

### **QUR'AAN SHAREEF RECITATION PROGRAMMES --- A NEW BID'AH**

Following in pursuit of the Saudi Salafi Qiraa't and Qur'aan Recitation programmes, are the 'deobandi' ulama of this era. Although they profess to be Ulama of Deoband, there is nowadays very little of genuine Deobandi'ism emanating from them. The deterioration in IIm, Akhlaaq and Maslak has degenerated to the level of Bid'ah which is being adorned as 'sunnah' by the presentation of subtle and spurious arguments devoid of Shar'i substance.

Before neutralizing the spurious and apodalic arguments, let us see what Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had said about the Qurraa' (qaaris).

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

**"Seek refuge with Allah from Jubbul Huzn (the Pit of Grief)." They (the Sahaabah) asked: 'O Rasulallah! What is Jubbul Huzn?' Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "It is a valley in Jahannam. Daily Jahannam seeks Allah's protection from it (its heat) 400 times." They asked: 'O Rasulallah! Who will enter it?' Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "It has been prepared for the Qurraa' who display their A'maal (their qiraa't). Verily, the most hated qurraa' by Allah are those who visit the umara' (rulers and the wealthy)."**

In another Hadith, Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: **"Most of the munaafiqeen of my Ummah are its qaaris."** A

nd, among the Signs of the Impending Hour of Qiyaamah are such reciters of the Qur'aan from whose throats the recitation will emerge like an arrow from the bow. The arrow does not return to the bow. In this analogy, the Qur'aan will have no beneficial

*Akhlaaqi*

effect on the heart of the reciter. The reason for this calamity is

*riya and takabbur (ostentation/show and pride).*

This is the condition of almost all qaaris who recite for public entertainment and

*fuloos (money).*

The other satanic element underlining these qiraa't shows and public jalsahs is *Hubb-e-Jah (love for name and fame).*

These qiraa't choirs are invariably motivated by *riya (show and ostentation).*

Only those spiritually blind will refuse to acknowledge these evils which stand out conspicuously. Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) made special reference to the

*riya*

of the qurraa' in the aforementioned Hadith.

Narrating a Hadith, Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu) said:

***"How will you be when such a Fitnah envelopes you wherein the elderly will become senile and the young will become old. The people will regard this Fitnah as Sunnah. If anything is abandoned from it (from the Fitnah), it will be said that a Sunnat has been abandoned." They asked: "And when will that be?" He said: "When your Ulama have departed (i.e. the world has become barren of them); when your qaaris have become abundant; when your Fuqaha are few; when your umara' are in abundance; when your trustworthy people are few; when the dunya will be acquired with the acts of the Aakhirah, and when Knowledge of the Deen will be pursued for purposes other than the Deen."***

The times in which we find ourselves today are the era depicted in the above Hadith. These Qur'aan recitation bid'ah programs and Qiraa't competitions, unheard of among the Salaf Saaliheen and even among our recent Akaabir, are among the Fitnah which is regarded as 'sunnah'. The dunya is acquired with the *amal* of the Aakhirah. This applies to the recitation of the Qur'aan by the qaaris at qiraa't competition shows, and by the miscreant organizers of Qur'aan recitation programs. Tilaawat of the Qur'aan is an *amal*

of the Aakhirah, but it is being mismanipulated by the qurraa' and the molvies for mundane gains and despicable *nafsaani*

ends.

In the light of this Hadith, we can say with emphasis that the Ulama – the Ulama-e-Haqq – have departed from the dunya, and the following Hadith of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) now applies:

***"The Saalihoon are departing one after the other (in rapid succession), and there will remain hufaalah (rubbish/chaff) like the hufaalah of wheat or barley. Allah will not have any care whatsoever for them (i.e. for the rubbish masquerading as Ulama and Saalihoon)."***

According to the Hadith the vacuum left by the disappearance of the Ulama-e-Haqq will be filled by an abundance of evil qurraa'. These Ahaadith predictions of Nabi-e-Kareem (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) are materializing in this age as clear as daylight. The Qur'aan Majeed is being misused for *nafsaaniyat*.

