East Indies*, vol.1 (B.M. Israel NV - Amsterdam, 1975), 147.

[33]See Hasymy, *Sejarah*, 7 and conclusion number 1.

region, not the Indians or other groups.[34] In other words, Indonesians were converted by the "first hand" Islam of the Arabs. This is transparent in Hasymy's earlier narration on the mission led by Nakhoda Khalīfah, who was an Arab. However, in the same narration the mission is reported to have been comprised of a hundred people, consisting of Arabs, Persians, and Indians,[35] probably all zealous Muslim missionaries, so any of these could actually be entitled to be called the "first" proselytizer of Islam. It seems likely that the idea of the "first hand" Islam may be emphasized for its prestige, or, as Drewes noted earlier, for the "self respect" of the Indonesian Muslims.

Discussing a similar issue, Alwi Shihab, another Indonesian scholar, argues that since the Indians were only newly converted by the Arabs to Islam, their "caste" falls under the category of *mu'allaf* Muslims, that is, those whose hearts are still being reconciled. Thus, he contends, it was unlikely that they were involved with the further proselytizing to Indonesia,[36] although, on the other hand, new converts often have more enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he does not fail to recognize the strategic significance of the

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[34]See also Crawfurd, *History* 2: 259-260, where he emphasizes the orthodoxy of the first Islam brought from Arabia to the archipelago.

[35]Hasymy, *Sejarah,* 146.

[36]Alwi Shihab, "Al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī wa Athāruhū fī al-Taṣawwuf al-Indūnīsī al-Mu'āṣir," Ph.D. Diss. (Cairo: 'Ayn Shams University, 1990), 16.

coastal areas of the Indian subcontinent from whence the
Arab proselytizers embarked on their way to the archipelago
and beyond.[37]

Though this question has been exhaustively discussed,
it remains a lively and living subject of debate among
Indonesians. A recent genealogical study also attempts to
show the overwhelming presence and influence of people of
Arab origin and their role as the early and primary
preachers of Islam in Indonesia and its surroundings. From
various sources, which are mainly Indonesian, the author,
Syamsu As., points out that of 191 preachers he counted, 144
are Arabs.[38] Here, as in the previous discussion, one sees
not only the ongoing emphasis on the "first-hand" reception
of Islam from the Arabs but also the strong suggestion that
many, if not the majority, of these Arabs were Ṣūfis or
saints.

Alongside the Arabs, Persian Muslims may also be viewed
as the early disseminators of Islam to Indonesia. Hasymy's
narration, quoted above, also mentions the participation of
Persian missionaries in the seventh-century journey. Early
Persian influence, however, only began to appear during the

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[37]For further discussions on the proselytizing efforts
of the Arabs, see, for instance, Shihab, "Al-Taṣawwuf," 15-
17; van Leur, *Indonesian Trade*, 89; and G.R. Tibbets, "Early
Muslim Traders in South-East Asia" *JMBRAS* 30 no.1 (1957):
37.

[38]H.M. Syamsu As., *Ulama Pembawa Islam di Indonesia dan
Sekitarnya* (Jakarta: Penerbit Lentera, 1996), 311-318.

reign of Malik az-Zahir (d.1326), when he employed in his own court two distinguished Persian scholars, Qāḍī Sharīf Amīr Sayyid of Shirāz (d.unknown) and Tāj al-Dīn of Isfahān (d.unknown). Several local words were also adopted from the Persian language, indicating a Persian influence.[39]

Another general characteristic of the early preachers which could well have been the most important factor in the successful evolution of Islamization in Indonesia was their shared Ṣūfism. In Indonesia, as in other parts of the Muslim world, the Ṣūfis have been revered as ardent Muslims and preachers who, having given up worldly concerns and pleasures (*zuhd*) make extensive travels, wandering around the earth, for the sake of the spiritual gain and preaching to others.[40] It is believed that these spiritual gains enable them to perform certain "acts beyond nature" (*khāwāriq al-'ādāt*), that is, to make what is generally viewed as impossible, real. A Ṣūfis who does this is called a "walī"--a saint who has a certain degree of "karāmah" (Indonesian: *keramat*), which is the ability to perform or

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[39]See, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah*, 617; *The Travels*, 876; Fatimi, *Islam*, 12. For more discussion, see, for instance: Drewes, "New Light," 441; and G.E. Marrison, "Persian Influences in Malay Life (1280-1650)" *JMBRAS* 28, no.1 (1955): 52-69.

[40]For detailed discussions of the nature of Ṣūfism, see, for instance, Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 3-22.

cause the uncommon.[41] It is fairly easy to understand why the average person, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, would be readily attracted to such people.

Little can be said about the early developments of Islam following the initial introduction of the religion in the seventh century. It is likely that the Arab Ṣūfīs played a significant role in those days. But the effects of their efforts can only be a matter of speculation, due to the fact that their numbers were doubtless very limited and that the introduction of Islam to the interior was not yet possible.[42]

However, from the thirteenth century onwards the Ṣūfīs grew in number and their role soon became remarkable. Among the most acclaimed Ṣūfis are the fifteenth century Wali Sanga (the nine saints) who are regarded as the preachers responsible for the rapid and immense spread of Islam in Indonesia.[43] The recent genealogical study mentioned above sums up both the established history and the legends surrounding these saints. Through a genealogical study of the *walis*, it also reemphasizes that seven of them are of

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[41]See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 206-213. For the word's usages in Indonesian context, see Federspield, *Dictionary*, 126.

[42]See Shihab, *Al-Taṣawwuf*, 27.

[43]For more discussion on the *wali sanga*, see, for instance, Solichin Salam, *Sekitar Walisanga* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1959).

Arab origin and descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad,[44] suggesting that descendants of the Prophet are not necessarily Arabs by culture or language.

The emergence of the Ṣūfīs, however, was by no means an event peculiar to Indonesia. In fact, the emergence of Ṣūfism had been significant very early in the Islamic world and had reached its zenith after the fall of Baghdad in 1258.[45] This draws scholars like Johns to consider the era from the 13th to the 18th centuries as the "Ṣūfī period" in Islamic history.[46]

With regard to Ṣūfism in the Indonesian context, Johns made the following remarks:

> ...Sufism was a functional and typifying category in Indonesian social life, which left clear evidence of itself in Indonesian letters between the 13th and 18th centuries. It was directly involved in the spread of Islam to Indonesia, it played a significant part in the social organisation of the Indonesian port towns, and it was the specific nature of sufism which facilitated the absorption of non-Muslim communities into the fold of Islam.[47]

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[44]Syamsu, *Ulama*, 49-89,311-318. However, Shihab, *Al-Taṣawwuf*, 30-31, says that all the nine saints are among the descendants of the Prophet through the great Ḥaḍrāmī Ṣūfī named al-Imām Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā al-Muḥājir ila Allāh.

[45]See, for instance, G.E. von Grunebaum, *Classical Islam: A History 600-1258* (London: 1970), 191-201; and H.A.R. Gibb, "An Interpretation of Islamic History II" *The Muslim World* 45, no.2 (April 1955): 130-133.

[46]Johns, "Sufism as a Category," 13.

[47]Johns, "Sufism as a Category," 13.

The "Indonesian letters" referred to by Johns include both

Malay and Javanese chronicles such as the *Hikayat Raja-raja*

Pasai, the *Sejarah Melayu*, the *Sejarah Banten*, and the *Babad*

Tanah Jawi. Thus, he clearly considers such writings to be

acceptable as historical proof for the presence of the

Ṣūfis.

On the character of the Ṣūfis, Johns writes:

> ...they were peripatetic preachers ranging over the
> whole known world, voluntarily espousing poverty; they
> were frequently associated with trade or craft guilds,
> according to the order (tarīkah) to which they
> belonged; they taught a complex syncretic theosophy
> largely familiar to the Indonesians, but which was
> subordinate to, although an enlargement on, the
> fundamental dogmas of Islam; they were proficient in
> magic and possessed powers of healing; and not least,
> consciously or unconsciously, they were prepared to
> preserve continuity with the past, and to use the terms
> and elements of pre-Islamic culture in an Islamic
> context.[48]

In the course of time, and through their persuasion and

inter-marriages, these Ṣūfīs were able to convert the

various Indonesian nobility and kings to Islam. With such

conversions, conversions on a larger scale usually followed.

In Johns' last lines quoted above, there is espoused

the general view that there was a syncretistic nature to the

Ṣūfī approach.[49] In other words, the Ṣūfī can be considered

an "adaptationist" who believes that other world views

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[48]Johns, "Sufism as a Category," 15.

[49]See also Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 2nd ed. (Chicago and
London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 134.

outside of Islam do not necessarily contradict Islam and hence can be adapted to the religion, which in fact can give them a new spirit.[50] A classic example of this is the popular Javanese shadow play (the *wayang*) which was infused with Islamic beliefs by the eccentric saint, Sunan Kali Jaga (fl. 15th century), one of the Wali Sanga group.[51] The architecture of the Demak and Kudus mosques, which resemble Hindu temples in part and which draw on certain elements of Hindu philosophy, are additional examples of the adaptationist approaches of the Ṣūfīs. Hence, if credit should be awarded for the peaceful process of Islamization in Indonesia, it was due to the ceaseless work of such Ṣūfīs, or, to borrow Crawfurd's words, "to the discreet and artful conduct of the first Mahomedan teachers, whose temperate zeal is always marked by a politic and wise forbearance."[52]

Nevertheless, the period of amicable and harmonious contact with Islam was interrupted by internal religious

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[50]See also John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press; Essex, England: Longman, 1982), 68.

[51]For a critical discussion on how *wayang* is used as an analogy for conveying religious, Ṣūfīstic teachings, see P.J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature, Islamic and Indian Mysticism in an Indonesian Setting*, ed. and trans. M.C. Ricklefs (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1995), 239-268. This was originally a 1935 Leiden doctoral thesis on *suluks*, modern Javanese verse literature concerning religious subjects.

[52]Crawfurd, *History* 2: 266.

conflicts which appeared to be the first in the Indonesian Islamic history. The following discussion will examine the nature of these conflicts in terms of orthodox-heterodox Ṣūfī discourses.

Orthodoxy *versus* Heterodoxy: An Early and Ongoing Conflict

Ṣūfī conflicts appeared very early in Islamic history with the exposition of heterodox teachings by such Ṣūfīs as Abū Yazīd al-Busṭāmī (ca.874), Ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d.922), and Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī (d.1240).[53] Al-Ḥallāj, for instance, is a well-known example of a heterodox Ṣūfī who uttered the phrase "Anā al-Ḥaqq" (I Am The Truth), for which he was accused of blasphemy for claiming to be God. For opposing the main doctrine held in his time, al-Ḥallāj was executed in Baghdad in 922.[54] However, the seeds of

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[53]For discussions on the early Ṣūfī conflicts, see, for instance: Rahman, *Islam*, 128-149; A.J. Arberry, "Mysticism," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. P.M. Holt et al., vol.2B, 612-614 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Annemarie Schimmel, "Aspects of Mystical Thought in Islam," in *The Islamic Impact*, ed. Yvonne Y. Haddad et al., 117-119 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984); and Victor Danner, "The Early Development of Sufism," in *Islamic Spirituality*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 256-259 (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

[54]For a comprehensive study of al-Ḥallāj, see Louis Massignon (1883-1962), *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason, 4 vols. Bollingen Series 98 (Princeton University Press, 1982). See also Herbert W. Mason, *Al-Hallaj* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1995); and 'Alī ibn Anjab al-Sā'ī, *Kitāb Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, eds. Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus (Paris: Larose and al-Qalam, 1936).

teachings of these Ṣūfī masters found a good soil to grow in Indonesian land.

In Indonesia, it is reported that an orthodox-heterodox conflict occurred in Java during the time of the Wali Sanga, around the fifteenth century, with the history of Siti Jenar or Lemah Abang. He was a Ṣūfī who purportedly pronounced *iya ingsun iki Allah* (I myself am Allah),[55] a phrase similar to the "Anā al-Ḥaqq" of al-Ḥallāj. For the same reasons as those raised against al-Ḥallāj, Siti Jenar was executed by the order of the Wali Sanga.[56]

Similar conflicts happened in Aceh. In the late sixteenth century, and during the seventeenth, the people of this region recognized four famous Ṣūfīs: Hamzah Fansuri (ca. 1607); Syamsuddin As-Sumatrani (d.1630); Nuruddin Ar-

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[55]Cf. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism*, 301.

[56]S.T. Alisjahbana, "Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam di Asia Tenggara dalam Hubungannya dengan Masa Depan Islam," in *Seminar Internasional tentang Islam di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: Lembaga Penelitian IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1986), 38. See also Zoetmulder, *Pantheism*, 303-308, where he discusses the efforts of some *walis* to summon Siti Jenar. These efforts, however, caused no change in Siti Jenar's monism. According to Zoetmulder, although there are parallels in some aspects between the story of Siti Jenar and that of al-Ḥallāj, there is little similarity between the doctrines of the two figures. In Zoetmulder's words, a great and fundamental difference between the two is this:
> "Al-Ḥallāj is constantly presented above all as an ecstatic who is lost in God in love, while there is little or nothing of this about Siti Jenar. The latter is above all the independent free-thinker, who takes no heed of king or religious law and will not be diverted from the consequences of his doctrine. It is because of this that he is the most popular of *walis*, whose story still lives amongst Javanese people."

Raniri (d.1068/1658); and Abdurrauf Singkel or As-Sinkili (d.1693). Hamzah and his pupil, As-Sumatrani, promulgated the *wujūdiyyah* school of mysticism, under the popular name of *Martabat Tujuh* ("seven grades").[57] This is a doctrine of emanation which is derived from the existentialist monism of Ibn 'Arabī.[58] To use Fazlur Rahman's phrase, Ibn 'Arabī taught that "the absolute Reality is transcendent and nameless and its only attribute is self-existence."[59]

At one time this doctrine was predominant in Aceh, particularly during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (d.1636), the famous Acehnese ruler who happened to be a pupil of As-Sumatrani and the protector of the *wujūdiyyah* doctrine. But after his death, it was challenged strongly by Ar-Raniri. Together with other orthodox followers, Ar-Raniri marched to eliminate the heterodox doctrine by way of burning books containing the doctrine and executing its followers.[60]

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[57]See H.J. De Graaf, "South-east Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Islam* vol.2A: 141.

[58]See G.W.J. Drewes, "Indonesia," 288-289.

[59]Rahman, *Islam*, 145. See also, Grunebaum, *Classical Islam*, 195.

[60]See Drewes, "Indonesia," 289. For more analysis of their thoughts, doctrines, and conflicts involved, see, for instance, Al-Attas, *Mysticism of Hamzah, Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of the 17th Century Acheh*, Monograph of JMBRAS No.3 (Singapore, 1966): 43-79; See also G.W.J. Drewes, "Nur al-Din al-Raniri's Charge of Heresy against Hamzah and Shamsuddin from an International Point of View," in *Cultural Contact and Textual Interpretation*, eds. C.D. Grijns and

But within seven years of his seemingly overwhelming victory, Ar-Raniri was challenged yet by another heterodox Ṣūfī, named Sayfurrijal (d.unknown), who represented a counterattack against orthodoxy which finally forced Ar-Raniri to leave Aceh forever in 1644/1645.[61]

As analyzed by Drewes and De Graaf,[62] neither Ar-Raniri nor Abdurrauf actually rejected mysticism or the *wujūdiyyah* doctrine. However, to them such a doctrine needed to be interpreted with due regard to orthodoxy, and at the same time orthodox outward appearances should be observed. Ar-Raniri himself did not hesitate to quote from the works of Ibn 'Arabī and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d.1329), the commentator on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Moreover, both Hamzah's *Asrār al-'Ārifīn* and Abdurrauf's *Daqā'iq al-Ḥurūf* quote the famous verses of Ibn 'Arabī's *Manāzil al-Insāniyyah*,[63]

S.O. Robson, 54-59 (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986); Alisjahbana, "Pemikiran," 38; and De Graaf, "South-east Asian Islam," 142.

[61]See Azyumardi Azra, "The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian 'Ulamā' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1992), 363.

[62]Drewes, "Indonesia," 290; and De Graaf, "South-east Asian Islam," 142.

[63]They read: *Kunnā ḥurūfan 'āliyatin lam nuqal*
Muta' alliqatin fī dhura a' la al-qulal
Anā anta fīhi wa naḥnu anta wa anta hū
Wa al-kullu fī hū hū, fas'al ' amman waṣal
(We lofty letters, (yet) unuttered// held latent in the highest peaks of the hills// I am you in Him and we are you, and you are He// and all is He in Him--ask those who have attained//) Cf. Azra, "The Transmission," 472.

although Abdurrauf gives an orthodox explanation to the doctrine of the "seven grades."[64] As well, Abdurrauf was responsible for the introduction of the orthodox *Shaṭṭāriyyah* order into Indonesia.

Suppression of the heterodox doctrine and its followers, however, did not bring to an end the conflict between the two Ṣūfī streams. This is particularly true in Java where, even to the present day, the teachings of heterodox Ṣūfism can be found clearly in the notes (*primbon*) of the *santris*, the students in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantrens*).[65]

What has been described so far shows that religious conflicts occurred when Indonesian Islam became more "mature," from the thirteenth century onwards--what Johns calls the Ṣūfī period--at the time when Ṣūfism was spread worldwide and the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī was being disseminated everywhere in the Muslim world. Thus, in terms of ideas, Ṣūfism which has been credited with the peaceful Islamization of Indonesia should also be regarded as a factor which opened the door of Indonesia for ongoing conflict.

Finally, it should be made clear here that most Ṣūfīs involved in these conflicts had educational backgrounds from

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[64]See also A.H. Johns, "Dakaik al-Huruf by Abd al-Rauf of Singkel," *JRAS*, 1, 2 (1955): 56.

[65]Drewes, "Indonesia," 299; Alisjahbana, "Pemikiran," 38.

the Middle East. Hamzah, for example, studied in various places, including Makkah, Madīnah, Jerusalem, and Baghdad. Ar-Raniri studied in Ḥaḍramawt in southern Arabia, as well as in Ranīr, India, his hometown. And Abdurrauf was a product of the seventeenth century scholarly community of the *Haramayn*.[66] Like Ar-Raniri, Abdurrauf and several of his Indonesian friends, who studied in the same circle, introduced to Indonesia a new dimension of Ṣūfism, which is called "neo-Ṣūfism." Their influence in the shaping of Indonesian Islam has been frequently acknowledged.[67] It is therefore important for us to analyze the connection between the Middle East as a source of religious learning and another stage of the development of Islam in Indonesia.

The Middle East: A Source of Religious Learning and Reform

It has been suggested throughout our discussion that connection with the Middle East played a significant role in the development of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Both the Silk Route and the sea route enabled continuous trading and religious interactions to take place among many people along the way. But from the beginnings of contact with Islam, the importance of the Middle East to the Muslims of various regions has lain primarily in the function served by

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[66]See Azra, "Transmission," 347, 351, 391.

[67]See Azra, "Transmission," 525-566.

the original heartland of Islam, the cities of Makkah and Madīnah. In Makkah, where the Prophet Muḥammad was born and preached in his earlier period (570-622), there stands the Ka'bah, a cubic building which functions as a direction, called *qiblah*, to where Muslims must face every time they pray, and around which they perform parts of their pilgrimage sessions. Madīnah is also the special burial place of the Prophet, which is located next to his mosque, and where he spent the latter part of his mission (622-632). This mosque, where the Prophet gave his regular sermons, witnessed the establishment of the many of the final fundamental tenets of Islam. Madīnah is recognized as the City of the Prophet (*Madīnat al-Nabī*).

Early on, Makkah and Madīnah became the two commonly accepted holy cities or sanctuaries of Islam (the *Ḥaramayn*). In the course of time, large mosques were erected around the Ka'bah and on the site of the Prophet's mosque. These large mosques still function as places for worship as well as for giving lectures and instruction in Islam. They are known respectively today as the Ḥarām Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Ḥarām*) in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Nabawī*) in Madīnah. From the latter part of the twelfth century C.E., the *madrasah* began to emerge in the region as a specific place for Islamic learning. During the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries another place of Islamic learning also emerged, the *ribāṭ* or *zāwiyah* (Ṣūfī hospice).[68]

It should be said that the *Haramayn*, especially Madīnah, were once the most renowned centers for Islamic learning. But due to the political developments in Islam, in which the Muslim capital shifted to Damascus and, later, to Baghdad, the significance of the *Haramayn* as centers of Islamic learning was eclipsed for a number of centuries. However, change began around the seventeenth century when Makkah and Madīnah partly regained their positions as centers of learning, and by the eighteenth century, the *Haramayn* had been transformed to what John O. Voll calls "the center of the cosmopolitan world of Muslim scholars and believers" where members of several ethnic groups gathered and formed a scholarly community.[69]

The teachers of this community, together with their students, were especially involved in critical studies on the Prophetic tradition, the ḥadīth, giving more emphasis to ḥadīth compilations which were earlier, such as the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik ibn Anas, than the "standard" collections, the six canonical ḥadīth books (*al-Kutub al-Sittah*). Apparently, this endeavor functioned partly as an encouragement to practice *ijtihād* as well as an effort to purify Islamic

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[68]See Azra, "Transmission," 140-151.

[69]Voll, *Islam*, 56, 58.

society from practices not approved of by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet.

It is observed that all teachers and students of the community had an affiliation with certain neo-Ṣūfī orders (*ṭarīqahs*) such as the Naqshābandiyyah, the Khalwātiyyah, the Shaṭṭāriyyah, and the Sammāniyyah.[70] Their adherence to the Islamic legal precepts marked another resurgence of the reconciliation between *sharī'ah* and Ṣūfism. As Azra rightly describes it,

> the most salient feature of the scholarly networks is that the rapprochement between the *sharī'ah*-oriented '*ulamā'* (more specifically, the *fuqahā'*) and the sufis reached its climax. The long standing conflict between these two groups of Muslim scholars appears to have greatly diminished; the rapprochement or reconciliation between them, which had been preached insistently by such scholars as al-Qushayri [d.1072] and al-Ghazali [d.1111] several centuries earlier, became a common practice among our scholars. Most of them were *ahl al-sharī'ah* (*fuqahā'*) and *ahl al-haqīqah* (Ṣūfīs) at the same time; ...[71]

As time developed, these orders became widespread and accepted throughout the Muslim world. One may notice that a distinct characteristic of these orders is that they were, unsurprisingly, involved in advancing al-Ghazāli's orthodox type of mysticism rather than Ibn 'Arabī's more pantheistic teachings. As Rahman puts it,

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[70]Voll, *Islam*, 58-59. See also his "Hadīth Scholars and Ṭarīqahs: An Ulama Group in the 18th Century Haramayn and Their Impact in the Islamic World," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 15 (1980): 264-273.

[71]Azra, "Transmission," 242.

> he [al-Ghazālī] not only reconstituted orthodox Islam,
> making Ṣūfism an integral part of it, but also was a
> great reformer of Ṣūfism, purifying it of un-Islamic
> elements and putting it at the service of orthodox
> religion. As such he represents a final step in a long-
> developing history.[72]

In the Indonesian case, the spread of al-Ghazālī's teachings had been very early, and the earliest Ṣūfī preachers of Islam, such as the Wali Sanga, are said to have adopted such teachings.[73] However, as observed by Azra, attempts to reconcile the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Ghazālī were made in the light of *sharī'ah* injunctions by such eighteenth century Indonesian scholars as Abdussomad al-Palimbani (ca.1704-1789) and his friends.[74] They were heavily influenced by, and indeed, formed part of, the scholarly community of the *Ḥaramayn*.

One reservation, however, should be made with regard to the development of their Ṣūfism which appears to have initiated a kind of "innovation" (*bid'ah*) in Islam. This can be observed in a number of cases. First, a member of an order is required to act according to certain particular or unusual forms of rituals and religious formula (*dhikr*), which is called *rātib*. Second, the two prominent Indonesian scholars, Abdussomad al-Palimbani, a master of the Sammāniyyah order, and al-Maqassari, of the Khalwātiyyah,

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[72]Rahman, *Islam*, 140.

[73]See Shihab, "Al-Taṣawwuf," 45-59.

[74]Azra, "Transmission," 527-549.

required a disciple of a *tarīqah*, as common in Ṣūfism, to
pledge allegiance (*bay'ah*) and total obedience to his
master, just like "a dead body in the hands of its
washers."[75] Finally, Islamic festivals were introduced,
such as the commemoration of the ascension (*isrā'-mi'rāj*) of
the Prophet Muḥammad and the celebration of his birthday
(*mawlid al-Nabī*). For the *mawlid* celebration, several
panegyrical texts were written, such as '*Iqd al-Jawāhir* by
Ja'far ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Barzanjī (1690-1766)
and *Simṭ al-Durar* by Sayyid 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-
Ḥabshī (ca.1342/1923).

Earlier, however, Ibn Taymiyyah, who was considered as
the pioneer of neo-Ṣūfism,[76] propagated this Ṣūfism which
contains the orthodox postulates of Islam that emphasize
morality and puritanical self-control.[77] But what he
proposed was somewhat different from what was developed by
the scholarly community of the *Ḥaramayn*, as exemplified
above. The position of Ibn Taymiyyah was instead grasped
more completely by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, who is
considered the founder of the "Wahhābī" movement, although
his followers call themselves the *Muwaḥḥidūn* (those who

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[75]For al-Palimbani and al-Maqassari, see Azra,
"Transmission," 535-536.

[76]See Rahman, *Islam*, 194-195.

[77]See Rahman, *Islam*, 205-206.

believe in the Oneness of God).[78] Despite the fact that he was also a part of the scholarly community, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb does not seem to have been affiliated with any Ṣūfī orders.[79] His main teachings concentrate on the concept of *tawḥīd* and *ijtihād*. Like Ibn Taymiyyah, he rejected any kind of veneration of saints and considered it as an unwarranted innovation and a kind of polytheism (*shirk*). Instead, he advocated a strict obedience to the commands of God and encouraged Muslims to do *ijtihād* and derive any beliefs and actions only from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet.[80]

Describing the Wahhābīs, Rahman asserts that they followed Ibn Taymiyyah's rejection, even in a more virulent way, of the intellectualist trends in Islam. But contrary to Ibn Taymiyyah, the Wahhābīs rejected Ṣūfism altogether.[81] The totality of the Wahhābīs' idea can be summed up, in Rahman's words, as:

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[78]For a discussion on the relationship between these two thinkers, see, for instance, Sheikh M. Safiullah, "Wahhābism: A Conceptual Relationship Between Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Taqiyy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya," *Hamdard Islamicus* 10, no.1 (1987): 67-83.

[79]For the position of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb in the scholarly network, see, Azra, "Transmission," 283-287.

[80]Safiullah, "Wahhābism," 71-73. For more introduction on Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, see, 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymin, *al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb: Ḥayātuh wa Fikruh* (Riyāḍ: Dār al-'Ulūm, n.d).

[81]See Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, eds. P.M. Holt et al., vol.2B: 638 (Cambridge University Press, 1978).

a reassertion of monotheism and equality of men combined with varying degrees of reinterpretation of the actual positive legacy of the Islamic tradition for the reconstruction of Muslim society.[82]

Thus, "returning to the Qur'ān and *sunnah*," in its strictest sense, is the major theme of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's teachings, a theme which influenced a later movement which is called the *salafiyyah*, founded by Muḥammad 'Abduh. The Wahhābī movement gained power with its adoption by Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd of Dir'iyyah, the founder of the Saudi Arabia Kingdom.[83] This movement has been flourishing there ever since, and its system is regarded as the official theology of the kingdom.

From what has been discussed, it is unmistakably clear that, especially from the seventeenth century onwards, the Middle East functioned as the most important center for Islamic learning and revivalism and was the place where many Indonesians were taught. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Indonesian Muslims made the pilgrimage many of them found a way to stay longer and advance their study of Islam in the *Haramayn*.[84] Thus, they became acquainted

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[82]Rahman, *Islam*, 199.

[83]See Voll, *Islam*, 60.

[84]For some important features and functions of the pilgrimage for the Indonesian context, see, for instance, J. Vredenbregt, "The Haddj, Some of its Features and Function in Indonesia," *B.K.I.* 118 (Martinus Nijhoff - 's-gravenhage, 1962): 91-154; and C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mecca in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1931).

with many religious ideas and reforms which were eventually brought back to Indonesia.

As mentioned earlier, Hamzah studied in various places in the Middle East, including Makkah and Madīnah. Similarly, Abdurrauf Singkel studied in the Ḥaramayn for nineteen years, although, as described above, his Ṣūfism is different from that of Hamzah. As can be seen in the following description, other Indonesians, too, received their religious training in the Ḥaramayn, but the impact of their training may also not be the same.

The first among the Ḥaramayn graduates is Abdussomad al-Palimbani, who specialized in the Islamic sciences, especially Ṣūfism and theology. Born in Palembang, south Sumatra, al-Palimbani is the author of many books, including *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*, *Sayr al-Sālikīn*, *Zahrat al-Murīd*, *Tuḥfat al-Rāghibīn*, *Rātib 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbānī*, and *Zād al-Muttaqīn fī Tawḥīd Rabb al-'Ālamīn*.[85] The first two of these works, are mainly a Malay-Indonesian adaptation of al-Ghazālī's *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* and his brother's *Lubāb Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, respectively. Al-Palimbani is not only regarded as an early propagator of Ghazālism but also of the Sammāniyyah order in Indonesia.[86]

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[85]See Syamsu, *'Ulama'*, 268.

[86]For a thorough discussion on al-Palimbani's studies in the Middle East and his contribution in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, see Azra, "Transmission," 484-501, 532, passim. His discussion also includes other south Sumatran scholars of the same century. For al-Palimbani's

From Kalimantan (Borneo), there was Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari (1710-1812), who studied in the *Haramayn* for thirty-five years and who eventually became a teacher in the circle. He shared a similar Ṣūfī orientation with al-Palimbani. Moreover, he majored in Islamic law and theology, which helped him to write the *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, a Shāfi'īte jurisprudence (*fiqh*) book that has been used for more than two centuries, and *Perukunan Melayu*, a theological treatise which has reached almost identical popularity.[87]

During al-Banjari's time in Kalimantan, there was a Ṣūfī named Haji Abdul Hamid Abulung (d.unknown) who introduced parts of the *wujūdiyyah* doctrine such as teaching people that "there is no being but God; there is no Abdul Hamid but God; He is I and I am Him." Since Abdul Hamid refused to renounce his belief, al-Banjari issued a legal decision (*fatwā*) that Abdul Hamid's teaching was heretical. Subsequently, Abdul Hamid was persecuted by the order of Sultan Tahmidullah.[88] As discussed in the previous section,

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myst⌐.: sm, see Chatib Quzwain, *Mengenal Allah melalui Tare ᴵ. ⌐ Syeikh Abdussomad al-Palimbani*, Jakarta: Bulan Bintaᵢᵤg, 1985.

[87]According to its writer, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* was derived from several Shāfi'īte works, such as *Sharh al-Minhāj* of Sheikh Zakariyā al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī* of Sheikh Khaṭīb Shirbīnī, *al-Tuhfah* of Sheikh Ibn Ḥajar al-Haithamī, and *al-Nihāyah* of Shaikh al-Ramlī. See Karel A. Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek tentang Islam di Indonesia Abad ke-19* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1984), 96-98.

[88]For a detailed background and influence of al-Banjari and other south Kalimantan scholars, see Azra, "Transmission," 501-512, 541-542, passim.

this case stands as another evidence of the ongoing orthodox-heterodox conflict in Indonesia.

While both al-Palimbani and al-Banjari represent eighteenth century Indonesian scholars, the following list contains the distinguished scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first among this is Muhammad Nawawi al-Banteni (d.1888), who was born in Banten, the west Java, and who studied in Makkah for thirty years.[89] Among his writings are *Sharh Kitāb al-Ajurrumiyyah* on Arabic grammar; *Lubāb al-Bayān* on rhetoric; *Darī' at al-Yaqīn* on theology; *Fath al-Mujīb*, a *sharh* of Nahrāwī's *Al-Durr al-Farīd*; a *sharh* of al-Ghazzālī's *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*; and a Qur'ānic exegesis which is called *Tafsīr Marah Labīd* or *Tafsīr Nawawi Banten*.[90]

Another important and productive scholar is Sayyid Usman bin Abdullah bin Aqil bin Yahya (1822-1913). Born in Batavia (the present Jakarta), this Hadramī Arab studied in Makkah for seven years, before continuing his study in Hadramawt, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Persia, Istanbul, and

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[89]According to Snouck Hurgronje, who met him in Makkah in 1884/1885, Nawawi studied with many teachers, among them Chatib Sambas, Abdul Ghani Bima, Yusuf Sumulaweni, Nahrawi, and Abdul Hamid Daghastani. Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 268-273.

[90]Steenbrink, a Dutch scholar, found that al-Nawawi's *tafsir* is similar to the *tafsir* of al-Baydāwī (d.1286), although the former seems to be more complete than the latter with regard to names, occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and explanations of Arabic terms. See Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek*, 122-127.

Syria.[91] Many of his writings are in *fatwā* forms, intended
to answer actual questions concerning religious matters
raised during his time. Among his works are *Tawḍīḥ al-
Adillah 'alā Shurūṭ Shuhūd al-Ahillah; Al-Qawānīn al-
Shar'iyyah li Ahl al-Majālis al-Ḥukmiyyah wa al-Iftā'iyyah;
Taḥrīr Aqwā al-Adillah.*[92] Sayyid Usman is one of the best
examples of the important role played by the people of
Ḥaḍrāmī origin in spreading and advancing Islam in
Indonesia.[93]

About the same period, the west of Sumatra also
witnessed the rise of Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau (1855-1916).
Born in Bukittinggi, he was brought by his father to Makkah
where he studied for ten years and was eventually well
recognized within the scholarly community.[94] He was very
critical against Ṣūfī orders and *adat* practices in
Indonesia. For the first he wrote in Malay *Iẓhār Zaghl al-
Kādhibīn fī Tashabbuhihim bi al-Ṣādiqīn;* while for the
second he wrote in Arabic *Al-Dā' ī al-Masmu' fi al-Radd 'alā
Yuwarrithu al-Ikhwah wa Awlād al-Akhawāt ma' a Wujūd al-Uṣūl
wa al-Furū'* , and a book in Malay, *Al-Manhaj al-Mashrū'* . Both

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[91]Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek*, 134-135.

[92]See Syamsu, *'Ulama'*, 276-277.

[93]For further discussion, see Syamsu, *Ulama*, 272-295.

[94]Thus, he was appointed as a prayer leader (*imām*) of
the Shāfi'īs in the Ḥaram Mosque, as well as a Friday
speaker, and was a teacher licensed to give lectures at the
Mosque. See Hamka, *Ayahku* (Jakarta: Djajamurni, 1967), 231.

these latter books are directed against the matrilineal system of inheritance, which was an *adat* of the Minangkabau.[95]

The views of Khatib were elaborated further by the three west Sumatran Makkah graduates, mentioned in chapter 1: Syeikh Jamil Jamberk, Haji Abdullah Ahmad, and Haji Rasul. But as argued by Hamka and Taufik Abdullah, these scholars were very much influenced by the reformism of Muḥammad 'Abduh, and partly through their efforts that 'Abduh's ideas were spread in Indonesia.[96]

In Java, the reformist ideas were enhanced by Ahmad Dahlan who founded Muhammadiyah in 1912. Dahlan also studied in Makkah for several years and was a student of Khatib.[97] As mentioned in the previous chapter, the organization he established was involved in the discourses of *bid'ah*, particularly towards the end of 1950s. It should be mentioned, however, that another student of Khatib turned out to be a traditionalist '*ālim* (religious scholar). Hasyim Asy'ari, as mentioned earlier, was the founder of Tebuireng *pesantren* and of the Nahdlatul 'Ulama', a traditionalist organization established in 1926.

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[95]Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek*, 143,145,147. See also Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 7-8.

[96]Hamka, *Pengaruh*, 10-11; Abdullah, *Schools and Politics*, 13-14.

[97]See Noer, *Modernist*, 32,58,74.

Similarly, Makkah also produced two other different scholars. The first is Moenawar Chalil who studied in the city and its surrounding for 4 years (1926-1929). Chalil was very much influenced by the Wahhābī reformist spirit and at the same time was an admirer of 'Abduh's reformism. This led him to writing several reformist books such as *Kembali kepada AlQur'an dan As-Sunnah*, mentioned earlier.[98] On the other hand, Siradjuddin Abbas is the scholar who, according to his own narration, studied in Makkah for 7 years (1927-1933) and remained steadfast to traditionalist principles. This is obvious from his writings such as the *40 Masalah Agama*, which defended traditionalism and Shāfi'ism, as mentioned above.[99]

Several other names could probably be added to this list from scholars who graduated from the *Ḥaramayn* circles; but the list has already given us a sufficient evidence of how the heartland of Islam in the Middle East became the most important source for religious learning and revivalism, which had a great impact upon the development of Islam in

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[98]See Thoha Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought: A Study of an Indonesian Religious Scholar (1908-1961)," Ph.D. diss. (Montreal: McGill University, 1996), 27-29. This is the best and comprehensive discussion on Chalil's reformist thoughts.

[99]See Abbas, *40 Masalah* 2:165. For an analysis of Abbas' writings, see Howard M. Federspiel, "The Endurance of Muslim Traditionalist Scholarship: An Analysis of the Writings of the Indonesian Scholar Siradjuddin Abbas," in *Toward A New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought*, ed. Mark R. Woodward, 193-220 (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1996).

Indonesia. Besides their own works, these scholars were held responsible for bringing the intellectual heritage of the Islamic Middle Ages to Indonesia in particular and to Southeast Asia in general. Together, many of these works have been circulated not only in the traditional Islamic boarding schools (the *pesantrens*) and *madrasahs* throughout Indonesia[100] but also among groups of ordinary people who conduct a regular circle of religious studies known as *majlis ta' lĩm* (the gathering of learning). It seems natural that some books have been frequently studied while others may have been kept on the shelf as an intellectual heritage, especially when new books on the same subjects emerge with a more sophisticated exposition.

There are, however, cases where self studies proved to have similar effect to certain scholars although they were never physically trained in the *Haramayn*. Ahmad Hassan is

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[100]For a discussion on books used in *pesantren*, see for instance, L.W.C. van der Berg, "Het Mohammedaansche Godsdienstondderwijs op Java en Madoera en de daarbij gebruikte Arabische boeken," *TBG* 31 (1886): 518-555. Cf. Steenbrink, *Beberapa Aspek*, 154-158, who made the following notes on the list of Berg: (1) there were no direct studies of the Qur'ān and hadĩth; most studies were of the selected books especially of *fiqh*; (2) almost all books came from the Islamic Middle Ages; (3) although Ṣūfism was an important factor in Indonesian Islam, very few Ṣūfĩ books were listed on the curricula; most of them were *fiqh* and Arabic grammar books; (4) some of the books are also listed in the *Serat Centini* of Surakarta version, which, however, adds several others; and (5) in fact the books used in the west Sumatera's *suraus* [places of religious learning and worship equivalent to *zāwiyahs*] were very similar to those listed by Berg. The latest work on the issue is by Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995).

one of the obvious examples of scholars whose self studies
were largely recognized in the Indonesian community.
Educated mainly in Singapore, he became an ardent supporter
of *Kaum Muda*, and joint the PERSIS, the reformist
organization whose development was basically shaped by him.
He wrote several books and issued *fatwās* which are mainly
collected in his *Soal-Jawab*.[101] Similarly, Hasbi Ash-
Shiddieqy is also an independent reader who published many
of his writings, such as *Criteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah*.
Together with other reformist scholars, he played an
important role in the development of reformist ideas in
Indonesia.[102]

As a discourse, *bid'ah* was only elaborately discussed
by scholars like A. Hassan, Ash-Shiddieqy, Abbas, and
Chalil. Others, such as Haji Rasul and the early members of
Muhammadiyah, only discussed it in a less elaborate form
which was, nevertheless, important as a part of the whole
disscussion on the issue. From the works of such scholars
will the following discussions derive much of their data,
with the purpose of comprehending *bid'ah* as a concept as
well as a living practice in the Indonesian community.

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[101]See, for instance, a bibliography of A. Hassan in
Soal-Jawab 3:1266-1269. See also Federspiel, *Persatuan
Islam*, 13-14, particularly note 13 where he listed some
short studies of A. Hassan.

[102]See, for instance, Noer, *Modernist*, 66, n.100.

CHAPTER 3

TOWARD A QUR'ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF *BID'AH*

The previous chapter traces some historical developments and features of Indonesian Islam from its early inception to the first half of the twentieth century. Many variables or factors were actually involved in shaping Indonesian Islam: the evolutionary process of Islamization; the preachers responsible for it; the conflicts aroused along with the process; and the connection with the centers of Islamic learning in the Middle East, especially the *Ḥaramayn*. In turn, this connection had a great impact on Indonesia by transforming the Islamic ideals and the intellectual heritage of the Middle East that have been preserved to the present day.

Within this long process of Islamization, several basic questions must have been raised: What is Islam, its God, and Prophet? What is the source of this religion and its purposes? What are the obligations of a Muslim and how can one perform them? What should one abstain from doing? What is the punishment for breaking the injunctions on behavior? To these questions, elaborate answers can be drawn from the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, or *sunnah* of the Prophet, the two primary sources of Islam.

But apart from these possible questions, the more important and actual questions for the early Indonesian

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context are best exemplified by the Islamization of Java. The first crucial question was how the Javanese came to understand this new religion and worldview, given the fact that their worldview was already moulded with a blend of Javanese thought, Hinduism and Buddhism, and that their language was Hinduized and/or Sanskritized. The second was how the Muslim preachers came to "clarify" their Islamic teachings or worldview in a way understandable to the Javanese. Scholars have suggested that the only preachers capable of solving these problems were the Ṣūfīs. It was the eclecticism and elasticity of Ṣūfism and the Ṣūfīs themselves that made Islam understandable and hence acceptable.[1] In this way, Indonesian Islam then took on a syncretic nature, a phenomenon which helps explain why the Islamization proceeded for centuries and how the Ṣūfīs played their significant role.

This Indonesian Islam, however, raises a problem whenever one tries to compare it with what Ricklefs calls "the ideal standards of Islam in Arabia." According to him, by way of comparison, Islam in Indonesia would be considered "heretical,"[2] in the sense that it was "different" from the "original" teaching of Islam. In other words, what had been

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[1]See, for instance, Fatimi, *Islām*, 94,98-99; and Drewes, "Indonesia," 287-288.

[2]Ricklefs, "Six Centuries," 104.

done and accomplished by the Ṣūfīs was a new thing, an "innovation" in the religion.

Here is where the concept of *bid'ah*, translated as "innovation," becomes important. In retrospect, we may rightly observe that "orthodox" scholars like Ar-Raniri and Abdurrauf Sinkel arose in the seventeenth century because they saw that the "heterodox" doctrine of *wujūdiyyah* of Hamzah and Syamsuddin was "heretical" or *bid'ah*, something which, in their view, must be wiped out. Similarly, the efforts of such 18th and 19th century Indonesian scholars as al-Palimbani and al-Banjari were made in order to bring Islam there "closer" to orthodoxy--believed by many to be the standard representation of Islam--as they introduced and drew on the ideas of works of the orthodox Islamic Middle Ages. Furthermore, the emergence of the twentieth-century modernist Muslim movements in Indonesia, which was actually provoked by certain individuals, was, as elsewhere, clearly intended to "purify" the Muslim society from what may be loosely called *bid'ah* beliefs and practices.[3]

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[3]See, for instance, Muhammadiyah, *Risalah Bid'ah*, A, where it says, "Among the main motives of the founding of Muhammadiyah is to purify the Islam, which is adhered to by the majority of the Indonesians, from the influences and customs that contradict the guidance and teaching of [true] Islam." See also Hamka, *Pengaruh*, 6-8, where descriptions of how false mysticism and the blend of syncreticism and rigid thinking which predominated in the early 20th century Indonesia, were about to be challenged by the figures deeply influenced by 'Abduh's reformism, such as Taher Jalaluddin and Muhammad al-Kalali.

By looking at *bid'ah* as a strategic key word to understand the development of Indonesian Islam in particular, it is therefore important to elaborate on the concept itself. This chapter will examine first the basic meanings and usages of the word *bid'ah* in the light of Arabic lexicographies. This is inevitable and important in order to provide a basic and literal understanding of the word which has been so controversial. Second, it is also relevant to discuss how the Qur'ān, as the first and primary source of Islam, uses some derivatives of the word--a discussion the importance of which will emerge in later discussions. Finally, some other "related" Qur'ānic verses will be discussed, as they appear to be equally important to understanding the basic concept of *bid'ah*. As mentioned earlier, this chapter will at the end suggest a "Qur'ānic conception of *bid'ah*."

Lexical Meanings of *Bid'ah*

Bid'ah (plural *bida'*) is an Arabic word which according to lexicographers has two roots, namely *bada'a* and *abda'a*. According to al-Azharī (895-980), a famous Arab lexicographer, the word *abda'a* is more commonly used than *bada'a*, although to use the latter is not regarded as incorrect.[4] In his well-known *Lisān al-'Arab*, Ibn Manẓūr

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[4]Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, ed. Muḥammad 'Alī al-Najjār, vol.2 (Egypt: al-Dār al-Miṣriyyah li al-Ta'līf wa al-Tarjamah, 1964), 241.

(1233-1311) translates *bada' a al-shay'* with "to invent something and to begin it (for the first time)."[5] The word *abda' a* means "to come up with an innovation;" so when a person says *abda' tu al-shay'* he means "I invented something without prior example." Ibn Manẓūr points out that *abda' a* also means "to cut off." Hence, the Arabic *abda' a fulān bi fulān* means "somebody has cut off (ties) with somebody else" in the sense that he belittles him or does not take responsibility for him.[6]

With regard to the word *bid' ah*, Ibn Manẓūr defines it in two meanings. The first is *al-ḥadath* which means "the new thing;" and the second is "something which has been invented in the religion after its completion" (*mā ubtudi' a min al-dīn ba' da al-ikmāl*). Quoting Ibn al-Sikkīt, *bid' ah* is also explained by Ibn Manẓūr to mean "every new thing" (*kull al-muḥdathah*).[7] On the other hand, Riḍā translates *bid' ah* as "the contradicting condition" (*al-ḥālah al-mukhālifah*); but, he adds, this word has been commonly used to indicate either a subtraction in the religion or an addition to it.[8]

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[5] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab al-Muḥīṭ*, vol.1 (Dār Lisān al-'Arab, 1970), 174. According to Riḍā, this is the original meaning of the word *bid' ah*. See Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu' jam Matn al-Lughah*, vol.1 (Bayrūt: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1958), 254.

[6] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 174-175.

[7] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 174. See also al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, 240, where he narrates from al-Kassā'ī that *bid' ah* could happen in badness and goodness.

[8] Riḍā, *Mu' jam*, 255.

In the final analysis, both *bada' a* and *abda' a* provide only one meaning, that is, of creating something without prior example and making it existent after it was not existent. Thus in its literal context the word *bid' ah* means "something which is originated and invented without prior example, and is begun after it was not existent before."[9] In other words, this word (*bid' ah*) renders the sense of novelty, something which has no preceding example whatsoever. In this sense, the best English equivalent or translation of *bid' ah* would be "innovation" or "invention" which means "something new, novelty."[10]

As would anyone whose mother tongue was not Arabic, Indonesian scholars have tended to adopt this literal meaning of *bid' ah* completely in their writing. Ash-Shiddieqy, for instance, quotes from *Al-I' tiṣām* in defining *bid' ah* as "something which is invented in a form for which

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[9]Cf. Ja' far Muḥammad ' Alī al-Bāqirī, *Al-Bid' ah: Dirāsah Mawḍū' iyyah li Mafhūm (al-Bid' at) wa Tatbīqihā ' alā Ḍaw' Manhaj Ahl al-Bayt (' alaihim al-salām)* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Thaqalayn li al-Ṭabā' at wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī' , 1995), 133-134. See also Sa' īd ibn Nāṣir al-Ghāmidī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid' ah wa Aḥkāmuhā*, 2 vols. (Al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1992), 242.

[10]See, for instance, J.M. Cowan, ed., *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1976), 46; Elias A. Elias and Ed. E.E. Elias, *Elias' Modern Dictionary, Arabic-English* (Cairo: Elias' Modern Publishing House and Co., 1981), 53. See also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition (1960), s.v. "Bida' "; Jean L. McKenchnie, ed., *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (USA: William Collins Publishers, Inc., 1979), 945-946.

there is no prior example."[11] In addition, he quotes from
Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *Al-Mufradāt* where *bidʿah* is defined
as "creating something without using a tool, matter, time,
and place."[12] This is, however, a careless quotation, for
in the *Mufradāt* itself, al-Iṣfahānī (d.1108), a famous Arab
theological writer, uses this definition for the word *ibdāʿ*,
instead of *bidʿah*, and it is used to refer to God alone (*wa
idhā ustuʿmila fī Allāh taʿālā fahuwa ījād al-shayʾ bi ghayr
ālah walā māddah walā zamān walā makān, wa laysa dhālika
illā li Allāh*).[13]

Chalil also defines the literal meaning of *bidʿah* as
"something which exists or happens without an example that
precedes it, that is, something new, which never existed
before."[14] Although his definition is clearly literal, as
he cites several examples of the word used in the Arabic
tongue, he does not give any reference for his
interpretation. But it cannot be assumed that he takes for
granted the literal meaning, for his other definitions
regarding the word, as will be discussed later, clarify the
sources he uses.

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[11]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 34. See also al-Shāṭibī, *Al-
Iʿtiṣām*, 27.

[12]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 35.

[13]Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān*, ed.
Ṣafwān ʿAdnān Dāwūdī (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam; Bayrūt: Dār al-
Shāmiyah, 1992), 110-111.

[14]Chalil, *Kembali*, 227.

