The Conceptology of bid’ah: Imam Ahmad’s Perspective and Its Application in the Contemporary Era

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Abstract. The term bid’ah has been hotly discussed in recent years. The diversity of views of scholars and the diversity of definitions are hot issues to be studied. Few are antipathy to this study, which sometimes leads to friction and disputes in the Muslim community. Imam Ahmad has a unique concept and is considered firm in determining the heresy of one case. This article focuses on examining the concept of Imam Ahmad's bid'ah and applying it to solving contemporary problems. Many expressions of sunnah, sunnah clerics (ulama), sunnah mosques, and sunnah studies have been expressed in recent years. Two good words sometimes create discomfort in the community and leave an impression. Others not labeled as sunnah are not part of the sunnah. This literature research uses the method of textual criticism of classical references that contain Ahmad's views. Globally there are two findings in this article; First, heresy, according to Imam Ahmad, only produces two taklifi laws, namely haram or makruh. Second, cleric, mosque, and sunnah studies can also be categorized as bid'ah, which is judged makruh.

Keywords: Innovation, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hadith, concept


Kata Kunci: Bid'ah, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Hadis, konsep.
INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, the word heresy (bid’ah) has once again become a hot topic for discussion. It has also become an exciting topic of discussion for religious leaders in West Sumatra, along with the episode of the Padri War in the 18th century. Currently, with the pattern and the umpteenth module, it has also become an object of research for academics. Jahroni (2018) said that the revival of this heretical dialogue resurfaced in the 1980s. This indicates that the politicization of rituals in the country has been going on for hundreds of years. In As’ad’s (2019) review in Indonesia, the heresy study focused on the theoretical basis (dalil) for carrying out the practice of bid’ah, which included religious terms that were misunderstood by some citizens, including educated groups, in addition to the terms caliph and jihad (Hanafi et al., 2022).

Puritan Islamic groups attempt to imitate all activities carried out by the Prophet Muhammad, including common things. Therefore, for them, the truth of every religious ritual is confirmed in two sources of Islamic teachings: the Quran and Hadith. The accumulation of actions like this, continued by As’ad (2019), triggers the nearness of the statement, "they are heretics, unbelievers, and hypocrites." The overstatement regularly causes discomfort in social life.

Etymologically, the word *bid'ah* is also termed innovation, novelty, heretical doctrine, and heresy (Owaisi, 2005). The hadith that is very often used as a reference in this case, is a history Sunan an Nasai:

إن أصدق الحديث كتاب الله وأحسن الهدي هدي محمد وشر الأمور محدثاتها وكل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار

Literally, the over hadith encompasses all religious activities that lack an authentic reference in worship, and thus they are classified as bid’ah, which eventually leads to hellfire. Furthermore, there is an opinion that this bid’ah includes all aspects of religion, including aspects of *aqidah*, *ibadah*, and *muamalah*. (Ihsan, 2015). The problem is determining the bid’ah of something in the *muamalah* category.

Interestingly, not all scholars are in the same position in terms of understanding the hadith above textually. The responses of the scholars to this hadith are pretty diverse. Abdullah Husain al-Arfaj classifies some as understanding broadly and some as understanding narrowly. Understanding
bid’ah barely means only one law applies to new cases, namely haram. Furthermore, there is no room for understanding anything other than haram. Among the scholars in this understanding are Syaukani, Siddiq Hasan Khan, Ibn Utsaimin, al-Fauzan, al-Bani, Ibn Baz, Ibn Jabarin, and so on. While broadening one's understanding of bid’ah enforces heresy for all of Ahkam al-Taklifiah. In other words, a case of heresy can be considered obligatory, bid’ah can be sunnah, permissible, makruh, or haram. Al-Izz Ibn Abd al-Salam, Imam Nawawi, and Ibn Hajar al-Astqalani are the figures who broadly understand heresy.

Ramadhan al-Buti emphasized that an activity can be categorized as a heretical activity if there is a religious intention behind carrying it out. In contrast, the activity carried out does not have a basis (proof) for why it is done. (Harun, Abdullah, & Rosele 2018). Al-Buti's assertion is to eliminate the negative stigma against the term heresy, thus developing the assumption that bid’ah applies to all activities. At first glance, al-Buti's concept of bid’ah presents uncertainty due to the perpetrator's intention to do charity, and no one knows the choices of others.