In *Mirqaaul Mafaateeh Sharh Mishkaatil Masaabeeh*, Mullah Ali Qaari (rahmatullah alayh), commenting on a Hadith pertaining to *saani*

*naf*

qiraa't, says:

"Their exaggeration in qiraa't will be extreme for the sake of show, ostentation, competition and aggrandizement.....They will seek reward in the world (for their recitation), and not seek it in the Aakhirah.. .....Their hearts and the hearts of the audience who will praise them will be corrupt.....At-Teebi said: It (their recitation) will not rise to the heaven nor will Allah accept it from them. It will be rejected from the abode of acceptance.....They will be involved in the love of the dunya and the praises of the people..."

The Ulama who have drifted far, very far from Siraatul Mustaqeem and the Sunnah are today portraying the Fitnah of Bid'ah as if it is 'Sunnah', just as is reported in the Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (radhiyallahu anhu). Thus we lament to see that these miscreant organizers of the Qur'aan recitation bid'ah programs are citing Ahaadith to justify their innovation. One of their spurious arguments is the Hadith in which it is mentioned that Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu) used to recite the entire Qur'aan Majeed in two raka'ts Salaat.

Citing Hadhrat Uthmaan's practice in justification of the bid'ah of Qur'aan recitation programs is an insult to intelligence – to their own decrepit *Aql* convoluted by *nafsaaniyat*. Did the Sahaabah or the Taab-een or any of our Akaabireen adopt Hadhrat Uthmaan's practice to organize public performances? In the fourteen century history Islam, were there any such bid'ah programs of public entertainment – of riya and takabbur? Is Qur'aan Tilaawat a new practice? Is it a new discovery for which a new format has to be fabricated?

Did Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu) recite the entire Qur'aan for public show? Did he organize any public jalsah for people to come and listen to his Tilaawat and to be applauded? Why don't these Ulama emulate Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu) and spend not one night, but every night in abundant Tilaawat in the seclusion of their homes without *riya*, during the silence of the night when all and sundry are sleeping snugly in their beds? If they do so, they will then qualify for the glad tidings sounded in the Hadith:

*"Stand (in Salaat and recite the Qur'aan) in the night , then enter Jannat in peace."*

Hadhrat Uthmaan (radhiyallahu anhu)'s Tilaawat of the whole Qur'aan in two raka'ts was his personal practice discharged in the silent hours of the night when people were snoring away. His *amal* was not a public act advertised as is the case with these programs of *riya* and *israaf*. Where is Hadhrat Uthmaan's private practice of Tilaawat executed in solitude and seclusion, and how is the confounded new bid'ah programs which are advertised and performed in public? There is no resemblance whatsoever between Hadhrat Uthmaan's practice and the new bid'ah programs. The basis cited for justification of the new bid'ah is absolutely putrid and ludicrous. It is unbecoming of men of knowledge to acquit themselves with the display of such *jahaalat*.

Then the innovators of the new-fangled Qur'aan recitation programs present another stupid '*daleel*': *"It was a very common practice of the Aslaaf to recite Qur'an Shareef excessively."* While this is undeniable, and while this excessive Qur'aan Tilaawat is a Waajib obligation on every Muslim to practise daily, there is no basis whatsoever in it for justifying the new innovation of these public recitation and qiraa't competition programs which have no origin in the Shariah.

The Ulama should constantly impart the lesson and naseehat to the public to engage in daily Tilaawat within the confines of their homes. They should inculcate in their students whilst at Madrasah to engage in 'excessive' Tilaawat daily. The excessive Tilaawat of the Aslaaf is not a public performance organized occasionally to promote the particular Madrasah and the particular molvies and sheikhs who organize these programs of deception. The excessive Tilaawat of the Aslaaf was recitation on a daily basis within the privacy of the home. Their Tilaawat was not for public show and consumption nor did they advertise their Tilaawat. Their Tilaawat was not an item on a program. It was a private act of Ibaadat – pure Ibaadat just as was their Nafl Salaat and Nafl Siyaam which were executed without advertising and without public show.