Similarly, the Muhammadiyah account, which describes
bid ah as a "new creation" or "new action which has no prior
example," does not indicate any source whatsoever.[15] On the
contrary, Abbas quotes the definitions of *bid ah* from al-
Shīrāzī's *al-Muḥīṭ*, al-Rāzī's *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥaḥ*, and from *al-
Mu' tamad* and *al-Munjid*. Then he concludes that *bid ah* means
something which is new or which is invented without prior
example.[16] And Hsubky quotes from 'Alī Maḥfūẓ's *Al-Ibdāʿ* in
order to translate the word *bid ah* as "everything which is
created without prior samples."[17]

From these instances, a clear picture of what the word
bid ah literally means can be found in the Indonesian
literature. Although the references the Indonesian scholars
use are somewhat varied, they are basically one in denoting
that the word means "innovation." This can be found also in
the Indonesian encyclopedia of Islam, where *bid ah* is
translated literally as "to do something which is not based
on an available example."[18] Thus at least at this point,

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[15]Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, 9.

[16]Abbas, "Masalah Bid' ah," in *40 Masalah Agama* 3:157-
158.

[17]Hsubky, *Bid'ah-bid'ah*, 28.

[18]Harun Nasution, ed., *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*
(Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, 1992), 173. This translation,
however, is inadequate because *bid ah* in Arabic, as rendered
earlier, is a noun form, not a verb, as is translated here.
Hence, it is more a translation of *ibdāʿ* or *ibtidāʿ*, rather
than *bid ah*. But in Indonesia, all uses seem to be
interchangeable and the word *bid ah* is just a popular word
which is easy to use. This is, for instance, reflected by

all are agreed on the term and the literal meaning of
bid̄ ah.

However, what is written in this literature is not
necessarily all that is understood by the Indonesian Muslims
in their reality. When the word *bid̄ ah* is mentioned, its
meanings seem to be varied, and the literal one just spoken
of is only one of such meanings. When the respondents in
Jambi were asked what *bid̄ ah* is, their response can be
categorized into four: (1) something new, never done by the
Prophet (43%); (2) something new, never done by the Prophet
and his Companions (13%); (3) something which has no prior
example (14%)--yet this is equal to the literal meaning
indicated above; and (4) something which is not in
accordance with the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* (29%). When asked
further whether or not "every new thing is *bid̄ ah*," their
response fall into three equal categories: (1) yes, every
new thing (30%); (2) yes, but sometimes it is not true
(30%); and (3) no, not true (28%).[19]

Dealing with these figures, however, one must be aware
that discrepancies may occur due, for instance, to the
number of the respondents. If more respondents were
included, it would possibly provide us with more variables
or categories. Nevertheless, what is more important here is

Federspiel, *Dictionary*, 36, who cites some of the uses of
the word in the Indonesian context.

[19]The 1995 Jambi *Bid̄ ah* Survey.

not the figures, but what they represent about the realities
of understanding such an intricate term as *bid'ah*.

As will be seen later, the other meanings of *bid'ah* are
in fact discussed more elaborately than the literal one in
Indonesian literature. Together with other Islamic
literature, this has been responsible for the emerging of
the various meanings of *bid'ah* in reality. One suggestion
which could be made here is that the transformation of
religious ideals, as reflected in this varied literature,
unequivocally matches the Indonesian context with various
real-world adoptions of these ideals.

Before proceeding to the other meanings of *bid'ah*,
which are often termed as the "religious meanings" (*al-ma'nā
al-shar'īy* or *al-ma'nā al-iṣṭilāhī*), it seems appropriate to
discuss the uses of the *bid'ah*-related words in the Qur'ān.
This is important at least from three perspectives. First,
it is important to see how the Qur'ān uses the word *bid'ah*
or its derivatives simply because it is the first and
primary source of Islam to which all religious discussions
(should) refer. Second, the so called religious meanings of
bid'ah did not, certainly, appear until the completion of
the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Thus, the word had
already been circulated before the religious meanings began.
Third, unlike much literature on the subject, this method or
approach intends to show a chronological order of analysis
from which a new understanding can be constructed. As will

be seen shortly, this approach also contributes valuable

suggestions to the whole discussion on *bid' ah*.

The Exegesis of *Bid' ah* in the Qur'ān

Needless to say, prior to the coming of Islam in

Arabia, the Arabs had already long-used the word *bid' ah* and

its derivatives. The Qur'ān, which was, of course, revealed

in the Arabic tongue, also incorporates some words related

to *bid' ah*, in four occurrences: Q.S.2:117; 6:102; 46:9; and

57:27. To get a clearer picture of these verses, and how the

words are incorporated, we quote their full translations

from Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall:[20]

> The *Originator* [*badī'*] of the heavens and the earth!
> When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be!
> and it is. (Q.S.2:117)

> The *Originator* [*badī'*] of the heavens and the earth!
> How can He have a child, when there is for Him no
> consort, when He created all things and is Aware of all
> things? (Q.S.6:102)

> Say: I am no *new thing* [*bid' an*] among the messengers
> (of Allah), nor know I what will be done with me or
> with you. I do but follow that which is inspired in me,
> and I am but a plain warner. (Q.S.46:9)

> Then We caused Our messengers to follow in their
> footsteps; and We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow,
> and gave him the Gospel, and place compassion and mercy
> in the hearts of those who followed him. But
> monasticism they *invented* [*ibtada' ūhā*]--We ordained it
> not for them--only seeking Allah's pleasure, and they
> observed it not with right observance. So We give those

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[20]Muhammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: Mentor, n.d.), 43,116,358,389. Italics and the words in brackets are mine to indicate the translation of the *bid' ah*-related words.

of them who believe their reward, but many of them are
evil-livers. (Q.S.57:27)

Regardless of the occasions in which they were revealed
(asbāb al-nuzūl), these verses seem to reinforce the literal
meaning of biď ah as discussed earlier. In Q.S.2:117 and
6:102, the word badī' is translated as "Originator," that
is, the one who makes a thing appear for the first time, Who
is God.[21] Similarly, the word biď an in Q.S.46:9 is
translated as "new thing," for the Prophet Muhammad was
certainly not the first prophet.[22] And Q.S.57:27 again
emphasizes the literal meaning of biď ah where monasticism
in Christianity, as this verse states, was not ordered by
God. It was invented, created for the first time, by the
followers of Jesus themselves.[23]

Similar reinforcement can be seen in various well-known
Qur'ānic commentaries.[24] The Arab historian al-Ṭabarī (224-

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[21]See al-Azharī, Tahdhīb al-Lughah, 231; Ibn Manẓūr,
Lisān al-'Arab, 175.

[22]See Al-Azharī, Tahdhīb al-Lughah, 230, where he would
rather translate the part of the verse as "I am not the
first who is sent; many messengers have been sent before
me." See also Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-'Arab, 174.

[23]See, for instance, Majma' al-Lughat al-'Arabiyyah,
Mu'jam Alfāz al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, vol.1 (Egypt: Al-Hay'at al-
Miṣriyyat al-'Āmmah li al-Ta'līf wa al-Nashr, 1970), 85.

[24]It would be interesting if one were to attempt to
investigate the issue of biď ah in the light of extensive
Qur'ānic commentaries, using, for instance, the related
verses as quoted here, their occasions of revelation, and
traditions that surround them. This could be a major
contribution to the study of biď ah. Our use of some
commentaries here are meant only to provide some examples of

310/839-923), for instance, when discussing Q.S.2:117,

translates the word *badī'* as *mubdi'*, that is, the one who

creates or originates something which has never been created

before by anyone. That is why, he said, that those

innovators in religion are called *mubtadi'*. But this is

applied not only to religion; in fact, the Arabs use the

word for all innovators of actions or speeches.[25] This

explanation is followed by al-Ṭabarsī (d.548/1153), a famous

Shī'ī Qur'ānic commentator. Having described several

features of exegesis, including the meaning of *al-badī'*, he

adds that the use of *al-badī'* is for an exaggeration (*al-*

mubālaghah), for one of God's concerns is to innovate or

create things, such as the heavens and the earth.[26]

Furthermore, he mentions in passing the word *bid' ah*, which

is the noun form of *abda' a*, and quotes the ḥadīth stating

that "every *bid' ah* is erroneous and every error leads to the

hellfire."[27]

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how they deal with the *bid' ah*-related words in the verses.

[25]Abī Ja' far Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-*
Bayān ' an Ta'wīl Āyi al-Qur'ān, vol.1 (Dār al-Fikr, 1992),
508. See also Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*
al-' Aẓīm, vol. 1 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Andalus, 1966), 280-282.
Ibn Kathīr (d.1373), a well-known Syrian historian and
traditionist, depends heavily on al-Ṭabarī on commenting
this verse.

[26]See also Al-Iṣfahānī, *Mufradāt*, 110-111.

[27]Abī ' Alī al-Fadl ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-*
Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, ed. Abū Ḥasan al-Sha' rānī, vol.1
(Tehrān: Kitābufurūshī Islāmiyyah, 1953), 193-194.

Similarly, al-Qurṭūbī (d.671/1272), a Māliki scholar of Cordoba, explains the use and meaning of *al-badī'* the way al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭabarsī do. But he states further that *bidʿah* is so called because its pronouncer invented it without the (prior) example or statement of a leader (*li'anna qāilahā ibtadaʿahā min ghayr fiʿl aw maqāl imām*). To substantiate this, he refers to al-Bukhārī's quotation of the aforementioned ʿUmar phrase regarding the *tarāwīḥ* prayers.[28]

Al-Qurṭūbī goes further in explaining the concept of *bidʿah*, such as its forms and divisions. He refers to several ḥadīths from which he concludes that *bidʿah* is basically divided into bad and good.[29] Although this issue will be dealt with in greater details later, it is worth noting how a famous commentator like al-Qurṭūbī, and eventually Ibn Kathīr, abruptly shifts his discussion from *bidʿah* as an Arabic word to *bidʿah* as a concept without any

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[28]Abī ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭūbī, *Al-Jāmiʿ li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm al-Burdūnī, vol.2 (Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1967), 86.

[29]Al-Qurṭūbī, *Al-Jāmiʿ*, 2:87. See also Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 1:282, where he divides *bidʿah* into two: religious *bidʿah* (*bidʿah sharʿiyyah*), as represented by the *Bidʿah Hadīth* narrated by Muslim, and linguistic *bidʿah* (*bidʿah lughawiyyah*), as represented by the famous saying of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

attempt to discuss its relation with the verse he is commenting.[30]

Having explained the issue in this way, al-Qurṭūbī has no more comments to offer on Q.S.6:102.[31] In a different manner, al-Ṭabarsī further elaborates the discussion of the word *badī'* when commenting on this verse. According to him, the word *ibdā'* differs from *ikhtirā'* , in that the former denotes an action which has no prior example, whereas the latter refers to an action which finds no cause. Hence, he adds, the word *bidʻah* is so called for it contradicts (*khālafa*) the *sunnah*, because it creates something for which nothing has preceded it.[32] As for Ibn Kathīr, he quotes Mujāhid and al-Suddī who explain that *bidʻah* is derived from the word *badī'* , since there is no parallel found before.[33]

In Indonesia, the interpretation of Q.S.2:117 and 6:102 can be seen, for instance, in Hamka's *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, a

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[30]It can be assumed that al-Qurṭūbī must have been aware of such works of Ibn Waḍḍāḥ and al-Turtūshī, mentioned earlier. He was also a contemporary of, and was likely acquainted with, Abū Shāmah, and al-Maqdisī (d.643/1245), the author of *Ittibā' al-Sunan wa Ijtināb al-Bida'* . Fierro, "Treatises," 210-211, notices that Western Islam, where Andalusia once was a centre of Islamic learning, was very concerned with the issue of *bidʻah*, and many Western Mālikīs, whose works al-Qurṭūbī could had access to, until the late 11th century are often described as *shadīd 'alā ahl al-bida'* (very strict against the people of *bidʻah*).

[31]See Al-Qurṭūbī, *Al-Jāmi'* , 7:53-54. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 7:298.

[32]Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 7:342. See also al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, 241.

[33]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 3:72.

Qur'ānic exegesis which is very widely circulated and is printed and distributed in several editions even to neighboring countries.[34] Hamka (1908-1981), a celebrated Indonesian 'ālim (religious scholar), translates the word badī' as "creator, the one who offers a creation which has never been preceded by anyone else." The word bid'ah, he says further, is derived from the word badī'. If someone attempts to add a religious ritual, without its being exemplified before by the Prophet, he is called a maker of bid'ah or a mubtadi'.[35] Thus, Hamka's definition of bid'ah is already expanded beyond the literal meaning of the word.

The reinforcement of the literal meaning of bid'ah is more boldly expressed in the Indonesian literature on bid'ah which, as in the previous discussion, follows the pattern of discussion set by their Middle Eastern sources. Following Al-Shāṭibī verbatim, Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil, for instance, quote Q.S.2:117 and 46:9 to confirm the literal meaning of the word bid'ah.[36] It seems that neither considers it necessary to include Q.S.57:27 as part of this confirmation. This is likely because they are merely translating the discussion from al-Shāṭibī, who also does not mention the

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[34]Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 10 vols., 2nd ed., (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional Pte, Ltd.), 1993.

[35]Hamka, *Tafsir*, 1:280; 3:2126.

[36]Ash-Shiddieqi, *Criteria*, 34; Chalil, *Kembali*, 225-226. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 32, where he quotes Q.S.2:117.

verse at this specific point of the discussion.[37] But this suggestion might not be true. Abbas, for instance, also does not quote Q.S.57:27, while citing Q.S.2:117 and 46:9 to establish the literal meaning of *bid ah* he concluded earlier; and he is expressly against Shāṭibīsm.[38]

As far as the Muhammadiyah's account is concerned, it also quotes the two verses (Q.S.2:117 and 46:9) to indicate the literal meaning of *bid ah*.[39] Although it does not indicate its reference, it may have been influenced by the earlier writings of Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil, or even of al-Shāṭibī himself, which had been widely circulated.

Another way of translating al-Shāṭibī is to quote from a scholar who quotes from him. This is, for instance, clear from Hsubky who quotes from 'Alī Maḥfūz's *al-Ibdāʿ* with regard to the literal and religious meanings of *bid ah* and the citation from Q.S.46:9.[40] It is beyond doubt that

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[37]See al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Iʿtiṣām*, 27-34.

[38]Abbas, "Masalah Bid' ah," 158-159. For his criticism against al-Shāṭibī, see pp.198-199, where he noted that neither al-Shāṭibī nor any of his admirers, such as Rashīd Riḍā, is a prophet; that al-Shāṭibī was following a different path than that followed by *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿ ah* (People of the *Sunnah* and the Group); that if every *bid ah* is an error then al-Shāṭibī's *al-Iʿtiṣām is* an error, since there is no prior example nor an order from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* to write the book; and that by insisting on his arguments, al-Shāṭibī is indirectly accusing many great Companions of the Prophet as the makers of *bid ah* who should thus be condemned and punished by Fire, since they did make some innovations in their time.

[39]Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, 8.

[40]Hsubky, *Bid'ah-bid'ah*, 28-29.

Maḥfūẓ was in this matter influenced by al-Shāṭibī.[41]
Hsubky is therefore mistaken when he regards the quotation
as Maḥfūẓ's opinion. In this case, Hsubky is not only
showing his ignorance of al-Shāṭibī's work, which was
available very much earlier, but also of another style of
Indonesian approach to the issue of bidʿah. It is worth
mentioning that he could have been influenced by the
curricula of Indonesian Islamic universities or institutes,
where Maḥfūẓ's al-Ibdāʿ is regarded as a primary reference
in discussing bidʿah. In fact, the list of Hsubky's
references shows his non-reliance on the "authoritative" or
"primary" works on bidʿah, as listed earlier, except that of
Maḥfūẓ and Ibn Taymiyyah's Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā.[42]

Despite his barely-grounded approach, however, Hsubky
follows Maḥfūẓ in interpreting the Q.S.46:9, instead of only
quoting it as others have done. Before quoting the verse, he
writes,

> The opinion of Shaykh Maḥfūẓ is based on the Qurʾānic
> verse which says that the Messenger of God, peace be
> upon him, was not acting on his own without examples of
> previous prophets. His duty was a continuation of their
> duties, but God appointed him as the last prophet.
> Thus, he would not do anything except what had been
> revealed by God through Gabriel....[43]

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[41]See al-Shāṭibī, Al-Iʿtiṣām, 27-28.

[42]See Hsubky, Bid'ah-bid'ah, 216-220.

[43]Hsubky, Bid'ah-bid'ah, 29.

Thus, this verse has proven its significance to an understanding of *bid' ah*. A much clearer results would be expected if more concerted attention were given to the four verses themselves, rather than adopting them as merely confirmatory statements of the literal meaning of the word *bid' ah*.

Indeed, these verses can be approached from three perspectives. First, from the subjects discussed therein, the verses convey that *bid' ah* could happen in two areas, namely, of theology and ritual. Q.S.2:117 and 6:102, which are basically similar, refer to the attribute of God as the Originator or Innovator (*al-Badī'*). Discourse on God is usually treated under the rubric of theological discourses. Similarly, Q.S.46:9 is about the prophethood of Muḥammad, a discussion of which also comes under theology.[44] But as adduced to by some Qur'ānic commentators, Q.S.57:27 is

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[44]Treatises on Islamic theology often begin their discussion by explaining God and His attributes; one form of Islamic theological creeds consists of: belief in God, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, and the Day of Judgement. See, for instance, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Fatḥ Allāh Khulayf (Bayrūt: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970); Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn Khuzaymah, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa Ithbāt Ṣifāt al-Rabb*, ed. Muḥammad Khalīl Harās (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyyah, 1968). In this connection, Hamka, for instance, discussing Q.S.46:9, emphasizes the primary mission of all prophets and messengers of God in advancing the oneness of God. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 9:6641.

concerned with a "ritual" practice, that is monasticism. Like other rituals, it may have a theological link.[45]

Secondly, the verses tell us about the nature of *bid' ah*. Differing from what have been commonly explained by many Qur'ānic interpreters,[46] both Q.S.2:117 and 6:102 relate the word *badī'* with the creation of the heavens and the earth, to what constitutes the world. Thus the nature of *bid' ah* here is related to physical nature. On the other hand, Q.S.46:9, as commented on by Hsubky earlier, is apparently related to mission or duty. The word *bid' an* here is referred to the word *rusul* (plural of *rasūl*) which means the messengers, whose primary duty is to convey messages revealed to them by God. In this verse, two words are regarded antonymous, namely, *bid' an*, whose other form is *ibtidā'*, which means to innovate, and *attabi' u*, another form of *ittibā'*, which means to follow. It may be suggested that a scholar like al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505), for instance, was likely partly inspired by this verse when he entitled his

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[45]See, for instance, al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 27:242; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 9:7195.

[46]Qur'ānic interpreters mainly see these verses as a refutation against allegations that God has a son or that the angels are His daughters. They argue that God Who is capable of originating the heavens and the earth without prior example is also capable of originating Jesus without his having a father. Furthermore, it is impossible for God to have a son since He is the Creator of everything and nothing is compatible to Him. See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 1:508, 512; al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 1:194-195; and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 1:280-282. See also Mahmoud Ayoub, *The Qur'ān and Its Interpreters*, vol.1 (SUNY Press, 1984), 148-149.

book *Al-Amr bi al-Ittibā' wa al-Nahy 'an al-Ibtidā* .[47] But
even if the Prophet was merely following the Revelation,
some of the whole corpus of his teachings can be regarded as
innovations if they are to be compared with those of his
predecessors, especially with regard to such ritual
practices as prayer.[48]

As far as Q.S.57:27 is concerned, the innovation is
clearly in the realm of religion, for God is quoted as
saying that, "We ordained it [monasticism] not for them." In
other words, the Christians, seeking God's pleasure,

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[47]Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Sunnah wa al-
Bid'ah aw al-Amr bi al-Ittibā' wa al-Nahy 'an al-Ibtidā'* ,
ed. Sheikh Khalīl Ibrāhīm (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī,
1992).

[48]The idea of whether the Prophet Muḥammad introduced a
totally new revelation has been a subject of debate
especially in the Western world. Many believe that a large
portion of "Islamic" teachings was "borrowed" but then
"modified" from the previous revelations, namely, Judaism
and Christianity, so much so that Islam has been seen as a
"Christian heresy" (*bid'at naṣrāniyyah*). But as far as
Q.S.46:9 is concerned, it seems that what is *not* regarded as
an innovation here is the office of prophethood itself, of
which Muḥammad is claimed by Muslims to be its last holder.
However, historians of religions would argue that such an
office would necessarily be a product of interaction between
a remarkably innovative person, i.e., a prophet, and the
society in which he lives; thus the prophet is considered as
an agent of change. See, for instance, Marilyn Robinson
Waldman and Robert M. Baum, "Innovation as renovation: The
"prophet" as an agent of change," in *Innovation in Religious
Traditions*, eds. Michael A. Williams et al. (Berlin, New
York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), 241-284.

invented monasticism, which God then declared to be an innovation.[49]

Derived from this second perspective, the third and final one is related to suggestions elaborated from reading the verses in a larger context. In Islamic moral precepts, Muslims are taught to imitate God's good attributes (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*);[50] and *al-Badī'* , as stated in Q.S.2:117 and 6:102, is one such attribute.[51] Hence, they are encouraged to be innovative with regard to nature, as discussed above. With this spirit, unlimited inventions could be made by, or expected from, the Muslims.

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[49]See, for instance, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 27:238; al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 27:243; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:567; Hamka, *Tafsir*, 9:7193. See also a discussion on this verse by Sara Sviri, "*Wa-Rahbānīyatan Ibtada' ūhā*, An Analysis Concerning the Origin and Evaluation of Christian Monasticism" *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 13 (1990):195-208. Challenging Louis Massignon's thesis that anti-monastic influences were adopted by Muslim commentators only after the third century *hijrah*, Sviri argues that the anti-monastic trend among the Muslims was in fact very early, no later than the mid 2nd century *hijrah*, starting from the narration of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d.767).

[50]See, for instance, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, trans. David B. Burrel and Nazih Daher (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1992), 30-47; and Muhammad Amān ibn 'Alī al-Jāmī, *Al-Ṣifāt al-Ilāhiyyah* (Al-Jāmi' at al-Islāmiyyah bi al-Madīnat al-Munawwarah: Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1987), 373-382.

[51]See, for instance, Al-Ghazālī, *Ninety-Nine*, 146; Ahmad Ibrāhīm Malā Muhammad, *Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh al-Husnā 'alā Manzūmat al-Sheikh 'Abd al-Ghanī (ibn Ibrāhīm) al-Nābulisī* (Dimashq: Dār al-Majd, 1994), 164. For a discussion on the relation between this name/attribute of God to other of His names, see Abū Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt*, ed. 'Abd Allāh ibn Muhammad al-Hāshidī (Jeddah: Maktabat al-Suwādī li al-Tawzī' , n.d.), 56-89.

But this should comply with their general mission, which is to follow the Messenger of God. Suggested by Q.S.46:9, the Muslims, like the Prophet himself, are bound to follow what is revealed by God, the Qur'ān, and, in addition, to follow what is exemplified by the Prophet, the *sunnah*, as other verses of the Qur'ān testify.[52]

Somewhat in contrast with this general mission, understanding Q.S.57:27 is rather problematic. Here, surely innovation took place and God acknowledges it;[53] but then He said that they did not observe it with "right observance." Qur'ānic interpreters offer various explanations regarding this last phrase. Al-Ṭabarī, for instance, explicates in detail two basic opinions: the first is from those who argue that those who originally invented monasticism did not observe it rightly, but changed and contradicted the religion brought by Jesus. The second comes from those who believe that monasticism was not rightly observed by those who came later, rather than by the ones who invented it.[54] Al-Ṭabarī himself prefers the first opinion, adding that only some of the innovators did not observe the monasticism rightly while others remained faithful and deserved the rewards as promised by God. But

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[52]See the next section.

[53]See Majma' al-Lughah, *Mu'jam*, 85.

[54]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 27:238-240.

al-Ṭabarī did not close the possibility that those who did not observe it might come also from later generations.[55]

Discussing a similar issue, al-Ṭabarsī narrates from al-Zujjāj, who offers two explanations on Q.S.57:27: (1) that the followers of Jesus reduced what they had been practicing; and (2) that when Muḥammad was appointed as a prophet they did not believe in him and hence ignored God's order and did not observe monasticism rightly. But this opinion is contrasted by al-Ṭabarsī with a narration from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd (d.652), a Companion who was given more information by the Prophet about the origin of Christian monasticism, which is barely touched on in the Qur'ān. The story tells that some time after the death of Jesus, many Christians were being persecuted. Fearful of losing their religion, they went into exile in the caves and mountains, where they innovated the monasticism. Among them were those who were steadfast with the religion, but others turned out to be disbelievers. In another narration, Ibn Mas'ūd also quotes the Prophet as saying: "Whoever (among them) believes in me, trusts and follows me, he is the one who has observed it (the monasticism) with the right observance."[56]

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[55]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 27:241.

[56]Al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 27:243. Compare with al-Qurṭūbī, *Al-Jāmi'*, 17:265-266; and Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:568.

Al-Qurṭubī, however, offers a different explanation. According to him, the meaning of "they did not observe it with right observance" is that "they did not stand for it rightly," since the reason for some of them to adopt monasticism was to acquire leadership over the people and to take from their treasuries.[57] Moreover, al-Qurṭubī quotes the narration of Sufyān al-Thawrī (d.778) through 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās (d.688), who explains how later generations of the followers of Jesus changed the forms and values of the monasticism which had been invented by the older generation. Hence, like one of the opinions quoted by al-Ṭabarī earlier, this verse is talking about two generations: the older were given rewards for their innovation, while the latter were considered evil-doers.[58]

Still in this regard, Ibn Kathīr's comments are worth mentioning. The verse, he argues, is a form of condemnation against the followers of Jesus in two ways. First, they made innovation in the religion, something which God did not ordain. Second, they were not consistent with what they had been practicing, claiming that the practice was a means to seek God's pleasure.[59] Although Ibn Kathīr quotes several prophetic traditions,[60] these do not seem to substantiate

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[57]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi'*, 17:263.

[58]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi'*, 17:263-264.

[59]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:567.

[60]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:567-569.

his argument. On the contrary, this verse, instead of condemning the innovation, promises to give rewards to those who are still faithful, who, according to al-Ṭabarī earlier, are certainly among the innovators themselves.

If one looks at *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Hamka also arrives at a different explanation. He argues that the reason they did not observe monasticism rightly is because it is very hard for a man who has sexual desires to detach himself from marriage. So some of them failed to keep to celibacy, although others did uphold it. God then justly gives the latter their rewards.[61]

But Hamka takes this verse as a support for the idea, which is based on what is regarded by many as a prophetic tradition, that "there is no celibacy in Islam" (*lā rahbāniyyah fī al-Islām*).[62] This opinion is also adopted by some other Indonesian commentators, including the official Indonesian translation, with annotations, of the Qur'ān, which was prepared after an eight-year labor by ten of the

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[61]Hamka, *Tafsir*, 9:7195-7196.

[62]Hamka, *Tafsir*, 9:7196. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 7:569-570, however, mentions another partly contradictory tradition. Narrated from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* 3: 82, 266, the Prophet is quoted to have said: "For every prophet [in another version, every *ummah*] has a monasticism and monasticism for this [Muslim] *ummah* is struggle in the path of God Almighty." For various formulae of anti-monastic precept, see Sviri, "*Wa-Rahbāniyatan*," 199.

most distinguished Indonesian scholars of the time.[63] The

Indonesian encyclopedia of Islam goes even further by

labelling monasticism as a condemned *bid ah*.[64] No

explanation has yet been made in the literature to

substantiate this opinion.

Contrary to this opinion, however, nowhere in the verse

do we find that God prohibited such an innovation,

especially if God's pleasure is sought after. Even Hamka's

earlier comment, like that of al-Ṭabarī, makes it clear that

some of Jesus' followers were rewarded for holding strongly

to their monasticism. Other scholars go even further. Al-

Qurṭūbī, for instance, suggests that this verse not only

proves that every new thing is *bid ah*, it is also a positive

encouragement for those who innovate in goodness that they

should keep doing so.[65]

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[63]See Departemen Agama R.I., *AlQur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Jakarta: CV.Indah Press, 1994), 905. The ten scholars are: Prof. T.M. Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (one of our sources here), Prof. H. Bustami A. Gani, Prof. H. Muchtar Yahya, Prof.H.M. Toha Jahya Omar, Dr. H.A. Mukti Ali (a former Minister of Religion), Drs. Kamal Muchtar, H. Gazali Thaib, K.H.A. Musaddad, K.H. Ali Maksum, and Drs. Busjairi Madjidi. See also H. Zainuddin Hamidy and Fachruddin HS, *Tafsir Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Malaysia: Klang Book Centre, 1988), 805-806. Compared to the various classical Arabic Qur'ānic commentaries we have cited here, this Indonesian commentary has therefore offered a novel, although hardly justifiable, look at this verse.

[64]Nasution, *Ensiklopedi*, 173.

[65]Al-Qurṭūbī, *Al-Jāmi'*, 17:264. See also the commentator of al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 27, note on p.243, who deduces from the discussion of the Q.S.46:9 and the ḥadīth narrated by Ibn Mas'ūd that *bid ah* is not prohibited absolutely. Instead, there is commendable *bid ah*

Although the perspectives being offered here probably bear certain limitations and, surely, have relative degrees of merit, we have attempted to understand what the Qur'ān has to say about *bid' ah* by studying the derivatives of the word as it is contained in the various verses under discussion. In dealing with *bid' ah*, this approach is not only new, but will also enable us later to emphasize some alternatives to the whole unending debate on *bid' ah*, particularly in the Indonesian context.

Finally, despite the fact that many Indonesian scholars who write on *bid' ah* do not provide an elaborate explanation of the verses, they nevertheless mention other verses which are, in their view, related to the discussion of *bid' ah*. For the present purpose, it is therefore necessary to discuss these verses and to examine their interpretations suggested by scholars.

Other "Related" Verses

Many Qur'ānic verses are mentioned in the Indonesian literature on *bid' ah* to basically formulate a theme or thesis concerning "following the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*." The thesis begins by explaining that the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* are the complete guidance to the straight path for every

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which seeks God's pleasure, as exemplified by the followers of Jesus. Massignon and E. Beck also argue that this verse was in fact understood by early Muslims in a permissive and laudatory sense that revered Christian monasticism as a noble religious ideal. Cf. Sviri, *Wa-Rahbānīyatan,*" 196-197.

Muslim. To support this, Ash-Shiddieqy, for instance, quotes Q.S.5:3 and 6:38; while Chalil quotes Q.S.7:3; 39:55; 6:155; 29:51; 65:10,11; 17:9; 4:174,175; 42:52; 5:15-16; 6:153; 3:101; 43:43; 6:126; 46:30; and 12:108.[66]

The thesis then continues to indicate that, since the Qur'ān and *sunnah* constitute complete guidance, we humans are ordained simply to follow them without reservation. Obedience will bring eternal happiness whereas disobedience will cause eternal damnation. Thus, Ash-Shiddieqy quotes from Q.S.33:21; 3:31; 7:158; 25:27-30; and 6:153, to emphasize how God has ordained every believer to follow the path (*sunnah*) of the Prophet and his Companions. Other paths, he says, are simply unrighteous, and will not lead us to the goal (of salvation).[67]

Similarly, Q.S.6:154, which is discussed in a ḥadīth, and Q.S.59:7, are quoted to indicate the obligation to follow the guidance, especially in matters of worship (ritual). In contrast, Q.S.4:115 and 24:63 are quoted to indicate the prohibition to disobey or deviate from the Prophet and his *sunnah*. Commenting on the last verse, Ash-Shiddieqy inserts that part of deviating from the *sunnah* is

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[66]See Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 8-9; Chalil, *Kembali*, 25-32. The numerical order of these verses is original. See also Ibn Bāz, *Waspadalah*, in the motto, where he quotes Q.S.5:3 and 6:116; and Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, 1-3, where quotation from Q.S.5:3; 59:7; and 6:154, are found.

[67]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 7-8. See also Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, 3.

by making *bid' ah*.[68] As indicated earlier, the word *bid' ah* is also contrasted to *sunnah*, a position which is clearly adopted by Ash-Shiddieqy in his book.

In a similar fashion, Chalil quotes Q.S.4:59; 8:20; 17:33; 3:32; 24:54; 8:1; 58:13; 8:46; and 5:92, to indicate the obligation to obey God and His messenger. In his short comments on these verses, Chalil reemphasizes the obligation and the guidance that Muslims should not quarrel in opinion among themselves. Differing from Ash-Shiddieqy, however, he does not attempt to relate these verses specifically to the issue of *bid' ah*.[69]

Thus, there is a number of verses which are approached by the Indonesian scholars in a very literal sense. Unfortunately, no exegetical discussions have been attempted by them to substantiate their claim. This is probably due to the fact that the verses are literally "clear" enough that they do not feel it necessary to use the many exegetical works already available in their time or to author new ones on them.

It seems, indeed, unnecessary to indulge in a lengthy exegetical discussion on these verses. For, besides their clarity, as far as their wording is concerned, these verses do not have an expressive correlation with the word or the issue of *bid' ah*. Even the scholars themselves, with the

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[68]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 9-11.

[69]Chalil, *Kembali*, 3-6.

exception of the single insertion of Ash-Shiddieqy above, have not made any attempt to elaborate on the verses and to relate them to the issue of *bid' ah* even while they are discussing it in their works. They take for granted the existence of a relationship between following guidance and avoiding *bid' ah*, though they might also be aware that any attempt to emphasize such a relationship could be considered highly hypothetical or at least relatively interpretive.

Nevertheless, from the structure of their discussions, a suggestion could fairly be made. These scholars seem to project the contrast between the word *ittibā'* (to follow), as rendered by many of the quoted verses, and the word *ibtidā'* (to innovate), although none of these verses contain the latter or its derivatives. Consequently, they can be seen to be taking for granted the contrast between *ittibā'* and *ibtidā'* when they imply that whenever God and His messenger has ordained us to follow, God's command must *therefore* considered an order to avoid innovation. As indicated, however, neither have they discussed what is meant by the general command of "following" God's orders, nor how the verses are connected with the issue of innovation. In their structure of discussion, the word *bid' ah* (innovation) itself is yet to be defined.

There is no doubt regarding the clarity of the command to follow God's orders. But one may suggest that this general command falls under the nature of *bid' ah* as

discussed in Q.S.46:9 earlier, which is related to the mission of the Prophet and, consequently, to his followers. As suggested, this verse emphasizes that the Prophet follows what was revealed to him; and that the Muslims, as his followers, are to do exactly the same.[70] In a reciprocal way, the other related verses containing *ittibā'* , as discussed here, function to substantiate this general mission of the Prophet and the Muslims.

But Q.S.46:9 has been discussed only as a part of the nature of *bid'ah*. The other verses, Q.S.2:117; 6:102; and 57:27, still leave open a possibility of other kinds of *bid'ah* which, as elaborated, are even partly encouraged, or at least not condemned or prohibited. In other words, the *bid'ah* verses, as we may call them, offer more flexibility in dealing with *bid'ah* than what has been offered by the other "related" verses. Thus, it can be argued that the *bid'ah* verses should be taken into consideration within a larger context of Qur'ānic passages. By ignoring this, as implied by the approaches taken by the Indonesian scholars, one may be led to an inadequate or incomplete understanding of the Qur'ān on this particular issue.

Having discussed the *bid'ah* and other related verses, I would suggest a formula for what is likely to be the "Qur'ānic conception of *bid'ah*," which runs as follows:

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[70]See page 101 above.

> The general mission of every Muslim is to follow the
> Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Part of this
> mission is to make innovations, whenever necessary, in
> two avenues: one is within natural schemes, where the
> possibilities are unlimited; and the other is within
> the religious spheres, where the innovations must be
> intended to seek God's pleasure and be observed
> thoroughly. Needless to say, all these innovations
> should be subject to the injunctions of both the Qur'ān
> and the *sunnah*.

This formula will be contested later when we discuss the ḥadīths on *bid'ah*. In fact, the Indonesian scholars we are considering are not only inclined to present the other related verses, but they also mention some traditions (ḥadīths) of the Prophet to make their case. We will discuss these views in the ḥadīth discussion. Indeed, it is the ḥadīths that expound more expressly *bid'ah*, and it is from them that *bid'ah* discourses are now in fact elaborated throughout the Muslim world. It is, thus, to the ḥadīth we must next turn our discussion.

CHAPTER 4

THE *BID' AH ḤADĪTH*: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INSPIRING SOURCE

Like other writers throughout the Muslim world,
Indonesian Muslims quote several Prophetic traditions
(ḥadīths) to support their views on *bid' ah*.[1] One specific
ḥadīth, however, is particularly important, since it is
mentioned frequently by almost all of the writers.
Basically, it says that "every new thing is *bid' ah* and every
bid' ah is an error" (*kullu muḥdathat bid' ah wa kullu bid' at
dalālah*).

The ḥadīth attracts the attention of everyone concerned
with *bid' ah* issues. More importantly, it has been quoted to
indicate the nature and the valuation of *bid' ah*. Even on
ordinary religious occasions it is often recited by Muslim
preachers, especially in the Friday congregational sermon
(*khuṭbah*) or prior to reading a particular Islamic text in
the *majelis ta' līm*. Without doubt, this ḥadīth is very well-
known among the Indonesian Muslim community.[2]

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[1]For a discussion on the usage of ḥadīth in Indonesia,
see Howard M. Federspiel, *The Usage of Traditions of the
Prophet in Contemporary Indonesia* (Arizona State University,
1993). This is a study of 40 Indonesian works on ḥadīth, the
majority of which, according to the author, concentrated on
recapitulation of traditional Islamic lessons.

[2]In the 1995 Jambi *Bid' ah* Survey, about 89% of the
respondents recognize this ḥadīth, many of whom (36%) hear
it often. Moreover, the people have heard of it through
several ways: reading it in certain ḥadīth collections;
reading it in books other than such collections; hearing it
from teachers in religious schools, from *khaṭībs* (preachers)

Because of the particular characteristics of this ḥadīth and its central importance as well as the inspiration that it offers to the issue of *bidʿah*, it has been chosen as a focus of this study. To differentiate it from other ḥadīths, it will be referred to in this study as the *Bidʿah Hadīth* or the *Hadīth* (with the capital H and italicized word). This choice is, of course, not intended to minimize the importance of other ḥadīths regarding *bidʿah*, some of which are, in fact, discussed later in this and the following chapters. But what is emphasized here is the nature of *bidʿah*, which is represented by the *Bidʿah Hadīth* more than by any other ḥadīths. Hence, the choice serves more purpose than mere convenience.

The *Hadīth* is believed to have been spoken by the Prophet Muḥammad in one--or several--of his final sermons, in which he warned his *ummah* (followers) against *bidʿah*. The primary importance of the *Hadīth* is, indeed, related to its wording and its meaning in its various forms. While the first part of the statement ("every new thing is a *bidʿah*") equates terms that are literally synonymous, that is, one defines the other, as discussed in the previous chapter, the second part ("every *bidʿah* is an error") adds an indication of a negative value, by equating *bidʿah* with error, which terms are by no means literally synonymous. Indeed, while

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of the Friday sermons, and from many preachers during *majelis taʿlims*.

this part adds a negative evaluation to the new and to
bid ah, it also creates a problem, for it does not explain
how the two concepts--*bid ah* and error--are related. This is
only one of the problems raised by the *Bid ah Hadīth*.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine four issues
which are closely related to the *Hadīth*. The first issue
deals with some problems concerning the chains of
transmission (the *isnāds*) of the *Hadīth*. Variations of the
isnāds have been found in several hadīth collections,
suggesting that some chains are likely more reliable than
others. Through *isnād* criticism, this study attempts to
establish which of the chains are reliable and which are
weak or denied.

The importance of *isnād* and of *isnād* criticism have
been acknowledged by the majority of Muslim scholars. Both
primarily serve to ensure a certain degree of reliability
for every hadīth ever narrated. In the introduction to his
Sahīh, Muslim (817-875), one of the outstanding early
collectors of hadīth, for example, considers *isnād* as a part
of the religion itself (*al-isnād min al-dīn*). It is also
said that "without *isnād* anybody can say whatever he wishes"
(*law lā al-isnād laqāla man shā'a mā yashā'u*).[3]

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[3]See Abū Zakariyyā Muhyi al-Dīn al-Nawawī (1233-1277),
Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām Muhyi al-Dīn al-Nawāwī, or *Al-Minhāj bi Sharh Sahīh Muslim ibn al-Hujjāj*, ed. Sheikh
Khalīl Ma'mūn Shihā, vol.1 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1994),
84. Muslim's introduction has been translated by G.H.A.
Juynboll, "Muslim's Introduction to His *Sahīh*, Translated
and Annotated with an Excursus on the Chronology of *Fitna*

The second issue concerning this chapter is the text (*matn*) of the *Ḥadīth*. As in the case of the *isnād*, variations of the text are also found in the *ḥadīth* collections. This study will examine these variations through text (*matn*) criticism, hoping to suggest the most plausible text(s) of the *Ḥadīth*.[4] Thus, both *isnād* and *matn* criticism will help determine the most reliable version(s) of the *Ḥadīth*.

The third issue is related to the understanding of *bidʿah* as suggested by the *Ḥadīth* itself. As mentioned earlier, *bidʿah* in this *Ḥadīth* is associated with error. One approach to getting a more precise understanding and

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and *Bidʿa"* *JSAI* 5 (1984):263-311. See also Muḥammad Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm, *Al-Aḥādīth al-Nabawiyyah wa al-Muḥaddithūn* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1973), 39. For more discussion on the basis and the importance of *isnād*, see, for instance, Al-Ḥākim Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Naisābūrī, *An Introduction to the Science of Tradition, Being Al-Madkhal ilā Maʿrifat al-Iklīl*, trans. and annot. James Robson (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1953), 9-14, 44; Ḥasan Muḥammad Maqbūlī al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Hadīth wa Rijāluh* (Sanʿāʾ: Maktabat al-Jayl al-Jadīd, 1991), 33. For critical analysis on the *isnād* system, see, for instance, M.M. Azami, *Studies in Ḥadīth Methodology and Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978), 212-247; and his *On Schact's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Riyādh: King Saud University; and England: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 1985), 154-212. A good discussion on ḥadīth also appears in the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, vol.1 (1983); and in a series by James Robson in the *Muslim World* 41 (1951). For the efficacy of *isnād* criticism, see Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 93-100.

[4]For the general principles of *matn* analysis and criticism, see, for instance, Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 113-115.

definition would be to analyze the commentaries (*sharhs*) of the hadīth collections which contain the *Hadīth*; another way would be to examine various interpretations of the *Hadīth* itself, as found in many works on this issue, especially in the Indonesian literature.

Fourthly, another important hadīth will be discussed. The importance of this hadīth lies in the idea it contains, which is similar to that of the *Bid' ah Hadīth*, and which may also help in understanding the meaning of the *Hadīth*. It cannot be termed "another" *Bid' ah Hadīth*, because it does not contain the word *bid' ah*. However, together with the *Bid' ah Hadīth*, it can be regarded as an inseparable part or source of *bid' ah* discourses.

These issues are all very important to the effort of this study to understand the various approaches taken, as well as the different understandings grasped, by the Indonesian Muslims with regard to *bid' ah*, all of which are likely to have been inspired especially by this *Hadīth*. The overall discussion on the *Hadīth* itself is intended to partially establish what *bid' ah* is really about.

In this chapter, several important hadīth collections which contain the *Bid' ah Hadith* will be used, primarily the *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim, the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd (817-889), the *Sunan* of al-Tirmīdhī (d.279/892), the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī (830-915), the *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah (824-887), and the *Musnad* of

Ibn Ḥanbal (780-855).[5] These are standard collections, accepted widely by Sunnī scholars and regarded as authoritative. Quite interestingly, other well-recognized collections, such as the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik ibn Anas and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, do not contain the specific *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*. Nevertheless, they will be referred to in this study whenever necessary.[6]

The *Isnāds* of the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*

In the ḥadīth collections, there are about forty-three transmitters who narrate the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*. They are found in various chains of transmission (*isnāds*), some of which are connected to each other and from which a combined *isnād* can, and will, be constructed. Like many other ḥadīths, the *Ḥadīth* is narrated, in its initial *isnāds*, by several Companions whose reliability is hardly ever challenged by Muslims. They believe that all Companions of the Prophet are

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[5]Muslim ibn al-Ḥujjāj ibn Muslim, *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Istanbul: Dār al-Ṭabāʿat al-ʿĀmiriyyah, 1911); Sulaymān ibn al-Ashʿath Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (n.p.: Dār Iḥyā' al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah, 1970); Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. ʿIzzat ʿUbayd al-Diʿās (Ḥamṣ [Egypt?]: Maṭābiʿ al-Fajr al-Ḥadīthah, 1967); Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, with a commentary by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1930); Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, *Sunan,* ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Shurakāʾuh: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1952); and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Bayrūt: al-Maktab al-Islāmī and Dār Ṣādir, 1969).

[6]See, for instance, pages 133-134, 147 below. For a discussion on the translations of many of these collections into Indonesian, see Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions*, 41-55.

reliable, a conviction from which the concept of the trustworthiness of the Companions (*'adālat al-ṣaḥābah*) has been established and well maintained.[7] Those other than the Companions, however, are subject to scrutiny.

It is of primary importance to examine the rest of the transmitters of the *Ḥadīth*. This task will, in part, determine the authenticity and the reliability of the *Ḥadīth* and will help indicate its soundest chains. Toward this end, several books on *rijāl* (ḥadīth transmitters), will be used, especially the twelve-volumes of al-'Asqalānī's *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*.[8] This work is particularly important because of

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[7]This concept comes from a presupposition of the Companions' strong attachment to Islam, which establishes the improbability of their telling lies about the Prophet. Good moral character is also attributed to them, as well as powerful memories which enabled them to memorize many ḥadīths which were eventually narrated by those who met and learnt from them. In his master's thesis, Ghaffar describes the approaches taken by the Companions to ensure the reliability of a ḥadīth. It is not that there was no attempt of forgery during their time, but such attempts were easily discovered and resolved. See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Ḥadīth among Muslims with Reference to Sunan of Ibn Māja* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd. and Al-Qur'an Society, 1986), 59-76. For more discussion on this issue, see, for instance, Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. Ṭāhā Muḥammad al-Zaynī, vol.1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyyah, n.d.), 10-14; al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 210-213; and Brown, *Rethinking*, 85-87. However, this concept has been challenged by some modern Muslim scholars, such as Maḥmūd Abū Rayyah, an Egyptian scholar. He, for instance, criticizes Abū Hurayrah, the famous Companion who narrated the most of the Prophet's ḥadīths, and considers some of his ḥadīths to be spurious. This criticism can be seen in Abū Rayyah's *Aḍwā' 'alā al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyah* and *Shaykh al-Muḍīrah [Abū Hurayrah]*.

[8]Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1325/1907). Other books include Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī (1274-1348), *Mīzān al-I'tidāl fī Naqd*

its wide coverage of previous works on the same subject and of its articles on almost all ḥadīth transmitters. Al-'Asqalānī, usually known as Ibn Ḥajr, himself is undoubtedly one of the most important scholars on ḥadīth.[9]

The first *isnāds* to be examined are those of Muslim, who has three versions of the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*. In his first version, Muslim narrates the *Ḥadīth* from Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā, from 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Abd al-Majīd, from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, who narrated the *Ḥadīth* from the Prophet.[10] Muslim's second *isnād* is narrated from 'Abd ibn Ḥumayd, from Khālid ibn Makhlad, from Sulaymān ibn Bilāl, from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, from the

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al-Rijāl (Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah: 'Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Shurakāʾuhu, 1963); 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d.327/938), *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1952); and Abū al-Maʿātī al-Nūrī et al., *Al-Jāmiʿ fī al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* (Bayrūt: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1992).

[9]Among his other works on ḥadīth are *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb, Lisān al-Mīzān, al-Iṣābah,* and *al-Durar al-Kāminah.* Studies on ḥadīth owe a great deal to such scholarly ḥadīth works as these, which enable an easy assessment of any particular ḥadīth narrator. These works, however, should be used with a great care, for, as will be made clear later, an assessment of a particular narrator could be somewhat varied, and other works must also be consulted.

[10]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11. In this study, I try to avoid the dubious discussion on the technical Arabic words used in the transmission of ḥadīth, such as *haddathanā/ī, anbaʾanā/ī, akhbaranā/ī,* and *'an,* all of which are translated here as "narrated to us/me" or simply "from." The significance of such a discussion is only applied to a minute analysis of how a ḥadīth is transmitted, something which is outside the purpose of this study.

Prophet.[11] In the third, Muslim narrates from Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah, from Wakī' , from Sufyān, from Ja'far, from his father, from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, from the Prophet.[12] A diagram of these *isnāds* can be seen in figure 1 below.

The Prophet
|
Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh
|
Muḥammad
|
Ja'far ibn Muḥammad

'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Abd al-Majīd	Sulaymān ibn Bilāl	Sufyān
Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā	Khālid ibn Makhlad	Wakī'
	'Abd ibn Ḥumayd	Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah
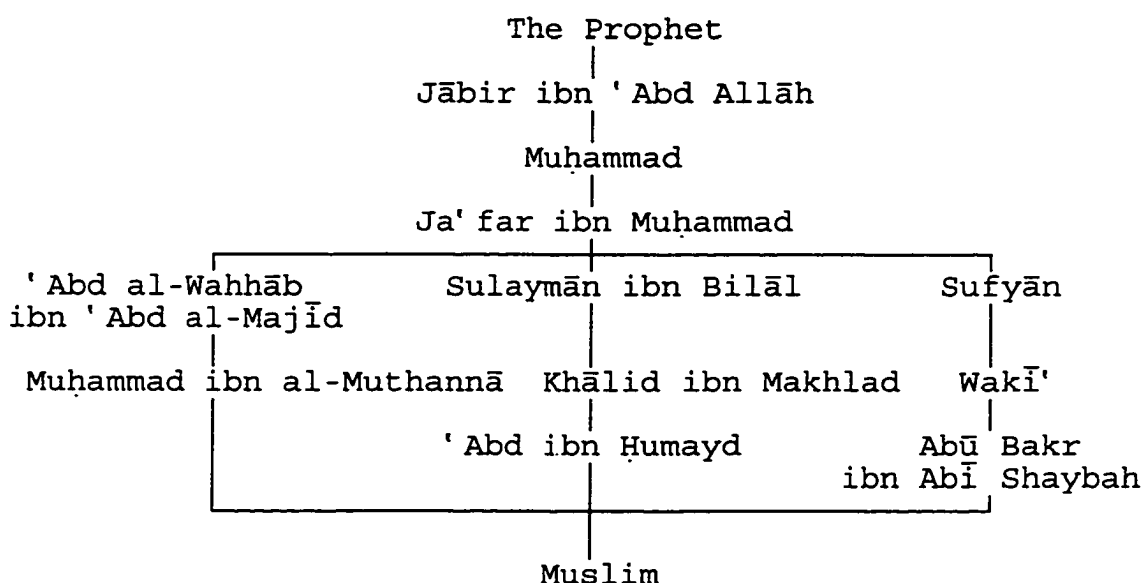
Muslim

Figure 1. Muslim's *Isnāds* of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*[13]

Based on Al-'Asqalānī's assessment of these narrators, these three, and linked, *isnāds* are all historically connected, that is, each transmitter in them met and narrated from the one who transmitted the *Ḥadīth* to him. Moreover, all of the transmitters, except Khālid ibn Makhlad, are considered reliable (*thiqah*, pl. *thiqāt*).