The diversity of arguments against heresy sometimes starts from different points of view. Some focus on etymological studies, and some focus on terminology. Imam as-Syatibi emphasized that innovation only applies to the aspect of worship, not to the aspect of language. Therefore, collecting the Qur'an was carried out during the time of the Companions. However, in etymology, it can be called a bid’ah. According to as-Syatibi, it cannot be called worship because it is not directly related to worshiping. (Haq, Muchtia, & Mukhlis, 2021: 225).

Discussing the idea of heresy scientifically, presenting studies that are warm and intriguing. The community's response to the topic of heresy could have been more positive. When heresy was raised, many people wanted to avoid the conversation after being "questioned" about the reference's origin by various Amaliah organizations. He will be forceful in pushing and opening up debate places worldwide for those who are radically anti-heretic. To preserve and uphold societal harmony, many people adopt the attitude of avoiding conflicts (Asyari, 2013).

Although some Muslim communities accept heresy as teaching and do not mind it, it is difficult to eradicate as an ideology. Sukring (2016) noted that one of the ways the Khawarij committed heresy was by judging unbelievers, a practice that no longer required the use of proof and was simple.
to carry out whenever and wherever. In terms of fiqh, it would appear that Sukring’s research differs significantly from heresy in that it places the focus of the bid’ah debate on the amaliah component.

Meanwhile, Imam Ahmad ibn Hambal distinguishes heresy conceptually from other figures. The concepts presented make it possible for modern-day Muslims to use it as a reference in determining whether one thing can be categorized as bid’ah or not. In addition, it can also be assessed whether the bid’ah in question is categorized as a thing that is haram or makruh. This article describes the conceptology of Imam Ahmad’s bid’ah and the application of the concept to the problems that occur today.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The term bid’ah is part of musthalah diniyyah. It’s just that there are differences in its interpretation and level of attention among Muslims. Even the discourse of the difference stems based on differences in definitions, both etymologically and terminologically (Arifianto, Hanafi, & Anam, 2021). Some are very strict in this matter, some could be better, and some are trying to broaden their understanding, which sometimes means that almost no activity can be categorized as heresy.

Safwan, a lecturer at the University of Malaya, conducted a study on the concept of bid’ah according to al-Buti. Safwan’s research concluded that a person’s practice can be categorized as bid’ah when a person performs a religious activity and intends to do so. This study also emphasized the need to separate the aspect of worship from customs, cases that can be categorized as heretical acts are matters of worship, while the customary aspects cannot be classified as acts of heresy. Thus, any activity that is not considered part of religion and that does not harm if abandoned, in accordance with the magasid al-shari’ah of the legal arguments, but when carried out can bring maslahah, then the activity cannot be categorized as heresy, even this activity must be conducted (Harun et al., 2018).

The classification of Imam as-Syatibi, who divides bid’ah into two main categories; bid’ah haqiqiyah and bid’ah idhafiyah is different. The act of modifying religious practices that have explicit rules in the Qur’an or the Sunnah, such as changing the amount of prayer, is known as bid’ah haqiqiyah for as-Syatibi. Syatibi makes those who commit bid’ah haqiqiyah more guilty; this is worse. One instance of bid’ah idhafiyah is the practice of maulidan, or collective prayer (Wardiyanto, Hasnidar, & Elihami 2020), reading Surah Al-
Kahf Ba'da Asr on Friday, reading Surah Yasin when washing the body, etc. (Syed Mohd et al., 2018).

One study that has not found academic consensus is bid’ah speech; disagreement exists about its classification and meaning. Nobody disputes its existence in society, nevertheless, either domestically or internationally. If they are not patient in handling it, there is a risk that internal problems will arise among the Muslim population. It is conceivable for a village to use multiple types of amaliah. The complexity of this idea creates room for the diversity of judgments; some people believe that certain conduct is bid’ah and must be avoided, while others regard it as bid’ah hasanah and believe that it is acceptable to continue (Asyari, 2013). It is required to demonstrate an attitude of *ibtiyat*, or caution, to decide if a practice falls under the category of bid’ah or not. This issue is covered in the Mutasyabihat chapter (Mohd et al., 2018:15).