In another snippet of miserable justification for the new bid'ah, it is proffered: *"In order to revive the spirit of daily recitation of the Qur'an Shareef, and to bring alive the practice of the pious, many of whom would make one khatam daily, a Qur'an Shareef Khatam program will insha Allah take place. All are welcome to participate....."*

The organizers of this new bid'ah public program, lamentably lack spiritual insight. It is indeed sad that these molvies are unable to understand the harm they are causing to the Deen and the beliefs of ignorant Muslims with the introduction of their new bid'ah which will, with the passage of time, become an entrenched bid'ah sayyiah similar to the bid'ah of the Barelwi Qabar Pujari sect. Indeed these molvies with a flimsy veneer of 'deobandi'ism' have set course along the Barelwi bid'ati path. They are gradually becoming bedfellows of the Barelwis.

The spirit of daily Tilaawat cannot be revived by bid'ah. It cannot be revived by ways which have no relationship with the Salaf-e-Saaliheen. Ibaadat is not a public act of show. Tilaawat of the Qur'aan Shareef is not a congregational Ibaadat such as Jamaa't Salaat. It is a private act. The spirit for observing this ibaadat on a daily basis cannever be imbued by occasional public acts which are contaminated with riya and takabbur, and which clearly come within the purview of the condemnation explicitly stated in many Ahaadith. All ibaadat practices have to be incumbently cultivated during childhood, and while the children are at Madrasah. Jalsahs upon jalsahs will prove futile, for these functions are firstly bid'ah, secondly, riya and takabbur, and thirdly functions of *israaf*. These public displays of Qur'aan recitation are bereft of the fragrance of the Sunnah.

A major problem and a disastrous defect of the Madaaris is that they no longer are concerned with the moral reformation and spiritual elevation of the Talaba. The Madaaris themselves are corrupt and contaminated with incorrigible *nafsaaniyat*. They come squarely within the glare of the Hadith which says that Knowledge of the Deen will be pursued for objectives other than the Deen. This is the conspicuous and confirmed noxious state of the Madaaris of the day, hence they have become forerunners in the fabrication of bid'ah.

All the spurious and putrid excuses advanced in justification of their bid'ah practices – Qur'aan programs being the most recent one – will be recognized by even these new brand bid'atis if they search their souls with sincerity. The Qur'aan Majeed reminds them: ***"In fact, insaan has baseerat over his nafs even though he puts forth excuses (to justify his nafsaniyat)."***

The Sunnah manner of kindling the spirit for Ibaadat, including Tilaawat, is to educate the masses about the fadhaa-il (virtues and thawaab) of Tilaawat and to inculcate in the students of the Madaaris the importance of Tilaawat and to ensure that all students engage in substantial Tilaawat on a daily basis. Bid'ah presented as ibaadat is *Talbeesul Iblees (deception of Iblees)*. This is the trap in which the organizers of the bid'ah program are enmeshed. Shaitaan is using them to misguide and mislead the ignorant public.

It is false to claim that it is the normal practice of our pious predecessors to complete the Qur'aan Shareef in one night or one sitting. Undoubtedly, there were many Auliya who recited more than one Qur'aan Khatam in one night. This was their *karaamat*. It is not a Sunnah practice for emulation nor is it possible for us drowned in nafsaniyat to even dream of emulation. Instead of seeking publicity for promoting one's 'piety', the buzrugs of this time should draw attention to the Sunnah practice of Tilaawat.

They should rationally and satisfactorily reconcile the exceptional Tilaawat practices of the Salaf with Rasulullah's prohibition of making a khatam in less than three days. There is no such night as 'Lailatun Noor' in Islam. It is a bid'ah designation similar to the bid'ah designations which the Barelwis coin for their bid'ah occasions and festivals. The introduction of a 'lailatun noor' night will in the future become an entrenched bid'ah among the future juhala mureedeen in the Silsilah of the originator of this bid'ah.