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[11]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11.

[12]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11.

[13]The left line corresponds to the first version, while the middle to the second, and the right to the third. This style will be used in all figures, except in figures 4 and 7.

Khālid's personality is somewhat controversial. Some *rijāl* critics regard him as a trustworthy transmitter (*ṣadūq*), but others reject him and his narration, saying that he was accustomed to narrating refuted hadīths (*manākīr*); that he wrote, instead of memorizing, his hadīths--implying his memory had deficiencies; and that he was possibly involved in a deviant group (*al-ghuluww*).[14] These disparaging records make him suspect and, consequently, the second version of Muslim's *isnāds*, which goes through Khālid ibn Makhlad, is regarded as suspicious. But since this version contains a similar text to that of the first version, which, like the third version, is free from defect, the suspicion regarding the second *isnād* may be lifted. This could have been one of the reasons why Muslim, who claims to have narrated only sound hadīths and through reliable transmitters, adopts the narration of Khālid. Another reason could be that he considers Khālid as totally, or

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[14]Al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 3:116-118. See also al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 1:640; al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Jarh*, 3:354; and al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'*, 1:213. In case of contradictory opinions on a suspect transmitter, many hadīth scholars prefer to accept the "disparaging points" (*al-jarh*) rather than the "authenticating points" (*ta' dīl*) of the transmitter, especially when the former points are assessed by many critics. See al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalah*, 200. Such this "precautionist" approach does indeed do more good to protect the integrity of hadīth tradition than it does to the transmitter himself.

particularly in his second version of this *Hadīth*,

reliable.[15]

Very close to the third *isnād* of Muslim is the single

isnād of al-Nasā'ī. He narrates the *Bid' ah Hadīth* from

'Utbah ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Ibn al-Mubārak, from Sufyān,

from Ja' far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Jābir ibn

'Abd Allāh, from the Prophet.[16] The simplicity of this

isnād can be seen in figure 2 below.

The Prophet
|
Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh
|
Muḥammad
|
Ja' far ibn Muḥammad
|
Sufyān al-Thawrī
|
'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak
|
'Utbah ibn 'Abd Allāh
|
Al-Nasā'ī
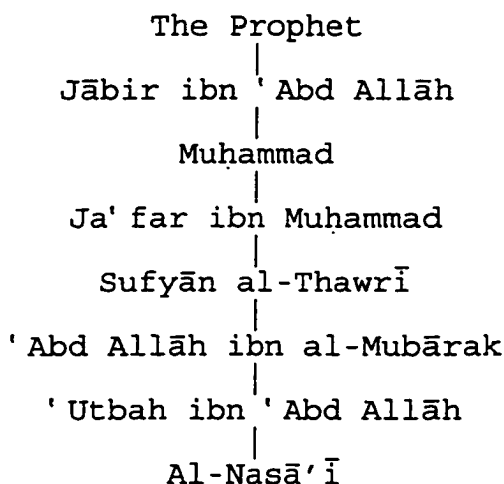
Figure 2. Al-Nasā'ī's *Isnād* of the *Bid' ah Hadīth*

This chain is full of great transmitters, all of whose

reliability is acknowledged in *rijāl* books. This includes

'Utbah, who, although less well-regarded than the others, is

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[15]In his Introduction, Muslim clearly states that "we
have refrained from [mentioning] those transmitters, the
majority of whose traditions are *munkar* (lit.: rejected) or
faulty." Cf. Juynboll, "Muslim's Introduction," 269.

[16]Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 188.

considered by al-Nasā'ī himself as reliable.[17] Thus, al-Nasā'ī's *isnād* can be considered a sound *isnād*, although his version of the *Bidᶜah Hadīth* has an additional phrase which is not mentioned by other compilers, including Muslim. As will be seen in the next section, this phrase has a great impact upon the reliability of al-Nasā'ī's version of the *Bidᶜah Hadīth*.

Differing from the *isnāds* of both Muslim and al-Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd narrates the *Hadīth* from Ahmad ibn Hanbal, from al-Walīd ibn Muslim, from Thawr ibn Yazīd, from Khālid ibn Maᶜdān, from ᶜAbd al-Rahmān ibn ᶜAmr al-Sulamiy and Hujr ibn Hujr, from al-ᶜIrbād ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[18] Like al-Nasā'ī, however, Abū Dāwūd has only a single *isnād* which can be seen in figure 3 below.

The Prophet
|
al-ᶜIrbād ibn Sāriyah
|
ᶜAbd al-Rahmān ibn ᶜAmr al-Sulamiy
and Hujr ibn Hujr
|
Khālid ibn Maᶜdān
|
Thawr ibn Yazīd
|
al-Walīd ibn Muslim
|
Ahmad ibn Hanbal
|
Abū Dāwūd
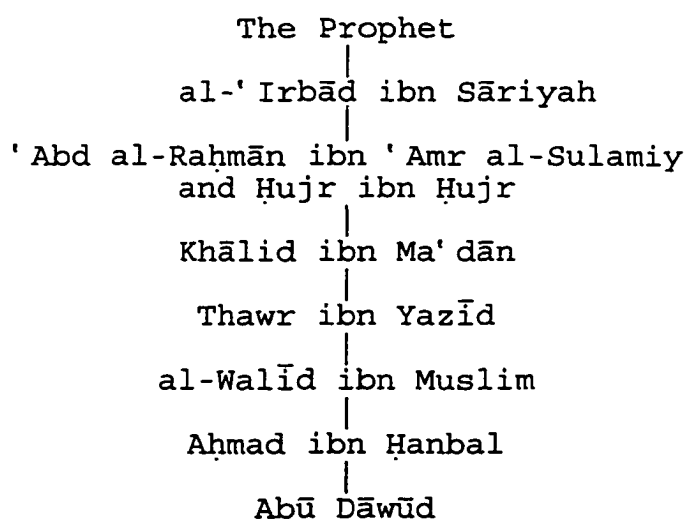
Figure 3. Abū Dāwūd's *Isnād* of the *Bidᶜah Hadīth*

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[17]Cf. al-ᶜAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 7:97-98.

[18]Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:200.

This is a sound *isnād*, since each transmitter is related to one another, respectively. But Thawr ibn Yazīd and al-Walīd ibn Muslim are noteworthy for their peculiarities. According to *rijāl* critics, Thawr adopted the *Qadariyyah*'s doctrines, while al-Walīd cannot be trusted if he narrates from al-Awzā'īy or Ibn Jurayj.[19] Nevertheless, the critics do not consider Thawr's doctrinal inclinations to have caused his reliability to be defective.[20] At the same time, al-Walīd, in this particular *isnād*, does not narrate from al-Awzā'ī or Ibn Jurayj. According to Ibn Sa'd (784-845), a traditionist of Basra, al-Walīd is a reliable transmitter who mastered many hadīths and much knowledge.[21] Thus, in this overview, Abū Dāwūd's *isnād* is still held reliable.

However, as will shortly be discovered, his *isnād* is somewhat "strange." As far as al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah, the Companion and the initial transmitter on the chain, is

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[19]See al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 2:33-35; 11:151; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 1:374-375; 4:347-348; al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Jarh*, 2:469; and al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'*, 1:119; and 3:269-272. *Qadariyyah* is a theological faction which believes in the free will of human actions. It was promulgated by Ma'bad al-Juhanī and Ghaylān al-Thaqafī.

[20]Regarding different factions such as *Qadariyyah*, *Rawāfid*, and *Khawārij*, early traditionists adopted the principle that "anyone will be eligible to be reported from as long as he doesn't propagate his views because the propagator must have a strong preference for fabricating Ahādīth in favor of his belief." Cf. Ghaffar, *Criticism*, 95.

[21]Muhammad ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*, ed. Eduard Sachau, vol.7, part II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1915), 173.

concerned, Ibn Ḥanbal, through whom Abū Dāwūd narrates the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*, in his own *Musnad* never narrates his *Ḥadīth* immediately from al-Walīd ibn Muslim. In all of his own *isnāds*, as shown below, he narrates it from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr. The same is also true when Ibn Ḥanbal narrates the *Ḥadīth* on the authority of Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh. Based on these facts, Abū Dāwūd's *isnād* is therefore objectionable. It may be categorized as a *munqatiʿ* (cut-off) or a *mudallas* (forged) *isnād*.[22]

Ibn Ḥanbal himself indeed narrates the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* on the authority of ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah from four *isnāds*. In the first, he narrates it from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr, from his father (Aḥmad ibn Bashīr), from al-Daḥḥāk ibn Makhlad, from Thawr, from Khālid ibn Maʿdan, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAmr al-Sulamiy, from al-ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[23]

Ibn Ḥanbal's second *isnād* is narrated from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr, from his father, from al-Walīd ibn Muslim, from Thawr ibn Yazīd, from Khālid ibn Maʿdan, from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAmr al-Sulamiy and Ḥujr ibn Ḥujr, from al-ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[24]

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[22]On these categories, see Ibrāhīm, *Aḥādīth*, 30; and al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 129-131.

[23]Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:126.

[24]Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:126-127.

In the third, the *Hadīth* is narrated by Ibn Ḥanbal from 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr, from his father, from Ḥaywah ibn Shurayḥ, from Baqiyyah, from Baḥīr ibn Sa'ad [or Sa'īd], from Khālid ibn Ma'dān, from ['Abd Allāh] ibn Abī Bilāl, from al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[25]

And finally, the fourth *isnād* is narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr, from his father, from Isma'īl, from Hishām al-Distiwā'ī, from Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr, from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥarth [or al-Ḥārith], from Khālid ibn Ma'dān, from [Ibn] Abī Bilāl, from al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[26]

Ibn Ḥanbal also narrates the *Bid' ah Hadīth* on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh. In the first of his two versions, he narrates it from 'Abd Allāh, from his father (Aḥmad ibn Bashīr), from Muṣ'ab ibn Sallām, from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, from the Prophet.[27] In the second version, the *Hadīth* is narrated from 'Abd Allāh, from his father, from Wakī', from Sufyān, from Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, from the Prophet.[28]

The construction of the *isnads* of Ibn Ḥanbal can be seen in figure 4 below.

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[25] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:127.

[26] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:127.

[27] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:310-311.

[28] Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:371.

The Prophet

al-' Irbād ibn
Sāriyah

Jābir ibn
' Abd Allāh

'Abd al-Raḥmān   Ibn Abī   Ḥujr   Muḥammad
ibn 'Amr al-Sulamiy Bilāl   ibn Ḥujr

Ja' far ibn
Muḥammad

Khālid ibn Ma' dān

Thawr   Bahīr ibn   Muḥammad ibn   Muṣ' ab   Sufyān
ibn Yazīd   Sa' īd   Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarth   ibn Sallām

al-Daḥḥāk   Baqiyyah   Yahyā ibn   Wakī'
ibn Makhlad   ibn Abī Kathīr

                Ḥaywah ibn   Hishām al-
al-Walīd   Shurayḥ   Dastiwā'ī
ibn Muslim

                             Ismā' īl

Aḥmad ibn Bashīr

' Abd Allāh

Ibn Ḥanbal

Figure 4. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Isnāds* of the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*

Among these mostly reliable transmitters, two are described in *rijāl* books as "having a problem;" they are Baqiyyah al-Walīd and Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm. Baqiyyah is considered objectionable by some critics for his mixed good and bad personal qualities. He also narrated *mudallis* and *munkar* ḥadīths.[29] Similarly, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm, like Khālid ibn Makhlad in the Muslim's *isnād*, is reported to have narrated refuted (*manākīr*) ḥadīths. Hence, there is

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[29]Al-' Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 1:473-478. See also al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 1:331-334; al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ*, 2:434; and al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'* , 1:106.

"something" objectionable in hadīths narrated by him.[30] Al-Dhahabī, an Arab historian and theologian from Damascus, however, remarks that many people, including al-Bukhārī and Muslim, consider him a reliable transmitter.[31] Thus, while the third *isnād* which goes through Baqiyyah may be objected to, the fourth one which goes through Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm may still be acceptable. Nevertheless, since the *Bid'ah Hadīth* narrated by these *isnāds*, as will be seen in the next section, is similar to that in the second, whose *isnād* is more reliable, such an objection, just as in the case of the second version of Muslim's *isnād* above, can be overruled, or at least is not entirely supportable.

As far as Ibn Ḥanbal's first *isnād*, which goes through Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, is concerned, there is Muṣ'ab ibn Sallām. Many *rijāl* critics consider him as a narrator who made a lot of mistakes in his narration. He is also charged with narrating refuted (*manākīr*) hadīths. Therefore, hadīths narrated by him are commonly considered weak and cannot be used.[32]

Another important feature to note is from Ibn Ḥanbal's second *isnād* which is narrated on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh. This *isnād* is closely linked to the third *isnād*

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[30]See al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 9:5-7.

[31]Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 3:445. See also al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ*, 7:184.

[32]See al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 10:161; and al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'*, 3:134-135.

of Muslim and the *isnād* of al-Nasā'ī,[33] yet the text that this *isnād* has is curiously truncated. As will be elaborated on later in this chapter, it does not mention the phrase "every *bidˁah* is an error" (*kullu bidˁat ḍalālah*), which will be referred to as "the phrase KBḌ," after the Arabic of the phrase "every new thing is *bidˁah*," both of which phrases are mentioned by Muslim and al-Nasā'ī. Unlike al-Nasā'ī's version, which has an additional phrase, this particular *isnād* of Ibn Ḥanbal has "omitted" a phrase which has been mentioned by others, and which is very significant in understanding *bidˁah*. But as far as the *isnād* is concerned, all of its transmitters, just like those in al-Nasā'ī's *isnād*, are undoubtedly reliable.

Like Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Tirmīdhī also has several *isnāds*, but all rely on the authority of al-ˁIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah. In the first *isnād*, he narrates the *Bidˁah Ḥadīth* from ˁAlī ibn Ḥujr, from Baqiyyah ibn al-Walīd, from Bahir ibn Saˁad (or Saˁīd), from Khālid ibn Maˁdān, from ˁAbd al-Raḥman ibn ˁAmr al-Sulamiy, from al-ˁIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[34]

In his second *isnād*, al-Tirmīdhī said that Thawr ibn Yazīd narrated this *Ḥadīth* from Khālid ibn Maˁdān, from ˁAbd al-Raḥman ibn ˁAmr al-Sulamiy, from al-ˁIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[35]

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[33]See figure 7 below.

[34]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:319.

[35]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:320.

For the third, he narrates the *Ḥadīth* from al-Ḥasan ibn
'Alī al-Khallāl and others, from Abū 'Āṣim (al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn
Madkhal), from Thawr ibn Yazīd, from Khālid ibn Ma'dān, from
'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Amr al-Sulamiy, from al-'Irbāḍ ibn
Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[36]

In the fourth *isnād*, this *Ḥadīth*, according to al-
Tirmīdhī, is also narrated from Ḥujr ibn Ḥujr, from al-
'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[37] Although al-
Tirmīdhī does not mention who narrated from Ḥujr ibn Ḥujr,
the *isnāds* of Ibn Ḥanbal above have shown that Khālid ibn
Ma'dān narrates from Ḥujr. Figure 5 below will show the
links between al-Tirmīdhī's four *isnāds*.
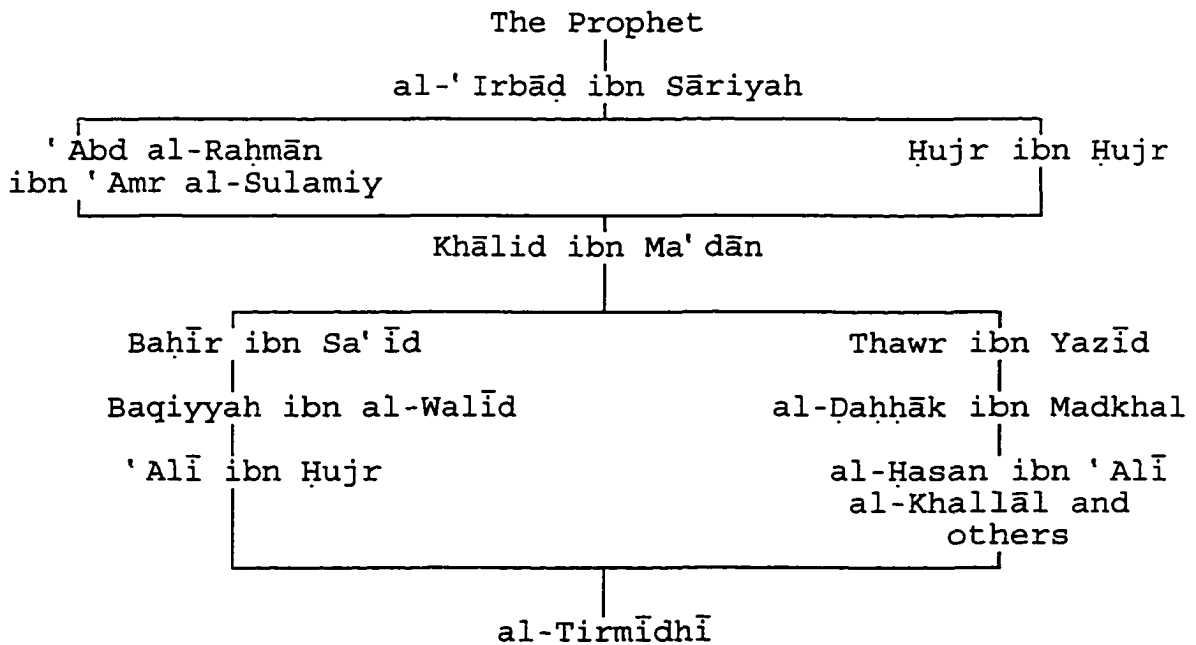
Figure 5. Al-Tirmīdhī's *Isnāds* of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*

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[36]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:320.

[37]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:321.

Al-Tirmīdhī regards his first *isnād* as "good and sound"
(*hasan sahīh*),[38] that is, a good hadīth (*hasan*) which
becomes a sound one (*sahīh*) because of support from other
chains which have a better quality.[39] Although he does not
indicate what these supporting chains are, the reason for
the lesser quality described to this *isnād* is probably
because of the criticism against Baqiyyah, whose
personality, as described earlier, was considered defective.
However, as far as the links between the transmitters are
concerned, all of al-Tirmīdhī's *isnāds* are reliable.

With regard to Ibn Mājah, he has three *isnāds* of the
Bid'ah Hadīth. In the first, he narrates the *Hadīth* from
'Abd Allāh ibn Ahmad ibn Bashīr, from al-Walīd ibn Muslim,
from 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Alā' (Ibn Zabr), from Yahyā ibn Abī
al-Mutā', from al-'Irbād ibn Sāriyah, from the Prophet.[40]
The second *isnād* is narrated by Ibn Mājah from Suwayd ibn
Sa'īd and Ahmad ibn Thābit al-Jahdarī, from 'Abd al-Wahhāb
al-Thaqafī, from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from

[38]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:319.

[39]Hadīth scholars have discussed this term, "good-and-
sound," of al-Tirmīdhī. Some say that the term means that
the hadīth which he is narrating has two or more *isnāds*, one
of which is sound, while the other is good. In this case, he
would be simply trying to combine the two qualities. Others,
however, say that the hadīth is considered sound by some
traditionists but is regarded good by some others, the
qualities of which al-Tirmīdhī is not able to verify. Hence,
he mentions both the qualities at once. See al-Ahdal,
Mustalah, 115.

[40]Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 1:15. See also al-Hākim, *al-
Mustadrak*, 1:97.

Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, from the Prophet.[41] The third *isnād*

is narrated from Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd ibn Maymūn al-Madanī

(Abū 'Ubayd), from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Ja' far ibn

Abī Kathīr, from Mūsā ibn 'Uqbah, from Abū Isḥāq, from Abū

al-Aḥwaṣ, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, from the Prophet.[42]

These three *isnāds* can be seen in figure 6 below.
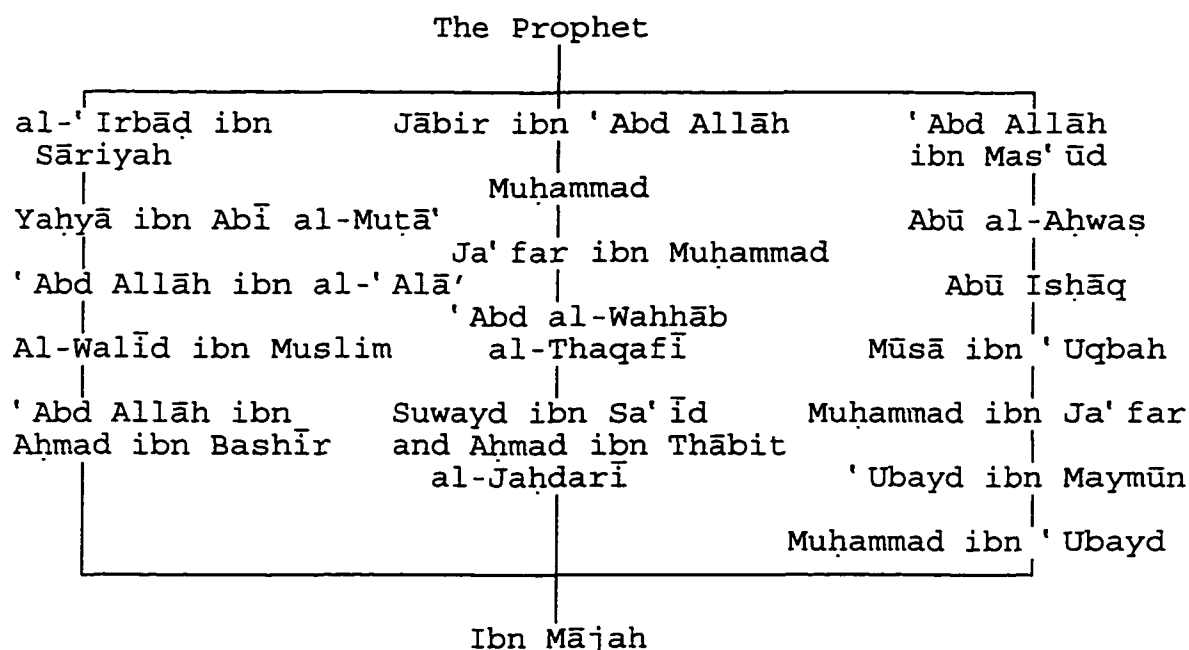
Figure 6. Ibn Mājah's *Isnāds* of the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*

Ibn Mājah's *isnāds* are unique. He narrates the *Ḥadīth*

on the authority of three major Companions, only two of

which have been mentioned so far in the previous *isnāds*.

Among the ḥadīth collections which have been consulted for

this study, Ibn Mājah is the only compiler who has an *isnād*

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[41]Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 1:17.

[42]Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, 1:18.

which relies on the authority of 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd.
Moreover, this chain of transmission is not shared by, or
linked with, other chains which have been discussed.[43]
Hence, Ibn Mājah's third *isnād* can be considered as an *āhād*
(single, rare) tradition, whose reliability should further
be contested. Such an *isnād* is also categorized as *gharib*
(strange).[44]

Furthermore, in this chain, too, there is 'Ubayd ibn
Maymūn, who is considered by *rijāl* critics as a *majhūl*, a
person whose personal quality is not known. He is also said
to have narrated "cut-off" (*maqātī*') hadīths, although Ibn
Hibbān includes him among the reliable transmitters
(*thiqāh*).[45] All of these features constitute evidence
adequate to consider the third *isnād* of Ibn Mājah
objectionable.

Al-Bukhārī also narrates a hadith, which, as will be
seen in the next section, is quite similar to the *Bid'ah*
Hadīth, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd. In the first of his
two *isnāds*, he narrated it from Abū al-Walīd, from Shu'bah,

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[43]See also figure 7 below.

[44]See, for instance, Ibrāhīm, *al-Ahādīth*, 29; and al-
Ahdāl, *Mustalah*, 98,101-102.

[45]Al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 7:74-75. See also al-Dhahabī,
Mīzān, 3:24, and his *Al-Mujarrad fī Asmā' Rijāl Sunan Ibn
Mājah*, ed. Bāsam Faisal al-Jawābarah (Riyād: Dār al-Rāyah,
1988), 203; and al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'*, 2:171.

from Mukhāriq, from Ṭāriq, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd.[46] In the second, the hadīth is narrated from Ādam ibn Abī Iyās, from Shu'bah, from 'Amr ibn Murrah, from Murrah al-Hamdānī, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd.[47] It can be seen here that each isnād only goes back to Ibn Mas'ūd and is not referred to further to the Prophet.

According to Ibn Ḥajar, it is clear that this hadīth is mawqūf, that is, a hadīth which refers to a Companion. Nevertheless, other compilers such as Ibn Mājah refer their parallel narrations to the Prophet, by which their hadīth becomes considered marfū'. As argued by Ibn Ḥajar, this difference is due to the fact that the narration by the others, which goes through Ibn Mas'ūd, does not comply with the requirement of soundness set forth by al-Bukhārī.[48] Thus, Ibn Mājah's third isnād, which relies on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd, is also not considered sound by al-Bukhārī's standard.

As far as Ibn Mājah's second isnād is concerned, there is Suwayd ibn Sa'īd who is considered by some rijāl critics as reliable. Others, however, regarded him as an unreliable transmitter whose hadīths cannot be used, especially since

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[46]Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (810-870 A.H.), Matn al-Bukhārī, vol.4 (Egypt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1981), 65.

[47]al-Bukhārī, Matn al-Bukhārī, 4:256.

[48]al-'Asqalānī, Fatḥ al-Bārī (al-Qāhirah: al-Maktabat al-Salafiyyah, 1987), 10:527; 13:95.

he was blind.[49] Al-Dhahabī adds that he transmitted many *mudallas* ḥadīths; and al-Bukhārī considers his ḥadīth as *munkar*. Hence, his ḥadīth is generally considered weak and abandoned (*matrūk*).[50] But despite such harsh criticism of this transmitter, the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* he narrated has support from Aḥmad ibn Thābit al-Jaḥdarī, his contemporary, whose reliability is much more acknowledged.[51] This argues not only that Suwayd is not always untrustworthy but also that the second *isnād* is not completely unreliable.

With regard to Ibn Majah's first *isnād*, it bears a problem similar to that of the *isnād* of Abū Dāwūd. Here, Ibn Mājah narrates from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashīr who narrated the *Ḥadīth* from al-Walid ibn Muslim. As has been seen in the six *isnāds* of Ibn Ḥanbal above, ʿAbd Allāh never narrates the *Ḥadīth* directly from al-Walīd ibn Muslim; instead, he narrated it all from his father, Aḥmad ibn Bashīr.

Moreover, this *isnād* is singled out by the narration of al-Walīd ibn Muslim from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAlāʾ. Indeed, al-Walīd narrates ḥadīths from ʿAbd Allāh;[52] but as far as the narration of the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* is concerned, and

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[49]Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 4:272-275.

[50]Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān*, 2:248-251. See also al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, 1:359.

[51]Al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb*, 1:21.

[52]See al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhib*, 11:151, where one of al-Walīd's sources is ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAlāʾ.

comparing this *isnād* with the *isnāds* of Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Dāwūd, al-Walīd apparently does not narrate the *Ḥadīth* from this particular chain.

Similarly, it is debatable whether Yaḥyā ibn Abī al-Muṭā' met al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah. Al-Bukhārī confirms that both met, but ḥadīth scholars in Syria (Shām) have denied it, and they are more knowledgeable on their authorities or predecessors than others.[53] Thus, this particular *isnād* is very suspicious. Like Abū Dāwūd's *isnād* above, it falls into the category of a *munqati'* or *mudallas* chain.

Having examined the qualities of the transmitters and the *isnāds* of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*, there is sufficient evidence to consider some of the *isnāds* to be more reliable than others, even within the *isnāds* of a specific compiler himself. Although some of the less reliable *isnāds* have support from other more reliable ones, they are nevertheless defective in the sense that some doubt has been raised regarding some of their transmitters. Through this approach, it is possible to establish the most reliable *isnāds* of the *Ḥadīth*. Those are the *isnād* of al-Nasā'ī; the first and the third *isnāds* of Muslim; the first and the second *isnāds* of Ibn Ḥanbal, which rely on the authority of al-'Irbāḍ ibn

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[53]Cf. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (736-795/1335-1392), *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam fī Sharḥ Khamsīna Ḥadīthan min Jawāmi' al-Kalam*, ed. Abū Mu'ādh Ṭāriq ibn 'Awḍ Allāh ibn Muḥammad, vol.2 (al-Riyāḍ: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1995), 99. See also al-Nūrī, *al-Jāmi'*, 3:305.

Sāriyah; those of his which go through Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh; and all the *isnāds* of al-Tirmīdhī, except his first.

Figure 7 below is a reconstruction of all the *isnāds*, indicating the complex transmission of the *Bid'ah Hadīth*.

Nevertheless, the soundness or the reliability of an *isnād* does not automatically guarantee the soundness of a particular hadīth.[54] The text (*matn*) of the *Bid'ah Hadīth* still needs to be scrutinized before its soundness can be adequately established. The purpose of this scrutiny is twofold. On the one hand, *matn* (text) criticism--as will be seen in the next section--will shed some light that will permit us eventually to certify which of the *isnāds* is finally most likely to be reliable. On the other hand, *isnād* criticism, as elaborated in this section, will help decide which of the *matns* has the most support.

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[54]For a discussion on this issue, see Ṣiddīqi, *Hadīth Literature*, 113-115.

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                              ┌─Sulaymān —Khālid b. Makhlad
                              │  b. Bilāl        |
                              │              'Abd b. Ḥumayd >──────┐
   ┌─Jābir — Muḥammad         ├─Sufyān  ┌─ Wakī' >──────────┐     │
   │ b. 'Abd      |           │         │     |             │     │
   │ Allāh     Ja'far ────────┤         │   Abū Bakr        v     │
   │           b. Muḥammad    │         │   b. Abī Shaibah >───────┼─Muslim
   │                          │         │                   v     │
The│                          │         └─ Ibn al-Mubārak   |     │
Prophet┤                      │              |              v     │ Al-
   │                          │         'Utbah b. 'Abd Allāh >─────┤-Nasā'ī
   │                          │                              v     │
   │                       ┌─'Abd al-    Muḥammad b.         v     │
   │                       │ Wahhāb  ┌── al-Muthannā >───────┐     │
   │                       │         │                       v     │
   │                       │         └─ Suwayd b. Sa'īd      v     │
   │                       │           & Aḥmad b. Thābit >───┐     │
   ├─'Abd Allāh            │                                 v     ├>Ibn
   │ b. Mas'ūd             └─ Muṣ'ab b. Salām >──────────────┤     │ Mājah
   │                                                         │     │
   Abī al-Aḥwaṣ —Abī Isḥāq                                   │     │
   │                                                         v     │
         Mūsā b.'Uqbah —Muḥammad —'Ubayd >──────────────┐    │     │
                        b. Ja'far    b. Maymūn     v    │    └─────┘
                                                        │
         .> Yahyā b. Abī — 'Abd Allāh ──────┐          │
         .  al-Muṭā'        b. al-'Alā'      v          │
         .                    .....> al-Walīd >──       │
                .             .       b. Muslim          │
              ┌─ 'Abd al-Raḥmān ┐     .      ^           │
              │  b. 'Amr al-     │     .   ┌Thawr>┘       │
              │  Sulamī          │     .   │ b. Yazīd     │
   ┌─Al-'Irbād┤─ Ibn Abī Bilāl ─┤─Khālid─┘    v          │
   │ b. Sāriyah│                │ b. Ma'dān  al-Ḍaḥḥāq >──┤
   │           │                .           b. Madkhal >──┤
   │           └─ Ḥujr b. Ḥujr ─┘           al-Ḥasan      │
   │                                        b. 'Alī       │
   │  ┌──────────────────────┐  .           & others ┐    │
   │  │                      │                       │    │
     Muḥammad          Bahīr b.── Baqiyyah           │   ─>Al-
     b. Ibrāhīm        Sa'īd .  b. al-Walīd ─────────┤   Tirmī
        |                  .    ┌'Alī b.             │   dhī
     Yahyā b.          ....     │ Ḥajr──────────────┐│
     Abī Kathīr          . .    └                   ││
        |                        Ḥaywah b. Shurayh ──┘
     Hishām al-Dastiwā'ī    . .
        |                  .  .
     Ismā'īl >─────────────── Aḥmad b.Bashīr <──┘
                 .    .       |  ................<.
                 .    .       | v
                 ^.'Abd Allāh─> Ibn Ḥanbal
                 ^.............<─┘   ^
                                     |
                               Abū Dāwūd
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Figure 7. The Reconstruction of the Isnāds of the Bid'ah Hadīth[55]

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[55]Italicized names in this figure indicate the suspect transmitters, while the dotted lines indicate where discontinuities in the chains probably occur.

Before examining the text of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*, it should be noted that the Indonesian literature which has been referred to so far is not concerned with the issue of *isnād* or the reliability of any ḥadīth quoted by that criterion.[56] The Indonesian writers mention only the ḥadīth compilers and the initial narrators, who are the Companions.[57] For instance, to cite the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*, Ash-Shiddieqy quotes the version of Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī in a single narration, and directly refers to al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah.[58] As has been seen, both Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī indeed narrate, in their final chains of transmission, from al-'Irbāḍ. Ash-Shiddieqy is therefore acquainted with the *isnāds*, but he does not bother to question their reliability, nor does he indicate which of al-Tirmīdhī's *isnāds* he is quoting. As shown earlier, there is a suspicious figure, Baqiyyah ibn al-Walīd, who is found in one of al-Tirmīdhī's *isnāds*, and there is a possible discontinuity in the *isnād* of Abū Dāwūd. Abbas also quotes

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[56]As argued by Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions*, 9,32, studying the science of ḥadīth criticism is considered important among the Indonesians, as found in eleven Indonesian books on the subject. But with a few exceptions, the study is mainly "for perception, not for actually undertaking an analysis...." See also pp.35 and 39 n.1, for the list of the books most of which are "recapitulations of standard religious lessons."

[57]This approach, however, is not uncommon in the Islamic world, especially in the translations of ḥadīth collections, which are intended mainly for the use of the general public. See Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions*, 50,53.

[58]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 12.

from Abū Dāwūd, while ignoring the narrations of other hadīth compilers, particularly Muslim, who has stronger *isnāds* of the *Bidˁah Hadīth*.[59]

A similar case occurs when Ash-Shiddieqy quotes from Muslim, who is then related directly to Jābir ibn ˁAbd Allāh. As with Chalil, who also cites the same authorities, no mention is made of the fact that one of the transmitters in Muslim's *isnāds*, Khālid ibn Makhlad, is a questionable figure.[60]

Chalil provides a further example for this attitude of not questioning *isnāds* by quoting the *isnād* of Ibn Mājah, apparently the third one, which goes back to the authority of ˁAbd Allāh ibn Masˁūd.[61] As discussed earlier, this chain is questionable since one of its transmitters is ˁUbayd ibn Maymūn, whose reliability is suspect for *rijāl* critics. Moreover, this *isnād* is an *āhād* one, the reliability of which requires a further examination.

These are some instances which provide a clear picture of how Indonesian scholars, well-recognized authorities, cite the *Bidˁah Hadīth* which constitutes one of their main arguments on *bidˁah*. Apparently, they take for granted the reliability of the *isnāds* and the hadīths which are

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[59]See Abbas, "Masalah Bidˁah," 155-157.

[60]See Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 12; and Chalil, *Kembali*, 77.

[61]Chalil, *Kembali*, 77.

mentioned in the collections of ḥadīth, especially those found in the well-known six collections (*kutub al-sittah*),[62] five of which have been quoted so far in this chapter. Thus, they have made an arbitrary choice in quoting the ḥadīths that they use to support their arguments. Because of this attitude they have also, unfortunately, chosen the very ḥadīths whose *isnāds* have been proven most problematic.[63]

Similar issues arise when the same scholars deal with the text of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*. As will be seen in the following section, their attitude to the text is uncritical and their approach to it can be misleading. However, before substantiating this argument, it is first necessary to examine the text of the *Ḥadīth* itself.

The *Matns* of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*

That there are reliable *isnāds* of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth* suggests that the *Ḥadīth* was certainly spoken by the Prophet Muḥammad.[64] Scrutiny of its text also suggests that the

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[62]For the place and significance of the six and other ḥadīth collections, see Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 43-75. See also Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions*, 38,41,47.

[63]See, for instance, Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 16-17.

[64]Despite the appearance of this *Ḥadīth* in many ḥadīth collections, and its popularity among Muslims, it is, however, interesting to note that the *Ḥadīth* is not found in either al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* or Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa'*. Moreover, both al-Bukhārī and Muslim do not narrate the versions of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth* as partly narrated by Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmīdhī, and Ibn Mājah. Al-Ḥākim speculates that

Ḥadīth was probably uttered publicly. This is indicated by
the use of the word *khaṭaba* ("to deliver a public
address")[65] at the beginning of the *Ḥadīth*.[66] The word
wa'aẓa (to console) is also used in some versions of the
Ḥadīth, a word which may indicate the public nature of the
Ḥadīth[67] and which, at the same time, indicates that this
is a warning from the Prophet to his followers.[68] Ibn Rajab
al-Ḥanbalī mentions that such a Prophetic warning was
delivered on many other occasions than in regular Friday or

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this is because both suspect that, as far as the *Ḥadīth* is
concerned, there is no narrator from Khālid ibn Ma'dān
except Thawr ibn Yazīd. See al-Ḥākim al-Naisābūrī, *Al-
Mustadrak*, vol.1 (al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Naṣr al-Ḥadīthah,
n.d.), 96. Al-Ḥanbali, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, 2:98, rejects this
speculation and, instead, offers an explanation that the
Ḥadīth does not comply with the requirements (*shurūt*) set
forth by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim: they do not narrate
from either 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī or Ḥujr ibn Ḥujr, both
of whom, in their judgement, are not well-recognized for
their knowledge and narration. This, however, still does not
explain why al-Bukhārī does not even narrate the *Ḥadīth* as
narrated by Muslim, though such differences are not uncommon
between the two great compilers. As has been shown, al-
Bukhārī instead narrates a *mawqūf* tradition on the authority
of Ibn Mas'ūd. For the text, see page 147 below.

[65]See, for instance, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 1:855;
and Cowan, *Arabic-English*, 245-246.

[66]See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11; al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 3:188; and
Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 1:17.

[67]See, for instance, Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 3:952;
and Cowan, *Arabic-English*, 1082.

[68]See al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan*, 7:319; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*,
1:15-16; and Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:126-127.

'Īd (feast) sermons.[69] It is thus possible to assume that

the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth* was also spoken more than once.

On one or several occasions, the Prophet is reported to

have uttered the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*, which, in al-Nasā'ī's

version, runs as follows:

> ...verily the most truthful tradition (*aṣdaq al-ḥadīth*)
> is the Book of God and the best guidance (*aḥsan al-*
> *hady*) is the guidance of Muḥammad. And the worst of
> things (*sharr al-umūr*) are their new ones; every new
> thing is an innovation (*bid' ah*), every innovation is an
> error (*ḍalālah*), and every error [ends up] in
> Hellfire.[70]

This text is quoted from al-Nasā'ī's *Sunan* because it

is the "complete" version of the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*, which is

often recited in the Friday sermon. Among the ḥadīth

collections which have been used here, it is the only

version that adds the phrase "every error [ends up] in

Hellfire" (*kull ḍalālah fī al-nār*), which will be referred

to as "the phrase KDN." Thus, al-Nasā'ī's version is the

best example for the existence of a textual variant of the

Bid' ah Ḥadīth.[71]

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[69]Al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, 2:100.

[70]A translation from Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 3:188-189.

[71]Variant readings or texts are made possible in ḥadīth
studies by the adoption of the concept of "narration by
meaning" (*riwāyah bi al-ma'nā*), beside that of "narration by
wording" (*riwāyah bi al-lafz*). While the latter is
unanimously accepted by ḥadīth scholars, the former is
tolerated only by observing certain qualifications, such as
that a narrator should really be able to comprehend the
meaning of a text from its original wording. But in cases of
theology, ritual (worship), and sophisticated language,

Another example of variation is found in Muslim's
Ṣaḥīḥ, where he mentions the phrases "...and the worst of
things are their new ones and every innovation is an
error..."[72] In this version, there is no phrase like "every
new thing is an innovation" (*kull muḥdathat bidʿah*), which
could logically and linguistically have fit between the
phrases, and "every error [ends up] in Hellfire," as
mentioned by al-Nasāʾī, which would seem to be a logical
conclusion to the *Ḥadīth*.

Ibn Ḥanbal's first text, which goes through Jābir ibn
ʿAbd Allāh, resembles Muslim's phrases.[73] But his second
text, from the same authority, has the phrase "every new
thing is an innovation" (*kull muḥdathat bidʿah*).
Nevertheless, in this text, Ibn Ḥanbal "omits" the phrase
"and every innovation is an error."[74] This is undoubtedly a
serious omission, for this particular phrase constitutes the
"main idea" of *bidʿah* in the *Ḥadīth*, without which such a
prophetic saying would have less apparent religious value or
legal implication.

In his other versions, which go through the authority
of al-ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriyah, Ibn Ḥanbal, like Abū Dāwūd,

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narration by meaning is basically denied. See al-Ahdal,
Muṣṭalaḥ, 42-44. For a modern discussion on this issue, see
Brown, *Rethinking*, 88-93.

[72]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11. See table 1 below.

[73]Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:310. See table 1 below.

[74]Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3:371. See table 1 below.

mentions the phrase "...and beware of new things because every new thing is an innovation and every innovation is an error."[75] Both the terms "beware" and "because" are not found in either al-Nasā'ī's or Muslim's version.

Similarly, like Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Tirmīdhī mentions the phrase "...and beware of new things," but he "skips" the phrase "every new thing is an innovation." Instead, he continues with the phrase "because they [the new things] are an error..." (li'annahā ḍalālah).[76]

Al-Nawāwī clearly quotes the Bid'ah Ḥadīth, which is the 28th ḥadīth of his Arba'īn (forty ḥadīths) collection, on the authority of both Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī.[77] But in his quotation, the version of Abū Dāwūd seems to be preferred to that of al-Tirmīdhī, although the quoted text has a minor difference from the version which is used here. Nevertheless, al-Nawawī's version has likely been imitated by many scholars after him, such as al-Ḥanbalī and Ash-Shiddieqy, who clearly use similar wordings.[78]

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[75]Abū Dāwūd, Sunan, 4:201; and Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad, 4:127.

[76]Al-Tirmīdhī, Sunan, 7:319. See table 1 below.

[77]Abū Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī, Matn al-Arba'īn al-Nawawiyyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah al-Nabawiyyah, eds. Maḥmūd al-Arnā'ūṭ and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā'ūṭ (al-Kuwayt: Maktabat Dār al-'Urūbah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1989), 74-75.

[78]See al-Ḥanbalī, Jāmi' al-'Ulūm, 2:97; and Ash-Shiddieqy, Criteria, 12, 65. There are several editions of al-Nawawī's Arba'īn, some of which include the phrase KDN ("and every error will end up in Hellfire") at the end of

Unlike the previous compilers, Ibn Mājah instead offers three versions of the Hadīth, each of which corresponds to each isnād that he relies on, as shown earlier. In the first version, he mentions the phrase "...and beware of the new things because every innovation is an error." In the second, he narrates "...and the worst of things are their new ones and every innovation is an error." The third version quotes "...know and beware of new things because the worst of things are their new ones and every new thing is an innovation and every innovation is an error..."[79]

Last, but not least, al-Bukhārī's hadīth, which has been identified as mawqūf, uses a phrase which differs from that used by Ibn Mājah in his first isnād, despite the fact that both compilers refer to the same authority of Ibn Mas'ūd. Here, al-Bukhārī instead uses the phrase that is used by Ibn Mājah in the second isnād. Ibn Mas'ūd is reported by al-Bukhārī to have said the following:

> The best speech is the Book of God and the best
> guidance is the guidance of Muhammad--peace be upon
> him. And the worst of things are their new ones; and

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the 28th hadīth, although it is still described as narrated by both Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī. See, for instance, the edition of Ahmad 'Abd Allāh Bājūr (n.p.: al-Dār al-Misriyyah al-Lubnāniyyah, 1992), 98; and that translated into English by Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Damascus, Syria: the Holy Koran Publishing House, 1977), 94-95. These editions are most likely mistaken, since, as far as the versions of Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī are concerned, from whom al-Nawawī quotes the 28th hadīth, there is no mention at all of the "additional" phrase.

[79]Ibn Mājah, Sunan, 1:16-18. See also table 1 below.

whatever you have been promised will surely come to pass, and you cannot escape [it].[80]

Besides the fact that al-Bukhārī's narration is *mawqūf*, it is also clear that it does not contain the word *bid'ah* which is so significant to this study and which is needed to call the narration truly as a variant of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*. But it nevertheless deals with the issue of *bid'ah* through al-Bukhārī's commentators such as Ibn Ḥajar whose assessments have been consulted here.

To look at the variant readings of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth* in their original language, Table 1 below shows their comparison in English transliteration.

There is now a need to incorporate the foregoing *isnād* criticism here to make some important remarks. First, there is a warning against new things, a warning which is unequivocally conveyed by either the phrase "and beware of new things" or "the worst of things are their new ones." Muslim, al-Nasā'ī, two versions of Ibn Ḥanbal, and the second version of Ibn Mājah, use the latter phrase; whereas Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmīdhī, the rest of Ibn Ḥanbal's versions, and the first and the third versions of Ibn Mājah, use the former. Since several of these compilers have narrated from reliable *isnāds*, this variant may suggest that the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth* could have been spoken by the Prophet more than once,

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[80]al-Bukhārī, *Matn al-Bukhārī*, 4:65,256.

in which case he may have used different phrases to indicate

a similar meaning.

Table 1. Comparison of the *Bid' ah* *Hadith* Texts

Compiler	Version	Text (the Initial Transmitter)
Al-Nasā'ī	1	wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu muhdathat bid' ah wa kullu bid' at dalālah wa kullu dalālah fī al-nār (Jābir)
Muslim	1	wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu bid' at dalālah (Jābir)
Ibn Hanbal	1	wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuha wa kullu bid' at dalālah (Jābir)
	2	wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu muhdathat bid' ah (Jābir)
	1	wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fainna kullu muhdathat bid' ah wainna kullu bid' at dalālah (al-' Irbād)
	2	wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fainna kullu muhdathat bid' ah wa kullu bid' at dalālah (al-' Irbād)
Abū Dawūd	1	wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fainna kullu muhdathat bid' ah wa kullu bid' at dalālah (al-' Irbād)
Al-Tirmīdhī	1	wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fainnahā dalālah (al-' Irbād)
Ibn Mājah	1	wa iyyākum wa al-umūr al-muhdathāt fainna kullu bid' at dalālah (al-' Irbād)
	2	wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu bid' at dalālah (Jābir)
	3	alā wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fainna sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu muhda-that bid' ah wa kullu bid' at dalālah (Ibn Mas' ūd)

Second, only the versions of Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn

Hanbal (through al-' Irbād), and the third version of Ibn

Mājah mention the phrase "every new thing is an innovation" (*kull muḥdathat bidʿ ah*). This is basically a linguistic definition in which *muḥdath* is identical to *bidʿ ah* and vice versa. The version of Muslim, which enjoys a higher trust,[81] and that of Ibn Ḥanbal, which goes through almost the same chains as Muslim's, omit this phrase. One can consider this as an indication that the phrase could have been added by any transmitter in the above *isnāds* except those of Muslim and two of Ibn Hanbal. In ḥadīth terminology, this is called the *mudraj* ḥadīth, that is, a ḥadīth which has an explanation inserted by a narrator.[82] Or else, this may indicate that either Muslim or Ibn Ḥanbal narrates a totally different version of the *Ḥadīth*. This is possible if the Prophet, as suggested above, spoke of this *Ḥadīth* more than once. Otherwise, this suggestion is unlikely, since, as has been seen in the reconstructed *isnād* above (Figure 7), most of the *isnāds* have a link to one another, particularly those of al-Nasā'ī, Muslim, Ibn Ḥanbal, and Ibn Mājah. Hence, the former suggestion, that

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[81]The *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, like the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mālik, is regarded by ḥadīth scholars as the first rank (*al-ṭabaqat al-ūlā*) of ḥadīth collections. Meanwhile, the *Sunans* of al-Tirmīdhī, Abū Dāwud and al-Nasā'ī, and the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal are considered as the second rank (*al-ṭabaqat al-thāniyah*). See Ibrāhīm, *al-Aḥādīth*, 66; and al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 76.

[82]See Ibrāhīm, *al-Aḥādīth*, 29; and al-Ahdāl, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 141.

the phrase could have been added to the text, is theoretically strengthened.

Third, all of the compilers mention the phrase KBD: "every innovation is an error" (*kull bid' at dalālah*), except al-Tirmīdhī and Ibn Hanbal in his second version which comes from Jābir. In the case of al-Tirmīdhī, he is the only one who, instead, mentions the phrase "because they [the new things] are an error" (*li'annahā dalālah*)--here reference is to "new things," not to "innovation," unlike the other compilers. Although grammatically justifiable, the deviation from the commonly recorded phrase on this issue has discredited his version of the *Bid' ah Hadīth*, regardless of the fact that three of his four *isnads* are reliable.