According to Fairuz Adam, there are four reasons for the spread of bid’ah in society, especially in Malaysia. The first element, a lack of religious instruction, can be attributed to Muslims' lack of interest in learning more about their faith. Inexperience is the second element. Sometimes a straight faith will use incorrect and unreliable religious allusions to mask an ignorant attitude. One of the forms is a lack of interest in learning about the religious foundations of one's ancestors' customs. Teaching and sermons are effective strategies that can be utilized to combat this attitude of religious ignorance. (Bala & Ainu, 2018: 34). The third factor is the influence of the belief in Shamanism. Moreover, fourth is belief in mysticism and magic. This fourth factor is relatively developed, especially if what is conveyed is related to extraordinary events related to religious issues. (Adam et al., 2015).

It is necessary to present a comprehensive reading regarding this heresy. It is a part that needs to be looked at. Moderation in the theory of bid’ah needs to be presented in addition to 'nrimo' if any of the daily practices are considered a bid’ah. Hiding behind the expression of the universality of Islamic law (Sugara, 2019) also does not provide education to the broader community. There are at least two extreme attitudes on the issue of heresy, firstly being a too anti-bid’ah expression, uncomfortable with terms that make mistrust in recitations that discuss this term. On the other hand, some are too extreme in judging something as heresy. It is straightforward to issue this term among the people, and sometimes even heresy that is not heresy.
A. The concept of Bid’ah: Imam Ahmad Perspective

The definition of bid’ah cannot be reached by scholars because of the diversity of editorials that have been written on the subject. Some scholars consider all facets of life to be part of ritual, bid’ah, and other related topics. They base their reasoning on the idea that there is just worship and nothing else in life. To minimize confusion, Muslim academics have also attempted to describe and portray the range of bid’ah discourse in various classifications, such as those who divide it into bid’ah hasanah (commended) and dalalah (misguided), as well as those who share themes (Zarif et al., 2013).

There is no precise method of determining heresy for either the books that were the works of Imam Ahmad himself or the books written by the Ulama of his school. To formulate the conceptual bid’ah according to Imam Ahmad, it is necessary to analyze and develop the hadiths which speak of bid’ah related to furu’ cases which were determined as bid’ah by Imam Ahmad, in which the author found nine cases that were bid’ah by Imam Ahmad namely qashaid and taghbir, reading the Koran at the grave, reciting the Koran in talhin, qunut at dawn, raising his voice at the side of the corpse, gathering regularly to listen, reading the Koran and the assembly of knowledge, praying the occult every night for all Muslims those who have passed away, call to prayer ta’qib in the month of Ramadan, and collect wages from badal haji. Hadith narrated by Aisha, said, 'Rasulullah Saw. said; Whoever invents a new matter in our affairs that is not part of it will be rejected' (al-Bukhary). Based on the correlation of the hadith narrated by Aisyah and the furu’ case, there are four conditions for a case to be considered bid’ah, namely:

1. Muhdatsah creating new thing

Determining whether a case is part of bid’ah or not begins with paying attention to whether the Prophet and his companions have never carried out this matter, and this is still general in nature, applicable to all aspects of both the world and custom. Imam Ahmad often uses the term muhadatsah to refer to something that is syar'iyyah bid’ah. When asked about taghbir, a type of song that reminds us of the Hereafter and invites asceticism into the world, he said (Wizarah Auqaf al Kuwaitiyah, 1404; 296). Then he replied "هو محدثة التغيير" (nasyid Islami) that is muhadatsah or new matter (Khalid al-Ribath, 2009). In another narration Imam
Ahmad was asked about qashaid (poetry) and taghibir and he answered bid’ah and muhdats (Mufrij Abu ‘Abdillah, 1424).

A crucial point regarding the term bid’ah needs to be made: according to Imam Ahmad, not every mubdat may be classified as bid’ah, and not all bid’ah is unquestionably mubdats. Like Imam Ahmad, who lowered the number of cycles he prayed each night from 300 to 150 as a result of the discomfort he continued to experience after being caned (al-Ashbahaniy, 1309). This practice of Imam Ahmad can be categorized as a practice of muhdats, because it was not practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, but it cannot be judged as a heresy because there is a general argument for carrying it out, namely the hadith from Abdullah bin Yusuf which narrates that two-night prayer raka’at, and if you are worried that the time of Fajr will come, then pray one raka’at, to make the number of raka’at odd (al-Bukhari).