In Islam, every Night is sacred, especially the latter part when Allah's special *Tajalli* settles on those who seek Divine Benediction.

The organizers of this new bid'ah are without any Sunnah basis and absolutely bankrupt in Fiqhi dalaa-il to substantiate a program which is the effect of pure nafsaniyat which Iblees has portrayed as 'ibaadat'.

These new-brand Ahl-e-Bid'ah who profess to be Deobandis, should remove the plugs from their ears and heed with attention the following naseehat of Hakimul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (rahmatullah alayh):

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"Some people make khatam (of the Qur'aan) in a single night. They call it *shabeenah* in which there are several acts of *bid'ah*. Reflect and you will understand that the *niyyat* underlying this act is purely show (*riya*)..... The listeners should honestly say whether they have gathered to listen to the Qur'aan or to attach their hearts to *Salaat*."

For the permissibility of the practice of *shabeenah*, Hadhrat Thanvi has made it clear that the intention must be sincere; that not more than three persons should join; and there should be no public announcement and advertisement. Thus, Hadhrat stated:

"There is no need for *I'laan* (announcement) to ensure that there is no *riya* (show and ostentation)."

The practice of making a khatam in one night is specific with some Sahaabah. It was never the norm. Hadhrat Abu Humzah (radhiyallahu anhu) said to Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu): "I am a swift reciter (of the Qur'aan)." Sometime I complete the entire Qur'aan once or twice in a single night." Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (radhiyallahu anhu) said: "I regard it better to recite one Surah with reflection than the whole Qur'aan without reflection."

Leaving aside reciting the Qur'aan in one night/day, this was not the *ta'leem* of Rasulullah

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(sallallahu alayhi wasallam). It therefore does not befit the Ulama to exhibit their *riya* by means of a practice which is being portrayed as Masnoon. Hadhrat Amr Bin Al-A's (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) advised him to make one khatam in a month. He said: "O Rasulallah! I have the ability for more than this." Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam): "Complete a Qur'aan recitation in ten days." I said: "I have the ability for more than this." Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Complete a Qur'aan in seven days, and do not recite more than this."

Some Sahaabah would make a khatam in three days, and this is the best practice. Imaam Suyuti (rahmatullah alayh) says in *Itqaan*: According to many Ulama it is Makrooh to complete a Qur'aan recitation in less than three days. Their *daleel* is the Hadith which Abu Daawood and Tirmizi narrated *Marfoo-an* from Abdullah Ibn Umar (radhiyallahu anhu) that Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: **"He who completes a Qur'aan recitation in less than three days will never understand it."**

Many other Sahaabah have reported the same ruling of Makrooh for a recital less than three days. Therefore, it is improper to organize programs of show and publicity-seeking by displaying a khatam in one night. Inspiration for the masses is in the Sunnah and advices of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and of the Sahaabah, not in certain practices of ibaadat which are exclusive with some Auliya, and which are absolutely beyond the ability of the masses, especially of such masses who do not recite the Qur'aan Majeed daily.

Even Hadhrat Uthmaan's did not recite the whole Qur'aan Majeed every night. Mulla Ali Qaari states in *Zainul Hilm*: "A group of Sahaabah would complete one Qur'aan once a week, such as

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Uthmaan, Zaid Bin Thaabit, Ibn Mas'ood and Ubay Bin Ka'b (radhiyallahu anhum).

Qais Bin Sa'sah (radhiyallahu anhu) narrated that Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) advised him to make one khatam in 15 days. When he expressed the desire to recite more, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) permitted him to make a khatam in seven days.

The organizers of the public khatam program should do some soul searching. If they do so with *ikhlaas*, they will not fail to discern the grievous error of their public shows in which the *amal* of the Akhirah is manipulated for worldly and nafsani objectives. May Allah Ta'ala save us from the evil lurking in our nafs and from the snares of shaitaan.

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