With regard to Ibn Hanbal, he totally "omits" the phrase KBD which, as argued earlier, constitutes the main argument of the *Hadīth*. It is remarkably interesting to search for the reason behind this serious omission, especially considering the high level of each narrator in the *isnād* through which the *Hadīth* is transmitted. In the light of his first *isnād* and version, and of the *isnāds* and versions of both Muslim and al-Nasā'ī, all of which go through the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh, such an omission was probably due to a scribal error.

Fourth, it is only al-Nasā'ī who mentions the phrase KDN: "every error [ends up] in Hellfire" (*kull dalālah fī al-nār*). This phrase is very much doubtful, especially since

it is not mentioned by Muslim and Ibn Ḥanbal, both of whom narrate the *Ḥadīth* from almost the same authority as al-Nasā'ī.[83] It may be suspected that the "additional" wordings or phrase could have been inserted by Ibn al-Mubārak, 'Utbah, or al-Nasā'ī himself. This is not only called a *mudraj* ḥadīth but also *gharīb*, that is, the ḥadīth whose narrator is singled out by an addition to the ḥadīth he narrates.[84] Nevertheless, this version of al-Nasā'ī's could also be called a ḥadīth with a sound *isnād* (*ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ al-isnād*).[85]

Finally, there are two instances which indicate not only the variant readings but also possibly discrepancies which could have occurred in the transmission of the text of the *Ḥadīth*. In the first instance, Ibn Mājah's first *isnād* is very closely linked to Abū Dāwūd's, but the texts they narrate are different. In the second, al-Tirmīdhī's text also differs from Ibn Ḥanbal's, which goes to al-'Irbāḍ; yet their *isnāds* go through the same authority, Khālid ibn Ma'dān.[86]

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[83]See Figure 7 above.

[84]Ibrāhīm, *al-Aḥādīth*, 29; and al-Ahdal, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 141.

[85]Al-Ahdāl, *Muṣṭalaḥ*, 109-110. Al-Ḥākim and al-Suyūṭī remark that there are many forged and weak ḥadīths having sound *isnāds*. Cf. Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 113. For a modern debate on this issue, see Brown, *Rethinking*, 112-116.

[86]See Table 1 above.

In the final analysis, and after a thorough examination
of the variants of both the *isnāds* and the texts of the
Bid ah *Hadīth*, it can be suggested that the most reliable
versions of the *Hadīth* are those which are narrated by
Muslim through his first and third *isnāds*. Both are sound
hadīths (*sahīhs*), although they do not achieve the degree of
mutawātir--that is a hadīth which is narrated by more than
two transmitters in each level of its chain(s).[87] Ibn
Mājah's second version has, in fact, similar wording to that
of Muslim, but the presence of Suwayd ibn Sa' īd in his *isnād*
subordinates his version to that of Muslim.

For subsequent reference to these most reliable
versions, the following is a translation of them. Muslim's
first version reads:

> Jābir ibn ' Abd Allāh said: When the Prophet--peace be
> upon him--gave a speech, his eyes became red, his voice
> rose, and his emotion increased, as if he were
> instructing an army, saying: "Your [enemy has made]
> morning and afternoon attacks [on you] (*sabbahakum wa
> massākum*)." Then he said: " [The distance] between me
> and the Judgment Day is just like these two (referring
> to his forefinger and middle finger)." He continued:
> "Now then, verily the best speech is the Book of God
> and the best guidance is that of Muhammad. And the
> worst of things are their new ones, every innovation is
> an error." Then he said: "I am preferable for every
> believer to himself. Whoever leaves a property, then it
> belongs to his family; and whoever leaves a debt or
> family, then I will take care of the family and will be
> responsible for the debt."[88]

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[87]For meanings of these terms see Ibrāhīm, *Al-Ahādīth*,
32; and al-Ahdāl, *Mustalah*, 103-107.

[88]Muslim, *Sahīh*, 3:11.

The third version of Muslim runs as follows:

> Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh said: The Prophet--peace be upon
> him-- was delivering a speech, praising God and
> thanking him with what He is entitled to. Then he said:
> "Whomever God guides [then] no one will lead him astray
> and whomever God leads astray then no one will be a
> guide for him. And the best speech is the Book of God
> ..." then the ḥadīth continues as the first one.[89]

This establishment of the most reliable versions of the
Bid' ah Ḥadīth will enable us critically to discuss works on
bid' ah, some of which rely on the less reliable versions
and, in some cases, even on weak ḥadīths. Some of the
Indonesian literature which has been spoken of serves as an
example for the fact that many misconceptions regarding
bid' ah could be the result of a misrepresentation of the
source on which the issue so heavily depends.

In Indonesia, the *Bid' ah Ḥadīth* is quoted by the Muslim
scholars in their works on *bid' ah*.[90] Unfortunately, the way
they present the text of the *Ḥadīth* is not accurate and can
be misleading. Ash-Shiddieqy, for instance, quotes the
Ḥadīth from the authority of Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī
together in one narration.[91] As indicated earlier, there

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[89]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:11.

[90]There are, however, always exceptions. See, for
instance, Hsubky, *Bid'ah-bid'ah*, where the *Ḥadīth* is nowhere
mentioned. But we can only assume that for such a writer
there has been a prior conception of *bid' ah*, which relies,
though it is not expressly admitted, on a certain source,
one of which, and the most important, is undoubtedly the
Bid' ah Ḥadīth.

[91]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 12, 65.

are significant differences between the version of Abū Dāwūd

and that of al-Tirmīdhī, which cannot simply be reconciled.

In this case, Ash-Shiddieqy apparently quotes a version of

the *Hadīth* which is very similar to Abū Dāwūd's version, in

a way that suggests that a similar version is also narrated

by al-Tirmīdhī. It is more likely, however, that, as

mentioned earlier, Ash-Shiddieqy quotes the *Hadīth*, not from

the original hadīth collections, but from such anthologies

as Al-Nawawī's *Arba' īn* or al-Hanbalī's *Jāmi' al-' Ulūm*, both

of which are popular books in Indonesia.[92]

Moreover, another inaccuracy also occurs when, in the

same version, Ash-Shiddieqy includes the phrase KDN ("and

every error ends up in Hellfire") which, as pointed out

earlier, belongs solely to al-Nasā'ī's version. He may have

followed a version of al-Nawawī's *Arba' īn* which contains the

additional phrase. As argued earlier, al-Nawawī's original

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[92]Al-Nawawī's *Arba' īn* is probably one of the most
popular short hadīth collections in the Muslim world. In
Indonesia, it is included in the curricula of the *pesantrens*
beginning from the junior high level (*al-qism al-
thānawiyyah*). See Van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning,* 162; and
Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions,* 58-59. Al-Hanbalī's work,
however, is not popular at this level, and is not included
in Bruinessen's list of hadīth books. But when a student
gets to an advanced level, or becomes highly proficient in
Islamic religious studies, this work becomes a main
reference work. See also table 2 below regarding the sources
used by people in Jambi to understand the concept of *bid' ah*.
Federspiel, *Usage of Traditions,* 48, argues that such
anthologies have become more popular and widely used in
Indonesia and Southeast Asia than the original hadīth
collections, except those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. This is
one of the reasons, he says, why Indonesian writers are less
interested in translating these collections.

version could have not contained such a phrase, on the basis
that both the versions of Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmīdhī, from
whom al-Nawawī quotes, do not contain the phrase.[93] Hence,
it may have been inserted later by the *Arba' īn* editor(s),
which insertion has been blindly followed by later scholars,
such as Ash-Shiddieqy.

This is also true when Ash-Shiddieqy quotes from Muslim
adding this additional phrase, although there he writes that
this phrase is found in al-Bayhaqī's narration.[94] However,
in a further quotation from Muslim, he writes with exactly
the same wording as the first version of Muslim's *Hadīth*
mentioned above.[95] This can only suggest that, while in the
former quotation Ash-Shiddieqy quotes Muslim through al-
Bayhaqī, in the latter he quotes Muslim directly from
Muslim's *Sahīh*.

Ash-Shiddieqy is not alone in making this mistake of
adding the phrase KDN, as this error is also made by Chalil
in his book.[96] In addition, minor differences can be found
in his quotation from Ibn Hanbal, although he then becomes
accurate when quoting a version of Ibn Mājah,[97] which,
however, has been proven weak.

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[93]See note 78 above.

[94]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 12.

[95]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 14.

[96]Chalil, *Kembali*, 77.

[97]Chalil, *Kembali*, 76-77.

A similar case of inaccuracy can also be seen in the Muhammadiyah treatise on *bid' ah*, where quotations from Abū Dāwūd, Muslim, and al-Nasā'ī do not agree verbatim with their original versions, which are quoted in this study.[98]

These instances provide a clear example of the lack of carefulness displayed by the Indonesians in presenting the text of the *Bid' ah Hadīth*.[99] Muslim in his own elaborated hadīth methodology, which emphasizes the necessity of accuracy in narrating a hadīth, objects to this attitude.[100] This is crucial when wording of a narrated hadīth may convey certain important variations in meaning or cause serious consequences, such as in the phrase that warrants an action with the threat of Hellfire, which is the utmost possible punishment. Thus, the unwarranted inclusion of such phrase can indeed be seriously misleading.

Hence, in terms of the sources used by the Indonesian scholars, three conclusions can be drawn. First, these scholars have arbitrarily chosen which versions of the *Bid' ah Hadīth* they want to quote. Second, their quotations of the *Hadīth* are mainly not accurate. Third, their

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[98]Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, I. Compare the quotations found on this treatise with Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:201; Muslim, *Sahīh*, 3:11; and al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 3:188-189.

[99]It is indeed unfortunate that this lack of care was committed by such scholars as Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil who are regarded as scholars of hadīth and Indonesian Muslim reformers.

[100]See al-Naysābūrī, *Introduction*, 43.

approaches to this important source seem to derive from their lack of concern for the reliability of either the *isnāds* or *matns* of the *Hadīth*.

In the next section, attention is called to the issue of meaning and interpretation of the *Bid'ah Hadīth*. Although the literal meaning of the *Hadīth* has been cited above, the *Hadīth* itself has inspired many scholars to attempt to understand it beyond this literal meaning. This can be seen in the many *hadīth* commentaries (*sharhs*) and collections which are concerned to discuss *bid'ah* drawing on this *Hadīth*. Many Indonesian scholars also have discussed the meanings and interpretations of this *Hadīth*. As will be seen later, their discussions are very much influenced by certain texts or opinions elaborated in the Middle East.

The *Bid'ah Hadīth* and Its Interpretations

As discussed in chapter 3, the term *bid'ah* denotes every new thing or innovation. The *Bid'ah Hadīth*, literally speaking, therefore warns against any innovation whatsoever, without specifying whether it is directed against "religious" or "worldly" innovations. An outcome of this literalist understanding would be that any innovation whatsoever made after the death of the Prophet, can, or should, be considered an error. In other words, Muslims, who by their own confession must submit themselves to this Prophetic command, should not do or make anything except

what was specifically exemplified or affirmed by the Prophet during his lifetime.

However, this strictly literal understanding is challenged by the natural human need to change. By nature, human beings have so far shown both the capacity for and the need to make changes and innovations, all of which have established various human cultures and civilizations.[101] Hence, humanity always has the potential of making *bidʿah* in the literal sense of the word.

When a necessity--which is a very relative term--is felt, people tend to make *bidʿah*. In early Muslim history, an example of this tendency is shown by the case of the collection of the Qurʾān into a single volume.[102] The original response of Abū Bakr and Zayd to the then-new idea indicates their awareness of the Prophet's warning against *bidʿah*. But like ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and others, they were finally convinced by the need to realize the idea.[103] To

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[101]Anthropologists tend to see people as a substantial power that invents and shapes culture by way of using conventional symbols which are taken from a variety of codes in order to create new meanings. Thus, culture is invented by people and invention itself is a culture of the people. For more discussion, see, for instance, Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981). When this concept is applied to such religion as Islam, the question is not whether Muslims can really invent a culture--which answer has been historically obvious; but to what extent they can legitimately have the "right" to exercise their inventing power. In part, this is the issue which is questioned in the concept of *bidʿah*.

[102]See pp. 2-3 above.

[103]See also al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm*, 2:120-121.

this day, Muslims have acknowledged this as a supreme benefit, and are united in believing in the coherence and the completeness of the Qur'ān, which could not have been imaginable without the realization of the idea. Thus, the Prophet's warning was clearly not understood or interpreted in its literal sense by the Companions, as all of them admitted the standard written Qur'ān and hardly any trace of protest against it can be found.

There are several approaches to understanding the meaning of *bid'ah* in the *Bid'ah Hadīth*. The first of these is to look at the context of which the *Bid'ah Hadīth* is a part. Where the hadīth compilers put this *Hadīth* can be a starting point to find such a context. Muslim, for instance, includes the *Hadīth* in the section on "Making the Prayer and Sermon Easy" (*takhfīf al-salāh wa al-khutbah*);[104] and al-Nasā'ī puts it in the section on "How [to deliver] the Speech" (*kayf al-khutbah*).[105] Both of them apparently emphasize the occasion on which the *Hadīth* was spoken by the Prophet, namely a sermon, and not its substance.

Although this contextualization as sermon does not yet allow an interpretation beyond the literal meaning of the *Hadīth*, it is nevertheless frequently followed by Muslims in their religious life. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Muslim preachers in Indonesia, and probably

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[104]Muslim, *Sahīh*, 3:11.

[105]Al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan*, 3:188.

elsewhere, often cite this *Ḥadīth*, especially the version of al-Nasā'ī, in their Friday sermons, from which many other Muslims get to know the *Ḥadīth*.

A different way of contextualizing is given by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmīdhī, and Ibn Mājah. These compilers include the *Ḥadīth* under the theme of "Following the *Sunnah* and Avoiding *Bidʿah*" (*al-akhdh bi al-sunnah wa ijtināb al-bidʿah*).[106] This theme has undoubtedly been inspired by the content of the *Ḥadīth* which, in their respective versions, mentions the order to remain steadfast in the *sunnah* of the Prophet and that of the rightly-guided caliphs (*khulafā' al-rāshidīn al-mahdiyyīn*). The phrase "clench your teeth on it (i.e., the *sunnah*)" (*ʿaḍḍū ʿalayhā bi al-nawājidh*), as found in those versions, could be taken as an injunction that following such *sunnah* should be done in the strictest way possible.[107]

Like al-Nasā'ī's, Muslim's versions of the *Ḥadīth*, which are the most reliable, do not contain the phrases on *sunnah*. Hence, it is fairly clearly understood why their contextualizing is different from that of the other compilers. But the theme suggested by these other compilers has apparently been well promoted in the Muslim world, under a rubric "returning to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*." The

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[106]Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:200; al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:318; and Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 1:15,17.

[107]See, for instance, al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm*, 2:118.

propounders of this theme, sometimes called the reformers, would therefore prefer to quote the versions of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmīdhī, and Ibn Mājah.

Because Ibn Ḥanbal's work is organized by names of transmitters and not subjects, his approach is to narrate the *Ḥadīth* as part of the collections of ḥadīths narrated from al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah and Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh.[108] Thus, he is not offering any context by which the *Ḥadīth* may be understood.

Judging from the various contexts offered by these ḥadīth compilations, the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* has remained bound within its literal meaning. Therefore, a second approach to the *Ḥadīth* is necessary--that is, by looking at the ḥadīth commentaries on it, from which the forms of classical Islamic hermeneutics can be analyzed. The phrase which attracts much attention, and is found in most of the ḥadīth collections, is the phrase KBD (*kull bidʿah ḍalālah*: "every innovation is an error"). What follows is a hermeneutical discussion on this important phrase--or its close variants-- which can be considered the core-phrase of the *Ḥadīth*.

In order to comprehend the meaning of the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*, commentators on the ḥadīth collections apparently put more emphasis on a linguistic discussion rather than on the context in which the *Ḥadīth* was spoken. For instance, al-Nawawī regards the phrase KBD as a usually general term

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[108]Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:126; 3:310-311,317.

which is being used here in a more specific sense (' *āmm
makhṣūṣ*), and which is intended for the common innovations
(*ghālib al-bida'*).[109] Al-Nawawī refers to his previous
work, entitled *Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa al-Lughāt*, a compendium-
like work, where he discusses at length the word *bid ah*. But
in this work, he relies on the authority of al-'Izz ibn 'Abd
al-Salām and al-Bayhaqī regarding the divisions of
bid ah.[110] Regarding the word "kull," as found in the
phrase KBD, al-Nawawī points to its possible specification
by referring to an example from the Qur'ān, that is,
Q.S.46:25.[111] This verse describes the torrential wind
which destroyed the people of 'Ād due to their challenge to
the Prophet Hūd, who had been sent to them. It reads, "[The
wind is] destroying *all* things by commandment of its
Lord..."[112] The word "all" in this verse is not applied to
the whole world; it only referred to things which belong to
the 'Ād people. Thus, although "all" denotes a general
meaning, it is, in this verse, only intended to be specific.

Al-Suyūṭī, a commentator on al-Nasā'ī's *Sunan*, quotes
from al-Qurṭūbī on the meaning of the phrase "the worst of
things are their new ones." These condemned new things, he

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[109]Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 6:393.

[110]Abū Zakariyya Muhyi al-Dīn ibn Sharf al-Nawawī,
Tahdhīb al-Asmā' wa al-Lughāt, vol.3 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub
al-'Ilmiyyah, 1970), 22-23.

[111]Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 6:393.

[112]See Pickhtall, *The Glorious Koran*, 360. Italics mine.

said, include only those which have no root in, or which are not approved of by, the religion; and this is the meaning of *bid* ah.[113] Al-Suyūtī then interprets the phrase KBD by relying on the explanation of al-Nawāwī above. The popular statement of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb is also quoted to support al-Nawāwī's opinion.[114] Furthermore, quoting an anonymous scholar, probably al-ʿIzz ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, al-Suyūtī tends to agree with the five categories of *bid* ah--corresponding the five categories of law--which are the obligatory (*wājibah*), the beneficial (*mandūbah*), the forbidden (*muharramah*), the unbeneficial (*makrūhah*), and the permitted (*mubāhah*).

Meanwhile, two commentators on al-Tirmīdhī's *Sunan*, al-Diʿ ās and al-Mālikī, divide the "new thing" (*muhdath*) into two categories. One is the thing which has no precept or root (*asl*) except one's own desire; this is the kind of *bid* ah which is condemned. The other is the thing which has a way of being related to the past--of being rooted; this, according to them, has been the practice (*sunnah*) of the Caliphs and the noble Muslim leaders alike. As they conclude, innovation or *bid* ah is therefore not judged from

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[113]Al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, 3:188-189.

[114]Al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan*, 3:189. ʿUmar's statement has become a key source of discussion on the meaning of *bid* ah. According to Rispler, "Toward a New Understanding," 323, by saying the statement ʿUmar "actually stated that some *bid* a are favorable and some are not, and that human intellect can differentiate between the various types."

its wording and meaning, but from whether or not it has a
relation (root) to the past.[115]

Similarly, al-Mubārakafūrī (d.1353/1934), a modern
commentator on al-Tirmīdhī's *Sunan*, makes a long comment on
the *Biď ah Ḥadīth* narrated by al-Tirmīdhī. The phrase "and
beware of new things," he says, is a warning against
innovations, as is emphasized further by the phrase KBḌ.
Like al-Suyūṭī, al-Mubārakafūrī also quotes from al-Qurṭūbī,
who defines *biď ah* as an innovation which has no root in
religion.[116] Moreover, if there is a root, then such an
innovation is not "religiously" called *biď ah* even though
"linguistically" it is (*falaysa bi biď ah shar' an wa in kāna
biď ah lughatan*).[117]

In this regard, the phrase KBḌ is understood as an
example of comprehensive speech (*jawāmi' al-kalam*) which
covers everything; and the *biď ah* which 'Umar spoke of,
according to this thought, is only a linguistic *biď ah*, not
a religious one.[118] Thus, although the phrase KBḌ remains

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[115]Al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:319-320; al-Ḥāfiz ibn al-'Arabī
al-Mālikī (d.543/1148), '*Āriḍat al-Aḥwadhī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ
al-Tirmīdhī*, vol.10 (Syria: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Jamī', 1972),
147.

[116]Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakafūrī, *Tuḥfat al-
Aḥwadhī bi Sharḥ Jāmi' al-Tirmīdhī*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān
Muḥammad 'Uthmān, vol.7 (Madīnah: al-Maktabat al-
Salafiyyah), 439.

[117]Al-Mubārakafūrī, *Tuḥfat*, 7:439-440. See also al-
Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, 2:118-119.

[118]Al-Mubārakafūrī, *Tuḥfat*, 7:440.

general, its understanding should be specific, depending on the relation of the *bid'ah* in question to the religion itself.

A feature of decisive importance which is offered by these commentaries is that *bid'ah* in the *Bid'ah Hadīth* is not understood by its absolutely literal meaning. It is rather always a relative, interpretive *bid'ah*, which is dependent upon, or related to, other aspects of the religion. If these aspects are legal ones, then *bid'ah* is divided into the five categories of Islamic law. This is the concept which has been elaborated historically by such scholars as al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salām, al-Nawawī, and al-Suyūṭī. Even earlier, al-Shāfi'ī is reported to have said that *bid'ah* is of two kinds: that which corresponds to the *sunnah* is the praiseworthy *bid'ah*, whereas that which contradicts it is the condemned *bid'ah*.[119] Thus, *sunnah* is used to measure *bid'ah*.

If, however, the related, other aspects are concerned with the historical rootedness of *bid'ah*, that is, if they refer to the past or to the primal time of the Prophet, then *bid'ah* is divided between that which has no reference, and is therefore condemned, and that which has a root, for which

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[119]Cf. al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, 2:122. See also al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 17:10. For various categories or classifications of the terms *bid'ah*, see Rispler, "Toward a New Understanding," 324-327, where he argues that *bid'ah* in the early and medieval time was evaluated in Shar'ī (legal) terms.

there is no condemnation. Such scholars as al-Qurṭūbī, al-Di'ās, al-Mālikī, and al-Mubārakafūrī, are among the proponents of this interpretation. This interpretation could actually be paralleled to the previous one as legally related, for the terms "condemned" and "not-condemned" could be put under the legal categories of the forbidden and the permitted, respectively.

In any case, whether Muslim scholars support the legal or the historical aspects, all of them make the past a justifying or legitimizing tool, by which they may themselves escape from being condemned. The "past" here is understood as the total teaching found in the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth (sunnah) of the Prophet. For some people, it also includes the sunnah of the Companions, a concept which finds a support in some of the versions of the Bid'ah Ḥadīth.[120] For some, it includes the Successors (tābi'ūn) of the Companions. For still some others, like the Mālikīs, the "past" includes the practice of the people of Madīnah ('amal ahl al-madīnah) as recorded down to Mālik's time.

But as it is generally understood, the total teaching is often characterized as mostly general and limited. Indeed

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[120]The Bid'ah Ḥadīth is also understood by Muslim scholars as a prophecy (akhbār) concerning the emergence of bid'ah after the death of the Prophet and concerning the four caliphs, i.e., Abū Bakr ibn Abī Quhāfah, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, although their names are not mentioned in the Ḥadīth. See, for instance, al-Ḥanbalī, Jāmi' al-'Ulūm, 2:110; al-Mubārakafūrī, Tuḥfat, 7:440; and al-Mālikī, 'Āriḍat, 10:147.

there are certain specific rulings in both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth but their number is again very limited. At the same time, changes and problems have continuously occurred in the Muslim world that require a response, in terms of justification or denial, from the religion. To answer those problems Muslims have often employed their personal reasoning (*ijtihād*) or interpretation, a concept which also finds support in several Prophetic traditions.[121] Thus, *ijtihād*, much of which will be elaborated on in the next chapter, can be, and has been, used as a tool to judge whether a new thing has, or can have, a relation with the past. In other words, reference to the past includes the interpretation of how the past is related to the present issue or action, and vice versa.

The interpretability and divisibility of *bid'ah* is also reflected in the discussions on *bid'ah* in Indonesia. In Indonesian literature, discussions regarding meanings and interpretations of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth* are somewhat varied, but the idea of the rootedness is prevalent. Abdul-Qadir Hassan, for instance, outwardly interprets *bid'ah* in the *Ḥadīth*, not in its literal meaning, but in its

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[121]The story about Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, who was appointed Governor at Yemen by the Prophet, and who was praised by him for his methods of solving problems, one of which is by *ijtihād*, is one of the popular traditions justifying the act of *ijtihād*. See, for instance, Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 3:303; and al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 2:68-69.

interpretative or terminological one (*iṣṭilāḥ*). In his own words,

> Let us not to be so zealous in defining the Prophet's *Hadīth* literally. The Prophet knows that the world is changing as he is well aware of human needs. Therefore, it is impossible [to opine] that the word *bidʿah* there is directed to all [worldly] concerns. Rather, it must have been intended for the main mission with which he was ordered to convey, that is, religious matters.[122]

Bidʿah is then understood as something related to actions which seem to have a parallel to the religion, but which, in fact, were not recognized by the Prophet, nor are able to be included in what he would have accepted.[123] Thus, what the *Bidʿah Hadīth* is condemning is all *bidʿah in religion or religious matters*.

But "religion," by which is meant Islam, is understood in a simple way. It is divided between ritual or worship (*ʿibādah*) and custom (*adat or muʿāmalah*). *ʿIbādah* consists of religious injunctions or orders, whose methods or technicalities did not exist before being introduced by the religion, such as making ablutions, prayer, and so forth. Meanwhile, *adat* (from the Arabic *ʿādah*) is a common practice which exists even without having been introduced by religion, such as eating, drinking, etc. It is within this simple understanding that *bidʿah* is thus divided between

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[122]Abdul-Qadir Hassan, "Tamhied," the foreword to *Soal-Jawab* 1:29.

[123]Abdul-Qadir Hassan, "Tamhied," *Sual-Jawab* 1:29.

bid ah in '*ibādah* and that in *adat*; the former is condemned
whereas the latter is related to human necessities, and is
not necessarily condemned.[124]

The lines of arguments offered by A. Hassan above have
actually reduced what he originally calls "religion" to what
he calls '*ibādah*, because in the first instance he limits
condemned *bid ah* to religious matters, but in the end, the
same *bid ah* is also limited to '*ibādah*. In this regard,
there is also an inconsistency in his thought that arises
when he defines religion as including both '*ibādah* and *adat*.
If *bid ah* is condemned in religious matters, then *bid ah* in
adat should also be condemned. In his opinion, however, it
is not.

A similar case can actually be seen in the Muhammadiyah
treatise on *bid ah*. Although the treatise recognizes the
generality of the *Bid ah Hadīth* is recognized, it seems it
cannot escape from limiting religion to ritual, when *bid ah*
is defined as "a new practice in religion aiming, by this
practice, at the worship of God or to incorporate it into
the ritual."[125]

Another instance is provided by Chalil. He limits
bid ah in the *Bid ah Hadīth* to innovations in the religious
realm, but he limits the realm only to matters of theology

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[124]A. Hassan, "Mengusap Ubun-ubun Sesudah Salam," *Soal-Jawab* 1:147-149.

[125]Muhammadiyah, *Risalah*, 7.

('*aqīdah*) and ritual ('*ibādah*).[126] Although his definition
of religion is thus somewhat larger than that of A. Hassan
and the Muhammadiyah, it is still a simplified understanding
of the religion.

A more general interpretation, however, can be found in
Ash-Shiddieqy's book. Commenting on several hadīths that he
quotes, including the *Bid'ah Hadīth*, he says that whoever
read these hadīths will grasp the conclusion that they order
us to follow the *sunnah* and to combat *bid'ah*. In his own
words, "We need no comment nor explanation on the aim and
the purpose of the hadīth. This simply requires the
consciousness of the *ummah*."[127] Hence, the *Hadīth* is taken
at its face value, which is literally general. But a further
look at Ash-Shiddieqy's discussions eventually reveals the
fact that he also tends to attach *bid'ah* only to the
religious realm.[128]

Having examined this literature, a general pattern on
this particular issue can be established. *Bid'ah*, as found
in the *Bid'ah Hadīth* or, more specifically, in the phrase
KBD, is applied to all innovations in religion, which is
translated as ritual. Consequently, all such changes in
ritual are all considered as erroneous. This pattern of
understanding is later enhanced by many Indonesian

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[126]Chalil, *Kembali*, 78.

[127]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 12-14.

[128]See Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 41.

translations of Arabic books of the Middle Eastern origin.[129]

The whole genre of the above Indonesian literature provides no place for what is recognized by other Muslim scholars as "good" *bid' ah* (*bid' ah ḥasanah*). However, another genre of Indonesian literature offers a different understanding of the phrase KBD. Following the reasons which have been presented earlier by scholars like al-Shāfi'ī, Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, al-Nawāwī and al-Suyūṭī, other Indonesian scholars consider the word "every" (*kullu*) found in the phrase as something which applies only to specific matters, which are eventually acknowledged as "bad" *bid' ah* (*bid' ah sayyi'ah*). The whole concept of *bid' ah* is then divided under the five categories of Islamic law.

This is, for instance, obvious from the writing of Abbas. The *Bid' ah Ḥadīth*, or particularly the phrase KBD, he argues, is a general ḥadīth (*hadits umum*) which has been specified (*dikecualikan*).[130] According to him, this feature has been established in the science of juristic principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) which recognize three types of specification: (1) specification of the Qur'ān by the *sunnah*; (2) specification of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān; and (3) specification of the *sunnah* by the *sunnah*. For the first

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[129]See, for instance, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tidak Meniru*, 100-101; Ibn Bāz, *Waspadalah*, 16-17; and al-'Uthaimin, *Kesempurnaan Islam*, 23.

[130]Abbas, "Masalah Bid' ah," 188.

type, Abbas quotes Q.S.7:32 which generally permits Muslims to wear good ornaments or consume good food; but which is specified by a hadīth, narrated by Muslim, that prohibits man to wear gold ornaments. Similarly, Q.S.5:3 clearly prohibits eating all kinds of corpse. But according to a hadīth, the corpse of fish is permitted to consume. Likewise, Q.S.4:11 which institutes the right of children to inherit their father's estate has also been specified or limited by a hadīth in which a non-Muslim cannot inherit from a Muslim or vice versa. Thus a non-Muslim son cannot have a share from his Muslim father's inheritance, or vice versa.

For the second type of specification, Abbas quotes Q.S.2:228 which states that a waiting period for a divorced woman to remarry is three cycles of her menstruation (qurū'). However, this verse, commonly applied to every divorced woman, is specified by Q.S.65:3 in which the waiting period for a pregnant woman divorced by her husband is until she delivers her baby.

Finally, the third type of specification is exemplified by two narrations from the ṣaḥīḥs of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. In the first narration, the almsgiving (zakāt) for crops which are watered by rain is 10%. This has been specified by the second narration that if the crops produce less than five awsuq (about 1300 pounds) then no zakāt is imposed.

Having elaborated these types of specification, Abbas states things that have specified the *Bid'ah Hadīth*. In his own words,

> All *bid'ah* is an error and will end up in the Fire, except *bid'ah* in worldly matters--except *bid'ah* that resulted from the *ijtihād* of the *mujtahid imāms*--except that which was initiated by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs--except good *sunnahs* invented by Muslims--except matters of utmost necessity and badly needed in [strenghtening] the religion.[131]

This type of understanding is also adopted by other Indonesian scholars.[132]

Thus, at the theoretical level of discussion on *bid'ah*, which is based on the *Bid'ah Hadīth*, there are mainly two Indonesian groups holding two apparently opposing views. The first group, which we may call Group A, consists of Muslim scholars who consider that the generality of the *Hadīth* is specified by its usage in the Arabic language. *Bid'ah* is then basically divided into the good and the bad, the latter of which is the one intended by the *Hadīth*. In such a transformative understanding, the *Hadīth* is therefore read: "Every bad *bid'ah* is an error," or "Some *bid'ahs*, which are bad, are an error."

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[131]Abbas, "Masalah Bid'ah," 188-193.

[132]See, for instance, Idris Ahmad, *Dasar Pokok Hukum Islam dan Aqidah Ahlussunnah Wal-Djama'ah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azam, 1963), 158; Moch. Anwar, *100 Masail Fiqhiyyah* (Menara Kudus: Darul Ulum Press, 1996), 4-6; and Muhammad 'Alwiy al-Malikiy, *Paham-paham yang Perlu Diluruskan*, trans. Indri Mahally Fikry (Jakarta: PT. Fikahati Aneska, 1994), 123-125.

On the other hand, the second group, which we may call Group B, consists of those who, seeing *bid' ah* as a serious threat to the religion, consider the same *Hadīth* to include all kinds of innovation, mainly in the realm of religion or ritual. In their views, there is no real division of *bid' ah*, although the linguistic *bid' ah* is still acknowledged as a part of human necessity. To them, the *Hadīth* to be understood: "Every *bid' ah* is bad and, hence, is an error," or "Every *bid' ah* in religion is an error." In fact, they may even interpret it more specifically, that is, "Every *bid' ah* in ' *ibādah* is an error."

A somewhat similar division can also be observed in the real practical life of the Indonesian Muslim community. In my field research in Jambi, it is found that there are basically two main opinions regarding the interpretation of the phrase KBD. The majority of the respondents (81%) disagree with the literal understanding of the phrase. A few in this majority give two reasons for this disagreement. First, *bid' ah* in the *Hadīth* is only applied to Islamic theology and ritual, an opinion which resembles that of Chalil above. Second, Islam is a rational and a dynamic religion, a condition which requires certain innovations in itself. This represents an heterogeneous outlook on the religion which cannot be attached to any of the previous views on the issue.

On the other hand, a minority of the respondents (11%) accepts the literal meaning of the phrase. Within this group, however, there are some people who made it a general condition that *bid' ah* is only considered as an error if it contradicts the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*.[133]

By understanding the phrase in a literal way, this minority seems to be very strict, even when compared to what has been discussed in the Indonesian literature. On the other hand, the majority also seems to be very narrow in their views by limiting religion, like Group B above, to the realm of theology and ritual. But as will be seen shortly, they in fact tend to follow the opinion of Group A, which divides *bid' ah* into the good and bad categories.

In the same field research, the respondents were asked about the division of *bid' ah* into the good and the bad. About 81% of them express their agreement with the idea that *bid' ah* can be divided into the two categories. Besides their two previous reasons, the majority considers it a necessity to divide *bid' ah* into several categories, some of which are considered as worldly in nature. However, the other

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[133]The 1995 Jambi *bid' ah* Survey. Due to its nature, field research provides a more dynamic view and greater variety of outlooks on an issue than a literary one. The more people involved in the research, the greater that dynamism will be. But we have been able to locate some patterns which are here identified as the "majority" and the "minority". Another difference is that, in field research such as this, the place of reasoning is sometimes absent or at least less elevated. This is particularly true in certain societies like Jambi, where tradition and religion are usually taken at their face value.

respondents (8%) reject such a division; some of them are reluctant to agree. They argue that every *bid̄ ah* is rejected; and if there were a so-called "good" *bid̄ ah* then it should have not been considered as a *bid̄ ah* at all; and there is no good *bid̄ ah* in ritual whatsoever.[134]

What has been discussed so far suggests a certain degree of parallel understanding of the phrase KBD of the *Bid̄ ah Ḥadīth* in the literature and in the practical life of the community. The *Bid̄ ah Ḥadīth* has not been generally understood in its literal sense. It is always interpreted to give what is often called the "religious meaning" (*al-ma' nā al-shar' ī*) or the "terminological meaning" (*al-ma' nā al-istilāhī*) of *bid̄ ah*. One should not be surprised with this result, for the sources upon which the community base their views are basically similar, to a certain degree, to what are used and elaborated on in the literature. In their answers to the question about their sources, the respondents gave the following books, arranged in Table 2 below in order of importance measured by frequency of mention.

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[134]The 1995 Jambi *Bid̄ ah* Survey.

Table 2. The Sources Used by the Jambi People to Understand
Bid' ah[135]

No.	Name of book or source
1	*Matn al-Arba' īn al-Nawawiyyah, by al-Nawawī
2	Riyād al-Sālihīn, by al-Nawawī
3	*Al-I' tisām, by al-Shātibī
4	*Sahīh al-Bukhārī, by al-Bukhārī
5	*Sahīh Muslim, by Muslim
6	Dalīl al-Fālihīn, a commentary on no.2 above, by al-Suyūtī
7	Al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr, by al-Suyūtī
8	Subul al-Salām, by al-San' ānī
9	Ādāb al-Bahth
10	Durrat al-Nāsihīn, by ' Uthmān al-Khubuwī
11	Mustalah al-Hadīth[136]
12	*Al-Sunan wa al-Bida' , by al-Shaqīrī
13	Usūl al-Fiqh[137]
14	Minhāj al-Istiqāmah
15	Durr al-Nafīs, a Malay work by Nafīs al-Banjarī.[138]

[135]The asterisk indicates a work that has been cited in this study.

[136]One of the two most widely used works on this science is that of Hāfiz Hasan Mas'ūdī, a modern scholar of al-Azhar, entitled Minhat al-Mughīth. The other is known as Bayqūniyyah, referring to a text by Tāhā ibn Muhammad al-Fattūh al-Bayqūnī (d.1669), which is accompanied by its commentaries such as that by ' Atiyyah al-Ajhurī (d.1776) and Taqrirat al-Saniyyah, by Hasan Muhammad al-Mashhāth. See van Bruinessen, Kitab Kuning, 162-163.

[137]It is observed that the interest in the study of usūl al-fiqh (the principles of Islamic jurisprudence) in Indonesia emerged as a response to the idea that the "gate of ijtihād" is closed. According to van Bruinessen, serious attention to this study was given in the 1920's by the Kaum Muda who use it as a vehicle to combat bid' ah and taqlīd. In the Kaum Muda's magazine, al-Ittifāq wa al-Iftirāq, many quotations are found from some popular works on usūl al-fiqh such as al-Suyūtī's al-Ashbāh wa al-Nazāir, al-Shāfi'ī's al-Risālah, and Ibn Rushd's Bidāyat al-Mujtahid. See van Bruinessen, Kitab Kuning, 123 and note 17.

[138]This is actually a Malay work on Sūfism explaining the concept of wahdat al-wujūd. It is found in many Islamic bookstores in South Kalimantan, Aceh, and Malaysia. See van

Table 2. (continued)

No.	Name of book or source
16	*Al-Majālis al-Saniyyah*, a commentary on no.1 above, by Ahmad Hijāzī
17	*Al-Sirāj al-Munīr*
18	*Jāmi' al-' Ulūm wa al-Hikam*, by al-Hanbalī
19	*Criteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah*, by Ash-Shiddieqy
20	*Kembali kepada AlQur'an dan As-Sunnah*, by Chalil
21	*40 Masalah Agama*, by Siradjuddin Abbas
22	*Ihyā' ' Ulūm al-Dīn*, by al-Ghazālī
23	*Al-Ibdā'*, by ' Alī Mahfūz
24	*Al-Bid' ah*, by ' Izzat ' Atiyyah

Due to its very nature, there can be a multiplicity of interpretations. But interpretations on the meaning of *bid' ah* are mainly summarized into four groups or definitions. In his book, Ash-Shiddieqy has adequately summarized each. The first definition is that made by the *uṣūlīs*, scholars of the principles/bases of Islam, who define *bid' ah* as:

> a path which is invented in the religion (of Islam), and is considered as having a resemblance to the *sharī' ah*, and the intention of which is to increase devotion in the worship of God.[139]

The second definition also comes from the *uṣūlīs*, but has a different emphasis. According to them, *bid' ah* is:

Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, 164.

[139]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 35. See also al-Shātibī, *al-I' tisām*, 28.

a path invented in the religion, which resembles the *sharī'ah*, and the intention of which is the same as what is intended in doing the (actual) *sharī'ah*.[140]

The third definition comes from the *fuqahā'* (jurists) who define *bid'ah* as:

> a condemned action which is invented and which runs contrary to the Qur'ān, *sunnah*, and *ijmā'* (consensus). This is [the innovation] which has never been allowed by God, in terms of speech, action, expression, or sign; but this does not include customs.[141]

The fourth opinion also comes from the jurists, who offer the following definition. *Bid'ah* is:

> whatever is invented after the time of the Prophet, whether it is [considered as] good or bad, and [whether it is] in ritual or in custom (seeking worldly pleasure) only.[142]

After some elaborations, Ash-Shiddieqy considers that in fact all of these definitions basically agreed on one aspect, that is, whatever is innovated after the Prophet's time, which has no reference to or from the religion, nor from its guidelines or principles, is a condemned *bid'ah*.[143]

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[140]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 35. See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām*, 28; and al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 31-32.

[141]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 36.

[142]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 37.

[143]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 40.

This observation, however, needs to be reviewed. Indeed the sense of rootedness is prevalent in the four definitions, but there are significant differences among them. The fourth definition, for instance, is strictly literal, and has only a small actual representation in the Muslim community. The third definition emphasizes the legal aspects of an innovation, for it makes the Qur'ān, *sunnah*, and consensus, which are all legal sources, as the justifying sources. This definition is thus represented by many of the hadīth scholars above, such as al-Nawawī and al-Suyūṭī, Group A, and the majority of the Muslim community. Meanwhile, the second and the first definitions are best exemplified by the case of A. Hassan or Group B, where *bidʿah* is equalized with the innovations in religion and, then, is reduced to those in ritual.

The complexity of these interpretations shows a dynamic struggle to find the true meaning of *bidʿah* in the *Bidʿah Hadīth*. But as far as interpretations are concerned, unanimity is probably impossible. What concerns this study is more than analyzing this complexity; it will attempt to examine which interpretations are likely to have more grounds. For this purpose, another hadīth, of an outstanding reliability, will be studied in the following section.

Another Inspiring Ḥadīth

In an agreed ḥadīth (*muttafaq 'alaih*), which is the
highest degree of reliability,[144] both al-Bukhārī and
Muslim narrate that the Prophet Muḥammad says:

> Whoever makes an innovation (*man aḥdatha*) in areas
> which are our concern (*fī amrinā hādhā*), [but] which
> [in fact] does not stem from these, is rejected.
>   In another version: Whoever does an action which is
> not in accordance with our dictates (*laysa 'alayh
> amrunā*), is rejected.[145]

According to Ash-Shiddieqy, this ḥadīth divides human
action into the ritual (*'ibādah*) and the custom (*mu'āmalah*).
He contends that the former is subject solely to the
mandates of God and His messenger, with which no one else
should interfere. But for the latter, he argues, religion
has provided certain general principles, in accordance with
which a Muslim can act dynamically.[146]

A somewhat similar conclusion is also suggested by
Chalil. He interprets the phrase "our concern," as found in

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[144]Al-Naisābūrī, *Introduction*, 14-15, says: "*muttafaq
'alayh* is the first grade of what is sound."

[145]Quoted by Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 59; Chalil,
Kembali, 90; and Abbas, "Masalah Bid'ah," 153-154,162,167.
See also Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī, *Al-Lu'lu' wa al-Marjān
fī mā Ittafaqa 'alayh al-Shaykhān* (al-Kuwayt: Wizārat al-
Awqāf wa al-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1992), 431; and Sayyidī
Muḥammad Ḥabīb Allāh ibn al-Shaykh Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-
Shinqītī (d.1363/1943), *Zād al-Muslim fī mā Ittafaqa 'alayh
al-Bukhārī wa Muslim*, vol.3 (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba'ah Miṣr
Shirkah Musāhimah Miṣriyyah, 1955), 46. It is the 5th ḥadīth
in both al-Nawawi's *al-Arba'īn*, 34, and al-Ḥanbali's *Jāmi'
al-'Ulūm*, 1:162.

[146]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 60.

the ḥadīth, to include only matters of theology and ritual.[147] In other words, innovations which do not fall into these categories are simply not the ones intended by the ḥadīth. Like Ash-Shiddieqy, Chalil shows his consistent interpretation of the meaning of *bidʿah* as an innovation which is made within a religious context and which exclusively concerns theology and religious ritual.

This ḥadīth, which may now be termed the "ḥadīth 'Āʾishah," for she is the sole authority for it, does include a phrase through which the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* can be partially linked to it. The phrase *fī amrinā* ("in [areas] of our concern," which will be referred to as "phrase FA"), according to several Muslim scholars, means no other than "the religion of Islam."[148] Thus, when the phrase KBD, in the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth*, is interpreted by the phrase FA, in the ḥadīth 'Āʾishah, an arguable understanding of the phrase KBD would be read "every innovation *in Islam* is an error" (*kullu bidʿah fī al-Islām dalālah*, abbreviated as KBID). Based on this argument, justification can be offered for the interpretations of such Indonesian scholars as A. Hassan, Ash-Shiddieqy, and Chalil. Even such a traditionalist scholar as Abbas agrees with this understanding that every *bidʿah* in matters of religion (*bidʿah keagamaan*) is strictly

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[147]Chalil, *Kembali*, 90,96.

[148]See, for instance, al-'Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 5:357; and al-Shinqīṭī, *Zād al-Muslim*, 3:46.

prohibited;[149] although, as demonstrated earlier, he already specifies what he considers as acceptable *bid'ahs*.

In any case, however, the new phrase, KBID, remains general, in the sense that its scope is not different from that of the phrase KBD, as elaborated on in the previous section. It does not help to explain obvious examples of innovation in Islam, such as the collection of the Qur'ān and the *tarāwīh* congregation initiated by 'Umar. Thus, the idea of rootedness is repeated here to explain the hadīth 'Ā'ishah which now has a more comprehensive view of *bid'ah*. Ibn Hajar, who, like many others, regards this hadīth as a fundamental principle of Islam, reads it as "whoever makes an innovation in the religion which is not witnessed to by any of the religious principles, it is not approved."[150] Al-Shinqītī adds the explanation that what is intended by this hadīth, or similar hadīths, is the kind of innovation which has no religious reference or support. Otherwise, that innovation will fall under the five categories of law.[151]

In the end, if the hadīth 'Ā'ishah is accepted and incorporated as a legitimate means by which to interpret the *Bid'ah Hadīth*, then for Group A above, the meaning of the phrase KBD is no longer "every bad *bid'ah* is an error," or "some *bid'ahs*, which are bad, are an error," but

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[149]Abbas, "Masalah Bid'ah," 166-168.

[150]Al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī*, 5:357.

[151]Al-Shinqītī, *Zād al-Muslim*, 3:46-47.

collectively as "every bad *bid'ah in Islam* is an error." On the other hand, for Group B, which understands the phrase as "every *bid'ah* is bad and, hence, is an error," or "every *bid'ah* in religion is an error," remains, after the collaboration of the two ḥadīths, in the same position as before. As for that faction within Group B which opines that "every *bid'ah* in 'ibādah is an error," their interpretation has gone beyond the scope of the two ḥadīths combined--which could not have been their intention. Their interpretation, however, can be set aside if the issue of *bid'ah* is approached as has been suggested here--through the spirit of the Qur'ānic verses, and employing both ḥadīth criticism and an independent analysis of the issue.[152]

For several reasons, the view of Group A is more convincing than that of Group B. First, although in a literal sense the word "kull" means "every," the usage of the word in the Arabic language makes it possible to interpret it to mean "some." Second, both the *Bid'ah Hadīth* and the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah are structured in a general way which, as discussed earlier, opens the way to an interpretation with which most Muslims agree: that any

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[152]It is somewhat regrettable to see how, for instance, al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tiṣām* has been adopted almost unquestioningly by some important Indonesian Muslim scholars who are among the propounders of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). Indeed al-Shāṭibī's work is an important contribution to *bid'ah* discourses, but this uncritical approach does more harm than good to the spirit of *ijtihād* itself. For discussions on the attachment of the Indonesian reformists to *ijtihād*, see Noer, *Modernist*, 302-306.

innovation should refer to the injunctions of the Qur'ān and the authentic ḥadīths. To do this the concept of *ijtihād* is indispensable; and due to its very nature, *ijtihād* opens a wide avenue to innovations.[153] Third, as will be discussed at the beginning of the next chapter, another authentic ḥadīth also allows and supports the interpretation that some *bidʿ ahs* are "good" while some others are "bad."

In summary, it can be said that the *Bidʿ ah Ḥadīth* functions to specify, although still in a general way, what has been suggested by the Qur'ānic conception of *bidʿ ah*.[154] The ḥadīth 'Āishah then helps to make the *Bidʿ ah Ḥadīth* more specific. Both ḥadīths are to be further interpreted and elaborated through the process of *ijtihād*, by which one can decide whether a *bidʿ ah* is acceptable or rejected.

It is now possible to offer a new interpretation of the *Bidʿ ah Ḥadīth*, which reads as follows:

> Every new thing is indeed linguistically called *bidʿ ah*. Some *bidʿ ahs* may lead you to an error. Hence, make your best efforts to learn carefully and attach yourself to the guidance found in the Qur'ān (the best speech) and the ḥadīth (the best guidance), for they will minimize your chance of falling into error.

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[153]Two means of *ijtihād* will be elaborated in the next chapter.

[154]Muslim scholars agree that one of the functions of the *sunnah* or ḥadīth of the Prophet is to explain what is not clearly defined by the Qur'ān. See for instance, Ibrāhīm, *Al-Aḥādīth*, 35.

This interpretation will be substantiated further in the following discussion, which will be concerned with several concepts that are closely related to the issue of *bid' ah*.

CHAPTER 5

BID'AH IN THE LIGHT OF *IJTIHĀD*

As discussed in the foregoing chapter, the *Bid'ah Hadīth* is subject to certain interpretations which are made in order to construct what is considered the real meaning of *bid'ah* and the scope of its application. Based on the literal meaning of *bid'ah*, on which Muslim scholars are unanimously agreed, some Muslims are convinced of the blanket application of the *Hadīth* and, thus, give no space for any kind of innovation, particularly in religion or ritual.

Other scholars, however, basing their views on the capacity of the Arabic language to have multiple usages and meanings, open the possibility for specifying, rather than generalizing, the *Hadīth*. Hence, *bid'ah* is divided into categories, depending on the interpretation of its relationship to the religion.

Having examined these two positions, it has been suggested that the *Hadīth* was spoken by the Prophet Muḥammad to warn his *ummah* against certain innovations which run contrary to, or have no root in, the religion, implying that other innovations may as well be permitted, be accepted, or even be encouraged.

But this understanding is not self-sufficient without looking further into certain other concepts which seem to be

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closely related to *bid ah* and on which many scholars have
elaborated in their works. This is precisely because *bid ah*
--like many others--is not an independent concept that by
itself can produce or prevent a judgement or action. For
instance, when a certain belief or practice is called
bid ah, this concept actually refers implicitly to one which
says that another belief or practice is *not* so, or that the
particular belief or practice in question is so called
because it falls under a certain criterion. In whatever
case, it is therefore necessary to discuss the related
concepts which will make the whole discussion on *bid ah* more
accurate and comprehensible.

The present chapter will examine the relation between
bid ah and several other concepts which are discussed in the
works on *bid ah*, particularly in the Indonesian literature.
The first of these is called *sunnah*--a term frequently
referred to in the previous chapters--which many scholars
consider to be the opposite of *bid ah*. The latter is often
defined and judged in the light of the former; thus,
whatever is not *sunnah* is regarded as *bid ah*. But as will be
argued later, the concept of *sunnah* has a broader meaning
rooted both in the linguistic sense of the word as well as
in the history of its usage. In certain contexts, moreover,
it even opens a wide avenue for *bid ah*.

The second concept to be discussed is called *maslahah*
mursalah (public interest). This originally juristic term

has been incorporated into the discourse for its close resemblance to *bid'ah*, especially with regard to motivating elements. This resemblance, however, has been overshadowed for many scholars by the differences between the two concepts. In contrast, this study will emphasize the fact that, as a part of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning), *maṣlaḥah mursalah* may be regarded as an important vehicle for justifying *bid'ah*.

Similarly, a third concept called *istiḥsān* (juristic preference) is discussed here. Like *maṣlaḥah*, this is also a juristic term which has found its way into the discussion on *bid'ah*. Likewise, it incorporates the human intellect (*'aql*) to define what is good or bad in its own terms. *Istiḥsān* is just as integral to *maṣlaḥah* as it is to *bid'ah*.

Finally, *adat* is the fourth concept to be examined in this chapter. *Adat*, an Indonesian adaption of the Arabic *'ādah*, which literally means "custom," refers to local traditions. The significance of this concept lies in the peculiar relationship it has had and function that it has performed in the long history of Indonesian Islam. *Bid'ah* and *adat* are twin concepts that have actually co-existed since the introduction of Islam to Indonesia but have been mutually opposed throughout its history.

The significance of this chapter lies in its attempt to analyze the critical relationship between *bid'ah* and the four concepts discussed here: *sunnah*, *maṣlaḥah*, *istiḥsān*,

and *adat*. Instead of emphasizing the differences between *bid'ah* and these concepts, as has been done in most Indonesian literature, it will be argued here that not only are the concepts closely related to *bid'ah* but also that they are frequently employed either to justify it or to create an avenue for it.

Sunnah and Bid'ah

The contrastive prototype for many Muslim scholars has been to title their works on *bid'ah* with some variant of the two terms: *sunnah* and *bid'ah*. Such titles as al-Suyūtī's *Ḥaqīqat al-Sunnah wa al-Bid'ah*, al-Shuqayrī's *al-Sunan wa al-Mubtada'āt*, al-'Adawī's *Ūsūl fī al-Bida' wa al-Sunan*, and Ash-Shiddieqy's *Criteria antara Sunnah dan Bid'ah*, serve as some obvious examples of the prototype, showing the intent of the authors to contrast the two terms. In fact, many works on *bid'ah* have been written for the same purpose even where it is not immediately visible in the title. Chalil's *Kembali Kepada Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah* is also an example of these works, many of which will be discussed later.

Three approaches will be used here to comprehend the term *sunnah* (plural: *sunan*): respectively, the literal, the historical, and the contextual. The literal approach is concerned with the lexical meanings of the word *sunnah* as found in Arabic lexicographies. This will be essential to the effort to understand the root or the basic meaning of

the word. The historical approach is more related to the usage of the word in the early Muslim society, through which *sunnah* is comprehended. Finally, the contextual approach is taken both in discussing *sunnah* in the Indonesian literature and in terms of a *hadīth* which has been a source of controversy on the relation between *sunnah* and *bidʿ ah*. With these three approaches, I hope to establish a comprehensive and critical understanding on the relationship between the two concepts.

According to the Arab lexicographers, such as al-Azharī and al-Jawharī, the literal and original meaning of *sunnah* is "the path" or "the way" (*ṭarīqah*), implying a track which has been beaten by an earlier people and which then becomes a way for those who come after them.[1] Al-Zabīdī and Ibn Manẓūr add that the word is also understood as "historical conduct" (*sīrah*), whether such conduct is good or bad.[2] Both al-Azharī and Ibn Manẓūr quote a *hadīth*, which will be identified below as "Jarīr *hadīth*," to emphasize both of these meanings: "the way" and "historical conduct."[3] In fact, these meanings are closely related, for to follow a

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[1]Al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, 12:298; al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, 5:2138.

[2]Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farāj, vol.9 (Maṭbaʿ at Ḥukūmat al-Kuwayt: al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1965), 244; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 2: 222.

[3]Al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, 12:198; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 2:222.

way invented by others requires certain conduct. Thus, *sunnah* is literally and basically translated as a "trodden path" and its verb-form, *sannā*, means "to make a path" or "to beat down a way."

In its history, the word *sunnah* has been used to indicate a commonly agreed-on practice or tradition of a culture or group which has been handed down from generation to generation. Many scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have contributed to the discussion of the historicity of *sunnah*. Ignaz Goldziher, for instance, asserts that the concept of *sunnah* was influential for the Arabs even before Islam, for whom it meant "all that corresponds to the traditions of the Arabs and the customs and habits of their ancestors."[4] This "old" concept, Goldzhiher argues, underwent a change at the hand of early Muslims, for whom it meant "all that could be shown to have been the practices of the Prophet and his earliest followers." This shift in meaning thus formulated a "new" concept which "gained prevalence first of all among the pious circles of Medina."[5]

Another scholar who depends heavily on Goldziher is Alfred Guillaume. Guillaume, who disregards the value of the ḥadīth literature as a whole as "an accurate and trustworthy

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[4]Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, vol.2 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971), 25.

[5]Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:26.

record of sayings and doings of Muhammad," like Goldziher, considers *sunnah* also in terms of the "old" and the "new" concepts mentioned above. In his own words, "the word *sunna* up to the time of Muhammad meant the practice of antiquity: after his time it acquired in orthodox circles a different significance, and came to denote the practice of the Prophet and his immediate successors."[6]

Many Western critics, such as Margoliouth, argue that *sunnah* is entirely a concept originating with the pre-Islamic.[7] The concept, "the *sunnah* of the Prophet," is thus rejected. This idea was taken up later by Joseph Schacht, who maintains that this particular concept is relatively late and that for the early generations of the Muslims, *sunnah* meant the practice of the Muslims themselves.[8] However, Fazlur Rahman has thoroughly analyzed the reasons lying behind the Western criticism and offered a different explanation, which will be elaborated later, defending the

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[6]Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam: An Introduction to the Study of the Hadīth Literature* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1924), 11-12.

[7]D.S. Margoliouth, *The Early Development of Muhammedanism* (New York, 1914), 69.

[8]Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), 2,80. For a detailed criticism of this book, see M.M. Azami, *On Schact's Origins.*

view that "*sunnah* of the Prophet" is, in fact, a concept

accepted by Muslims from the very beginning.[9]

Bearing Rahman's conclusions in mind it is interesting

to note that Juynboll still arrives at the same old Western

perception on the *sunnah* of the Prophet.[10] Like Goldziher,

and following Bravmann, Juynboll showed the significance of

the concept to the early Muslims and how the concept was

changed by them. He argues that although many Muslims

believe that from the third/ninth century, *sunnah* was

already equated with *sunnat al-nabī*, the evolution of the

former to the latter as a concept could, in fact, have been

slower. In his own words:

> ...the associations of *sunnas* with persons other than
> the Prophet are so numerous and varied that that does
> not permit us to assume that the Prophet's example
> overshadowed or indeed eclipsed that of others, at
> least not during the first hundred and fifty years or
> so after his death. During his lifetime that may have

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[9]Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Karachi: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1965), 5-9. See also Azami, *On Schacht's Origins*, 31; A. Hasan, *The Early Development of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1982), 88-89; and Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "Islamic Juristic Terminology before Shafi'i: A Semantic Analysis with Special Reference to Kufa" *Arabica* 19 (1972): 262-263.

[10]G.H.A. Juynboll is one of a very few contemporary Western scholars dedicated to writing about Muslim tradition literature. He has written several books and many papers, among them *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt* (Leiden, 1969); *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early* Hadīth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and a collection of his papers, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic Hadīth* (Great Britain and USA: Variorum, 1996).

been the case, but after his death historical indications presumed to point to *sunnat an-nabī* are easily outnumbered by those pointing to the *sunnas* of others.[11]

He also concludes that

apart from the *ḥadīth* literature and obviously late, "up-trended" versions of early historical reports, early Arabic poetry and prose present the term *sunna* in a broad sense--i.e. including that of the *rāshidūn* and/or other rulers--rather than in a narrow sense, i.e. exclusively that of the Prophet.[12]

This conclusion could have been revisited or avoided if Juynboll did not "ignore," for instance, Rahman's works, especially *Islamic Methodology in History*.[13] One of Rahman's arguments for the early acceptance of the concept "*sunnah* of the Prophet" is a quote from al-Kumayt ibn Zayd (d.743), a pro-Hāshimī poet of the first and early second century A.H. One of his most famous poems reads:

Biayyi kitābin aw biayyi sunnatin//
tarā ḥubbahum 'āran 'alayya wa taḥsabu?

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[11]Juynboll, "Some New Ideas on the Development of *Sunna* as a Technical Term in Early Islam," in Juynboll, *Studies*, 100-101. This article was originally published in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (Jerusalem, 1987): 97-118. See also M.M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam: Studies in Ancient Arab Concepts* (Leiden, 1972), 152-155.

[12]Juynboll, "Some New Ideas," 100-101.

[13]This work was published in 1965 and was soon widely available. It is one of critical and authoritative works explaining, among other things, the concept of *sunnah*, which scholars like Juynboll, whose works on ḥadīth came much later, should have not missed.

On the basis of what Book or which *sunnah*//
do you regard my love for them as a disgrace?[14]

After some elaboration, Rahman concludes that the *sunnah* in
this poem, which was written around 100 A.H. or even before,
refers to the "*sunnah* of the Prophet," a concept which, in
his view, must have been established before the writing of
the poem.[15]

Regardless of who is correct, what has been discussed
above serves as an illustration of how the word *sunnah*
developed historically as a concept.[16] Whether accepted as
an "old" or "new" concept in Goldziher's sense, the word
still does not deviate from its literal meaning. At the same
time, however, the historical usage of the word shows that
it is in a context that *sunnah* has been understood. The next
task is to decide which context (the "old" or the "new") is
held in common by Muslims with regard to their discussions
on *bid ah*.

As far as the works on *bid ah* are concerned, *sunnah* has
been linked to what Goldziher has identified as the "new"
concept, which refers to the actions or deeds of the Prophet
and his immediate successors (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*). This
concept is supported by several authentic traditions of the

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[14]Cf. Rahman, *Islamic Methodology*, 7-8.

[15]Rahman, *Islamic Methodology*, 8.

[16]For more discussion, see, for instance, Azami, *On Schacht's Origins*, especially part two, chapters 3 and 6; and A. Hasan, *Early Developments*, 85-114.

Prophet himself, including several versions of the *Bid'ah Hadīth*, where he is reported to have encouraged his *ummah* to follow his *sunnah* and the *sunnah* of his Companions.[17] This *Hadīth* is quoted in most of the works on *bid'ah*, taking for granted the meaning of *sunnah* in the "new" sense.[18] Thus, *sunnah* in *bid'ah* discourses basically refers to the exemplary deeds of the Prophet and those of his Companions.

The same would be true in most of the Indonesian literature. *Sunnah* is largely confined therein to what comes from the Prophet Muhammad and, sometimes, to what comes from his Companions--although the latter cannot in any way be equated with the former. All discussions on *sunnah* in Ash-Shiddieqy's *Criteria* and Chalil's *Kembali*, for instance, refer to *sunnah* in this sense.[19] This meaning should be paralleled with the Muslim reformists' notion of combatting various forms of the *sunnah* of others and propagating, instead, a strict adherence to the *sunnah* of the Prophet and his Companions.

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[17]See Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, 4:201; al-Tirmīdhī, *Sunan*, 7:319; the first version of Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, 1:16; Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 4:126-127; and al-Hanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm*, 2:110-111.

[18]See, for instance, Ibn Waddāh, *al-Bida'*, 37; al-Turtūshī, *Kitāb al-Hawādith*, 25; Abū Shāmah, *al-Bā'ith*, 59; and al-Shātibī, *al-I'tisām*, 54, passim.

[19]See, for instance, Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 20; Chalil, *Kembali*, 193-199. See also Abbas, "Masalah Bid'ah," 169-176.

The *sunnah* of the Prophet is divided into utterances (*qawliyyah*), active deeds (*fi'liyyah*), tacitly-approved acts (*taqrīriyyah*), refrained-from acts (*tarkiyyah*), and intentions of acting (*hammiyyah*). While the first three of these divisions are well accepted in the Muslim world,[20] the last two are intensely debated. Together with *sunnah fi'liyyah*, *sunnah tarkiyyah* is taken in the Indonesian literature as a key concept used in the modern fight against wholesale innovation. Meanwhile, *sunnah qawliyyah* and *taqrīriyyah* are not elaborated on, probably because there is the least controversy regarding their status. On the other hand, *sunnah hammiyyah* is seldom elaborated on, seemingly because it has the least legal power and significance. The following discussion thus concentrates only on the *sunnah fi'liyyah* and *sunnah tarkiyyah*, as they are elaborated on in the Indonesian literature and as they are discussed in connection with *bid'ah*.

According to Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil, the Prophet's deeds or actions are divided into five categories. First, there are natural actions such as sitting, standing, eating, drinking, etc., which every person--just like the Prophet, who is a person--is allowed to do.

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[20]See, for example, *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Sunnah"; and Abdul Majid Mackeen, "Some Thoughts on the Meaning of 'Following the Sunnah'," *Islamic Quarterly* 28 (1984): 360.

Second, as established by Muslim scholars, there is conduct which is specified only for the Prophet (*khuṣūṣiyyāt*), which others should not follow. A primary example of this is that he was married more than four wives at a time, while all others are limited to up to four only.

Third, the Prophet's task to explain God's revelation was done by showing examples of how, for instance, to make ablutions, pray, and to go on pilgrimage. The value of these examples depends on what is exemplified; if it is stated as an order (*wājib*), then to follow this kind of *sunnah* is also obligatory.

Fourth, there are actions of the Prophet which do not fall into one of the previous categories. An example is the Prophet's haircut at al-Hudaybiyyah. Muslim scholars differ on whether this is *sunnah* or not. Some, like al-Shawkānī (d.1834), in his *Irshād al-Fuhūl*, and Ibn al-Ḥājib (d.1249), in his *Mukhtaṣar*, think that this action should be regarded as *sunnah*. But others, like al-Āmidī, do not regard it either as *sunnah* or mandatory. In other words, it has no clear legal status.

The fifth and final category of the Prophet's deeds concerns the Prophet's actions about which it is not clear whether they are based on religion or worship or not. This, for instance, is applied to the Prophet's wearing the long garment or gown, which is still worn by Arabs today. Like the fourth category, this is also a matter of debate among

scholars. Al-Āmidī regarded it as not prohibited, since the Prophet did it, but did not define it as mandatory, *sunnah*, or *mubāh* (permissible). Ibn al-Ḥājib, however, thinks that it is *mubāh* and al-Shawkānī regards it as *sunnah*.[21]

Regarding the fifth category, both Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil make an interesting point. According to them, the most plausible opinion of the three scholars mentioned is that of al-Āmidī, who regards this specific *sunnah* as not prohibited, which is actually close to Ibn al-Ḥājib's *mubāh*.[22] This is interesting because it shows the preference of the Indonesian scholars regarding this category of *sunnah* still debated among many Muslim scholars; and this preference, as will be seen later, is not consistent with their overall view on the relation between *sunnah* and *bid* ah.

Having indicated his preference above, Ash-Shiddieqy goes even further. He argues that "If someone does that, [i.e., follows the not prohibited *sunnah*], intending by his action to acquire a strength in worship, he will surely be rewarded for this intention."[23] Hence, Ash-Shiddieqy sees

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[21]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 22-23; Chalil, *Kembali*, 210-212. For comparison, see, for instance, 'Aṭiyyah, *Al-Bid ah*, 141-145. See also Brown, *Rethinking*, 77, where al-Mawdūdī is quoted as having said that "imitating the Prophet in such things as dress or personal habits is an 'extreme form of innovation (*ek sakht qism kī bid āt)'*." Emphasis is original.

[22]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 23; Chalil, *Kembali*, 212.

[23]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 23.

the possibility of one's having a reward because having a
good intention in doing something which is considered *mubāh*.

A careful reading of the five categories of *sunnah*
fi' liyyah above suggests that the first, the fourth, and the
fifth categories can be considered as *mubāh* (permissible),
an action which may or may not be followed by Muslims.[24]
Meanwhile, the second category is specific to the Prophet
which others are prohibited from emulating. Consequently,
the only category left is the third, that which is agreed
upon by Muslim scholars as the actual *sunnah* *fi' liyyah* of
the Prophet every Muslim is obliged to follow.

The most important question to ask in the light of
these divisions is this: when Muslims are called to follow
the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, which specific *sunnahs* of the
sunnah *fi' liyyah* is one to follow? Obviously, it is the
sunnah of the third category, since the Prophet's overall
sunnah is meant to make clear what are sometimes described
only in general terms in the Qur'ān. In addition, this is
the only sure way to know whether or not an action of the
Prophet is meant to be followed. The other categories are
either prohibited (the second category) or it is a matter of
indifference as to whether one should follow them or not
(the first, fourth, and fifth categories). To this category
of *sunnah* *fi' liyyah* are added the two other kinds of *sunnah*

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[24]See, for instance, al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 73-74.

of the Prophet-- namely *qawliyyah* and *taqrīriyyah*--the

following of which is mandatory for all Muslims.[25]

The category of *sunnah fi'liyyah* seems to be emphasized

by many reformists in order to justify its opposite, that

is, *sunnah tarkiyyah*. Citing several short references to

sayings of such scholars as al-Qastallānī (d.1517), Ibn

Hajar al-Haythāmī (d.1566), al-San'ānī (d.1768), al-Shātibī,

Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350), Shaykh Bakhīt, and Mulla al-Rūmī al-

Hanafī, both Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil refer to *sunnah*

tarkiyyah as a speculative condition where the Prophet did

not do something he could have done and had apparent reasons

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[25]Muslims are divided over the concept of "following
the *sunnah* of the Prophet." Jurists tend to follow only the
sunnah which has legal purport (*al-sunnat al-tashri'iyyah*).
Meanwhile, traditionalists or Muslim missionaries have urged
a total emulation of the Prophet's *sunnah* even in customs,
or what al-Ghazālī calls "absolute following" (*al-ittibā'*
al-mutlaq). See, for instance, Mackeen, "Some Thoughts,"
360-364; and Brown, *Rethinking*, 63. In his *Kitāb al-Arba' īn*
fī Usūl al-Dīn, al-Ghazālī mentions his opinion very
plainly:

> "Know that the key to joy is following the sunna and
> imitating the Prophet in all his comings and goings,
> words and deeds, extending to his manner of eating,
> rising, sleeping and speaking. I do not say this only
> in relation to requirements of religion ['*ibādāt*], for
> there is no escaping these; rather, this includes every
> area of behavior ['*ādāt*]." Cf. Brown, *Rethinking*, 62-
> 63. Square brackets and italics are original.

The concept of *sunnah* itself, however, is often
explained in an ambigous way. Chalil, for instance, places
more emphasis on two categories of *sunnah* only, namely
fi'liyyah and *tarkiyyah*, instead of elaborating on all five
of the categories he himself has defined. He apparently has
done this because his preoccupation is to combat *bid'ah*, and
the two types of *sunnah* used give him a strong
justification. See Thoha Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist
Thought," 124-126.

for doing. Some examples for this include the call to prayer
(*adhān*) during 'Īd ceremonies, the supererogatory prayer to
honor the half-month of Sha'bān, and the reading of the
Qur'ān for the deceased.[26] The Prophet *did not* do these
things despite the fact that he *could have* done them, if he
wished, and there were, theoretically, plenty of reasons for
him to do them.[27] Hypothetically, the fact that the Prophet
did not do them indicates that these acts: (1) are not
incumbent upon Muslims; (2) that, indeed, Muslims should not
do them; and (3) that doing them would be contrary to God's
will. These are the deductions and the conclusions of both
Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil regarding *sunnah tarkiyyah*.[28]

Nevertheless, these deductions--and these conclusions--
are as speculative as they are interpretative. Speculation
occurs when they say that "the Prophet could have done the
actions if ..." or "if these actions were intended to be
followed, they could have been ordered." Interpretation is a
consequence of this speculation. Thus, they would say,

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[26]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 24; Chalil, *Kembali*, 214.
For a discussion on the honoring the half-month of Sha'bān,
see Vardit Rispler-Chaim (Haifa), "The 20th Century
Treatment of an Old *Bid'a*: *Laylat Al-Niṣf min Sha'bān*," *Der
Islam* 72 (1995): 82-97.

[27]See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 47-49.

[28]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 24-25; Chalil, *Kembali*, 214-
215. Thoha Hamim argues that Chalil classifies it as an
independent category since "it had the potential of giving
him a strong hand in the debate on *bid'ah*." See Hamim,
"Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thoughts," 119. See also al-
Ghazali, *Bukan*, 52-53, where he fully adopts al-Shāṭibī's
views on this matter.

"because these actions were not done by the Prophet, then this must have been an order for us to avoid them."

However, using the same argument both Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil use for the first, the fourth, and especially the fifth categories of *sunnah fi'liyyah* above, all of which come under *mubāh* status, would it not be possible to grant a similar status to this *sunnah tarkiyyah*? For even when the Prophet *did* do something, that does not necessarily indicate encouragement or an obligation for Muslims to do the same.[29] Hence, when he *did not* do something and at the same time *did not* state any prohibition against it, it would appear to deserve the "right" to have *mubāh* status. Using this approach, it would seem that the arguments presented by the Indonesian scholars are one-sided and somewhat self-contradictory.

Sunnah, whether *fi'liyyah* or *tarkiyyah*, is often contrasted with *bid'ah* by many scholars, Muslim and Western alike. It is probably true that some of the versions of the *Bid'ah Hadīth* may have inspired the scholars to see *bid'ah* as the opposite of *sunnah*.[30] Apart from the historicity of

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[29]Al-Ghazali, for instance, has convincingly shown several examples of Prophet's actions which, because they were based on his own *ijtihād*, not revelation (*wahy*), all Muslims are not necessarily obliged to follow. See al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 76-79.

[30]See, for instance, Mustafā al-Sibā'ī, *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī' al-Islāmī* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-'Urūbah, 1961), 61; Muhammad 'Ajjāj al-Khatīb, *Al-Sunnah Qabl al-Tadwīn* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabah Wahbah, 1963), 18; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2:33; Juynboll, "Muslim's

each concept, the inspiration likely emerges because both terms were used in the same *Ḥadīth*. A. Hasan, for instance, bases his view on a poem by Ḥassān ibn Thābit which indicates that *bidʿah* is the antithesis of *sunnah*. In Ibn Thābit's case, however, *bidʿah* is contrasted to *sunnah* in the sense of discontinuity or break with the old customs or the established practices.[31]

However, the generalization often made by the scholars, as if both terms are always contradictory, cannot be supported on two grounds. First, both terms are literally generic ones which in their actual usages can overlap. Second, following from the first argument, the two terms may sometimes even be identical, as will be discussed shortly.

As *bidʿah* can be divided into good and bad, so can *sunnah*. This concept is not only derived from the literal meaning of *sunnah* above,[32] but also from a prophetic tradition where *sunnah* is divided between the good and the bad. In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, for instance, this ḥadīth is narrated through four *isnāds* on the authority of Jarīr ibn ʿAbd Allāh. As mentioned above, this ḥadīth is referred to as the "Jarīr ḥadīth." Muslim says:

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Introduction," 308; and *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 552.

[31]A. Hasan, *Early Developments*, 86,112 n.30.

[32]See pp. 191-192 above. See also ʿAṭiyyah, *al-Bidʿah*, 118-119.

Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb narrated to me, from Jarīr ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, from al-A'mash, from Mūsā ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd and Abī al-Ḍuḥā, from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Hilāl al-'Absiyyi, from Jarīr ibn 'Abd Allāh who said: "A group of Bedouins came to the Messenger of God--peace be upon him--wearing rough wool. He saw their bad condition and extreme need [of help], upon which he encouraged the people [present around him] to give charity. But they made themselves slow in giving [the requested charity] so that [his disappointment] could be seen on his face."

Jarīr narrates further: "Then a person of the *Ansār* came with a bundle of money. Then another came with the same. The others followed this action, after which [the sign of] happiness could now be read on the Messenger's face. Then the Messenger of God--peace be upon him--said: 'Whoever establishes in Islam a good tradition (*sunnah ḥasanah*) which is practiced by others after him, he will be rewarded with the equivalent of the [accumulation of] the rewards of those who practice it, without any subtraction from the rewards whatsoever. [On the other hand], whoever establishes in Islam a bad tradition (*sunnah sayyi'ah*) which is done also by others after him, he will be ascribed sins equivalent to the sins of those who follow the tradition, without any subtraction from their sins.' "[33]

The ḥadīth clearly mentions the establishment of two kinds of *sunnah*, namely *ḥasanah* and *sayyi'ah*, based on which many scholars argue for the possible establishment of good new traditions. Al-Nawawī, for instance, regards this ḥadīth as a clear proof of encouragement to establish good traditions or deeds as well as a prohibition against creating whatever is bad.[34] Furthermore, this proof is also used to support the idea of establishing good *bid'ah*, because establishing a good tradition (*sunnah*), as stated by the ḥadīth, contains a possibility of novelty. It will be

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[33]Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8:61.

[34]Al-Nawāwī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 16:443.

clearer later that this possibility is crucial to understanding this ḥadīth.

In Indonesian literature on *bidʿah*, this particular ḥadīth is also quoted, but with a significant textual difference. Ash-Shiddieqy, for example, mentions this ḥadīth in the section in his book on "obscurities used by the proponents of *bidʿah*," a title that sounds very disparaging.[35] He quotes the ḥadīth from Muslim, but suprisingly his text does not mention the phrase "*fī al-Islām*" (in Islam).[36] Apparently, he quotes from al-Shāṭibī who also does not mention the phrase in his many quotations of the Jarīr ḥadīth.[37] Like Ash-Shiddieqy, Chalil also regards the ḥadīth as an argument often used by the proponents of *bidʿah*.[38] But unlike the former, he quotes it more correctly, in that the phrase "*fī al-Islām*" is included, although this does not lead him to have a different opinion from that of Ash-Shiddieqy. As will be demonstrated later, this phrase is very significant in understanding the meaning of the Jarīr ḥadīth.

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[35]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 67. Who these proponents are he never tells, but scholars like al-Nawāwī and others, whose comments support the concept of good *bidʿah* as discussed earlier, could be included in what Ash-Shiddieqy calls the "proponents of *bidʿah*."

[36]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 69. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 23-24.

[37]See al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Iʿtiṣām*, 53,128.

[38]Chalil, *Kembali*, 267.

Regarding the Jarīr ḥadīth, Ash-Shiddieqy suggested three explanations, two of which are borrowed from al-Shāṭibī. First, what is intended by the phrase "establishing a sunnah" (sannā) in the ḥadīth is not "inventing" but rather "enlivening" or "practicing it."[39] Second, what is meant by the same phrase is "inventing in worldly matters only" insofar as what is invented does not contradict religious principles and objectives.[40] To these explanations Ash-Shiddieqy adds a third, that what is meant is innovative ways or efforts to support the advancement of technology and industry.[41]

The arguments stated by Ash-Shiddieqy seem self-contradictory. In the first explanation, the ḥadīth is understood as a proof against innovation; but in the second, it is for innovation, although only in worldly matters. This contradiction is sharpened by the third explanation, which is apparently outside the context of the ḥadīth. For it is

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[39]Ash-Shiddieqy, Criteria, 70. See al-Shāṭibī, al-I'tiṣām, 131-132, where he interprets the phrase "man sanna sunnatan" as "man 'amila bi sunnatin," not "man ikhtara'a sunnatan," on the basis of the historical situation which led the Prophet to utter the ḥadīth.

[40]Ash-Shiddieqy, Criteria, 70. This is actually not a literal reading of al-Shāṭibī, who, in al-I'tiṣām, 132-133, argues that the concepts of "good" and "bad" in the Jarīr ḥadīth are religious concepts which, according to the Sunnis, will not be recognized by human intellects until they are informed by the religion. This implies that an "established" good or bad sunnah must have existed prior to "making" such a sunnah, which should thus mean "reviving" or "doing" instead of "inventing."

[41]Ash-Shiddieqy, Criteria, 70.

going "too far" to think in terms of "technology and industry" at the time of the Prophet.

Thus, Ash-Shiddieqy is, in fact, not really certain whether the Jarīr ḥadīth is *for* or *against* innovation. However, as has been seen previously, he, like others, argued for innovations in worldly matters and against those in religion. This is also the opinion of scholars like Chalil, A. Hassan, and others, who interpret the ḥadīth as an argument favoring innovations in worldly matters.[42]

It seems that the emphasis on supporting innovation in worldly concerns has led the scholars to ignore the phrase "*fī al-Islām*" (in Islam) as found in the original text of the Jarīr ḥadīth, as narrated by Muslim above. No attempts have been made to show what this phrase means and how it is significant in producing a comprehensive understanding of the ḥadīth.

There is, however, one exception, which is found in the translation of a work by al-'Uthaymīn, a modern Saudi Arabian '*ālim*. He discusses the phrase as a part of his argument for rejecting all forms of *bidʿah*. According to him, there is no contradiction between the Jarīr ḥadīth and the *Bidʿah Ḥadīth* which says "every innovation is an error." This is simply because in the former, he says, there is the phrase "in Islam" whereas *bidʿah* is not applied to this

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[42]Chalil, *Kembali*, 270-271; A. Hassan, "Mengusap Ubun-ubun," 150. See also Al-Ghazālī, *Bukan dari Ajaran Islam*, 24-25.

religion.[43] Thus in his opinion, the Jarīr ḥadīth has no relation to *bidʻ ah*, and this makes him differ from the previous assessments made by the Indonesian scholars on it.

To support his view, al-ʻUthaymīn gives two further arguments. First, the phrase "good tradition" (*sunnah ḥasanah*) in the Jarīr ḥadīth should not be compared with *bidʻ ah* since there is no "good *bidʻ ah*" at all. Second, as mentioned by al-Shāṭibī above, the phrase "*man sannā*" could mean "to enliven a *sunnah*"--to revitalize a tradition which has been abandoned. Hence, according to this argument, the Jarīr ḥadīth does not concern real innovation but simply the reactivation of a tradition. It also follows from the historical basis for the ḥadīth that the word *sannā* means "to practice," not "to invent," a *sunnah*.[44]

Thus, as far as the word "*sannā*" in the Jarīr ḥadīth is concerned, there are attempts to shift its meaning away from the clear meaning which has been literally and historically adopted. The Indonesian literature tries to translate it as "to enliven" whereas it has been widely understood as "to establish" or "to invent." A careful reading of the ḥadīth would also render the conclusion that the latter meaning is more sensible than the former. The ḥadīth talks about two kinds of persons, namely, the originator of an action or tradition and those who follow after him. If the word

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[43]Al-ʻUthaimin, *Kesempurnaan Islam*, 30-32.

[44]Al-ʻUthaimin, *Kesempurnaan Islam*, 30-32.

"*sannā*" means "to enliven" or "to practice" a tradition, then there is no reason for such a division into two kinds of persons, since in that case there would be only one kind, namely, that of the followers. If this understanding is insisted upon, the reading of the ḥadīth will sound not only strange but also illogical.

The understanding of the following phrase, *fī al-Islām* ("in Islam"), must therefore be put into the context of the more logical meaning of "*man sannā.*" The phrase "in Islam" thus serves as a clear evidence that what is meant by "to establish a *sunnah*" is included *within* or *in* the religion of Islam. That is, the *sunnah* in question is not necessarily applied to worldly matters only, as the Indonesian literature insists.

The idea that the Jarīr ḥadīth does not concerning *bidʿah*, since *bidʿah* could not occur *in Islam*, as suggested by al-ʿUthaymīn, also has to be rejected. First of all, it has been argued from the beginning that *bidʿah* indeed occurs *in Islam* or can be Islamic or good. As elaborated in chapter 3, *bidʿah* has several natures, one of which is religious. Chapter 4 then shows the possible--and actual--existence of permitted *bidʿah* alongside the warning against erroneous innovation.

Secondly, the Jarīr ḥadīth also talks about establishing good and bad traditions. "Good" and "bad" are two attributes or categories which are closely related to

the parameters of religion and to which human creativity is attached. Thus the ḥadīth is also concerned about human creativity and this is where *bidʿah* is related to the ḥadīth.

As a result, the Jarīr ḥadīth suggests a wide possibility for Muslims to establish good traditions (*sunnah hasanah*) in Islam, which also means to make good innovations (*bidʿah ḥasanah*).[45] This suggestion is further supported by two arguments. First, numerous Qurʾānic verses encourage Muslims to do good things (*aʿmāl ṣāliḥāt* or *khayrāt*),[46] without specifying whether they are already prescribed or newly invented. Second, the Companions have exemplified the making of good innovations by several of their well-attested actions, such as collecting the Qurʾān and gathering individuals for the *tarāwīḥ* prayer.

Commenting on the last example, A. Hasan beautifully shows how a *bidʿah* becomes *sunnah*. In his own words, "the so-called *bidʿah* of *tarāwīḥ* prayer being said in public during Ramaḍān has been ultimately recognized as *sunnah* and is thus practised throughout the Muslim world until today."[47] To follow the Companions should be understood not

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[45]See a similar suggestion in Abbas, "Masalah Bidʿah," 163.

[46]See, for instance, Q.S.2:25,148; 3:114; 5:48; 16:97; 18:110; 21:90; 23:61; and 41:46.

[47]A. Hasan, *Early Developments*, 96.

only in terms of what they themselves invented but also in
the spirit of how or on what their innovations were based.

It is now possible to suggest that the ḥadīth on
following the *sunnah* of the Prophet and of the Companions is
complemented by the Jarīr ḥadīth on establishing good
sunnah. Thus, rather than seen as promoting contradiction,
the latter ḥadīth helps establish a coherent understanding
of the mutual relation between *sunnah* and *bidʿah*. The
relationship between the two can be described as follows.
Sunnah, including the *sunnah fiʿliyyah* of the third category
above, the *sunnah qawliyyah*, and the *sunnah taqrīriyyah*, is
basically meant to be observed. There is no *bidʿah* possible
or encouraged at this point, since it would contradict an
established *sunnah*. However, whenever a *sunnah* of these
categories is not found on a particular matter, Muslims are
encouraged to invent a good *sunnah* which could become a
model or tradition for others to follow. Whether this
invented *sunnah* is in religious or in worldly matters, it is
subjected to the principles outlined by the Qur'ān and the
authentic *sunnah* of the Prophet.

This approach certainly requires a serious effort to
define what is a good and acceptable tradition. This effort
is defined as *ijtihād*, by which a qualified *mujtahid* tries
his best to formulate or examine a new tradition.[48] At the

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[48]For discussion on the early modes of *ijtihād*, see A.
Hasan, *Early Developments*, 115-154.

same time, because *ijtihād* should be based on the principles of the Qur'an and the authentic *sunnah*, it serves as a means by which unwarranted innovation can be avoided. Thus the knowledge of *ijtihād* is necessary not only to ensure what *sunnah* of the Prophet to follow but also to accurately formulate new good *sunnahs* or traditions, as stimulated by the Jarīr ḥadīth.

Two important means of *ijtihād* will be discussed in the two following sections respectively: *maslaḥah mursalah* and *istiḥsān*. As will be obvious later, these concepts have the same significant relationship to *bidʿah* as *bidʿah* has to *sunnah*.

Bidʿah and Maslaḥah Mursalah

Like *ijtihād*, *bidʿah* discourses have so far involved matters not mentioned specifically or expressly in the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet.[49] In fact, *bidʿah* may stimulate the emergence of *ijtihād* on matters yet to be established. It can be discussed and handled retrospectively and proleptically by *ijtihād*; and this makes the relationship between the two very substantial.

But while many Muslim scholars emphasize the use of *ijtihād*, they give the least attention to a possible relationship between *ijtihād* and *bidʿah*. Abbas, for

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[49]See, for instance, Rispler, "Toward a New Understanding," 328.

instance, mentions that the product of *ijtihād* cannot be called *bid'ah*. Nevertheless, he argues that if it is to be called so--because it was not exemplified at the time of the Prophet--it should be called the "good" *bid'ah*. Using analogies (*qiyās*), Abbas elaborates some examples of *ijtihād*. First, at the time of the Prophet, the objects of almsgiving (*zakāh*) were the wheat, goats, gold and silver coins, etc. According to *ijtihād*, many other objects such as rice, cows, and banknotes should also be subjected to almsgiving because of their *similar* functions to those objects specified by the Prophet.

Secondly, it is considered prohibited by the *mujtahidūn* to burn the properties of the orphans, on the basis that Q.S.4:10 prohibits eating properties belonging to the orphan. The analogy is that both actions (eating and burning) have a similar impact, that is to make the properties disappear. According to Abbas, such products of *ijtihād* cannot be called *bid'ah* because the Prophet himself guarantees the validity of *ijtihād*, as understood from the story of Mu'ādh ibn Jabal.[50]

Before examining this relationship further, it is necessary to outline the definition of *ijtihād*, whose main function is to endow new issues with the religious sanction upon which a Muslim must act. According to Kamali, *ijtihād* is:

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[50]Abbas, "Masalah Bid'ah," 182-186.

The total expenditure of effort made by a jurist in order to infer, with a degree of probability, the rules of *Sharī'ah* from their detailed evidence in the sources [i.e., the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*].... [In other words,] *ijtihād* essentially consists of an inference (*istinbāṭ*) that amounts to a probability (*ẓann*), thereby excluding the extraction of a ruling from a clear text. It also excludes the discovery of a *ḥukm* by asking a learned person or by consulting the relevant literature without the exercise of one's own opinion and judgement.[51]

One of the approaches to or means of *ijtihād* is *maṣlaḥah mursalah*, abridged as *maṣlaḥah*. It is technically defined as "a consideration which is proper to and harmonious (*waṣf munāsib mulā'im*) with the objectives of the Lawgiver; it secures a benefit or prevents a harm; and the *Sharī'ah* provides no indication as to its validity or otherwise."[52] The objectives have been interpreted by al-Ghazzālī as consisting of the five essential values (*kulliyyāt al-khamsah*), namely religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect ('*aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*māl*).[53]

Unlike *maṣlaḥah*, which is always elaborated on in the works of and on Muslim jurisprudence and which is accepted as a source of Islamic law by the majority of Muslim

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[51]Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: Islamic Text Society, 1991), 367.

[52]Kamali, *Principles*, 267.

[53]Cf. Kamali, *Principles*, 267. See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 2:4. Al-Shāṭibī's *al-Muwāfaqāt* is considered one of the most elaborate works discussing the objectives of the religion (*maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*).

scholars,[54] *bid' ah* has never been the concern of pure Muslim jurists as it has been to Muslim theologians. Many works on jurisprudence do not include *bid' ah* as a part of their discussion. But this fact does not negate the relationship between the two concepts of *bid' ah* and *maslahah*. Both terms appear in most works on *bid' ah*, many of which, however, tend to see their relationship only in terms of their differences. However, I will argue that both concepts also bear certain similarities that have been so far overlooked, and as a means of *ijtihād*, *maslahah* can serve as a justifying tool for the evaluation and creation of *bid' ah*.

Among Indonesian writers, Ash-Shiddieqy is one the first to write on the relationship between *bid' ah* and *maslahah* viewing only the differences between the two concepts; he makes no attempt to indicate their similarities. According to Ash-Shiddieqy, *bid' ah* is intended to refer to matters of religious devotion (' *ibādah*) whose meanings are not actually known (*ghayr ma' qūl al-ma' nā*) by the worshippers. On the other hand, *maslahah* involves with matters whose objectives and wisdom are intelligible (*ma' qūl al-ma' nā*), while matters of devotion are excluded from it.[55]

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[54]See, for instance, Fathī ' Uthmān, *Al-Fikr al-Qānūnī al-Islāmī, Bayna Uṣūl al-Sharī' ah wa Turāth al-Fiqh* (Ābidīn: Maktabah Wahbah, n.d.), 73.

[55]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 57. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 42; Hadikusuma, *Bid' ah*, 38.

There are two responses which can be offered to argue that there is no basis for such a strong differentiation. First, in the approaches made by many writers, including Ash-Shiddieqy, *bid ah* has always been divided into categories or divisions, as noted in the previous chapter. Although *bid ah* in "matters of devotion" are the main targets of these writers, and are considered as comprising many of the condemned *bid ahs*, this does not justify regarding *'ibādah* as the only content and purpose of *bid ah*. As elaborated on in chapter 3, where certain Qur'ānic verses are discussed, *bid ah* is also applied to worldly concerns and human missions, as well as matters of worship. Secondly, the relationship between *'ibādah* and *maslahah* is, to a certain extent, historically obvious. It is probably true that *maslahah*--as many Muslim scholars argue--cannot be used as a proof in devotional matters, since such objectives are known only to the Lawgiver.[56] But what was perceived and practiced by 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb--for instance--in gathering the worshipers for congregation of *tarāwīh* was none other than an *'ibādah* which in his eyes had good objectives; hence he considered his action as a good *bid ah*. In other words, a *bid ah* in *'ibādah* was created through the means of *maslahah* which itself is *bid ah*.

The problem of whether *maslahah* is, or can create, *bid ah* is clearly seen in the writing of Chalil. He

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[56]See, for instance, Kamali, *Principles*, 267-268.

basically shares Ash-Shiddieqy's position, but offers a

further twist. He argues,

> If *maslahah mursalah* is to be considered or affirmed as
> *bid'ah*, then the term *bid'ah* here does not mean the
> religious *bid'ah* (*bid'ah dīniyyah*), but the worldly one
> (*bid'ah dunyāwiyyah*). An example of this is the
> collection of the Qur'ān, which is considered by al-
> Shāṭibī as "obligatory *maslahah mursalah*" and by al-
> Qarafī both as "obligatory *bid'ah*" (*bid'ah wājibah*) and
> as *maslahah mursalah*.[57]

He gives further definitions:

> *Bid'ah dīniyyah* is every innovation in the religion
> after its completion, which is after the time of the
> Prophet. Every such innovation is an error.
>   *Bid'ah dunyāwiyyah* is every innovation in worldly
> matters which aim at the benefit of life, invented
> after the time of the Prophet. This *bid'ah* is neither
> condemned nor prohibited. It is even praised.[58]

Through these remarks and definitions, Chalil, probably

inadvertantly, has opened the possibility of equating

maslahah with *bid'ah*. This can be observed from al-Shāṭibī's

and al-Qarafī's comments on the example of the collection of

the Qur'ān mentioned above. Although *maslahah* is regarded by

Chalil as related only to worldly matters,[59] the comments

of these two outstanding classical scholars clearly indicate

that the example is more than just a worldly matter, since

both of them consider it to have been an "obligatory"

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[57]Chalil, *Kembali*, 264. See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 2:237.

[58]Chalil, *Kembali*, 264.

[59]See also Hadikusuma, *Bid'ah*, 37.

action. If it were merely worldly, something which the human being had been given freedom to do or refrain from doing, it could not have been an obligation.

Furthermore, may writers on *bid'ah* claim another difference between *maslaḥah* and *bid'ah* in terms of the nature of each. According to them, *bid'ah* occurs in intended actions (*maqāṣid*), whereas *maslaḥah* is in the means of actions (*wasā'il*).[60] *Maqāṣid* refers to the ultimate goal of a person's actions. Thus when he makes an innovation, that innovation is his final goal. On the other hand, *wasā'il* refers to the means or methods by which a goal is hoped to be achieved. When a person does one thing in order to get another thing, he is setting in motion a process that includes both of these elements, namely, the means (*wasīlah*, sing. of *wasā'il*) of reaching the goal and the *purpose* for which he or she acts, which is the goal itself (*maqṣad*, sing. of *maqāṣid*).

However, this differentiation seems artificial and arbitrary. On the one hand, *bid'ah* clearly includes the means, or how to do things (*kayfiyyah*) as well as the goal or purpose for the action. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī is often quoted as saying, in regards to the reciting of praise to the Prophet--that is reading *ṣalawāt*--after doing one's prayer: "The basic law concerning that matter is *sunnah*

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[60]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 57. See also Hadikusuma, *Bid'ah*, 38.

(recommended), and the method or the way it is done is
bid ah" (*al-asl sunnah wa al-kayfiyyah bid ah*).[61]

On the other hand, although *maslahah* is concerned with
the means, it also necessitates actions, without which the
objectives of that *maslahah* will not be conceivable.
Hadikusuma, for instance, argues that it is sometimes
necessary to create new actions based on *maslahah*. He then
gives eleven examples of such actions, one of which is the
collection of the Qur'ān in the reign of Abū Bakr.[62]

Thus far, then, the attempts to differentiate between
bid ah and *maslahah* have not been successfully
substantiated. On the contrary, it has been demonstrated
that there exists a strong relationship between the two
concepts which should have been acknowledged from the
beginning.

There are two further analyses substantiating the
relationship between the two concepts, especially in terms
of their similarities. Firstly, both *bid ah* and *maslahah* are
concerned with something which is new, which was never
previously done nor clearly delineated in the Qur'ān, or in
the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Even al-Shāṭibī argues that
matters or means which have no explicit root (*asl mu' ayyan*)
but which serve the general good (*asl kullī*), as the

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[61]See, for instance, Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 46.

[62]Hadikusuma, *Bid ah*, 39-41. See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 2:238.

accepted legal sources agree, should be thereby accepted and can be used as legal sources. According to him, this is applicable to both *maṣlaḥah* and *istiḥsān*.[63]

Some Muslim scholars go even further to emphasize this principle. For example, Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d.1316), a Ḥanbalī jurist, takes the (extreme) position of arguing that the principle of *maṣlaḥah* is overriding even if it contradicts a primary source, meaning the Qur'ān or the *sunnah* of the Prophet. These, according to him, have only been provided to protect public interest in the first place. This principle is to a large extent followed by later Muslim reformists, such as Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) or Sanhūrī, who have promoted *maslaḥah* as a source for legal and political reform in the Islamic world. Indeed, in the modern world the use of *maslaḥah* has led to the creation of *new* legal rulings, such as the case of the Tunisian law code which abolishes polygamy, on the grounds that justice toward more than one wife is impossible to implement.[64]

Secondly, *maslaḥah* is intended to secure a benefit or to prevent a harm with regard to the preservation of the five objectives (*kulliyyāt al-khamsah*). Similarly, *bidʿah* can also be directed toward that purpose, since, like *maslaḥah*, it depends on the same relativity of a Muslim's

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[63]Al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 1:16-17.

[64]Cf. Majid Khadduri, "The *Maṣlaḥa* (Public Interest) and ʿ*Illa* (Cause) in Islamic Law" *Journal of International Law and Politics* 12 (1979): 214-215.

personal thinking. Al-Ghazālī, for instance, elaborated on the theory of *munāsabah* and *maṣlaḥah* in order to emphasize his strong leaning toward reason as the basis for determining public interest. This is particularly true in his work, *Al-Shifā'*.[65] Through *ijtihād*, of which *maslaḥah* is a part, the preservation of the objectives can be safely guarded and unnecessary excesses can thereby be avoided.

Despite these similarities, *maslaḥah* and *bidʿah* are different, and will likely remain so, in terms of how Muslims treat each concept in learned discourses. *Maṣlaḥah* is accepted as a legal juristic means, whereas *bidʿah* remains an independent concept still condemned by many Muslim scholars. Moreover, Islamic jurisprudence is mostly concerned with methodologies of extracting law from its sources, whereas *bidʿah* itself is not a methodology; however, it *is* an attribute applicable to methodology as well as the action produced thereof.

A similar relationship will be retested in the following section which examines the relationship between *bidʿah* and *istiḥsān*. Although *maslaḥah* and *istiḥsān* differ in their source of justification, both, as means of *ijtihād*, are similar in that both use human reasoning to extract or

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[65]See Wael B. Hallaq, "*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*: Beyond Tradition" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 3 (1992): 189. Reprinted in W.B. Hallaq, *Law and Legal Theory in Classical and Medieval Islam* (Great Britain and USA: Variorum, 1994). See also al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 2:289.

produce a law, and in this regard, both have similar access to the creation of *bid'ah*.

Bid'ah and *Istiḥsān*

Discussions on the relationship between *bid'ah* and *istiḥsān* have been stimulated by a tradition which is often used by those whom Ash-Shiddieqy calls "the proponents of *bid'ah*." The tradition reads,

> Whatever the Muslims view as good also is good in God's view (*mā ra'āhu al-muslimūn ḥasanan fahuwa ' inda Allāh ḥasanun)*[66]

The fact that it involves "the Muslims'" consideration, as well as the use of word *ḥasanan*, links this tradition to the concept of *istiḥsān*, which also has the same word-root, *ḥ-s-n* (being good or beautiful). At the same time, the allowing of such a consideration opens a wide door through which innovations (*bida'*) could easily pass.

As is the case with *maṣlaḥah*, the concept of *istiḥsān* has been used by Muslim jurists as a means of making *ijtihād*[67] and, also like *maṣlaḥah*, has rarely been used in connection with *bid'ah*. It is defined by Kamali as "a method of exercising personal opinion in order to avoid any rigidity and unfairness that might result from the literal

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[66]Cited in Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 71-72,74; Chalil, *Kembali*, 268.

[67]See, for instance, al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 1:16-17; Fathī ' Uthmānī, *al-Fikr al-Qānūnī*, 73.

enforcement of the existing law."[68] He adds further that
the phrase "juristic preference" is a short, fitting
description of *istiḥsān*, for "it involves setting aside an
established analogy in favor of an alternative ruling which
serves the ideals of justice and public interest in a better
way."[69] As will be seen later, this definition of *istiḥsān*
is also applicable whenever the Indonesian Muslims talk
about the concept.

In the Indonesian context, the discussion of the
relationship between *bidʿah* and *istiḥsān* begins with the
question of the source of the tradition mentioned above.
Ash-Shiddieqy, for instance, relies on both al-Shāṭibī's *al-
Iʿtiṣām* and al-Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Laknāwī's
Tuḥfat al-Akhyār, to announce that the tradition does not
originate with the Prophet; it is one of the sayings of
ʿAbd Allāh ibn Masʿūd, the Companion. Thus, according to
Ash-Shiddieqy, it is an *āthār*, not a *ḥadīth*.[70]

On the other hand, Chalil also regards it as a saying
of ibn Masʿūd, but he adds that as reported in the books
Asnā al-Maṭālib and *Tamyīz al-Ṭayyib*, the latter by Ibn al-

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[68]Cf.Kamali, *Principles*, 246. For some further
definitions of *istiḥsān*, see A. Hasan, *Early Development*,
145-151; and his "The Principle of *Istiḥsān* in Islamic
Jurisprudence" *Islamic Studies* 26, no. 4 (1977): 347-349.

[69]Kamali, *Principles*, 246-247. See also A. Hasan, *Early
Development*, 145.

[70]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 71-72. See also al-Ghazali,
Bukan, 25.

Dibā' al-Shaybānī, it is possible that the tradition also originated with another Companion, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās.[71] Chalil does not give a preference for either Companion, but his quotation clearly mentions the narration of ibn Mas'ūd. As narrated by Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bazzār, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Ṭayālisī, and Abū Nu'aim, Ibn Mas'ūd once said:

> Verily God had seen the hearts of the people before He chose Muhammad and sent him [to the people] with His messages. Then God again saw the hearts of the people before He chose the Companions for the Prophet and made them the helpers of his religion and the leaders in it. Thus, whatever is viewed good by the Muslims is considered good in God's view and [likewise,] whatever is considered bad by them is bad in God's view.[72]

There are two conclusions mentioned by both Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil in conjunction with this tradition. First, since it is an *āthār* it cannot be used as a source of religious ruling (*ḥujjah*). Second, the meaning of the tradition, particularly its last sentence, where the word "Muslims" is mentioned, is not applied to "all Muslims," as it literally sounds. According to them, the word "Muslims" originally refers to the Prophet's Companions.[73]

However, while agreeing on the first conclusion, Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil take different approaches in

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[71]Chalil, *Kembali*, 272.

[72]Cited by Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 72, from the narration of al-Laknāwī; and Chalil, *Kembali*, 272-273.

[73]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 71-74; Chalil, *Kembali*, 272-273.

elaborating the second, concerning the interpretation of the phrase "the Muslims." According to Chalil, based on the context which is derived from the whole text of the tradition, the word refers to the Companions of the Prophet. This is further emphasized with his argument that the phrase "whatever is viewed as good or bad" applies only to worldly affairs; for, according to him, it is impossible for the Companions to add to, or subtract from, the *religion*--that is, in matters of theology and worship.[74]

This exclusive interpretation, where "the Muslims" are understood as the Companions, has eliminated the possibility of a Muslim consensus other than the consensus of the Companions.[75] It goes almost without saying that, by this interpretation, the validity of *ijtihād* and *mujtahid* and of *ijmā*, as widely accepted by the various schools of Islamic law, is also being called into question. For, if Muslims other than the Companions have no "right" to exercise their independent reasoning to determine what is good or bad in cases not explicitly prescribed by the *Sharī'ah*, then there

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[74]Chalil, *Kembali*, 273. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 26.

[75]This is basically what scholars such as Chalil try to do. In Chalil's case, the *sunnah* of the Companions embraces equal legal authority to that of the Prophet. Thus, every effort is taken to make the Companions "the sole rightful possessors of religious authority." See Thoha Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thoughts," 127-128.

would be no use for such institutions or methodologies as *ijtihād* and *ijmā* .[76]

Ash-Shiddieqy may have realized the consequences of such an exclusivist interpretation. This can be observed from his different approach by which he gives an alternative interpretation. He argues that, even if the word "the Muslims" refers to someone other than the Companions, it could at most refer to those who make *ijtihād* (*mujtahids*) or those who are involved in making unanimous decisions (*ijmā*). Likewise, says Ash-Shiddieqy, the tradition could also imply a consensus of *all* Muslims, without any dissenting voices.[77] Thus, the scope of Ash-Shiddieqy's interpretation is broader than that of Chalil and far more in accord with the traditional *fiqh*, including that of the Shāfi'īs.

Ash-Shiddieqy is also more detailed on the relationship between *bid'ah* and *istihsān*. He discusses three reasons, or bases, used by those whom he identifies as "the *bid'ah* group," which, according to him, employs *istihsān* as a source justifying *bid'ah*.

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[76]Chalil, *Kembali*, 299-321, elaborates the issue of *ijmā* at length and is convinced that true *ijmā* is not possible after the time of the Companions. With regard to *ijtihād*, he positively supports this concept (pp.370-374), as against blind following (*taqlīd*) (pp.340-369). It seems that his interpretation of the *āthār* of Ibn Mas'ūd is based more on his conception on *ijmā* than on *ijtihād*.

[77]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 71-74.

The first basis is derived from four verses of the Qur'ān, all of which are from Sūrah (chapter) 39 (al-Zumar), and translated as follows:

> ...Therefore give good tidings (O Muhammad) to my bondmen Who hear advice and follow the best thereof.... (Q.S.39:17-18)

> Allah hath (now) revealed the fairest of statements .... (Q.S.39:23)

> And follow the better (guidance) of that which is revealed unto you from your Lord.... (Q.S.39:55)[78]

According to Ash-Shiddieqy, the group interprets "the best, the fairest, or the better," (ahsan) as found in those verses, as what is considered good by the reason (yang dipandang bagus oleh akal). The same interpretation is also applied to the āthār of Ibn Mas'ūd, which is used by the group as their second basis. Thus, a Muslim's reasoning can be used to consider what is good and bad. The third basis is a comment made by the group which, according to Ash-Shiddieqy, runs as follows: "The Muslim ummah has agreed to consider as good for us entering the bathroom with neither any charge, nor any limited duration to remain there, nor any restriction of water use."[79]

After presenting these arguments, Ash-Shiddieqy, by rephrasing al-Shāṭibī, refutes them. In the first place, those verses (Q.S.39:17,18,23,55), according to him, do not

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[78]Pickthall, Meaning, 330-331, 333.

[79]Ash-Shiddieqy, Criteria, 74-75.

in any case indicate that one can make a judgement on goodness based on *istihsān*, because the best way of following (*ittibā'*), as mentioned in two of the verses (Q.S.39:18,55), is to follow references for the *Sharī'ah*, especially the Qur'ān. Therefore, one cannot base anything on his or her own preferences.

Secondly, the *āthar* of Ibn Mas'ūd cannot be used as an argument because, even if it is sound, its meaning refers to the agreement or disagreement of the whole Muslim community, and not part of them, a consensus which is simply impossible to obtain in modern times. Besides, to use *istihsān* as an argument, one needs a strong reference, which cannot be provided by the *athar*, since it is not a strong one.

Finally, the matter of going to the bathroom is merely a custom which has been practiced since the time of the Prophet.[80]

Thus, this refutation originally of al-Shātibī, questions the concept of *istihsān* which, in Ash-Shiddieqy's view, is not based on the *Sharī'ah*. Thus, *istihsān*, according to him, is not a strong basis of argument. This is precisely what is grasped by Ash-Shiddieqy. In his refutation, Ash-Shiddieqy tries to emphasize that using *istihsān* in terms of "pure reason" cannot be accepted,

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[80]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 75.

especially in matters of worship (' *ibādat*), in which one has to cling to the clear references of *Sharī' ah*.[81]

There is also, however, acceptable *istiḥsān*, as finally argued by Ash-Shiddieqy. He refers to some definitions of acceptable *istiḥsān* as elaborated on in the four schools of Islamic law. He writes that, according to the Ḥanafīs and the Ḥanbalīs, *istiḥsān* is "turning from an established reference to a custom because of a *maslaḥah*." Meanwhile, the Mālikīs and the Shāfi'īs regard *istiḥsān* as "a preference for a strong argument over a weak one or for a better supported argument (*rājiḥ*) over a less-well supported one (*marjūḥ*)."[82]

These definitions, while comparable to what Kamali calls the "juristic preference," are given by Ash-Shiddieqy in order to contrast them to the notion of *istiḥsān* as used by "the *bidʿ ah* group." It is implied that while this group tends to use "pure reason" in using *istiḥsān*, followers of the schools of law still refer to *Sharī' ah*. Thus, Ash-Shiddieqy concludes, the rejected *istiḥsān* is the one which in its application does not draw on any *Sharī' ah* reference whatsoever, the one which relies solely on pure reason in matters of worship.[83]

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[81]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 75.

[82]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 75-76.

[83]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 76. The rejection of *istiḥsān* of this kind has actually been addressed by al-Shāfi'ī who was known as the opponent of *istiḥsān* propounded

The strength of Ash-Shiddieqy's assessment of the relationship between *bid ah* and *istihsān* lies in his emphasis on making the *Sharī' ah* the reference for any action, an emphasis which has already been identified with the movements that promote the idea of "Returning to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*." He identifies the four schools of law as those which use *istihsān* but still refer to the *Sharī' ah*, whereas "the *bid ah* group" uses *istihsān* on the basis of pure reason to justify *bid ah* practices.

Despite this strong emphasis, Ash-Shiddieqy's arguments, however, are weakened by two serious objections. First, he does not give any example of *bid ah* which is based on pure reason, despite the fact that in the final chapter of his book he cites seventy-one examples of *bid ah* beliefs or practices.[84] Thus, his readers are left in the dark on the issue and may question whether he is theorizing on the issue or basing himself on an actual example.

Secondly, he also does not give the criteria for determining who are the people of *ijtihād* and *ijmā'*, when he discusses the meaning of "the Muslims" as found in the narration of Ibn Mas'ūd. Defining such criteria is crucial in two respects. First, it is possible that in what Ash-

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by the Ḥanafī school. But as argued by A. Hasan and others, al-Shāfi'ī may have misunderstood the nature of *istihsān* as exercised by the early schools of law. For more discussion, see A. Hasan, *Early Development*, 202-207.

[84]See Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 109-124. These examples will be translated in an abridged form in Appendix A.

Shiddieqy identifies as "the *bid' ah* group" there are qualified *mujtahids* who should be included in the meaning of "the Muslims." Second, it is similarly possible that the question is not the using of "pure reason" but of differing interpretations of an actual reference provided by the *Sharī' ah*.

In the final analysis, unless a clear example is given of what he has been refuting, Ash-Shiddieqy actually has no firm basis to expel "the *bid' ah* group" from the right to exercise *ijtihād* or to label the group as those who use *istihsān* by employing pure reason only. The next chapter will substantiate this issue further as it concentrates on some actual examples of *bid' ah* in Indonesia.

It suffices here to say that, as a means of *ijtihād*, *istihsān* cannot be detached from the use of reason on which it heavily depends. In the words of Coulson, "*Istihsān* represents a more advanced stage in the development of legal thought [than the simple freedom of *ra'y*, personal opinion] since it presupposes as normal the method of reasoning by analogy."[85] It has been developed to remove the rigidity of law in certain situations.[86] Therefore, it can easily produce ideas or actions which are new in nature and can be considered *bid' ahs*. Like *maslahah*, then, *istihsān* and *bid' ah*

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[85]N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 1964), 40.

[86]Cf. Ahmad Hasan, "Principle," 347.

have an inherent relationship in which the latter is the inevitable product of the former.

Once the product of *istiḥsān* or *maslaḥah* is established in a Muslim community, it becomes a tradition or custom of the community, which in the Indonesian context is called *adat*. But in the same context, *adat* is not necessarily or always a product of creative *istiḥsān* or *maslaḥah*. It sometimes consists of an inherited non-Islamic or pre-Islamic custom which is given an Islamic aura. The *slametan*, or Indonesian ritual meal, is the chief example of this syncretic *adat*; this and other examples will be fully discussed in the next chapter. But before launching into such a discussion, it is first necessary to examine the relationship between the concept of *adat*, on the one hand, and *bidʿah*, on the other.

Adat and Bidʿah

Like *maslaḥah mursalah* and *istiḥsān*, *adat* (a loan word, from the Arabic 'ādah) is a concept commonly shared by Muslims, although it is often different in its actual applications from place to place. In Islamic jurisprudence, *adat* is also identified as '*urf* (literally: "that which is known"); the latter term is still used by Muslims in North Africa.[87] The two, however, are sometimes differentiated. According to Kamali, *adat* often refers to the habits of

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[87]*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "'Āda."

individuals, whereas '*urf* is the collective practice of a large number of people. In this sense, '*urf* is often translated as "custom."[88] Nevertheless, in Indonesia *adat* is always understood in terms of '*urf*.[89] Hence, the usage of both concepts is in fact interchangeable and refers to the same meaning, that is, a custom which is constantly practiced by a large number of people, often an ethnic group, such as the Minangkabau and the Javanese.

Adat or '*urf* is actually an external element that has been, or can be, adopted by Islam. Islam has, for instance, adopted some '*urfs* of the Arabs, such as the obligation of the whole clan of a murderer ('*āqilah*) to pay blood money (*diyat*); the requirement of appropriate match (*kafā'ah*) for the parties getting married; and the concept of '*aṣābah* (agnates) in matters of custodianship and inheritance. According to 'Uthmān, these and other adoptions of custom have led the '*ulamā'* to declare that "custom is a law-made-*Sharī'ah*" (*al-'ādatu sharī'ah muḥakkamah*).[90]

Many great Muslim jurists have also demonstrated the adoption of *adat* into their legal systems. Mālik ibn Anas, for instance, built many of his thoughts upon the practices

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[88]Kamali, *Principles*, 283. See also Fathī 'Uthmān, *al-Fikr al-Qānūnī*, 74.

[89]See, for instance, Federspiel, *Dictionary*, 6.

[90]Fathī 'Uthmān, *Al-Fikr al-Qānūnī*, 74. See also M.B. Hooker, *A Concise Legal History of South-East Asia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 111-112.

of the people of Madīnah (' amal ahl al-Madīnah); Abū Ḥanīfah differed with his friends because of their different customs; and al-Shāfi' ī changed his former opinion (al-qawl al-qadīm) to a new one (al-qawl al-jadīd) since the customs in Iraq, in which he had formerly lived, differed from those in Egypt, to which he later moved. Thus, 'Uthmān concludes, observing customs has been demonstrated as one of the flexible aspects of Sharī' ah.[91]

However, 'urf is only marginally discussed within the discourses on the sources of Islamic law. As observed by Joseph Schacht, although custom (' urf) and customary law have coexisted with the ideal theory of Islamic law, custom has been ignored as an official source of Islamic law. According to Schacht, this was simply because the classical theory of Islamic law was concerned with the systematic foundations of the law, and not with its historical development, notwithstanding the fact that customary law contributed to the development of Islamic law in its early history.[92] Coulson, for instance, argues that Islamic law tacitly endorsed the customary law in cases where the former did not expressly reject the latter.[93]

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[91]Fathī 'Uthmān, Al-Fikr al-Qānūnī, 74.

[92]Joseph Schacht, An Introduction to Islamic Law (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), 62,76,84.

[93]N.J. Coulson, Conflict and Tension in Islamic Jurisprudence (Chicago: The Chicago University Press, 1969), 4,19,31.

Thus, 'urf has been an object, instead of a means, of formulating the Islamic law, an object whose validity is to be examined within the paradigm of the law. According to 'Uthmān, a custom becomes acceptable (ṣaḥīḥ) as long as it does not contradict the injunction of Sharī'ah, or permit what is Islamically prohibited, or void what is mandatory (wājib) in Islam.[94] In other words, to be "Islamically" acceptable, 'urf must come under the injunctions of the law.

Laying aside, however, the theoretical place of 'urf or adat, in practical life adat has a strong position, particularly in the context of Southeast Asian society. It functions as the first basis of life in the society even if, in certain cases, it looks contradictory to Islamic law, as is the case with the rules of inheritance in the matrilineal society of Minangkabau.[95] As D.G.E. Hall has rightly pointed out, the most significant fact about Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia is that Islamic law does not have the

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[94]Fathī 'Uthmān, Al-Fikr al-Qānūnī, 74. See also M.B. Hooker, A Concise Legal History, 111-112.

[95]For a detailed discussion on this issue, see, for instance, Hooker, A Concise Legal History, especially chps. 2 and 4; and Roy F. Ellen, "Social Theory, Ethnography and the Understanding of Practical Islam in South-East Asia," in Islam in South-East Asia, ed. M.B. Hooker, 64-70 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983). See also Taufik Abdullah, "Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau" Indonesia no. 2 (October 1966): 1-14; and his Schools and Politics, passim.

same sanction there as it has in other Muslim countries:
"Their own adat law has maintained its position."[96]

As mentioned in passing, *adat* is a product of human
genius that emerges through the means of *maslahah*, *istihsān*,
or purely a collective consensus of a group or society and
is transferred through inheritance or newly invented. If
this framework is made to apply to everything that has been
produced after the time of the Prophet, then *adat* is
entitled to be called *bid'ah*.

But the problem to many Indonesian Muslims is not
whether *adat* should be prevented from being produced, since,
as described in the previous chapter, it is part of culture-
making, but whether a particular *adat* falls into the
category of '*ibādah* or whether it contradicts the injunction
of the *Sharī'ah*. Hooker, for instance, argues that "Islam
cannot be discussed as a legal system without considering
custom, and the reverse is also true in Muslim
countries."[97]

In the Indonesian context, the effort to solve this
problem is done by defining the realm of human action
itself. According to Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil, who quote al-
Shāṭibī, human action is divided into *ta'abbudī* and '*ādī*.
Ta'abbudī refers to actions which are prescribed in the

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[96]Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 234. See also
Hooker, *A Concise Legal History*, 48-49.

[97]Hooker, *A Concise Legal History*, 114.

religion and whose actual meaning cannot be comprehended by reason (*ghayr ma' qūl al-ma' nā*). Examples for these actions include the act of body purification or cleansing, praying, fasting, and making pilgrimage.[98]

Meanwhile, '*ādī* consists of actions comprehensible to reason (*ma' qūl al-ma' nā*). It is divided into two categories. The first refers to customs (*adats*) which are related to the injunctions of *Sharī'ah* but whose meanings are comprehensible. Actions such as trading, marriage, divorce, hiring, and punishment for crimes, are examples of the *Sharī'ah*-related '*ādī*. The second category, while also constituted of comprehensible customs, does not have an explicit relation to the *Sharī'ah*. This is called the pure '*ādī*, or pure-worldly '*ādī*, and includes such things as modes of clothing, manners of eating and drinking, the making of airplanes and submarines, and other advanced technologies.[99]

Bid' ah could occur in both the *ta' abbudī* and '*ādī*. In Ash-Shiddieqy's and Chalil's views, *bid' ah* in the *ta' abbudī* actions and in the first category of the '*ādī* above, are

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[98]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 52; Chalil, *Kembali*, 235-236. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 65; al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 2:213-214, 221-223.

[99]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 52-53; Chalil, *Kembali*, 235-236, 254-256. See also al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 66-67; Hadikusuma, *Bid' ah*, 42.

condemned and prohibited.[100] This is consistent with their basic view that *bid' ah* in '*ibādah* should never be accepted. But they go even further here, by including in the forever-forbidden *bid' ah* those *adats* that happen to have a relation to the *Sharī' ah*. Thus, the position of such scholars as Ash-Shiddieqy and Chalil has become that even the slightest possible innovation in what has been explained by the religion is, to them, to be uncompromisingly rejected as a condemned *bid' ah*.

On the other hand, *bid' ah* in the second category of '*ādī*--that is, the pure-worldly '*ādī*--is not condemned; it is, according to Ash-Shiddieqy, Chalil, and many others, even to be strongly recommended, encouraged, or praised.[101] It is thus left to the human reason to decide and to act upon, as long as no *Sharī' ah* injunction is being violated.[102]

Both Ash-Shiddieqy's and Chalil's opinion on *adat*, particularly on the second category above, has not been different from the generally accepted notion, as elaborated on earlier, that *adats* should not contravene the injunction

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[100]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 53-54; Chalil, *Kembali*, 254-256. See also Hsubky, *Bid' ah-bid' ah*, 30-31; al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 162-163.

[101]See Nasution, *Ensiklopedi*, 174; and al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 22-23, 36.

[102]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 53-54; Chalil, *Kembali*, 254-256. See also Hsubky, *Bid' ah-bid' ah*, 30-31; al-Ghazali, *Bukan*, 162-163.

of *Sharī' ah*. In turn, this seems to influence their opinion
on the relationship between *adat* and *bid' ah*, in which they
are more lenient than in their overall opinion on *bid' ah*. By
allowing the pure-worldly '*ādī* to occur, instead of
eliminating it, they in fact open the possibility that
bid' ah will occur, or at least recognize that it is
inevitable, although they are reluctant to name it *bid' ah*.
It is, for instance, different from their approach to *sunnah
tarkiyyah*, where no action is recommended unless it can be
referred to the injunction of *Sharī' ah*.[103]

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[103]See pp. 202-203 above.

CHAPTER 6

BID'AH AND INDONESIAN POPULAR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

In chapter 5, attempts were made to demonstrate particular relations between *bid'ah* and the concepts of *sunnah*, *maṣlaḥah*, *istiḥsān*, and *adat*. Despite the common tendency among the scholars to contrast *sunnah* with *bid'ah*, on the basis of linguistic and historical usages of the two words, it has been argued that *sunnah* is not always contrary to *bid'ah*, primarily because the former is divisible into "good" and "bad" categories, like the latter, and can be a necessary outcome of the latter as well.

Thus, a *bid'ah* can be transformed into a *sunnah*. *Sunnah* in this sense is best translated as '*urf* or *adat*, either of which denotes customs prevalent among the Muslims as a result of cultural dialogues or inventions. Here, either *maṣlaḥah* or *istiḥsān* can be an important tool for such a dialogue with cultural reality, by which Muslims are able to justify their *adats* with religious sanctions. Both *maṣlaḥah* and *istiḥsān* are different from *bid'ah*, particularly in terms of the nature of each and how each is treated in Islamic discourses. They, however, have a strong relationship with it, in that *maṣlaḥah* and *istiḥsān*--themselves innovative juristic means--may be used either to create a new *bid'ah* or to justify an existing one within the acceptable boundaries of religious premises and principles.

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Some examples have been mentioned above to support the analysis regarding the relationship between *bid'ah* and the other concepts. They are mainly taken from the heyday of the Companions of the Prophet, such as the case of the collection of the Qur'ān in the reign of Abū Bakr and the case of *tarāwiḥ* in congregation from the time of 'Umar.

As far as *adat* is concerned, examples for this concept have also been taken primarily from Middle Eastern customs adopted into Islam and how these have been treated by the Muslim jurists. Mention, however, has been made in passing regarding the *adats* of the Indonesian Muslims. However, this discussion has been peripheral, since the discussion on *adat* and *bid'ah* was focused--as it is in the Indonesian literature--on both as concepts and not as what is actually practiced by Muslims in the region.

Nevertheless, the present chapter will deal mostly with examples of widely observed *adats* in Indonesia, thus filling out the shortage of local examples given in the previous chapter. Moreover, this chapter functions not only to describe and analyze some actual allegedly-*bid'ah* practices but also to examine to what extent the suggestions made in the foregoing chapters can be substantiated in these examples. The following discussion will therefore examine in depth some living and popular religious practices of Indonesia and how they are related to *bid'ah* as a concept.

In the Indonesian context, out of numerous examples of such practices, there are some important and widely-known ones that will be discussed here. The first of these is the *slametan*, a ritual meal which is often considered suspect by Islamic-trend circles, as it is viewed as having an animistic origin and flavor. However, the practice is so common among the Indonesian Muslims that it can be regarded as part of popular culture. Several anthropological works have been dedicated to this issue, which this study intends to complement.

A second issue is related to the practices observed in relation to the grave. Death is not as simple for the family left behind as it is for the deceased. Many duties must be observed by them, starting with the burial ceremony, which includes some practices considered by reformists as *bid'ah*. Like the *slametan*, these practices are also common among the Muslims and are subject to heated controversy between the islamizing reformists and the local traditionalists.

A third issue concerns the *mawlid* celebration. This is a celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad and functions as an appreciation of him by Muslims, just as the Christmas celebration is an appreciation by Christians of Jesus. The Prophet's *mawlid* is observed by almost every Muslim society in the world, with some variations among cultures. In Indonesia, for instance, the highest official *mawlid* celebration is in the State Palace (*Istana Negara*) to

which only certain people are invited, although the whole process is broadcast to the entire nation through national and regional TV and radio channels. Like other celebrations, such as the commemoration of the Prophet's heavenly journey (*isrā' wa-mi'rāj*), the *mawlid* celebration serves as an example of an alleged *bidʿah* practice which is served and sanctioned by the state.

Finally, there are some practices which can be classified as "minor" according to their levels of religious importance, but which are nevertheless controversial, as they appear in several Indonesian works on *bidʿah*. Some examples of this are taken from practices involved in the weekly Friday congregational worship (*jumʿah*). These are as important to many reformists as they are to local traditionalists, and the debates between the two parties over these practices continue even to the present day.

As mentioned earlier, the examples to be examined in this chapter serve as supporting evidence for the analysis and suggestions made in the previous chapters. As actual and living examples, they also function to relate *bidʿah* as a concept to *bidʿah* as a reality, a link which many works on *bidʿah* fail to make. Thus, it is hoped that a coherent and comprehensive understanding of *bidʿah* will be achieved, which is the purpose which the following lines of inquiry are intended to support.

Slametan: A Request for Blessing and Protection

Slametan, the Javanese pronounciation of the Indonesian *selamatan*, is a communal feast or a ritual meal which is held to mark certain occasions. The basic structure of the activity always includes a speech by the host--welcoming the guests and explaining the purpose of the *slametan*--a reading of some portions of the Qur'ān, a recitation of some litanies and supplications (*du'ā'*), and finally the consumption of the *slametan* meal itself, which concludes the *slametan* gathering.

The occasions for which a *slametan* is offered are varied: they cover almost every aspect of significant and critical human moments. Clifford Geertz, a leading American anthropologist, has adequately described these moments as follows:

> A *slametan* can be given to almost any occurrence one wishes to celebrate, ameliorate, or sanctify. Birth, marriage, sorcery, death, house moving, bad dreams, harvest, name changing, opening a factory, illness, supplication of the village guardian spirit, circumcision, and starting off a political meeting may all occasion a *slametan*.[1]

The reason for this particular rite can be comprehended from its name, that is, to achieve or maintain the condition of *slamet*. The word *slamet* is adopted from the Arabic *salāmah* which means "safety, soundness, or security." For

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[1]Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960), 11. See also Noer, *Modernist*, 17.

the Javanese, as observed by Geertz, *slametan* has another meaning, which is "to give them a sense of equality among themselves, which would prevent them from being divided or at odds."[2]

Slametan is often associated with *kanduri* (spelled as *kenduri*) or *sadaqah*, spelled as *sedekah* or *sedekahan*.[3] As far as the basic structure of the activity is concerned, *slametan*, *kenduri*, or *sedekah* are the same, or interchangeable. But *kenduri* or *sedekah* aim primarily at celebrating joyous occasions such as weddings and ' *Īd* festivals,[4] on which occasions they are often supplemented with some musical performances. However, the application of these terms varies from one region to another and they are as easily differentiated by insiders as they are confusing to outsiders. In Jambi, for instance, *kenduri* is always associated with joyous occasions whereas *sedekah* is perceived as meaning *slametan* in the Javanese sense. Thus, *kenduri* here is more specific than the other two terms.

Although *slametan*, as asserted by Geertz, is a primary part of the *abangan* religious tradition, as contrasted to

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[2]Geertz, *Religion*, 13-14.

[3]See, for instance, Noer, *Modernist*, 16, 84, 300; and Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 71.

[4]There are two ' *Īd* festivals in Islam: ' *Īd al-Fitr* and ' *Īd al-Adhā*. The former is observed following the conclusion of the Muslim fasting month (Ramadān, the 9th lunar month) and the latter is started on the tenth day of Dhulhijjah, the 12th lunar month, after Muslims conclude their rites of pilgrimage (*hajj*).

the *santri* or *priyayi* ones, it has been transformed into a common Indonesian Muslim practice.[5] Thus, it is no longer exclusively Javanese; nor is it affiliated only with the *abangan*. For example, in a heterogenous society like Jambi, one is always being informed of, or being invited to, a *slametan* which is being held by a Bugis group, or a Borneo family, as well as by Malays and Javanese. On all of these occasions the people involved are not only the nominal Muslims--those to whom Geertz affixed the term *abangan*--but also the learned, the leaders of the community, the *imāms* of mosques, and members of the local Council of Indonesian 'Ulamā' (M.U.I.).[6]

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[5]Geertz uses these terms to differentiate the levels of Muslim adherence to Islam. Thus, *abangan* refers to the common, nominal Muslims who loosely attach themselves to Islam and who often mix their beliefs and practices with the old Javanese religion. *Santri* describes the religiously educated Muslims who observe Islam more thoroughly. *Priayi* falls somewhere in between these two groups and denotes Muslims from royal families. See, for instance, Federspiel, *Dictionary*, 1, 207, 232.

[6]This is based on my personal observation and my own participation, which started in 1980 when I began my six-year training (1979-1985) in *Pesantren* Ar-Riyadh in Palembang, a *pesantren* founded in 1976, and owned and managed by an Arab family from the *al-Ḥabshī* clan. The *pesantren* had two groups of *santris*, each consisting of 30 members who were trained and prepared to conduct a *slametan* rite upon invitation. Once I became a leader of these groups, I became acquainted with the procedures and the rituals involved. In Jambi, such groups usually consist of a mosque's routine or neighboring congregants, of different origins and backgrounds, who attend the *slametan*, and there is usually a leader, either an *imām* of a mosque or a trained individual, to lead the rite.

The commonness of the *slametan* is further attested by Mark Woodward, who studied the subject in one of the main centers of Javanese society, Yogyakarta. He argues that the *slametan* is "the product of the interpretation of Islamic texts and modes of ritual action shared by the larger (non-Javanese) Muslim community." In his observation, the so-called *kejawen* (Javanese) Muslims depend on the *santris* to lead and officiate at a *slametan*.[7]

One of the most important types and examples of *slametan* is the *slametan* for the dead. In Indonesia, it is very common for the Muslims to gather in the deceased's house, following a death, to recite some portions of the Qur'ān, particularly Q.S.36 (*Yāsīn*), to chant some litanies, particularly *tahlīl*--reciting *lā ilāha illa Allāh* (there is no god but Allāh) for a number of times, usually 50 or 100--and to say prayers asking God to forgive the deceased, that

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[7]Mark R. Woodward, "The *Slametan*: Textual Knowledge and Ritual Performance in Central Javanese Islam," *History of Religions* 28, no.1 (1988): 61-62, n.40. The dependency of the *abangan* had actually already been pointed out by Noer, *Modernist*, 19, who called the *santri* the *putihan* (white) group. See also James L. Peacock, *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1978), 84-85, on the dependency of the "syncretist" Javanese on the *santri*, particularly regarding funeral concerns. Peacock's work is also a good survey on how the *slametan* is similarly perceived and practiced in the neighboring countries: Singapore and Malaysia.

is to grant her or him *salāmah*, and to benefit her or him by what has been recited and performed in the *slametan*.[8]

This *slametan*, which is concluded by eating the meal provided, is observed consecutively on nights 1,2,3,7,25,40, and 100 after the person's death. It would also be observed on a yearly basis, which is called *haul* or *behaul* (from Arabic *ḥawl*, a one-year period), commemorating the deceased in the same manner. Thus, his or her family will keep counting the days until the 100th night is observed, after which the *haul* cycle will be started beginning with the first anniversary of the date of the death.[9]

The attitude towards *slametan* varies among Muslims in Indonesia and her surroundings. There are those who profoundly observe *slametan* on all occasions, as described by Geertz above; those who reject the practice altogether; and those in between, who accept and practice some types of *slametan*. In a survey done in the early 1970s, Peacock has summarized these groups as follows:

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[8]For this purpose, some manuals for these recitations and prayers are published and widely available, the most famous of which is *Majmū' al-Sharīf*. Such a manual is generally known as *Buku Yasin dan Tahlil*. Q.S.36 is also published separately in various sizes.

[9]The same observance of these dates has also been narrated by Hurgronje describing Muslims' customs and usages relating to death in late-19th century Makkah where many Indonesian students (the *Jāwah*) received their religious instruction. See Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 147. For their practices of *haul*, see also pages 43, 54-55,147,278-279 of the book.

Reformists overwhelmingly reject the communal feasts
(*slametan*) that have traditionally preserved social and
spiritual equanimity and thus kept everyone safe, or
"*slamet.*" Syncretists overwhelmingly reported practice
of the majority of these slametans. Traditionalists
were again in-between syncretists and reformists in
their reported practice of slametan, and they favored
most those slametans with Islamic content yet animistic
form, such as celebrations of the birth of Muhammad.[10]

The rejection of *slametan* by the reformists who are

associated with such organizations as PERSIS and

Muhammadiyah is basically directed at three aspects of the

slametan: (1) its recitations and prayers; (2) the question

of transferring the merit of these recitations and prayers;

and (3) the question of eating the food on the occasion.

They are less concerned with the "initial" spirit of the

slametan itself which, as portrayed by Federspiel, was "tied

in with the *abangan*'s philosophy of life, his belief in non-

Islamic spirits, and his superstitions regarding propitious

and unlucky days and numbers."[11] This is probably because

the form of the *slametan* itself has been filled up with an

"Islamic" aura that beclouds the initial spirit, intention,

and philosophy which would otherwise necessitate the outward

concern of the reformists.

The reformists' first concern seems to be focused on

the religious recitations and prayers, particularly *tahlil*,

which are performed especially at the *slametans* for the

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[10]Peacock, *Muslim Puritans*, 44.

[11]Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 71.

dead. Moh. Ma'sum, for instance, one of PERSIS' leading members, raises the question of rootedness when labelling the acts in the *slametan* for the dead as unwarranted *bid'ah*. According to him, those recitations and prayers do not have any roots (*aṣl*), or historical justification. They were never practiced by the Prophet, the Companions, the Followers, Followers of the Followers, or by the founders of the four legal schools (*madhhabs*). Thus, the participants will not get any merit (*pahala*) from what they do in such *slametan*.[12]

Similarly, Mahmud Aziz, another member of PERSIS, rejects the contention that merit from the recitations and prayers can be transferred to the deceased. He found no root or reference for such a contention in the Qur'ān or the ḥadīth by which, according to him, every practice should be defined. He refers to two Qur'ānic verses which indicate that a man is responsible only for what he has done in this world.[13] The two verses are translated as follows:

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[12]Moh. Ma'sum, "Tahliel dan Makan-makan Dirumah Orang Kematian" *Soal-Jawab* 1:216. See also A. Hassan, "Tahliel" *Soal-Jawab* 2:507-508; and his *Pengajaran Shalat: Cara Shalat beserta Dalil-Dalilnya* (Bangil: CV. Pustaka Tamaam, 1991), 120,324.

[13]Mahmud Aziz, "Tahliel and Baca Qur'an buat Orang Mati," *Soal-Jawab* 1:218.

> This day no soul is wronged in aught; nor are ye
> requited aught save what ye used to do. (Q.S.36:53)[14]

> And that man hath only that for which he maketh effort.
> (53:39)[15]

A. Hassan adds to the argument with rhetorical questions:

(1) if it were possible to transfer a merit from one person

to another, why then did Allah make worship compulsory at

all, since He could have transferred it from anyone who had

it to anyone who needed it without any worship having been

performed at all?; and (2) if the merit could be transferred

to the dead, why not also to the living?[16]

Finally, the last aspect subject to the reformists'

attack concerns eating in the house of the deceased, which

is traditionally an indispensable part of a *slametan* for the

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[14]Pickthall, *Meaning*, 317. See Hamka's commentary on
this verse which, according to him, indicates God's Supreme
Justice. Hamka, *Tafsir*, 8: 6015.

[15]Pickthall, *Meaning*, 378. Hamka's comments on this
verse and a verse preceding it emphasize the struggles of
the earlier prophets, particularly Moses and Abraham, whose
names are mentioned in the preceding verses. Hamka, *Tafsir*,
9: 7011-7013. According to Abbas, who quoted from 'Ali ibn
Muhammad's *Tafsir al-Khāzin*, this verse is related to the
laws of the two prophets; it does not concern the *Sharī'ah*
of Muhammad; and it is even abrogated (*mansūkh*) by
Q.S.52:21. See Abbas, "Masalah Hadiah Pahala" *40 Masalah* 1:
222-224.

[16]See A. Hassan, "Tahliel," 509. Cf. Federspiel,
Persatuan Islam, 74. See also Hassan's "Hadiah Bacaan" *Soal-
Jawab* 2: 515-516. Hamka's rejection of the idea of
transferring the merit of *tahlil*, *Fātihah*, and *Yāsin*, is
found in his *Tafsir*, 3: 2300-2304, where he gives a long
comment on Q.S.6:164, which in Pikhtall's translation
(v.165), *Meaning*, 121, reads: "...Each soul earneth only on
its own account, nor doth any laden bear another's load.
Then unto your Lord is your return and He will tell you that
wherein ye differed."

dead. Moh. Ma'sum, for instance, mentions the tradition about the time when the Prophet commanded the Muslims to prepare food for the Ja'far family on the burial day of this Companion.[17] According to him, this *sunnah* of the Prophet is contrary to the usual practice in Indonesia where oftentimes the family members of the deceased themselves have to provide food for the mourners in a form of *slametan*. To him, the family should be left alone and the neighbors should instead provide food for them. In any case, no *slametan* should ever be held.[18]

When asked about the length of period during which no one should eat in the decedent's house and in which the neighbor should provide meals, A. Hassan does not refer to any religious source, which, according to him, gives no guidance on such a limitation. Instead, he speculates that the proper limitation might be made one of three: (1) no limitation whatsoever; (2) limited to one occasion or for the bereavement day only; and (3) limited to several additional days, which are considered days of mourning for the deceased family. The first category he rejects as absurd. It woud be impossible to have no limitation, for it would effectively forbid eating in, or inviting dinner

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[17]A Shāfi'īte *muftī* at Makkah, Ahmad Dahlan, also issued a *fatwā* on the basis of this tradition, as mentioned in Sayyid Bakrī's *I'ānat al-Tālibīn*, one of the popular *fiqh* books in Indonesia. Cf. Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 146-147.

[18]Ma'sum, "Tahliel," 216-217. See also Mahmud Aziz, "Makan-makan Dirumah Orang Kematian" *Soal-Jawab* 1: 214-215.

guests to, all houses at all time, since there is no

household where a family member has never died. The second

category seems to him a possible choice; but he nevertheless

accepts the third. Thus, according to him, the prohibition

against eating in the house of mourning or giving a feast

there is limited to at least for one day and can be extended

to three days if the death creates very painful mourning.[19]

The financial strains a *slametan* creates, especially

for the poor family, is strongly criticized by Ma'sum. He

writes:

> ...and this particular type of *bid'ah* sometimes ruins
> people who are not well-to-do, for sometimes they sell
> their belongings, or place them in pawn, or borrow
> money to hold a *slametan*, and consequently they go into
> debt and become poor. Truly sound reasoning tells us
> that people in debt should not increase debts, but
> should be happy to liquidate their indebtedness.[20]

In Jambi, objection to the *slametan* feast is expressed

by 27% of the respondents, who consider it as either

forbidden (*harām*) or as bad *bid'ah*. According to these

respondents, this would be their position if the money for

the meal is taken from money that had belonged to the

deceased, or if the money belongs to an orphan. The same

would apply if the money is borrowed, if the deceased had a

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[19]A. Hassan, "Makan-makan Dirumah Orang Kematian dan Batas Terlarangnya," *Soal-Jawab* 2: 510-513. See also his articles on this issue, in *Soal-Jawab* 3: 965-975.

[20]Ma'sum, "Tahliel," 216. Cf. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam*, 71.

debt to be paid, or if the expense will greatly influence the distribution of the inheritance. There is also mention of the ḥadīth as elaborated by Ma'ṣum above, that it is others who should provide the food.[21]

The overall criticism against the *slametan* has been answered by the traditionalist '*ulamā*' and scholars. With regard to eating food provided by the deceased's family, they regard it permissible, also on the basis of a prophetic ḥadīth. It is reported that on one occasion the Prophet went to the house of a bereaved family following the burial and ate food provided therein by the bereaved family.[22] This ḥadīth was in fact rejected by A. Hassan and his associates, who considered it not only a weak ḥadīth but also as contradicting the ḥadīth regarding the Ja'far family cited above. Moreover, Hassan and his group also rejected it on the basis of Companions' comment that gathering and eating in the house of mourning is considered as *niyāḥah*, a forbidden lament. Furthermore, this ḥadīth, in their reading, does not clearly specify whether the Prophet ate in that house or in another house.[23]

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[21]The 1995 Jambi *Bid'ah* Survey.

[22]See, for instance, Edy Ridwan, *Penjelasan masalah Tawassul, Hadiah Pahala, Jamuan Kematian, Tahlil/Dzikir* (Pekalongan: CV. Bahagia, 1992), 76-78.

[23]A. Hassan, "Perihal Makan-makan Dirumah Orang Mati," *Soal-Jawab* 3: 965-970; and "Makan-makan Dirumah Orang Kematian," *Soal-Jawab* 3: 970-975.

However, the fact that this ḥadīth is narrated in the *musnads* of both Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālisī indicates that there *is* a textual source for the traditionalists' justification. More importantly, this justification should be seen as a valid interpretation of the ḥadīth, just as Hassan's view is also valid, although he arrived at a different conclusion.

Furthermore, the study by Woodward also demonstrates that not only is the offering of food in a *slametan* crucial but that it has a textual basis, for which it serves as an outward example or application. Relying on al-Nawawī's *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, which is widely circulated in Indonesia, Woodward is able to show the nature and significance of ritual meals in Muslim culture which are attested to by several verses of the Qur'ān, such as Q.S.2:177, 262-265; 76:8; 107:1-7, and by several prophetic traditions (ḥadīths). Such an offering of food, he argues, is not only confined to the Javanese, but is also practiced elsewhere, under different names, in Malay, Achehnese, and South Indian cultures. According to him, *slametan* in general can therefore be considered as a Muslim ritual which owes its existence to a certain degree to the Muslim texts as well as the practices of other local Islamic peoples.[24] Thus, instead of being a bad *bidʿ ah* or *ḥarām*, such an offering of

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[24]See Woodward, "The *Slametan*," 62-65.

food may be regarded as recommendable (*sunnah*) or, at the least, permissible (*mubāḥ*).

In Jambi, many respondents (52.52%) consider the offering of food at the *slametan* as permissible. Some of the respondents (17.17%) even call it a good *bid' ah*. But their agreement to this practice is conditional; it is valid only if: (1) all of the deceased's heirs are agreed; (2) the money used for that purpose is not taken from the orphan's share; (3) the family is not over-extending itself beyond its ability to provide the meal; and (4) the action is performed to honor the guests (the mourners). If the food is provided by the neighbors, then it is undoubtedly considered as a good *bid' ah*.[25]

Nevertheless, the traditionalists never argue that such an offering of food is obligatory (*wājib*), as they are also concerned with the way it is provided, as shown above. Their "agreement" with the reformists seems to be based on two aspects. First, there should be no self-imposing of a need to provide such a feast beyond one's actual financial ability. Second, the rights of others with regard to the deceased's inheritance must not be violated. Thus, all debts incurred by the deceased must be paid and no one's right to inheritance must be taken from him/her unless with a voluntary consent. In practice, the observance of these requirements may be ignored by families who, feeling bound

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[25]The 1995 Jambi *Bid' ah* Survey.

by the cultural practice of *slametan*, force themselves to provide beyond their actual ability to pay. In this case, the *slametan* food becomes objectionable both to the reformists and the traditionalists.

Concerning the recitations and prayers during the *slametan*, the traditionalists believe that they not only bring merit (*pahala*) to the readers/attendants but that these merits can also be transferred.[26] Reading the Qur'ān, or any portion of it, and saying a *dhikr* such as *tahlīl* and prayers, undoubtedly are practices which have premises based on both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth, though the Prophet and his early followers never performed them on such occasion as at or after a death.[27] This may be paralleled to what has been said by Ibn Ḥajr al-Haithamī, mentioned earlier: that the root of this action is *sunnah* and its method (or here, its timing) is *bidᶜah*. Only from this perspective does one understand why it is regarded as good *bidᶜah* by which people hope to get merit from God.

The Jambi Survey supports this conclusion. About 58% of the respondents consider the *slametan* as a good *bidᶜah* on the basis that: (1) it includes reading of the Qur'ān, which

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[26]See the elaboration of this view in Siradjuddin Abbas, "Masalah Hadiah Pahala" *40 Masalah Agama* 1: 198-232, where he discusses 19 supporting traditions and refutes the arguments of anonymous reformists whom he considers as lacking knowledge of Qur'ānic exegesis and of ḥadīth books.

[27]See the elaboration of these sources in Abbas, "Masalah Dzikir dan Do'a" *40 Masalah Agama* 1: 25-60.

is encouraged; (2) it is a form of strengthening the society tie (*silaturrahmi*); and (3) God is so Merciful that He will accept such a good action from His servants. Some respondents (about 13%) regard it as *sunnah* on the basis of the first reason above; while 21% of them think of it as a permissible action (*mubāh*) on the aforementioned reasoning plus an argument that saying *dhikr* is better than a plain talk or, worse, a play at the occasion of sorrow. Although no respondent labels the *slametan* as forbidden (*harām*), almost 7% of them mark it as a bad *bidʿah* if it is thought of as a religious obligation.[28]

The question of transferring the merit of the recitations and prayers is much more problematic, since it is highly abstract and theological. But the traditionalists employ an analogy from some Prophetic traditions to arrive at their conclusion. They, for instance, refer to several hadīths whose application in law allows a man to undertake the fast or the *hajj* (pilgrimage) on behalf of another man who, due to certain handicaps, such as illness, aging, or even death, cannot fulfil those obligation himself. Other hadīths, such as those concerning the *janāzah* (corpse) prayer, and charity, are also offered to indicate that the merit from the performers is beneficial to the deceased.[29]

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[28]The 1995 Jambi *Bidʿah* Survey.

[29]See Abbas, "Masalah Hadiah Pahala," 202-214.

From this, they extend the law to include all other matters of religious merit.

To a certain extent, this analogy answers Hassan's rhetorical questions mentioned earlier.[30] First, worship is compulsory for all eligible Muslims. But in certain cases, as the above hadīths indicate, an act of worship can be done by someone on another's behalf. If an act can be transferred in this way, why, one may wonder, cannot its merit also be transferred? Secondly, the hadīths also express the possibility and lawfulness of transferring the act from one living person to another. The dead are no longer capable of the physical worship that will bring merit. But this physical inability may not prevent him from acquiring the merit caused by others, as implied by the hadīths.

Slametan can be further justified on the basis of *maṣlaḥah*, in that *slametan* has shown to be an effective means to attain and maintain the unity and religiosity of people. During a *slametan* for the dead, for instance, the participants are led to realize the rites of passage and the humility of mankind in the face of the power of God. Usually the host or a speaker in the *slametan* also mentions the encouragement to patience (*sabar*) as well as the prayer (*du' ā'*) for God to shower His blessings on the deceased and on those left behind. The religious charge which this rite contains is perceived by the participants who usually

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[30]See page 252 above.

display deep humility and shout *amīn* every time a *du' ā'* is said. Thus, the *slametan* could help build a religiously charged person or community. The achievement of this purpose, however, depends indeed on the readiness of the people involved to see the ritual in this way. Otherwise, *slametan* can be merely another ceremony which has nothing to do with mourning, or one which contains a "materialistic spirit," as was observed by Hurgronje in late 19th century Makkah.[31]

The *slametan* for the dead is a prime example of how Indonesian Muslims show their grief in a religiously charged rite which they hope does some good for the deceased. In fact, they have even more ways to show this sorrow. As will be discussed in the next section, many practices are related to the dead, even when the corpse has probably long since decayed, even if the grave is well maintained.

Grave-related Practices

The death of a Muslim marks his final journey in this world, in which he enters another world where, according to Islamic theology, he will face the consequences of his previous actions, either in terms of joyous rewards or in severe punishment. The grave is also believed to be a stationary or a "waiting place" where he, and others, await the Final Day (*yawm al-akhīr*). To pay final respects to the

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[31]Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 147-148.

deceased, Muslims are obliged to perform certain rites,

which in sequence include: the washing of the entire body of

the deceased, the shrouding of the body, the *janāzah* prayer,

and the burying of the corpse.

But apart from these *Sharī'ah*-prescribed rites, which

are observed by all Muslims as a religious obligation, there

are certain rites or practices which are not initially

obliged by the *Sharī'ah* but which are commonly observed in

local traditions. The following story is derived from a

field observation concerning how a dead Muslim is treated in

Jambi.[32]

I was in Jambi when my wife and I were informed of the
death of my grandfather-in-law, Abdul Hamid, who died
of a sickness in Sarolangun. It was almost midnight
when we, together with other family members, rushed to
Sarolangun, spending about 3 hours on the journey. When
we got there in the early morning, we found the
deceased was already covered with some *batik* cloths and
lying at the center of his house. I saw some people
were crying or mourning while others were reading the
Qur'ān, particularly Q.S.36 (*Yāsīn*). I myself completed
reading this chapter three times, awaiting the dawn
prayer (*ṣubḥ*) when the funeral preparations were to
begin.
    A funeral clerk came to the house to prepare the
shroud, (*kain kafan*), which is made of white cotton.
Pak Kadir--his name--and his assistant were cutting the
shroud in six pieces, three of which are larger than
the others. At the cut edges of the shroud he tore some
strips to make something like strings that function to
tie the shroud closed later. After this, each pair of

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[32]I have avoided those minute details which are
naturally important, but which are less significant to our
investigation. The event took place in Sarolangun, Jambi, on
July 11, 1995. For a comparison, see Snouck Hurgronje, *The
Achehnese*, tran. R.J. Wilkinson, vol.1 (London, Luzac, and
Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), 418-434; and Geertz, *Religion*,
68-76.

the big and small parts of the shrouds was sewed in a particular way: it became three parts, or layers, of shroud. One was then put over another. Thus the cover was prepared upon which some women placed on some cotton and perfumed powder. By this time, it had been about 12 hours since the time of the death.

Pak Kadir then asked the family member to bring the body of the deceased to the bath area of the house where three types of water had already been prepared: the soapy, the plain, and the rose water. Almost all sons and sons-in-law of the deceased[33] participated in washing the body, firstly with plain water, then with the soapy, followed with another plain water rinse before finally using the rose water that made the body smell pleasant.

After the water was wiped from the body with some towels, the corpse was placed on the already prepared shrouds. Then Pak Kadir asked the women for the cotton and put it around some parts of the body: the underarm, hands, toes, and around the head so only the face was not covered. Afterwards, the three shrouds were tied one after another to wrap the whole body, except the face which was left exposed at this time. Pak Kadir asked a family member to bring him a *celak*.[34] I was wondering what was that *celak* for, only to find out soon that he used it to write the Arabic sentence *lā ilāha illa Allāh* (There is no God but Allāh) on the forehead of the deceased.[35] Pak Kadir then asked every family member to give a final kiss to the deceased. Being a grandson-in-law, I also kissed him on the forehead. Finally the face was wrapped with the shrouds and the participants were ready to perform a *janāzah* prayer.

I led the prayer twice: at home and in a small mosque nearby. At home, the prayer was followed mostly by family members. After completing the prayer the deceased's body was raised by two persons, leaving a gap underneath. Pak Kadir asked every family member to

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[33]Because the deceased was a male, only male family was eligible to wash his body according to Islamic law. The female member, however, also saw the washing process in this case.

[34]*Celak* is a cosmetic that is applied around the eyes and darkens the lids and lashes.

[35]Two days after this occasion, I asked Pak Kadir the purpose of his act. He replied that the writing was a sign that the deceased was a Muslim monotheist.

cross through the gap under the body.[36] Then the body
was brought to the mosque where many people were
already waiting to perform a(nother) *janāzah* prayer. I
led the prayer but asked a local *imām*, Kiyai Arsyad, to
recite a *du'ā'* afterwards. As is the custom, he also
asked the congregation, in a rhetorical way, whether
the deceased had been a good person. The congregation
replied in chorus, saying *baik!* (good).[37]

Not far away from the mosque is a Muslim cemetery
where the congregation brought the body to its final
resting place. Along the way to the cemetery, people
chanted the Arabic *lā ilāha illa Allāh* several times
until the group reached the cemetery.[38] A grave had
already been prepared by a cemetery clerk so that the
body was put directly into the grave by the family
members. After the direction of the body was considered
fixed--that is to face the *qiblah*--one of his sons
called *adhān*, followed by *iqāmah*.[39] Then some pieces
of wood were put over the body before people started to
cover the grave with the earth until the mound was
about 10 inches higher than the ground. Two markers
made of wood were put on the grave, one at the foot and
the other, which bore the name of the deceased and his
dates of birth and death, at the head.

Some rough carpets were put around the grave so
people could sit and read the *talqīn*, *tahlīl*, and

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[36]This is a common practice elsewhere. I was informed
that this is done in order to avoid a prolonged mourning
that may be caused by the loss of one's beloved family
member.

[37]I am informed that if more than 40 people bear
witness that a deceased person was a good person, then he,
presumably, will also be considered good by God; and this
will make his further journey "easier." But one simply
cannot tell whether such a chorus is a real recognition or
simply a tradition to which people hesitate to object.

[38]In many sections in Jambi and Palembang, the
participants instead read a longer formula: *subhana Allāh,
wa al-hamdu li Allāh, wa lā ilāha illa Allāh, wa Allāhu
akbar!* (Glorified be God, Praise be to Him, There is no God
but Him, and He is the Greatest).

[39]*Adhān* is the call to prayer, consisting of some
phrases glorifying God, acknowledging His Godhood and the
prophethood of Muhammad, and calling to prayer and victory.
Iqāmah is the shorter version of *adhān* and is called
formally when a congregation is about to start its prayer.
See, for instance, Federspiel, *Dictionary*, 26, 91.

du'ā'. The *talqīn* is an Arabic recitation formulated as a "reminder" for the deceased of what he is about to experience. Its most important part occurred when the leader recited the questions believed to be asked by the angels in the grave of the deceased: who or what was his God? His Prophet? His guide? His *qiblah*? His friends? The leader then recited the answers to these questions, telling the deceased to say: Allāh is my Lord; Muhammad is my Prophet; the Qur'ān is my guide; the *Ka'bah* is my *qiblah*; and the believers are my friends.[40] I led the *talqīn* and then the *tahlīl* before closing the rite with a *du'ā'*.

Afterwards, on behalf of family members, I stood up and made a speech, thanking people for their condolences and participation, and asking for forgiveness on behalf of the deceased. As is the custom, I also mentioned that if in any case the deceased owed anything to anyone, the latter should tell the family members so that a compensation could be made. I also invited people to come to the decedent's home right after the funeral to have a small meal, and to come for three consecutive nights to hold a *slametan* for the dead. Only a few people came after the funeral, but that was not the case for the first to the third nights of the *slametan*.

This account describes typical burial procedures and rites in Jambi as well as Palembang and other places.[41] However, the Jambi Muhammadiyah group is among those who reject many of these practices and consider them as *bid'ah*.[42] The funeral of one of their prominent leaders,

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[40]See, for instance, Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 146. See also Abbas, "Masalah Talqin" *40 Masalah Agama* 4: 74-76.

[41]The Arabs also observe this rite, as author has personally witnessed at Arab cemeteries in Jambi and Palembang.

[42]This is typical of the reformists who from the beginning have denounced such practices as *talqin*, *haul*, *kenduri*, and *usalli*. *Usalli* is the term used to designate the spelling out of intention prior to making a *salāh* (prayer). It has been one of the points of controversy between the reformists and the traditionalists. See Noer, *Modernist*, 95, 220.

Buya Syamsuddin Manan, is a case in point. There was no *talqīn* or *tahlīl* recited during or after the burial, but a *du'ā'* was said--interestingly, by a prominent Nahdhatul 'Ulama' leader, Haji Said Magwie--with all facing the *qiblah* after being instructed by a Muhammadiyah leader. Afterwards, a family member of the deceased made a speech, thanking people for their condolences and participation, asking those who still had unfinished business with the deceased to come to his home, and inviting people for a three night *sedekahan* in his house.[43]

It is not uncommon for the Muhammadiyah people to hold the *sedekahan*, but what makes them differ from the rest of the community is that they do not recite anything, though there is a speech by a group leader, condoling the family member and enjoining the participants to be patient, and sometimes talking about the concept of death and dying in Islam. There is usually no food or drink offered except that provided by the neighbors of the family.[44]

Talqīn has been a central issue of the debate between the reformists and the traditionalists. In 1929, polemics on this issue were hurled back and forth between A. Hassan and his reformist group and the traditionalists who support the *talqīn* practice. Hassan regarded the latter as the group

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[43]Participant observation at a Muhammadiyah burial ceremony in Jambi, August 18, 1995.

[44]Asri Neldi and Ibnu Kasir, interview by author, Jambi, September 14, 1995.

which had been blocked from seeing and receiving the truth of Islam that he propagated. According to him, they are just like corpses so that "Let the dead teach the dead." Or, on another occasion, "Let them open a school to teach the dead so that they will get their rewards from the lowest spirit."[45]

A. Hassan supports his rejection of talqīn on several grounds. First, the Qur'ān (i.e., Q.S.27:80 and 35:22) has indicated that the dead can no longer be taught; and that the repentance of a dying person is not accepted (Q.S.4:7). Secondly, there is no single Qur'ānic verse nor sound hadīth that recommends talqīn. Thirdly, it was never practiced by the Prophet, the Companions, or the founders of the schools of law. According to a narration by Ibn Hanbal, he never saw anyone doing talqīn except the Syrian (Shām) people when Abū al-Mughīrah died. In fact, doing talqīn, according to Hassan, can be considered the act of a madman.[46]

On the other hand, the traditionalists support the talqīn practice also on several basis. Abbas, for instance, elaborates on the arguments of Shāfi'īte scholars, such as al-Nawawī, Sharbīnī, and Ibn Hajr al-Haithamī, who issued

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[45]A. Hassan, "Mengajar Orang Mati," Soal-Jawab 1: 210-211.

[46]A. Hassan, "Mengajar," 211. See also his "Talqienkan Orang Yang Sudah Mati," Soal-Jawab 1: 212-213; and a dialogue in "Talqien," Soal-Jawab, 2: 476-480.

fatwās that reading *talqīn* is *sunnah* (recommended).[47]
Nevertheless, these *fatwās* are based on a weak ḥadīth from
Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī, who reported that the Prophet Muḥammad
once recommended his Companions to read *talqīn*. According to
Abbas, although this ḥadīth is weak (*ḍa' īf*)--since one of
its transmitters is 'Āṣim ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, who is
considered weak in memorizing ḥadīths--it is adopted for two
reasons. First, among the Shāfi'ites, a weak ḥadīth can be
used for beautifying acts (*faḍāil al-a' māl*), such as reading
the *talqīn*. Secondly, the status of Abū Umāmah's ḥadīth was
elevated to be a good ḥadīth, because of supports from other
accounts (*ḥasan li ghayrihi*). Abbas then elaborates these
accounts, which include Q.S.51:55 and some sound ḥadīths
narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.[48]

Abbas goes further by answering some questions and
criticism of the reading of *talqīn*. He argues, for instance,
that major Qur'ānic commentators, such as al-Ṭabarī and al-
Khāẓin, interpret the word *al-mawtā*, as found in Q.S.27:80
and 30:52, as "the unbelievers," and not literally as "the
dead." Similarly, the word *man fi al-qubūr*, as found in
Q.S.35:22, is interpreted as "the unbelievers," and not as
"those who are in the graves." Thus, according to Abbas,
these verses have no relevance to the issue of *talqīn*.

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[47]Abbas, "Masalah Talqin," 78-86.

[48]Abbas, "Masalah Talqin," 86-109.

Reading *talqīn*, he concludes, is recommended, rewarded, and the person for whom the *talqīn* is read benefits from it.[49]

Another issue which concerns many reformists regards embellishing the grave by means of any structure or elaborate headstones. While many tolerate a modest marking of the grave, such as putting up one or two tombstones and cementing the rectangular grave--as was done in the case of the burial of the Muhammadiyah leader above--most condemn the common practices of making a fence around a grave or building a dome (*qubbah*) or mausoleum. A. Hassan put forth a clear position on this issue. Based on several hadīths, he concludes that among the prohibited actions in relation to a grave are: cementing the grave, putting a fence around it or a *qubbah* over it, putting flower vases on it, or painting it with whitewash (*kapur*). At the same time, putting up a tombstone is, according to him, permissible, but writing something such as name on it is prohibited.[50]

The elaborate marking of a grave is particularly likely to occur when the dead person are well-to-do or important figures, such as a religious leader or a saint. In Jambi, one finds the well-known grave of Nurdin Hamzah, who was one of the richest Muslims in the region, and whose grave

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[49]Abbas, "Masalah Talqin," 109-126.

[50]A. Hassan, "Urusan Qubur," *Soal-Jawab* 3: 977-980.

complex in a Southeast Jambi city looks like a small

mosque.[51] In Palembang, there are buildings erected over

the Kertapati grave complex of a celebrated saint, namely

Kiyai Marogan, and over part of the grave complex of

Nagaswidak.[52] In Java, buildings have been erected and

carpets spread at the widely-visited grave complex of Wali

Sanga.[53]

Criticism of such practices is basically derived from

several Prophetic traditions in which the Prophet prohibited

"taking the grave as a mosque," as was done by the Jews and

the Christians regarding the graves of their Prophets.[54]

Three possible meanings are suggested by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-

Albānī regarding the meaning of "taking the grave as a

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[51]His family has hired a special grave keeper and
Qur'ān reciter to read the Qur'ān at the grave complex on a
regular basis.

[52]One of my spiritual teachers, Habib Alwi ibn Ahmad
Bahsin (d.1985), known as Mu' allim Nang, considered by some
Palembangis to be the Right Assistant of the World Ṣūfī Quṭb
of his time, was buried in the latter complex, adjacent to
the graves of some of his Arab spiritual teachers. It is
interesting to note that despite the common practice of
building a fence around a grave, he told his family before
his death not to build a fence around his grave. The same is
also noticeable at the same grave complex of the al-Habsyi
family of the pesantren Ar-Riyadh.

[53]For some descriptions of this complex, see James J.
Fox, "Ziarah Visits to the Tombs of the Wali, the Founders
of Islam on Java," in Islam in the Indonesian Social
Context, ed. M.C. Ricklefs (Victoria: Monash University
Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 19-38, with four
useful pictures of the graves.

[54]See, for instance, Imron AM, Peringatan Khaul, 64-79.
See also Memon, Ibn Taimīya's Struggle, 14-15.

mosque": (1) to perform a prayer or prostration on the grave; (2) to prostrate toward it or making it a prayer direction; or (3) to build a mosque over it and intend to pray therein. In all such cases, according to him, building such a mosque is prohibited unanimously by the four major schools of law.[55]

However, as far as our field observation goes, none of the objectionable practices mentioned by al-Albānī is common to Indonesian Muslim, particularly the building of a mosque. The *qubbah* building is quite noticeable, especially for notable persons, as mentioned above, yet one rarely sees a visitor who performs a prayer there or who makes a prostration. Instead, what one usually does is to come near the grave and then recite some Qur'ānic verses, such as Q.S.36 (*Yāsīn*) or simply Q.S.1 (*al-Fātiḥah*), and then to say some invocations. A longer rite would usually include the recitation of *tahlīl*.

With regard to the erecting of other kinds of buildings, such as the *qubbah*, there is a difference of opinion among Muslims. Some believe that the same prohibition applies to any kind of building erected over the grave. As a basis, it is reported from Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh that the Prophet Muḥammad prohibited people from painting the grave, sitting on it, or building over it.[56] But to

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[55]Cf. Imron AM, *Peringatan Khaul*, 64-65.

[56]See, for instance, Imron AM, *Peringatan Khaul*, 79.

others, such a prohibition is more based on the fear that people will exaggerate the importance of a particular figure and that they will misuse a public land for individual purposes. Thus, the prohibition can be taken in its strictest form (harām) or in its more lenient one (makrūh). As well-summarized by al-Jazīrī,

> It is strongly discouraged to build over a grave a house, a roof, a school, a mosque, or a wall...if the intention to build it is not to beautify or enhance it. Otherwise, this is strictly prohibited. This is also discouraged if the building is not erected on public or gifted land.... Otherwise, any kind of building over the grave is prohibited. This opinion is agreed upon by the [four] imāms [of the madhhabs] except that the Hanbalite said that any building whatsoever over a grave is discouraged....[57]

The variation of thought on this matter is also reflected in the answers given by the respondents in Jambi. Almost 50% of the respondents reject the idea of building over a grave. Among these, 18% regard it as a condemned bid'ah, for not only does it have no religious basis but also constitutes an act of exaggeration (mubazzir or mubadhdhir) and ostentation (riyā'); while 30% consider it prohibited (harām), especially when it is obviously ostentatious, as in the case of Nurdin Hamzah's grave, or when it is erected on public or waqf (endowment) land, as

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[57] 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jazīrī, Kitāb al-Fiqh 'alā Madhāhib al-Arba'ah, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Egypt: al-Maktabat al-Tijāriyyat al-Kubrā, n.d.), 536. This work is one of the main sources of Islamic legal studies in higher educational institutions such as the I.A.I.N. (State Institute for Islamic Studies).

is, in fact, the case for many Muslim graves in Jambi and elsewhere. At the same time, however, about 33% of the respondents regard it as a permissible act (*mubāḥ*), with the preconditions already mentioned that: (1) it is not on public land; (2) it is done with the purpose of both protecting the grave and marking it for a later visitation; and (3) it is not done in an ostentatious way and is not out of proportion. Only 9% of the respondents regard it as a good *bid' ah* on the basis that it serves as a marker that is easy to recognize whenever people want to visit a grave.[58]

So far, the idea of marking a grave in a various forms (*qubbah*, fence, tombstones) appears to have a very close relation with that of visiting the grave, i.e., the *ziyārah* (religiously recommended visitation). In a tropical country like Indonesia, where various kinds of weeds grow easily, such a *ziyārah* is made several times a year, especially during religious holidays, to clean up the weeds that surround the graves. This has been partially, but greatly, helped by cementing around the grave and putting down some sea stones to prevent the weeds from overrunning the grave.

Moreover, without a marker it would be extremely difficult for a family to identify the grave of its dead member, especially in a huge public cemetery, and, consequently, it could be practically impossible to tend it. As each family feels responsible for the grave(s) of its own

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[58]The 1995 Jambi *Bid' ah* Survey.

members, such marking has greatly helped people to fulfil their *ziyārah* obligations and to avoid conflict with other families over gravesites. In this regard, marking a grave has helped enable the religiously recommended visitation.

But the *ziyārah* is not only for the purpose of cleaning up the gravesite. In many cases, the visiting family will bring a portion of the Qur'ān, particularly the *Surat Yāsīn*, to be read together with a *tahlīl* and *du'ā'* near the grave. Thus, it is a lesser form of *slametan*, except that there is no offering of food or drink at this time. Afterwards, some water will be poured on the grave and this marks the end of a *ziyārah* trip.[59]

A *ziyārah* is also extended to visiting a spiritually important person in order to cause a blessing (*berkat* or *barakah*) or luck. In a larger context, visiting the tombs of saints or important religious leaders has long been a common

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[59]Field note, Jambi, April 29, 1995. Pouring water or putting flowers on a grave is commonly practiced in Indonesia. Each symbolizes the living blessing to mankind, dead or alive. This practice may be derived from a story narrated by al-Bukhārī, that at one time the Prophet put two green leaves from a date-palm tree over two unknown graves whose occupants, according to the Prophet, were being tortured. He explained that as long as the leaf is green (not dry), the persons in the grave will receive a blessing or that their punishment may be lessened. See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2: 249-250. See also Abbas, "Masalah Hadiah," 216-217; and A. Hassan, "Urusan Qubur," 3: 982-983, who explains that pouring the water was done at the time of the Prophet only to wet the dust of the grave.

practice in the Muslim world.[60] This is also true in the
Indonesian context where many such tombs are scattered
throughout the entire region. In Jambi, for instance, the
tomb of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin, a national hero, is
regularly visited, just as is the tomb of Kiyai Marogan in
Palembang, as mentioned earlier. In Java, visits to the
tombs of the Wali Sanga have been a practice for centuries,
not only by the Javanese but also by others who seek a
spiritual blessing.[61] Just like the family *ziyārah* above,
those who visit these tombs usually read some parts of the
Qur'ān and recite *tahlīl* and *du'ā*. In addition, they often
feel obliged to give some donations or charity to the tomb
keeper, who is often a family member of the deceased, or to
put money in the donation boxes provided for the maintenance
of the grave complex itself.

Such veneration of saints has been the subject of
severe attacks, especially by such scholars as Ibn Taymiyyah
and those who follow his arguments. Ibn Taymiyyah, for

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[60]For a discussion and criticism of this practice, see,
for instance, Memon, *Ibn Taimiya's Struggle*, 13-20. For the
practice in Makkah, Palestine, and Egypt, see, for instance,
von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals* (New York: Henry
Schurman, Inc., 1951), 76-84. For the practice in Maghrib
and Pakistan, see E. Dermenghem, *Le Culte des saints dans
l'Islam Maghrebin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954); and M. Geijbels,
"Aspects of the Veneration of Saints in Islam, with Special
Reference to Pakistan" *The Muslim World* 68 (1978): 176-186.
Geijbels concludes that as in Maghrib, the veneration of
saints will likely to continue in Pakistan. This, in fact,
can also be said regarding the Indonesian practices.

[61]See, for instance, Noer, *Modernist*, 57 n.72.

example, argues that the commonly practiced veneration has a deleterious influence upon the inner life of Muslims and promotes polytheism (*shirk*).[62] An ardent follower of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb also argues that this, and other kinds, of *bid'ah* should diminish and Muslims should be exposed to the true monotheism (*tawhīd*) preached by the Prophet and the *salaf*, the three Muslim generations after him.[63]

In Indonesia, the thoughts of Ibn Taymiyyah are well-known, widely-translated and elaborated upon. Imron, for instance, quotes him on the subject of *ziyārah* as *bid'ah* or what Ibn Taymiyyah calls *ziyārat bid'iyyah*. In Ibn Taymiyyah's words,

> *Ziyārat bid'iyyah* is the visit to a grave with an intention to seek help from the deceased, or to ask his *du'ā*, or to ask God [for the help] near the grave in the believe that this will be more acceptable. This particular kind of *ziyārah* is *bid'ah*, which is something never prescribed by the Prophet--peace be upon him--nor exemplified by his Companions; neither near the Prophet's grave nor the graves of others. This is a kind of polytheism and the cause of it.[64]

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[62]Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 12-13.

[63]See an Indonesian account of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's reformism in Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, vol.2 (Jakarta: UI Press, 1979), 95.

[64]Imron, *Peringatan Khaul*, 98. For the original text, see Ibn Taymiyyah, *Qā'idat Jalīlah fī al-Tawassul wa al-Wasīlah* (Cairo: al-Matba'at al-Salafiyyah, 1374 A.H.), 23-24. See also A. Hassan, "Mendo'a di Kuburan" *Sual-Djawab* 1: 203-204; and Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 271-273.

In Jambi, the practice of food offering (*sesajen*)
during a *ziyārah* and asking assistance from the dead are
basically rejected: 50.51% of the respondents consider the
practice to be a condemned *bidᶜah*, while 44.32% regard it as
harām (prohibited). Like Ibn Taymiyyah, they explain that a
grave is not the place to ask; and to do so would be
considered *khurafāt* (superstition) or *shirk* (polytheism)
which is an unforgivable sin.[65] However, if the visitor
only prays to God, asking forgiveness for the deceased, thus
such an act is considered permissible, even if the visitor
considers his presence near the grave enables him to get a
blessing.[66]

Muslims' veneration of saints may not be separated from
their veneration of the Prophet Muḥammad who is believed by
many of them to be the most perfect human being (*al-insān
al-kāmil*) and the creature closest to God. The latter
veneration is actualized in the forms of celebration of the
Prophet's birthday (*mawlid al-nabī*, or simply called the
mawlid celebration) which are observed worldwide. Like the
veneration of saints, this veneration is also subject to the
attack of reformists who regard it as a reprehensible
bidᶜah. The following section will elaborate the objections
of these reformists and the responses of the traditionalists

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[65]The 1995 Jambi *Bidᶜah* Survey. See also Memon, *Ibn
Taimīya's Struggle*, 266-297.

[66]See a fuller discussion on this issue in Abbas,
"Masalah Berkat" *40 Masalah* 3: 201-227.

who, although aware that *mawlid* celebration is *bid'ah*, consider it as a good one.

Mawlid Celebrations

Except in certain regions, *mawlid* celebrations are observed by Muslims throughout the world to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, which is believed to be on Monday night of the 12th of Rabī' al-Awwal or Rabī' I, the third lunar month. The same day, date, and month is also believed to be the time of his entrance into Makkah (*Fath Makkah*) and of his death.[67]

The embryo *mawlid* celebrations seem to have started in the late eight century when Muhammad's house in Makkah, transformed into an oratory by al-Khayzurān (d.789), the mother of the Caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd (d.809), came to be visited in pious awe by the pilgrims who came to Makkah to perform the *hajj*.[68] But celebrations on a larger scale first emerged in Egypt in the tenth and eleventh centuries during the Fāṭimid era (969-1171) in a climate in which many

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[67]See, for instance, Abū Nu'aim Ahmad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Iṣbahānī (948-1038), *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah* (Hyderabad; Deccan: Dāirat al-Ma'ārif, 1950), 110; and Ahmad al-Zayyat, "The Month of Rabī' al-awwal in the Life of the Prophet" *Majallat al-Azhar* 32 (1960/1961): 1-4.

[68]For the late 19th century performances of *mawlid* in Makkah among the Makkans as well as the *Jāwahs* (Indonesians), see Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 46-48,210,274-275.

Fāṭimids emphasized their descent from the Prophet through his daughter, Fāṭimah.[69]

The practices observed during a *mawlid* celebration have varied from time to time and from one region to another. In its early practice in Egypt in 1122, people attended to listen to sermons and to consume sweets, particularly honey, and, for the poor, to receive alms. About a century later, in 1207, a *mawlid* celebration in Arbela, northern Iraq, was prepared far in advance, in the first month of lunar calendar (Muḥarram) when several favilions and guest rooms were built and when large numbers of sheep, goats, and cows were slaughtered. Besides the sermons, the mystical concert was also performed, suggesting the influence of the Ṣūfīs in the early elaboration of *mawlid* ceremonies.[70]

In Indonesia, the forms of *mawlid* celebrations are also varied in three basic ways: political, traditional, and

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[69]Hasan al-Sandūbī, *Ta'rīkh al-Iḥtifāl bi al-Mawlid al-Nabawī min ' Aṣr al-Awwal ilā ' Aṣr al-Fārūq al-Awwal* (al-Qāhirah, n.p., 1367/1948), 63; Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 145. See also Nico Kaptein, *Perayaan Hari Lahir Nabi Muhammad saw: Asal Usul dan Penyebaran Awalnya; Sejarah di Maghrib dan Spanyol Muslim sampai Abad ke-10/ke-16*, trans. Lilian D. Tedjasudhana (Jakarta: INIS, 1994), 20-24,28-29; and *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Mawlid."

[70]For further development of these ceremonies, see, for instance, Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 145-58. For the development of *mawlid* celebrations in the Maghrib and Spain, see Kaptein, *Perayaan*. See also P. Shinar, "Traditional and Reformist Mawlid Celebrations in the Maghrib," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, ed. Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, 371-413 (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977).

cultural. The political *mawlid* celebration is carried out by every level of government in the country. At a national level, it has been observed since the reign of Soekarno (1945-1966) in the *Istana Negara* (State Palace), possibly creating jealousy in non-Muslim religious groups, since it is the only "religious" celebration to be held in the State Palace at which the President has always been present. In its present form, the celebration is conducted in the following order: (1) a reading of some passages of the Qur'ān; (2) an introductory speech by the Minister of Religious Affairs; (3) a sermon by an appointed religious leader or a Muslim scholar; (4) another reading from portions of the Qur'ān; (5) a speech by the President; and (6) a *du' ā'* led by an *imām*. In such a highly austere celebration, there is no music performed nor food provided.[71]

A similar performance is also observed at the provincial level, with some variations. In Jambi, for

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[71]This form is comparable to the new styles of *mawlid* celebrations that emerged in Algeria by the end of the 1930s in which, according to Shinar, they "tended to discard various colorful folkloristic elements, especially dancing, music, processions, flags and feasting." Due to the influence of puritanical reformism, the festival, says he, "lost much of its former spontaneity, warmth and *joie de vivre*, becoming a somewhat staid, austere and serious affair." Shinar, "Traditional," 411-412. It is unclear whether the political *mawlid* in Indonesia is a result of the reformists' influence, since it is also possible that the government officials have focused only on a "minimal" form of the celebration for technical reasons such as the limitations of time and money.

instance, there is no second reading of the Qur'ān; and the speech by the Governor is delivered before the sermon by the religious scholar. When a Jambi Muslim leader was asked about this, he replied that the congregation tends to leave after the sermon, which is considered the core of the celebration. Afraid of not being heard, the Governor thus gives his speech prior to the sermon.[72]

Another difference is that while the National celebration is held at night to give the entire nation a chance to watch on all Indonesian TV channels, the provincial one is observed during the day, and all Muslim government officers and school students are obliged to attend, sometimes in the middle of their work or school hours. At another time, individual government offices also hold the same ceremony in the same fashion but with some refreshments or a meal provided at the conclusion.

At the traditional level, *mawlid* celebrations are observed in mosques and such institutions as *pesantrens*, *madrasahs*, and *pengajians*. The basic format would include reading from the Qur'ān, an introductory speech by the organizer, a welcoming speech by a senior leader in the community (the *imām*, the leader of a *pesantren*, etc.), a keynote speech by an invited speaker, and a closing *du' ā'*. Food has always been served at the end of these celebrations

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[72]Said Magwie, interview by author, Jambi, February 25, 1995.

to be consumed by the attendees while Arabic-like music or a taped Qur'ānic recitation is played through loudspeakers.

Additional formats are usually held in educational institutions like *pesantens* and *madrasahs*. Prior to the appointed celebration day, some of these institutions will hold student competitions in certain fields, such as reading the Qur'ān, known as *M.T.Q.* (the acronym for *Musābaqah Tilāwatil Qur'ān*), poetry, and oratory speech. The winners of each competition will be announced towards the end of the *mawlid* celebration when the awards will also be given to them.

It is also customary to read a *mawlid* text--a panegyrical poem--such as those written by al-Barjanzī, al-Dibā'ī, or al-Habshī, albeit the last is usually read among Arab groups.[73] In *pesantren* Ar-Riyadh in Palembang, for instance, reading al-Habshī's *Simt al-Durar* is regarded as so crucial that without it, a *mawlid* celebration is not felt complete. The same is also observable in a big Arab *pengajian*, as in Kwitang, Jakarta. At the same time, al-Barjanzī's and al-Dibā'ī's *mawlids* are no less popular. In Jambi, they are always read in such *pesantrens* as Nurul Iman, founded in 1913, and As'ad, established in 1951. In the latter *pesantren*, As'ad's hymn is also recited, besides the popular *Selawat Badar*, a collection of prayers to ask

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[73]For the nature and significance of these panegyrical poems, see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. "Mawlid."

blessings through the Companions who joined the battle of Badr.[74]

During the reading of the panegyrical text, participants in a *mawlid* celebration stand to read in chorus particular *bayt*s or stanzas.[75] Many Muslims believe that the spirit of the Prophet Muḥammad is present with the congregation, in honor of whom they stand (*qiyām*). Sometimes, some will rub perfume to the hands or clothes of the standees, evoking the sweet scent of the Prophet's presence. After a while, the *qiyām* ends and people start sitting again to continue with the rest of the reading. Not all sections of the text are read, probably to shorten the otherwise extremely lengthy celebration.

The *garebeg mulud* in Java is a prime example of a more culturally-bound practice *mawlid* celebration. The *garebeg*, which literally means "the sound of howling wind," is one of the most important ceremonies of the Yogyakarta sultanate and is a celebration of three major Islamic holidays: (1) the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr celebration, called the *garebeg sawal*; (2) the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, the sacrifice feast named *garebeg besar*;

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[74]*Pesantren* Asʿad *mawlid* celebration is easy to observe, since by long tradition, the celebration is always held at the noon of the 12th Rabī I. Other institutions are more flexible in determining the time of celebration depending on convenience. The founder of this *pesantren*, K.H. Abdul Qadir Ibrahim, was a respected N.U. leader and an ʿālim in Jambi. His son and the present leader of the institute, K.H. Najmi Qadir, follows the tradition.

[75]See, for instance, Hurgronje, *Mecca*, 117-118, for the commonly-read refrain.

and (3) the *Mawlid* ceremony, which is identified as *garebeg mulud*.[76]

In these *garebeg* rituals, offerings, which consist primarily of *gunungan* (literally "mountains"--sticky rice shaped like a mountain) are brought to the grand mosque (Mesjid Besar) to be blessed with the recitation of prayers, and then distributed to, or rather competed for, by thousands of people who want a share of the blessed *gunungan*, which is believed to ensure prosperity and health and to prevent misfortunes.[77]

Meanwhile, the place and the function of the Yogyakarta sultan in these rituals are described by Woodward as follows:

> Prior to and during the distribution of the *gunungan*, the sultan sits on the throne, surrounded by the members of the court and the most powerful *pusākā* [royal regalia]. He focuses his attention on the *Tugu*, a monument located south of the palace that symbolizes the union of man and Allāh. According to informants and court documents, he attains mystical union. This, it is said, is the primary source of the blessing that is distributed to the waiting crowd. The sultan is, therefore, able to use his mystical attainments as a means of establishing royal legitimacy. In this ritual he is not simply the representative of Allah; he is,

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[76]B. Soelarto, *Garebeg di Kesultanan Yogyakarta* (Jakarta: Proyek Sasana Budaya Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1979), 27-34. See also Mark Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1989), 205. For a comparison to the Maghrib tradition, see Shinar, "Traditional," 377 and n.27.

[77]See Soelarto, *Garebeg*, 39-46.

for all intents and purposes, God. As such he conveys divine blessing directly to his subjects.[78]

Regardless of their forms, *mawlid* celebrations have been a subject of controversy in the Islamic world, a controversy which is naturally also reflected in the Indonesian context. Al-Suyūṭī, for instance, elaborates on this controversy in his work, *Ḥusn al-Maqṣid fī 'Amal al-Mawlid*, in which he analyzes the opinion of Sheikh Tāj al-Dīn ibn 'Umar 'Alī al-Lakhmī al-Iskandarī, known as al-Fākihānī (d.1331 or 1334), a late Mālikīte who, in his *al-Mawrid fī al-Kalām 'alā 'Amal al-Mawlid*, considers *mawlid* as a condemned *bid'ah*. Al-Fākihānī's primary objection seems to have sprung from his conviction that *mawlid* celebrations have no root (*aṣl*) in the Qur'ān, the *sunnah* of the Prophet, nor from the *salaf*.[79] This is also one the primary reasons that the Indonesian reformists reject the celebration. In

[78]Woodward, *Islam in Java*, 179. For a more detail process of this rite and its Sūfī's influence and significance, see pages 205-214 of the book. See also Soelarto, *Garebeg*, 78. Compare this practice with that of the presumably first *mawlid* celebration in Sunni Islam by Muzaffar al-Dīn al-Kokbūrī in Arbela, in 1207, as reported by Ibn Khallikān (1211-1282) in his *Biographical Dictionary*, tran. McGuckin de Slane, vol.2 (Paris, 1843-1871), 539-540.

[79]See also Memon, *Ibn Taimīya's Struggle*, 13, 242-243, where Ibn Taymiyyah argues that everyday is just the same and there is no need to turn certain days into festivals. This was, according to him, only the practice of the Jews and Christians, and the *mawlid* celebration is a mere imitation to the Christian observances of Christmas or out of love and reverence for the Prophet of Islam. See also G.E. von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 68; and Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 146.

one of its magazines, PERSIS clearly states that the Prophet himself never required his followers to celebrate his birthday.[80]

It is undoubtedly true that no such order--nor prohibition--is found in either the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. But according to the traditionalists, there are at least three sound traditions in which such a celebration is believed to have found a considerable support. The first one is quoted by al-Suyūṭī and Abbas from Ibn Ḥajr al-'Asqalānī who regards the following story to be a basis for the permissibility of the celebration that he considers as a good *bid'ah*. It is reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim that the Prophet Muḥammad once arrived in Madīnah and found the Jews fasting on the day of 'Āshūrā' (the 10th day of *muḥarram*). When he asked them about this practice, they replied: "This is the day when God let Pharaoh drown while Moses was rescued. For that reason we fast today as an expression of thanks to God--Exalted is He." Thus, Ibn Ḥajr argues, as an expression of thanks to God, similar forms of worship ('*ibādah*) can be performed to celebrate the day; and for the Muslims, he reasons, what could be a bigger occasion

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[80]PERSIS, *al-Muslimun* II, no. 4 (1955): 38. See also A. Hassan, "Membaca Maulid Nabi," *Soal-Jawab* 1: 371-374.

to thank God than for the coming or the birth of the
Prophet?[81]

A similar rhetorical question, and also with an
affirmative answer, is found in much of the Indonesian
literature, a great deal of which, however, appears only in
booklets or Indonesian translations of Arabic books. Abdun,
for example, in refuting *al-Muslimun* propaganda against
mawlid, argues that abundant verses of the Qur'ān as well as
the *sunnah* of the Prophet encourage Muslims to thank God for
His grace. Since the Prophet himself is the best grace,
shouldn't it be appropriate, he reasons, to celebrate his
birthday as an expression of thanks to God?[82] A translation
of al-Maliki's work also shows that the first and primary
reason for the permissibility of the celebration is its
being an expression of thanks and happiness for the coming
of the Prophet.[83]

The second tradition cited by al-Suyūṭī is quoted from
al-Bayhaqī (d.1066) who narrated on the authority of Anas
ibn Mālik that the Prophet performed an 'aqīqah for his

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[81]Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-Maqsid fī 'Amal al-
Mawlid*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Ātā (Bayrūt, 1985), 63;
Abbas, "Masalah Maulud Nabi Muhammad SAW," in *40 Masalah* 2:
172.

[82]Abdullah Abdun, *Sanggahan atas Tulisan Pengingkar Nur
Nabi Besar Muhammad SAW* (Bondowoso: Penerbit A.A., 1980), 6-
11.

[83]Muhammad 'Alwi al-Maliki, *Sekitar Maulid Nabi SAW*,
trans. A. Zarkasyi Chumaidy (Bandung: PT. Sinar Baru
Algesindo, 1994), 5,9-10. See also Abbas, "Masalah Maulud,"
175-176.

birth after he was appointed as a Prophet.[84] He did this despite his knowledge that his uncle, 'Abd al-Muttalib, had already performed an 'aqīqah for him on the seventh day after his birth, and that this rite can only be performed once. Thus, according to al-Suyūtī, the Prophet's act should be understood as his expression of thanks to God Who gave him life, appointed him as a mercy to all humankind (cf.QS.21:107), and made him a distinguishing factor (pembeda) to his ummah. For his ummah, al-Suyūtī concludes, it is more than appropriate to express gratitude for his birth by gathering with friends and relatives, preparing food and other good actions, and expressing happiness in speeches or talks.[85]

According to al-'Āmilī, however, the use of the 'aqīqah narration above as a basis for the mawlid celebration is not completely accurate on two grounds. First, the narration is not supported by other facts so that it is not clear whether the Prophet did the 'aqīqah for himself or 'Abd al-Muttalib did it for him. Secondly, although it is true that 'aqīqah is mandatory, it is only obligated once in a lifetime.

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[84] 'Aqīqah (Indonesian: Akekah) is a prescribed ritual welcoming a newborn baby by shaving his/her head for the first time, usually on the seventh day after his/her birth. See Federspiel, Dictionary, 12. In the Indonesian practice, the mawlid text is often read in this rite and the shaving is performed during the qiyām. This occasion is also used to announce the name (tasmiyah) of the baby.

[85] al-Suyūtī, Husn al-Maqṣid, 64-65.

Consequently, if the Prophet's 'aqīqah is meant to celebrate his birthday, he should have done it every year.[86]

Nevertheless, the testimony that the Prophet did celebrate his birthday by thanking God for what He had given him seems to be based on solid evidence. In a narration by Muslim, when the Prophet was asked regarding his Monday fasting, he replied that he did so because Monday was his birthday and the day when the revelation was first sent down to him.[87] According to al-Maliki, this narration indicates the significance of the Prophet's birthday, except that the ways by which it is celebrated differ: some would fast while others would organize a gathering where food is offered and the names of God and His Prophet are repeatedly chanted and praised.[88]

The third tradition used as a supporting basis for mawlid celebration, as elaborated by al-Suyūṭī, is taken from a story about Abū Lahab, Muhammad's uncle. Quoting from Shams al-Dīn ibn al-Jazarī in his book 'Urf al-Ta'rīf bi al-Mawlid al-Sharīf and from Shams al-Dīn ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī's Mawrid al-Ṣādī fī Mawlid al-Hādī, al-Suyūṭī retells the story of Abū Lahab who is punished by the fire (as witnessed by Q.S.111:1-3) but who gets a dispensation to drink water from his two thumbs every Monday night. This

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[86]al-'Āmilī, Perayaan maulid, 32-33.

[87]See Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, 3: 168.

[88]al-Maliki, Sekitar Maulid, 7-8.

dispensation is due to Abū Lahab's happiness when he heard the news of the birth of Muḥammad from his female slave, Suwaibah, who was instantly freed by Abū Lahab as an expression of his joy, and who afterwards breastfed the infant Muḥammad.

The analogy of this story is clear to al-Suyūṭī, as he says that if the great infidel and enemy of Islam is given such a dispensation for his happiness about the birthday of the Prophet, a greater blessing would logically follow for the monotheist Muslim who is not only happy about the birthday but is also showing his love to the Prophet through *mawlid* celebrations.[89] Similar reasoning is also offered by al-Maliki, who gives a list of literature containing the narration about Abū Lahab, one of which is al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[90]

Thus, there are at least three narrations used interpretatively by the traditionalist scholars to support *mawlid* celebrations. Although these narrations do not directly command Muslims to celebrate the Prophet's birthday, they do indicate the significance of the birthday which Muslims, according to the traditionalists' arguments, are encouraged to celebrate in various forms, of which the *mawlid* celebration is only a part.

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[89]al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Maqṣid*, 65-66.

[90]al-Maliki, *Sekitar Maulid*, 5-7. See also al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 7: 25-26.

Besides the issue of the roots of the *mawlid*

celebration, another attack on such celebrations concerns

the reading of the panegyrical texts.[91] In these texts the

Prophet is characterized with such accodates as the "giver

of intercession" (*shafāʻ ah*), "remission" (*ghufrān*), and

"security" (*salāmah*). According to Chalil, these ascribed

attributes would elevate Muḥammad to divine stature and deny

his humanity. Therefore, they are contrary to dogmatic

theology, in which God alone is the absolute helper and

protector. Chalil argues further that the extravagant

exaltation of the Prophet, particularly the concept of

shafāʻ ah, goes beyond sober eulogy and could lead to the act

of polytheism (*shirk*).[92]

Chalil's arguments against the Prophet's *shafāʻ ah* in

particular and the panegyrical texts in general are not

convincingly based. As argued by Hamim, the concept of

shafāʻ ah is not presented in a clear-cut way in the Qur'ān;

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[91]See, for instance, Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 146.

[92]Chalil, "Fatwa 'Oelama' Jang Haq Tentang Bidʻ ah Mauloedan," *Pembela Islam* no. 65 (1934): 22. Presently, a similar attack is also launched against the *mawlid* gathering in which Barzanjī's text is read. According to Ghozali, the critics, the text not only is not understood by its readers but also is irrational, containing such stories as the shaking of the Persian throne when Muḥammad was born, the destruction of idols, and the turning off of the Zoroastrian fire. This is apart from the exaggerating attributes of Muḥammad who, to him, is described more modestly in the Qur'ān. All of this, he concludes, is a deviation that contradicts the spirit of Islamic "spirituality." See Abd. Rohim Ghozali, "Deviasi Peringatan Maulid," *Media Indonesia* (an Indonesian daily newspaper), Wednesday, July 16, 1997.

while some traditions of the Prophet and of *hadīth qudsī* prove to some extent the acceptability of *shafā' ah*.[93] At the same time, Chalil, according to him, fails to recognize the panegyrical texts as a part of the literary genre known as *al-madā'ih al-nabawiyyah* (Prophetic panegyrics) or the *shamā'il* and *dalā'il* literature which typically "express a lavish exaltation of the birth of the Prophet and praise his life and virtues."

As further argued by Hamim, while the Qur'ān itself mentions Muhammad in praiseworthy terms (see, e.g., Q.S.33:43,56) the panegyrical texts could be considered as "sober eulogies in which love of Muhammad is expressed in tender, colorful and grandiose terms without elevating him to the level of a deity."[94] In Muslim tradition, the writing of such texts began with al-Tirmīdhī, the great traditionist quoted earlier, with his *Shamā'il al-Mustafā*. He was later followed by such scholars as Abū Nu' aim al-Isfahānī (d.1037), al-Bayhaqī, Qādī ' Iyād Ibn Mūsā (d.1149), and Abū al-' Abbās Ahmad al-Qastallānī (d.1517).[95]

At a practical level, the reading of the panegyrical texts serves more as a ceremonial imitation by the

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[93]Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought," 197-198. *Hadīth qudsī* is the "sacred" sayings of God which are narrated by the Prophet but which are not part of the Qur'ān.

[94]Hamim, "Moenawar Chalil's Reformist Thought," 198.

[95]Schimmel, *And Muhammad*, 32-34.

Indonesian Muslims than a set of teachings on the high position attributed to the Prophet. This is basically due to the fact that all of the texts are read in Arabic, the language which has been mastered by only a very few Indonesians. According to A. Hassan, such reading is useless: reading even the Qur'ān without understanding it brings no merit.[96]

It could be more valuable for the general mass of Muslims if the texts were to be translated into Indonesian and read in this language; alternatively, a totally new Indonesian panegyrical text could be written both for the purpose of reading it during *mawlid* celebrations and for teaching the people of the high esteem in which is held their Prophet. In fact, there has actually been an attempt in this direction: Abbas reported that in 1968, people in Baiturrahman mosque in Jakarta read an "Indonesian" *mawlid* text during its *mawlid* celebration. The text is entitled *Zahr al-Basim fī Athwāri Abī al-Qāsim* and was written by Sayyid Usman bin Yahya, presumably in the Arabic script.[97] However, the use of this text never entered mainstream Muslim practice in Indonesia.

No less frequent than the attack on the reading of the panegyrical texts is that on the tradition of standing (*qiyām*) in the middle of the reading. According to A.

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[96]A. Hassan, "Membaca Maulid," 372-374.

[97]Abbas, "Masalah Maulud," 164-165.

Hassan, the traditionalists, using a Ṣūfī point of view, regard the qiyām as respect for the spirit of Muḥammad who is believed to be present during the qiyām. In Hassan's view, whether or not Muḥammad's spirit is present during the qiyām is a mystery which cannot be explained unless it is by God or His messenger. Rhetorically he asks: Has God or His messenger ever said that Muḥammad's spirit is present at such a rite? And why is the spirit not considered present every time we mention the Prophet's name or when we tell stories about his prophethood? Regarding the qiyām itself, Hassan is convinced that there is no religious source that requires us to stand as an act of honoring the spirit of the Prophet or other prophets. According to him, the contrary would be true because the Prophet is reported to have prevented people from standing in his honor, as was done by the infidels in honor of their fellows.[98]

Thus, the qiyām, in Hassan's view, is a reprehensible innovation, just as is the belief that one acquires merit through hearing the reading of the panegyrical texts, the reading of which is, according to him, an act of foolishness and is thus prohibited by the religion.[99]

The question of the presence of Muḥammad's spirit (rūḥ) is affirmatively answered by such scholars as al-Maliki, who

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[98]A. Hassan, "Membaca Maulid," 373-374.

[99]A. Hassan, "Membaca Maulid," 374. See also a summary of Hassan's views on mawlid and PERSIS's social rejection of mawlid celebrations in Pijper, Beberapa Studi, 134-137.

argues that, with all the perfection that the Prophet deserves in his life in after-world (*'ālam al-barzakh*), the Prophet's spirit is able to go around God's suzerainty (*malakūt*) and to visit worthy gatherings and places of spiritual illumination and knowledge. According to him, the same is true for the spirits of any good Muslims who have passed away. He bases his argument on the sayings of both Mālik ibn Anas and Salmān al-Fārisī, as explained by Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350) in his *Rūḥ*, that the spirits of good believers can flow to any direction they wish.[100]

With regard to the *qiyām*, al-Maliki affirms that it is not obligated nor mandated by the Prophet. It is merely a spontaneous gesture of respect to the Prophet and an expression of happiness for his birthday. Thus, it is a mere custom, not part of the religion or of the *sharī'ah*. Nevertheless, he views it positively, as an act considered good by many Muslim religious scholars. Five reasons are then elaborated to support this view, including several traditions of times where the Prophet encouraged people to stand up in honor of a respected person.[101]

In his *fatwā*, Abbas mentions that the *qiyām* has been practiced and considered as a good tradition in the Shāfi'īte circles and promoted by such scholars as Abū

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[100]al-Maliki, *Sekitar Maulid*, 29-30.

[101]al-Maliki, *Sekitar Maulid*, 28-36.

Shāmah, al-Suyūṭī, al-Subkī, and Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān.[102] He also claims that *qiyām* was inspired by a tradition in which the Prophet ordered the *Aws* clan of his Companions to give full respect to Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, their chief, by rising from their seats.[103]

So far, at the theoretical level of discussion there have been various sources and interpretations cited which have been elaborated on to make a judgement on *mawlid* celebrations. As far as *ijtihād* is concerned, each judgement is valid in its own right. But if the concept of *maslaḥah* is to be used here, it will be clear shortly that such celebrations are very much necessitated at the practical level as one of the actual interpretations and presentations of Islam.

As the Jambi Survey has it, 63.44% of the respondents consider *mawlid* celebrations as a good *bidʿah*. They argue that such celebrations offer many benefits to Muslims, such as being able to refresh their memories of the Prophet, by which they are able to emulate him.[104] These celebrations are not only considered by them as forms of worship and remembrance to God, but also as a kind of display of Islamic

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[102]Abbas, "Masalah Maulud," 167-170.

[103]Abbas, "Masalah Maulud," 178.

[104]See also Soelarto, *Garebeg*, 28; and Ghozali, "Deviasi," where he suggests that all forms of religious activities must be started from the Prophet ethics and directed toward a collective awareness of actualizing this ethics. This, according to him, is a "new spirituality."

piety (*shi'ār*) which is encouraged by the Qur'ān (cf.Q.S.22:32).[105]

Meanwhile, 21.50 % of the respondents regard it as permissible (*mubāh*) to observe the celebrations since, according to them, they contain some Islamic values. The same celebrations are also considered as recommended (*sunnah*) by 15.05% of the respondents, who regard them as a means of Islamic mission (*da'wah*). Some even argue that they can be obligatory (*wājib*) at the time when *da'wah* and *shi'ār* are regarded as necessary.[106]

Similar variations also appear in the answers of respondents who were asked about the reading of the panegyrical texts. More than half of the respondents (55.55%) consider it as a good *bid'ah* because it brings benefits because of the exposition of its meanings, particularly to the illiterate. It is also thought of as a form of *dhikr* (remembrance) to God and His messenger from whom mercy and love are hoped. As for those respondents (26.26%) who regard the reading as permissible, their arguments refer to the hoped-for benefits, such as the *da'wah* and *shi'ār* by which Muslims are able to emulate their Prophet. Some of the respondents (15.15%) are convinced that such reading is recommended (*sunnah*) because it contains various *salawāt*s--prayers for the Prophet--the reading of

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[105]See also Abbas, "Masalah Maulud," 174-175.

[106]The 1995 Jambi *Bid'ah* Survey.

which is encouraged by the Qur'ān (chapter 33:56-57). To these respondents, it can even be an obligation at a time when Islam and the Muslims are weakening.[107]

It is interesting to note that none of the respondents regards either the *mawlid* celebration or the reading of the panegyrical texts as forbidden (*harām*). With regard to the latter issue, only 2.02% of the respondents see it as a reprehensible *bid' ah*, particularly because the meanings of the texts are not comprehended by the listeners.[108] As mentioned earlier, the texts are all read in Arabic which is not understood by many people in the Jambi or Indonesian society. While a new Indonesian text will have to find its own way, the present ceremonial reading of the Arabic texts will likely continue to be an inseparable part of the traditional *mawlid* celebrations in Indonesian society.

Mawlid celebrations represent a large and general practice among the Indonesian Muslims which can be compared only to such other feasts as '*Īd al-Fitr*, '*Īd al-Adhā*, and *Isrā' Mi' rāj*. Such reformist organizations as Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad also "celebrate" *mawlid* and the other feasts, but there is no reading of the *mawlid* texts. They observe the feasts by some readings from the Qur'ān and by giving special sermons in the month of Rabī' I. A. Hassan has criticized this and suggested that the feasts should be

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[107]The 1995 Jambi *Bid' ah* Survey.

[108]The 1995 Jambi *Bid' ah* Survey.

observed at other months, explaining to the masses that these feasts are not part of religious obligations and the only reason to hold them in certain months is because holidays are given only in those months.[109] But if such celebrations as *mawlid* is considered *bid' ah*, Hassan's suggestions serve no purpose except apologetic ones.

There are other practices which are smaller in scope and much more individual, but which are nonetheless subject to similar controversy where the question of *bid' ah* is raised. In what follows, some of these practices will be discussed and may be termed as *khilāfiyyah* issues because of differences of opinion surrounding them.

Khilāfiyyah Issues

Khilāfiyyah refers to differences of opinions concerning particular, and usually minute, details of religious practices which do not affect basic belief and doctrine in Islam.[110] While considered trivial by some Muslims, others regard them as important, particularly because they are attached to the *bid' ah*-related consequences.[111] Out of numerous possible examples, the issues concerning the Friday congregation (*jum' ah*) will be

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[109]See A. Hassan, "Perayaan Hari Lahir dan Mi'raj Nabi S.A.W.," *Soal-Jawab* 2: 795-796.

[110]See, for instance, Federspiel, *Dictionary*, 130.

[111]Regarding the controversy on this issue, see Noer, *Modernist*, 238-240.

discussed here, since the gathering constitutes a religious obligation which is enjoined on each male in the Muslim society.

The first controversial issue concerns the language used for the *khuṭbah* (the Friday congregational speech or sermon), which was commonly delivered in Arabic until the first two decades of this century.[112] This issue is significant in two aspects: it is a unique characteristic of non-Arabic speaking countries and it is a distinctive example of a *bidʿ ah* accusation on the part of the traditionalists, rather than the reformists who usually are the inspirers of such accusations.

The initial language of instruction of Islam was and is Arabic. Both the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth of the Prophet were revealed in this language and have been taught in it ever since. The *khuṭbah* was also delivered in this language, the only one known to the Prophet. Thus, delivering a *khuṭbah* in Arabic is a Prophetic *sunnah* which, although its contents may vary, consists of five constant elements. In *Fatḥ al-Qarīb*, these elements are: (1) praising God; (2) *ṣalawāt* to the Prophet; (3) warning the people to have "fear of God" (*waṣiyyah bi al-taqwā*); (4) reading a portion of the Qur'ān;

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[112]Pijper, *Beberapa Studi*, 52.

and (5) praying a supplication (du' ā') for the believers.[113]

In his commentary on the khuṭbah issue, al-Bājūrī (1783-1860), a prominent Shāfi'īte, mentions that the khuṭbah should be delivered in Arabic with the following conditions: (1) it must be in Arabic if there is an Arab in the congregation; (2) if no Arab is present then only the Qur'ānic verse that must be read in Arabic; and (3) it is required that at least one person in the congregation is familiar with Arabic. Otherwise, the whole congregation errs and their congregation is not valid, because it has ignored the mandate to learn the language.[114]

These widely adopted Shāfi'īte works[115] influenced the way Indonesian Muslims delivered their khuṭbahs until the first quarter of the twentieth century when, according to Pijper's observation, many reformist 'ulamā' began objecting to the Arabic khuṭbah. In 1927 there was a controversy in Bangka, an island in the present South Sumatra province,

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[113]Ibn al-Qāsim al-Ghazzī, *Fatḥ al-Qarīb* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1894), 180-182. See also von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, 11, where he argues that it was the Muslim jurists who were responsible for the fixing of this liturgy.

[114]Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Bājūrī, *Ḥāshiyah*, vol.1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1994), 420.

[115]See, for instance, van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*, 119-120. A brief discussion on these and other Shāfi'īte works is found in H. Abdoel'karim Amru'llah, *Alkawakib-oed-Doerriah, Menerangkan Masalah Boleh Choethbah Djom' at dalam Bahasa Indonesia* (n.p., 1940), 21-24.

where a reformist named Haji Bakri made the following

controversial remark regarding the *khutbah* in Arabic:

> If the congregation who listens to the *khutbah* does not
> understand its meaning, then there is no different
> between listening to the *khutbah* and listening to a
> frog croak.[116]

Hamka also reported that one of various issues discussed by

his father (Haji Rasul) and his friends was how to change

the language of *khutbah* from Arabic to the local language.

He remarks,

> So far the Friday *khutbah* has been delivered in Arabic
> and the first person who did not know its meaning was
> the *khatīb* himself! Then they [Haji Rasul and the
> others] issued a *fatwā* that *khutbah* can be delivered in
> a vernacular language. If Arabic is to be used then it
> can be used for the requirements [i.e., the five
> elements] of *khutbah*, so that the [rest of] *khutbah* can
> benefit the Muslims from its guidance and teaching.[117]

A. Hassan was also one of the key players in the

khutbah controversy, about which he issued two *fatwās*. In

the first *fatwā*, he elaborated the purpose of such an advice

as *khutbah*. Under the general notions of the Qur'ān (i.e.,

Q.S. 38:29 and 47:24) and the ḥadīth of the Prophet which

encourages Muslims to think, learn, and understand, *khutbah*

was viewed as a means by which religious advice and

teachings can be understood. This purpose is only achievable

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[116]Pijper, *Beberapa Studi*, 52-53.

[117]Hamka, *Pengaruh*, 11. See the original *fatwā* in
Amru'llah, *Alkawakib*, 10-11.

if *khutbah* is understood by its listeners. Thus, the vernacular is simply inevitable.[118]

Hassan argues further that there is no reference in the Qur'ān or hadīth to a command to the believers to deliver the *khutbah* in Arabic to the exclusion of other languages. That the Prophet Muhammad delivered his *khutbahs* in Arabic is obviously because that was his only language and the language of his own people. According to Hassan, if this is to be used as a basis to oblige the use of Arabic in *khutbah*, then every Muslim must also speak Arabic, because the Prophet spoke only Arabic. Thus, he concludes, the question of language is really conditional, depending on what language is practically understood by a particular Muslim community.[119] As also argued by Haji Rasul, those who give a *khutbah* in Arabic within the community, in this case Indonesia, which does not understand it, contradict the meaning of Q.S.16:25 in which God commands the believers to invite others with wisdom; that is, something that can be learnt. According to him, Q.S.14:4 also indicates that, like the prophets who were sent to speak in the language of their people, the preachers such as *khatībs* must also use the language of their own people.[120]

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[118]A. Hassan, "Sahkah Khutbah Jum'ah dengan Bahasa Indonesia," *Soal-Jawab* 1: 203-205. See also Amru'llah, *Alkawakib*, 10-11.

[119]A. Hassan, "Sahkah Khutbah," 204-205.

[120]Amru'llah, *Alkawakib*, 11-16.

In the second *fatwā*, Hassan differentiated '*ibādāt* from *adat* and included the *khuṭbah* in the latter category, since it was not fixed by the Prophet, had no exact form, and any convenient language can therefore be utilized. To him, *khuṭbah* is not the order of worship (*perintah ibadat*) but that of custom (*perintah adat*).[121]

In the second quarter of the twentieth century, responses and practices following the reformists' efforts to indigenize the language of *khuṭbah* were varied. In Pijper's observation and in reports sent to him, a *khuṭbah* in local languages, particularly Javanese, was not uncommon. There was also a suggestion which was widely practiced, that is to deliver the *khuṭbah* in two languages: first in Arabic and then in its translation into the local language. But this suggestion and practice was also rejected by the traditionalists on the basis that, as mentioned earlier, since we ought to follow the Prophet who delivered his *khuṭbahs* in Arabic, we also have to deliver the Friday speech in Arabic. To act differently is considered as a reprehensible *bidʿah*.[122]

It is very interesting to notice that this mode of argumentation by the traditionalists is actually the typical mode of the reformists, that is to literally follow what was

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[121]A. Hassan, "Bahasa dalam Khutbah," *Soal-Jawab* 2: 463-464.

[122]Pijper, *Beberapa Studi*, 53-55.

exemplified by the Prophet. In the language of *khutbah* issue, the reformists instead look at the purpose of the *khutbah* and thus establish their argument on the basis of *maslahah* which in earlier issues of this study is simply ignored by them. This is, then, one obvious example of the traditionalists' turn from their common interpretive approaches as well as the reformists' turn from their own somewhat literal arguments.

The present state of discourse has moved beyond the language of the *khutbah* to some practices surrounding the Friday congregation. Ash-Shiddieqy, for instance, listed several alleged *bid ah* practices related to the congregation.[123] The question of language is not listed as it is no longer an issue today. But the listed practices are still very much at stake. In many mosques in Jambi, for instance, one can observe how they are thoroughly observed, especially by old generation of '*ulamā*'. It is interesting to note that they also have their own list of alleged *bid ah*: (1) when a *khatīb* does not use a text to deliver his *khutbah* and (2) when he raises his hand during the *khutbah* or when making a supplication in the second *khutbah*. But many of the respondents (65%) who are asked about these issues regard them as permissible conduct (*mubāh*) as long as they are not exaggeratedly done. Some of them (11.95%)

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[123]Ash-Shiddieqy, *Criteria*, 116-117. See nos. 17-23, and 41-46 of Appendix A below.

discourage such practices and consider them as *makrūh*
(discouraged), since, according to them, *khuṭbah* is
different from any ordinary speech, in that the former is a
part of a prescribed ritual. Some even go further to
consider such actions as forbidden (*harām*) or bad *bidᶜah*,
primarily because *khuṭbah* is part of the rite which is
considered as a substitute of two prayer cycles and such
actions would destroy the perfect observance of the
rite.[124]

Thus, as a part of the Friday congregation, *khuṭbah* is
mainly considered as a ritual one must observe with certain
conditions, such as the calmness of its presentation, that
makes it different from any other speeches. This calm is
preserved if the *khaṭīb* reads a text for his *khuṭbah*. The
text is then considered necessary although it is certainly
not based on the Prophet's example, for he never used any
text for his speeches. On the other hand, the reformists
like Hassan took a liberal view by regarding the *khuṭbah* not
as an ᶜ*ibadah* rite but as *adat* which a *khaṭīb* can perform as
adat permits. This view, however, is peripheral since
Muslims have never considered *khuṭbah* as an external element
of the Friday congregation. Nevertheless, both the
traditionalists' and the reformists' approaches have reached
the final conclusion that interpretations are very much
involved in seeing such religious rites and practices as

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[124]The 1995 Jambi *Bidᶜah* Survey.

khuṭbah. Instead of seeing these interpretations as legitimate understanding of the issue, each group claims more truth than the other by condemning the other as the makers of *bidᶜah*, a claim which no one, to be sure, ever guarantees.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Since its inception, Islam has developed peacefully in Indonesia. The centuries-long contact with Islam and the flexible views and approaches of the Sūfī preachers made the religion widely accepted by the Indonesian people. Owing to this wide acceptance, today Indonesia enjoys such attributes as being the largest Muslim country in the world.

Religious conflicts, however, have not been entirely absent from the Indonesian experience. An example of these is the controversy surrounding the fifteenth-century Siti Jenar, a heterodox saint who taught what he considered the ultimate truth of mystical reality. Similarly, the heterodox-orthodox controversy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, between the group of Syamsuddin As-Sumatrani and that of Nuruddin Ar-Raniri, shows that even in such intensely Islamized regions as Aceh were not immune from religious conflicts. Since then, particularly from the 19th century onwards, such conflicts have taken the form of *bid'ah* controversies, whose tensions are still alive today.

Bid'ah has largely been used as a term to describe beliefs or practices which are considered by many Muslims as reprehensible or erroneous. But from the linguistic point of view, *bid'ah* is simply a generic term that means innovation, something invented without prior example. This is supported

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by its adoption in the Qur'ān as one of God's names, *al-Badī'* (Q.S.2:117; 6:102), which means the innovator of a unique and beautiful creation, including the heavens and the earth. In Islam, God's names are not only regarded as good names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) but they are also to be imitated or epitomized. Based on this argument, since God is *al-Badī'*, connecting all *bid'ah* with error alone is linguistically unjustified.

A deeper look into two other verses, which have *bid'ah*-derivative words, unveils yet another understanding of what the Qur'ān "has to say" about *bid'ah*. In the first, Q.S.46:9, Muḥammad's mission as a prophet was not seen as an innovation, since there were many prophets before him. At the same time, there is no implication from this verse that the *first* prophet was an erroneous innovation. In the second verse, Q.S.57:27, Christian monasticism (*rahbāniyyah*) is clearly mentioned by the Qur'ān as an innovation, but the holy book also reveals that some of its observers were rewarded, while others were going astray.

Thus, while most Arabic and Indonesian works use the above mentioned Qur'ānic verses as a confirmation of the literal meaning as well as the reprehensibility of *bid'ah*, the present study has found that *bid'ah* is actually a neutral term which can be connected both to the goodness, such as in God's being *al-Badī'*, or to a possible error, such as in some of the forms of the Christian monasticism.

More importantly, this study suggested the existence of a

"Qur'ānic conception of *bid ah*" as follows:

> The general mission of every Muslim is to follow the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Part of this mission is to make innovations, whenever necessary, in two avenues: one is within natural schemes, where the possibilities are unlimited; and the other is within the religious spheres, where the innovations must be intended to seek God's pleasure and be observed thoroughly. Needless to say, all these innovations should be subject to the injunctions of both the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*.[1]

As far as the ḥadīth is concerned, it has been found

that what is identified as the *Bid ah Ḥadīth* has been the

inspiring source of many *bid ah* discourses. Through *isnād*

(chain) and *matn* (text) criticism, two sound versions of the

Ḥadīth have been established. Both come from the narrations

of Muslim, who relies on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abd

Allāh. The first of the two versions reads:

> Jābir ibn 'Abd Allāh said: When the Prophet--peace be upon him--gave speech, his eyes became red, his voice rose, and his emotion increased, as if he were instructing an army, saying: "Your [enemy has made] morning and afternoon attacks [on you] (*ṣabbahakum wa massākum*)." Then he said: "[The distance] between me and the Judgment Day is just like these two (referring to his forefinger and middle finger)." He continued: "Now then, verily the best speech is the Book of God and the best guidance is that of Muḥammad. And the worst of things is its newness, every innovation is an error." Then he said: "I am more preferable to every believer than himself. Whoever leaves a property, then it belongs to his family; and whoever leaves a debt or

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[1]Cf. page 112 above.

family, then I will take care of the family and will be responsible for the debt."[2]

Other versions of the *Ḥadīth*, which go through the authority of al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah and, particularly, that of 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, have been found less than sound. Unfortunately, this fact is not recognized in many works on *bid'ah*. In the Indonesian case, hadīths from authentic sources have often been mixed with weak hadīths or some part of them.

Concerning the interpretations of the *Bid'ah Ḥadīth*, by which many Muslims understand *bid'ah*, scholars are basically divided into two groups. One group, which appears to be the majority, argues that the *Ḥadīth* comes in a general Arabic sentence that allows exceptions. Thus, the *Ḥadīth* should not be used to classify all *bid'ah* as bad or reprehensible. The other group, however, insists on the literal meaning and application of the *Ḥadīth*, which says that every innovation is an error. The present study supports the argument of the majority group, since there are many parallels to such exceptions found in the Qur'ān and the hadīth. Furthermore, based on the Qur'ānic conception of *bid'ah* above and an interpretation of a sound hadīth narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim through the authority of 'Āishah binti Abū Bakr, this study offers a new interpretation of the *Ḥadīth* as follows:

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[2]Cf. page 153. For the other version, see page 154.

every new thing is indeed linguistically called *bid'ah*.
Some *bid'ahs* may lead you to an error. Hence, make your
best efforts to learn carefully and attach yourself to
the guidance found in the Qur'ān (the best speech) and
the hadīth (the best guidance), for they will minimize
your chance of falling into error.[3]

The fact that both the Qur'ān and the hadīth do not
conclusively reject innovations is further supported by the
concept of *sunnah*, which is translated as tradition. Like
bid'ah, which can be good or bad, *sunnah*, which in a way is
an outcome of *bid'ah*, may also be praiseworthy and rewarded
(*sunnat hasanah*) or condemned and execrated (*sunnat
sayyi'ah*). As argued in this study, each category of *bid'ah*
or *sunnah* can be established through a systematic effort in
interpreting the Qur'ān and the hadīth and the spirit
('*illah* and *hikmah*) that they contain. This effort is called
ijtihād, which is adopted in various ways by both the
proponents and the opponents of *bid'ah*.

Among many means of *ijtihād*, *maslahah* and *istihsān* are
found not only related to *bid'ah* in general but also
necessary to either justify or reject a particular *bid'ah*.
Maslahah, for instance, was the spirit that stimulated the
Companions of the Prophet to collect the Qur'ān for the
first time and that encouraged 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb to
initiate the gathering for the *tarāwīh* prayers. Meanwhile,
istihsān is also a way of exercising *ijtihād* that has been
observed to remove the rigidity of law or the rigorism of

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[3]Cf. page 186 above.

bid ah combatters. Hence, while many works emphasize the differences between *bid ah* and *maslahah* or *istihsān*, this study has discovered many of their similarities and relations.

Similarly, many *adats* (customs) or *'urf* may be labelled *bid ah*, but they do not necessarily contradict Islam. In many cases, they are the actual implementation of the religion. This assertion is supported by some examples of popular religious practices in Indonesia. First, the practice of *slametan* (ritual meal), which is strongly attacked as a condemned *bid ah* by the Indonesian reformists, has been proven not only to have a textual link to both the Qur'ān and the *hadīth* but also to cause a common benefit (*maslahah*) to the Muslims.

Secondly, some grave-related practices commonly considered *bid ah*, such as the *ziyārah* (visit), are also textually based, although some others, such as the elaborate marking of a grave, are undoubtedly regarded as reprehensible.

Thirdly, *mawlid* (the Prophet's birthday) celebrations, which are clearly innovations, exemplify how the proponents of *bid ah* combine the textual interpretation of the religious sources and the principle of *maslahah*, to consider the celebrations as both necessary and recommended.

Finally, the *khilāfiyyah* issues surrounding the *jum' at* congregation show how Islam is implemented in local contexts

and practices. Here, the ardent opponents of *bid'ah* use the spirit of *maṣlaḥah*, which they have so far overlooked, to legalize their own practices which were not literally exemplified by the Prophet.

In the end, this study has not so much emphasized one opinion over another as it has expounded the necessity and significance of *ijtihād*. *Ijtihād* produces the differences of opinions which can be a part of God's blessing (*raḥmah*) to the Muslim people (*ummah*). *Bid'ah* is thus seen as either a significant cause or an indispensable outcome of an *ijtihād*. Making *bid'ah* parallel to error is not only unfounded, as pointed out earlier, but also damaging to the spirit of *ijtihād*, which has been proven to be a dynamic force in Muslim societies from the beginning. Indonesian Muslims are an example of a Muslim society which has been exposed to rich cultural and religious traditions, but which has managed to maintain its traditions and trace their origins through *ijtihād* to acceptable Islamic sources.

In future research, some accounts from this study may be developed further. From historical and cultural perspectives, for instance, it should be necessary to investigate the following: (1) the context(s) in which the ḥadīths on *bid'ah* were spoken; (2) the cultural milieu that stimulated the production of such rigorous works as al-Ṭurṭūsī's *Kitāb al-Ḥawādith* and al-Shāṭibī's *al-I'tiṣām*; and (3) the reason(s) these works have been widely adopted by

many Muslim reformists. Moreover, studies on other regional or local contexts where *bid' ah* is an issue may also be initiated, in order to provide a comparative understanding or even a challenge to the findings of this study.

But as far as textual interpretations and a regional implementation of *bid' ah* are concerned, the present study has offered innovative ways and outlooks by which *bid' ah* may become better understood. Nevertheless, there might be some room for other approaches and interpretations, which the author of this study would welcome.

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Abbreviations:

BKI: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde.
JMBRAS: Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic
   Society.
JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JSAI: Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam.
TBG: Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde.
VBG: Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van
   Kunsten en Wetenschappen.

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APPENDIX A

ASH-SHIDDIEQY'S LIST OF *BID'AHS*

The following is an abridged translation of Ash-Shiddieqy's list of *bid'ahs*, as written in his *Criteria* (pp. 109-124). The list is started with an introduction, explaining Ash-Shiddieqy's definition of *bid'ah*--as elaborated earlier in chapters 3 and 4 of this work--and his purpose in writing the list, that is to supplement his previous discussions. Then, he presents sixty examples of alleged *bid'ah* in matters of worship (*'ibādāt*) and eleven examples concerning theological matters (*'aqīdah*). These examples are translated here, following the order of the original list.

Bid'ahs in Matters of Worship

1. To believe that the prayer of a person who cleans his genital part(s) with stones (*istijmār*), in the presence of water, is invalid.

2. To verbalize one's intention before making an ablution (*wuḍū'*) or prayer (*ṣalāh*).

3. To wipe a water over a couple of hairs only, instead of the whole hair (or head), in the ablution.

4. To wipe a water over the head three times, instead of once, in the ablution.

5. To wet the hands a second time to wash the ears in the ablution, instead of using the leftover water from wiping the head.

6. To use both hands as a scoop to draw water from a bucket to make the ablution.

7. To read Q.S.94 (*al-Inshirāḥ*) after making the ablution.

8. To believe that if a *junub* person--legally an impure person after having sex or an ejaculation, for instance--does a job, such as farming or trading, before taking a complete bath (*ghusl*), bad luck will befall him and his associates.

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9. To perform *tayammum*--the substitute for the ablution--
   by putting the two palms twice on earth, instead of
   once, to touch the dust and to wipe with them the face
   and the hands to the elbows, instead of to the wrists.

10. To perform a new *tayammum* before every prayer.

11. To perform *tayammum* by wiping with dust any parts of
    the injured body covered by bandages.

12. To add the word *sayyidinā* ("our master") before the
    Prophet Muhammad's name, when reciting the *tashahhud*--
    the last reading in a prayer--or when calling the *ādhān*
    and *iqāmah*--both are the calls for the prescribed
    prayers. Similarly, failing to respond individually to
    the *ādhān* [by not repeating it], to recite *salawāt*--
    special supplications over the Prophet--after hearing
    the *ādhān*, and/or to ask *wasīlah* ("intercession") from
    the Prophet after the *salawāt*.

13. To add in the *du'ā'* (supplication) after the *iqāmah*
    these two sentences: *wa al-darajat al-rafī'ah* ("and
    [give the Prophet] a high status") and *innaka lā
    tukhlif al-mī'ād* ("Surely, You do not break your
    promises").

14. To loudly recite together *salawāt* over the Prophet
    after the *adhān*.

15. To kiss the nails or tips of the thumbs upon hearing
    the *ādhān*; then to wipe them over the eyes, believing
    that the eyes would not be sick afterwards.

16. To call the *adhān* in a long and melodious rhythm; and
    to omit the first *adhān* at the dawn prayer (*subh*).

17. To call the *adhān* in the Friday congregation (*jum'ah*),
    in front of the *khatīb* (preacher) and/or a pulpit, and
    to read a *tarqiyah*, that is an introduction to let the
    khatīb give his sermon and to warn the congregation not
    to speak during it, an action which could invalidate
    their Friday prayer.

18. To call the 'Uthmānic *adhān*, that is the first *adhān*,
    before the Friday congregation time begins.

19. The *imām*'s or *khatīb*'s coming too early to the mosque
    to perform supererogatory (*sunnah* or *nāfilah*) prayers.

20. To say *amīn* upon hearing the *khatīb*'s supplication
    and to shout *radiya Allāh 'anhu* ("may God be pleased
    with him") when he mentions a Companion's name.

21. To perform the before-*jumu'ah* supererogatory prayer (*sunnah qabliyyah*) after the first *adhān* of the Friday congregation.

22. To recite together *ṣalawāt* in the mosque before the time for prayer.

23. To say supplications for the sultāns in the *khutbah* (Friday sermon).

24. To read loudly Q.S.18 (*al-Kahf*) inside the mosque.

25. To read the *du'ā'* of the *adhān* after the *iqāmah*. Similarly, to read after the *iqāmah*: *aqāmahā Allāh wa adāmahā* ("may God help in performing and keeping the prayer").

26. To recite before *tarāwīḥ* (Ramaḍān night prayers): *ṣallū yā huddār 'alā al-nabiyy al-mukhtār* ("O congregation, say your *ṣalawāt* to the chosen Prophet!"), *ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ rahimakum Allāh* ("The *tarāwīḥ* prayers, may God have mercy on you"), or *athābakum Allāh* ("May God reward you"). Also, to read the *tahlīl--lā ilāha illa Allāh*, "There is no God but Allāh"--after each two cycles (*raka'ah*) of the *tarāwīḥ*.

27. To read Q.S.114 (*al-Nās*) before praying, in order to overcome doubt (*waswas*) of a doubtful person. Also, to read *rabbī ij'alnī muqīm al-ṣalāt wa min dhurriyyatī...* ("O God, make me and my offsprings regularly perform the prayers...").

28. To prolong the first *takbīr* of the prayer, that is, to say *Allāhu Akbar* ("Allāh is the Greatest"), in order to include the internal intention to pray. Similarly, to recite the *takbir* loudly by other than the *imām*.

29. To avoid reading *iftitāḥ* (the opening invocations) after the first *takbīr*, as practiced by many late Mālikītes.

30. Not putting one's hands on the chest during the *qiyām* (standing in the prayer), as practiced by some Mālikītes.

31. To put one's hands on the left stomach (hip) during the *qiyām*.

32. To read after the *Fātiḥah* (Q.S.1) and before *āmīn* in the prayer: *Allāhumma ighfirlī wa liwālidayya wa li al-muslimīn* ("O God, forgive me, my parents, and the Muslims").

33. To suffice oneself after reading the *Fātiḥah* by reading only one verse of the Qur'ān.

34. To regularly read the *qunūt* (special supplication) at the dawn prayer.

35. To prolong the *takbīr* when bowing down and rising up during the prayer.

36. To add reciting the phrase *wabiḥamdihi* ("and with all praise to Him") during bowing down or prostrating.

37. To add reading *sayyidinā* before the Prophet's name in the *ṣalawāt* on the *tashahhud*.

38. To read *as'aluka al-fauza bi al-jannah* ("I ask You for the success of entering the Paradise") after making *salām* (saying *al-salāmu 'alaikum wa raḥmat Allāh*) facing to the right; and to read *a'ūdhubika min al-nār* ("I take refuge with You from the Hellfire"), after making *salām* to the left.

39. To read together the *istighfār* (asking forgiveness) loudly and after the *salām*.

40. To read *subḥāna man lā yashu wa lā yanāmu* ("Glory be to Him Who does not forget nor sleep") in the *sahwi* prostration, that is the additional prostration performed due to a mistake or forgetfulness committed in any part of the prayer.

41. To read only half of Q.S.62 (*al-Jumu'ah*) or 63 (*al-Munāfiqūn*) in the Friday prayer. Similarly, to ignore reading those sūrahs or Q.S.87 (*al-A'lā*) or 88 (*al-Ghāshiyah*).

42. To perform noon (*ẓuhr*) prayer after performing Friday (*jumu'ah*) prayer. This practice is called *i'ādah* (repetition).

43. To read after the Friday prayer each of the following chapters (*sūrahs*) seven times: Q.S.112 (*al-Ikhlāṣ*); 113 (*al-Falaq*); and 114 (*al-Nās*).

44. To affirm that the Friday prayer is valid only if attended by at least forty adult Muslims.

45. To lean on a wooden stick when delivering a Friday sermon (*khuṭbah*). Similarly, to read the sermon from an old and/or out-of-date collection of sermons.

46. To read Q.S.112 (al-ikhlāṣ) three times when sitting between the two sermons of the Friday congregation. Similarly, to consider the second sermon as only supererogatory so that no advice is given thereof. Also, to close the sermon with such as the following sentences: udhkurū Allāh yadhkurkum ("remember God that He may remember you"), inna Allāh ya'muru bi al-'adl wa al-iḥsān ("verily God commands to do justice and goodness"), or aqūlu qawlī hādhā wa astaghfiru Allāh lī wa lakum ("then I say this, and I ask forgiveness from God for myself and for all of you").

47. Not shortening the prayers (qaṣr) during travel.

48. To read the Qur'ān for the dead.

49. To read talqīn ("reminder") over the grave after the burial.

50. To believe that the questions by the angels in the grave are asked in the Aramaic or Syriac language.

51. To do the following things on a grave: sitting, stepping, throwing waste, or making loud noises.

52. To stay overnight in a cemetery or a grave and to light a candle or the like therein.

53. Women visiting graves.

54. To move a buried corpse to another grave, unless the owner of the original burial site objects [to the deceased's being buried there].

55. To hold a gathering on the night of niṣf Sha'bān (in the middle of the 8th lunar month), or to perform supererogatory prayers and to read supplications under the leadership of an imām. Similarly, to read Q.S.36 (Yāsīn) three times, followed by reading a specific supplication and intention after each reading.

56. Not performing the 'Īd prayers in a field.

57. To make up (qaḍā') the prayers that one has intentionally not performed in their proper times.

58. To regard the last Wednesday of Ṣafar (the 2nd lunar month) as an ill-omened day, to avoid the effects of which an amulet paper with some Qur'anic verses on it is written and submerged in water that is then drunk, or in a river that is then swum in.

59. To consider 'Āshūrā (the 10th day of Muharram, the 1st lunar month) as an 'id (celebration) day.

60. To read Q.S.1 (al-Fātiḥah) with special intentions or for benefitting certain people.

Bid'ahs Concerning Theological Matters

61. To believe that the Ka'bah in Makkah was brought down from the heaven during the time of the prophet Adam. Similarly, to believe that the color of the black stone (al-ḥajar al-aswad) in the Ka'bah used to be white, and that it turned black because of the touching of Muslim sinners and menstruating women.

62. To believe that a house, wife, animal, or guess could bring a bad luck or accident.

63. To believe that the earth is on water, the water on a stone, the stone on a cow's horns, the cow on the ḥūt (fish), and the ḥūt on the bahamūt (beast) animal; and that human knowledge reaches only to the bahamūt.

64. To hang on oneself or another an amulet, bead, or thread, believing that it can protect one from any accident.

65. To avoid travelling on certain days considered to be ill-omened days. Similarly, to avoid eating fish and milk on Wednesdays, eating meat on Fridays, or slaughtering animals on Saturdays.

66. To believe that a reflex of the forehead is a sign of a good luck; just as to believe that any reflex of any part of the body is a sign of something.

67. To see an animal prior to conducting a marriage.

68. To believe that if a certain amulet is hung over a roof, or buried in a grave or under a door, it will cause a human heart to love somebody or will bring a marriage to an end.

69. To grow a tree or to keep a stone believing that either action could cure an illness or fulfill a need.

70. To avoid sweeping a house at night.

71. To believe that if a murder takes place, there emerges a devil called on 'ifrīt to frighten people.

The questionnaire contains forty-five questions and is divided into six parts. Part 1 consists of six questions, asking the respondent's name, sex, place and date of birth, major occupation, additional occupation(s), and address. Part 2 has four questions concerning the background of the respondent: What is his/her highest secular education? Religious education? Formal education? Informal education? Part 3 concerns the acquaintance of the respondent with the *Bid' ah Hadīth*, and asks five questions. Part 4 is designed to find out the respondent's understanding of *bid' ah*. Six questions are put forward for that purpose. Part 5 presents fourteen examples of alleged *bid' ah* practices, about which the respondent is asked. Finally, part 6 deals with the attitudes of the respondent toward the alleged "doers" of *bid' ah*. Nine questions are asked. The questionnaire is ended with an open question, asking the respondent's general comment on *bid' ah*.

The following is a translation of parts 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the questionnaire. Thus, it starts with question eleven. The letters a, b, c, etc., indicate the choices of answer.

Part 3: The Acquaintance with the *Bid' ah Hadīth*.

11. Have you ever heard or read either one or both of the following hadīths?
    - *wa iyyākum wa muhdathāt al-umūr fa'inna kullu muhdathah bid' ah wa kullu bid' ah dalālah.*
    - *wa sharr al-umūr muhdathātuhā wa kullu muhdathah bid' ah wa kullu bid' ah dalālah wa kullu dalālah fī al-nār.*

a. always   b. at sometime   c. not sure   d. never

12. Where have you heard or read the *Hadīth*?

a. from hadīth collections, such as ... (give examples!)
b. from non-hadīth collections, such as ... (give examples!)
c. from the teachers or ' ālims at *pesantren* or *madrasah*
d. from the *khatībs* at Friday congregations
e. from study groups, lectures, or *majelis ta' līms*
f. from other sources, please explain

13. How have you heard or read the Hadīth?

a. the teachers or 'ālims mentioned it in passing
b. the teachers or 'ālims explained it in detail
c. the khatībs read it in their khutbahs
d. the khatībs explain it in their khutbahs
e. casual self-study
f. intensive self-study
g. other ways, please explain

14. What is your first response to the teachers or khatībs who explain the Hadīth?

a. what they teach is absolutely right and must be followed
b. what they teach is usually right
c. what they teach can be right or wrong
d. we have to check first what they teach
e. other, please explain

15. What is the status of the Hadīth?

a. mutawātir   b. ṣahīh   c. hasan   d. ḍa'īf
e. not sure   f. other, please explain

Part 4. The Understanding of the Bid'ah Hadīth.

16. What is bid'ah according to your opinion?

a. every new thing never performed by the Prophet
b. new things never done by the Prophet and his Companions
c. every novelty which has no prior example
d. every action contrary to the Qur'ān and sunnah
e. other, please explain

17. Is every new thing or action bid'ah?

a. yes, at all time   b. yes, sometimes
c. no, not true   d. not sure
e. other, please explain

18. Is every bid'ah an error?

a. yes, absolutely   b. yes, it can be so
c. no, not true   d. no, not all of them
e. don't know   f. other, please explain

19. Will every maker of *bid ah* enter the Hellfire?

a. yes, absoulutely   b. yes, if he doesn't repent
c. no, not true   d. no, if he repents
e. let God decide his fate
f. don't know   g. other, please explain

20. What do you think of the division of *bid ah* into the "good" *bid ah* and the "bad" one?

a. yes, completely agree   b. somewhat accept
c. no, absolutely reject   d. not really agree
e. don't know   f. other, please explain

21. Is your understanding on *bid ah* influenced by an organization or a group?

a. yes, absolutely right   b. quite right
c. no, not true   d. my own opinion
e. don't know   f. not sure   g. other, please explain

Part 5. Examples of Alleged *Bid'ah* Practices.

22. What do you think of the *slametan*, when people read *Yāsīn*, *tahlīl*, and so on?

a. erroneous *bid ah*   b. good *bid ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*) e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

23. What do you think of the consecutive nights of *slametan*: the 1st, the 2nd, the 3rd nights, and so on?

a. erroneous *bid ah*   b. good *bid ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*) e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

24. What do you think of eating a meal in the deceased's house after the burial?

a. erroneous *bid ah*   b. good *bid ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*) e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

25. What do you think of embellishing a grave with a fence, dome, etc.?

a. erroneous *bid ah*   b. good *bid ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*) e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

26. What do you think of people who come to a grave, bring some food offerings, and ask something of God near the grave?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

27. What do you think of people who gather to read the *mawlid* panegyrical texts, such as *al-Barjanzi*, *al-Habashi*, etc.?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

28. What do you think of *mawlid* celebrations?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

29. What do you think of *tarāwīḥ* with only 8 cycles (*raka'āt*)?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

30. What do you think of *tarāwīḥ* with only 20 cycles (*raka'āt*)?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

31. What do you think of reciting *dhikr* loudly after a congregational prayer?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

32. What do you think of reciting *tahlīl* (*lā ilāha illa Allāh*) from a slow motion/rhytm to a fast one?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

33. What do you think of a *khatīb* who gives a sermon without reading a text and who makes body gestures, especially of the hands and face?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

34. What do you think of verbalizing the intention (*uṣallī*) before praying?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

35. What do you think of adding the word *sayyidinā* before mentioning the Prophet's name?

a. erroneous *bid'ah*   b. good *bid'ah*   c. forbidden
d. recommended (*sunnah*)   e. permissible (*mubāh*)
f. don't know/not sure   g. other, please explain

Part 6. The Attitudes Towards the "Doers" of *Bid'ah*.

36. In the *Bid'ah Hadīth*, every maker of *bid'ah* will enter the Hellfire. What is your attitude towards such a person?

a. to avoid him, because he is in error
b. to ask people to avoid him
c. to consider him an enemy
d. to come and advise him
e. to befriend him as usual
f. not to care about his personal affairs
g. other, please explain

37. What is your position if the alleged maker of *bid'ah* becomes the *imām* of a prayer?

a. his prayer is void
b. no one should follow his prayer
c. an aware follower must separate himself from him
d. the person must be prevented from being an *imām*
e. his prayer is acceptable, and anybody can follow him
f. the acceptability of a prayer depends on God's decision
g. not sure
h. other, please explain

38. What is your position if the alleged maker of *bid'ah* fasts during Ramaḍān or on any other months?

a. his fasting is void
b. his fasting is acceptable if he fulfills its conditions
c. I wouldn't invite him to break the fast together
d. I may invite him to break the fast together
e. his fasting depends on God's decision
f. not sure
g. other, please explain

39. What is your position if the alleged maker of *bid'ah* pays the *zakāt* (almsgiving)?

a. his almsgiving is void
b. his almsgiving is accepted if there is enough *niṣāb* (amount to give) and *ḥawl* (waiting period)
c. I wouldn't accept the almsgiving from him
d. I may accept the almsgiving from him
e. his almsgiving depends on God's decision
f. not sure
g. other, please explain

40. What is your position if the alleged maker of *bid'ah* performs the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*)?

a. his pilgrimage is void
b. his pilgrimage is acceptable if it fulfills its conditions
c. I wouldn't wave to him at the pilgrimage
d. I may wave to or welcome him at the pilgrimage
e. his pilgrimage depends on God's decision
f. not sure
g. other, please explain

41. What do you think of the value of all good deeds performed by the alleged maker of *bid'ah*?

a. his deeds are useless
b. his deeds are rewarded, even if he is in error
c. his deeds depend on God's decision
d. not sure
e. other, please explain

42. What is your position if you yourself are accused of being a maker of *bid'ah*?

a. to accuse back the accuser
b. to let him go, because I am right
c. to let him go, because I don't care
d. to explain to him why I do the alleged *bid'ah*
e. to think over the accusation, for it may be right
f. to ask experts concerning the alleged *bid'ah*
g. other, please explain

43. What will you do to correct an alleged *bid'ah*?

a. give public lectures that *bid'ah* is erroneous
b. give Friday sermons that *bid'ah* is erroneous
c. contact and advise the alleged maker of *bid'ah*
d. write books/articles explaining the err of *bid'ah*
e. gather a group to discuss the issue
f. report or ask an '*ālim* or a teacher on the issue
g. other, please explain

44. What is the most effective way to explain about *bid'ah* to the public?

a. through group circles in mosques, *suraus*, etc.
b. through classes or circles in *pesantrens*, *madrasahs*
c. through each level of public education
d. through seminars and regular academic conferences
e. through mass media, such as newspapers, magazines, etc.
f. through all of the above means
g. other, please explain

45. Please give your all-inclusive opinion(s) on *bid'ah* and issues around it!
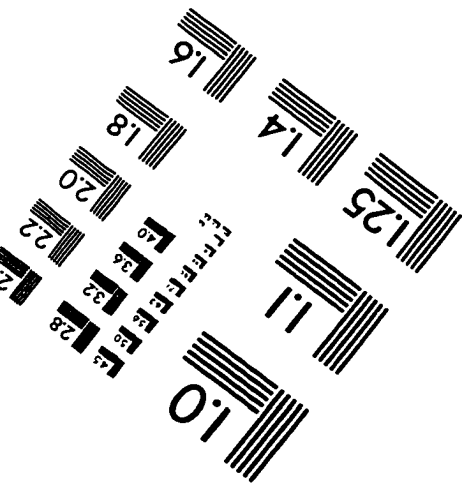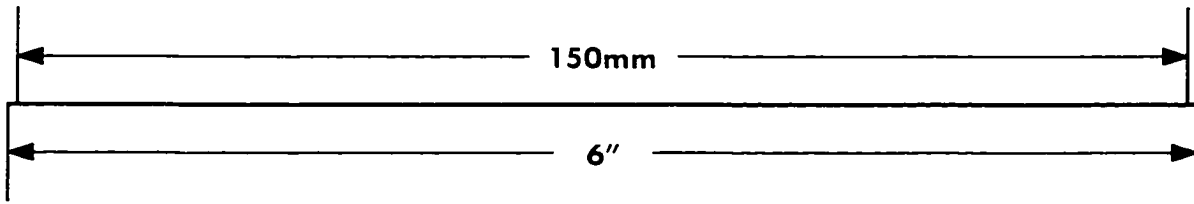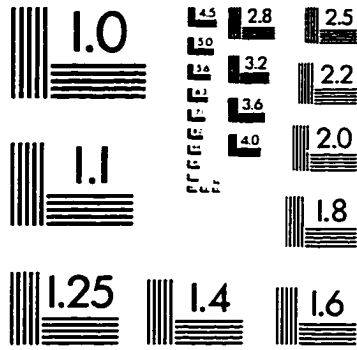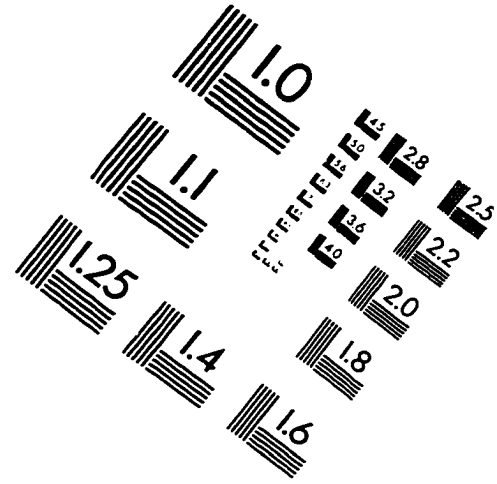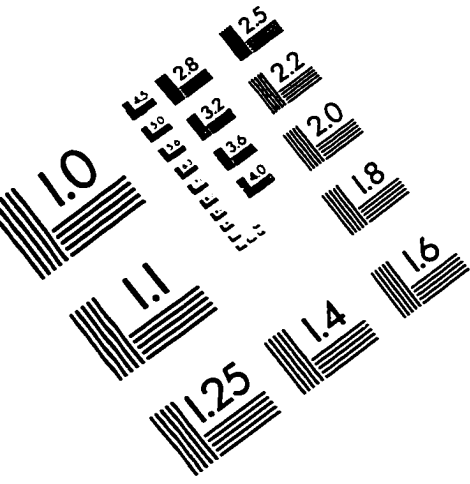
APPENDIX C

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

The following is a list of respondents from whom most data for the field research of this study is drawn. Their names are arranged alphabetically with the following order: full name, title(s), and main occupation(s). The titles/names are abbreviated as follows: K. (Kiyai), H. (Haji), Hj. (Hajjah), Ust. (Ustaz), Tgk. (Tengku), Sm.Hk. (Sarjana Muda Hukum), B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), Drs. (Doctorandus), Dra. (Doctoranda), M.A. (Master of Arts), M.S. (Master of Science), M.Ag. (Master Agama), Dr. (Doctor), Prof. (Professor), M. (Muhammad).

1. Abdul Aziz Rahman, Buya, religious teacher
2. Abdul Hamid Kurnain, H., religious teacher
3. Abdul Kadir Sobur, Drs., academician
4. Abdul Kadir Yasin, Drs., academician
5. Abdul Khalik HS, Drs., academician
6. Abdul Kholiq, Drs., academician
7. Abdullah Umar, Drs. H., religious teacher
8. Abdul Muin Aziz, H., religious teacher
9. Abdul Satar Saleh, H., religious teacher
10 Abdurrahman Firdaus, K.H., religious teacher
11. Adnan Rusli, Drs. H., academician
12. Adrianus Chatib, Prof. Dr. M.A., academician
13. Ahmad Bukhari N, religious teacher
14. Ahmad HM., Drs., academician
15. Ahmad Khudhari, B.A., religious teacher
16. Ahmad Rifa'i Majid, Drs., academician
17. Ahmad Tarmizi, Drs., academician
18. Anzohar Dulamin, Drs., academician
19. Armada Arsyad, religious teacher
20. Asafri Jaya Bakri, Dr. H. M.A., academician
21. Asri Neldi, Drs., academician
22. Asy'ari Thoha, Ust. B.A., religious teacher
23. Azis Ardabli, Drs., academician
24. Azro'i Marzuki, Drs., academician
25. Bakhtiar L., Drs., academician
26. Bakri Rasul, H., religious teacher
27. Boestamy Abbas, enterpreneur
28. Burhanuddin Laman, H. B.A., religious teacher
29. Darmawati, Dra. Hj., academician
30. Darmi Syarif, religious teacher
31. Djunaidi, Drs., academician
32. Endang Permadi, religious teacher
33. Erfan Kastury, religious teacher
34. Fahmi Bafadhal, Drs. M.A., academician

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35. Fathuddin Abdi, Drs. Sm.Hk., academician
36. Fuaddamhuzi, H. B.A., religious teacher, technocrat
37. Hadri Hasan, Drs. M.A., academician
38. Hanafi HZ, religious teacher
39. Harkan S, religious teacher
40. Hartono Margono, Drs. H., academician
41. Hasan Basri, Drs. H., academician
42. Hasan Basri, Ust. H., religious teacher
43. Hasan bin H. Gani, K.H., religious teacher
44. Helmi Bakar, teacher
45. Hilmi, Drs. H., academician
46. Husni Elhilali, Drs., acedemician
47. Ibnu Kasir, Drs., academician
48. Idris, Ust., religious teacher
49. Indriana Purwandari, student
50. Irhami K.S., religious teacher
51. Isa Karimi, Buya H. B.A., religious teacher
52. Ishak A. Aziz, Drs., academician
53. Ismail Thalibi, Drs. M.A., academician
54. Khadijah, Dra., academician
55. Khalilullah, Drs., academician
56. Malik, Ust., religious teacher
57. Mansur Fuadi, Drs., academician
58. Martinis Yamin, Drs., academician
59. M. Ali Usman, H., religious teacher, enterpreneur
60. M. Ali Wahab, K.H., religious teacher
61. M. Arsyad, K.H., religious teacher
62 M. Ashaf Shaleh, Drs. H., academician
63. M. Burkan Saleh, H., religious teacher
64. M. Hatta, Drs. H., academician
65. M. Jarjani, religious teacher
66. M. Lohot Hasibuan, Drs., academician
67. M. Mansur Hamzah, K.H., religious teacher
68. M. Saad Sanusi, Drs., religious teacher
69. M. Said Magwie, H. B.A., religious teacher
70. M. Salek, Buya K.H., religious teacher
71. M. Saman Sulaiman, Drs. M.Ag., academician
72. M. Sapar Beddu, Drs., academician
73. M. Shafi'i, Drs. H., religious teacher
74. M. Tamsir DP, religius teacher
75. M. Yusuf Arif, Kmas H., religious teacher
76. M. Yusuf, Drs. H., academician
77. M. Zurni Agiel, religious teacher
78. Muhidin N, religious teacher
79. Muhsin Ruslan, Drs., academician
80. Mukhlis, Drs., teacher
81. Mukhtar, Drs., academician
82. Mukhtar Rasyid, K.H., religious teacher
83. Munsarida, Drs., academician
84. Muntholib S.M., DR. MS., academician
85. Mustafa Thayib, Tgk. H., religious teacher
86. Najmuddin Rauf, academician

87. Pak Kadir, funeral clerk
88. R. Magdalena, Dra., academician
89. R. Mahfuzh Thoha, Ust. K.H., religious teacher
90. Saman Awang, H.M., religious teacher, enterpreneur
91. Su'aidi, Drs., academician
92. Suherman Rivai, Drs., academician
93. Sulaiman Abdullah, Dr. H., academician, technocrat
94. Syafi'i, Drs., academician
95. Syafruddin, Drs., academician
96. Umar Darin, Drs., religious teacher
97. Usman bin Gani, H., religious teacher
98. Zakaria Laut, religious teacher
99. Zufran Rahman, Drs., academician
100. Zukri Nawas, H., religious teacher, enterpreneur

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"