2. Related to religious teaching

New cases’ intricacy does not automatically make them bid’ah. The fact that these actions touch on matters of religion or are merely related to international politics is the second aspect that demands attention. It may be possible to classify religious activities as bid’ah if they touch on matters of belief, worship, or morals. By comparing the aforementioned hadith of Aisha with the case of the jur’i’, which Imam Ahmad deemed to be bid’ah, it is evident that a case can be classified as bid’ah if it involves a religious issue because none of the situations that are classified as bid’ah involve anything else.

3. No religious reference to practicing it

When it is discovered that new activities that were never performed by the Prophet are related to acts of worship, the next step that should be studied is the proper way to istinbath the law. In practice, Imam Ahmad carried out muhdatsah cases in religious matters in the form of praying 300 cycles of prayer every day on a regular basis, which was never done by the Prophet and his companions, but it is certain that this practice has evidence from the words of the Prophet: "Salat that night two cycles of two cycles, if you are worried that the time of Fajr will come, let him perform the witr prayer for one cycle to make the number of previous cycles odd." (al-Bukhari). new religious activity, and there is no single argument that is used as a basis for carrying out this activity, then it can be directly categorized as a bid’ah.
Imam Ahmad, according to the order, follows the texts of the Koran and the Sunnah, as well as the fatwas of the companions, in terms of *istinbath*. (Khalid al-Ribath, 2009), choosing the opinion of a friend if they differ on one issue, adhering to the *mursal hadith*, namely the hadith that Tabi'in leaned on to the Messenger of Allah without mentioning the friend who received it from him. And the *daif* if the content does not conflict with any argument and contradicts Qiyas. But if a problem can be reached by *istinbath* then it is not bid'ah, as Imam Ahmad once stipulated reading the Koran at the grave as a bid'ah (Al-Farrak, 1985) because it contradicts the general meaning of the hadith in which the Prophet directly In general, it was forbidden to make a house a grave. However, when Imam Ahmad said that Ibn 'Umar, a friend, had done it, he retracted his opinion (he no longer said bid'ah). According to the author, this means that a friend's actions can interpret the Prophet's hadith.

Regarding the method of istinbath or ushul al-fiqhiah, Imam Ahmad is adhering to the texts of the Koran and al-Sunnah, the companions' fatwas, choosing the companions' opinion if they disagree on one matter, adhering to the mursal hadith, or the hadith that Tabi'in relied on the Prophet without mentioning the companions who received it from him, the daif, and the mursal had Although Imam Ahmad once defined reading the Koran at a grave as a bid'ah (Al-Farrak, 1985), this contradicts the overall understanding of the hadith in which the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam clearly states that if an issue can be resolved by *istinbath*, then it is not a bid'ah.

4. Do not imitate the deeds of the prophets and companions

Imam Ahmad has implemented various rules relating to "ittiba." First, if a conduct based on "syar'i" directives is carried out in a manner that was never modeled by the Prophet and may conflict with other sunnahs, it is regarded as heresy. Second, imagine that the Messenger of Allah occasionally or at a specific period engages in a certain behavior. In that situation, it is sunnah to carry out the action at the appointed hour. If it is consistently practiced, it turns into heresy.

It's interesting to note that Imam Ahmad also defined a bid’ah as a nice statement that was not spoken at the appropriate time. This includes leaving the corpse while uttering particular words in a high pitch. (al-Mughny, 1405: 354). What is sunnah when leaving a corpse,
according to Imam Ahmad, is to reflect deeply, be solemn, and be silent. Likewise, learning from the experiences being faced.

B. The Islamic Law of Bid’ah according to Imam Ahmad

Imam Ahmad took into consideration the two taklifi laws of haram and makooh while defining heresy. The types of bid’ah that can result include those who refer to Allah's name, his characteristics, things that are usbul aqidab, the primary acts of worship, and other priests' opinions. Imam Ahmad did not specify which of the common types of worship is referred to as bid’ah haram. Just as performing three or four cycles of the Fajr prayer on purpose would be considered to argue against the shari'a argument, which would undoubtedly be upheld.

While Imam Ahmad considers bid’ah in terms of furu’ religion to be makooh, as evidenced by the nine cases of furu' mentioned above, The makooh law is required in the sense that there is no prohibition against it, that it does not contradict the main principles of religion, and that it prioritizes practicing things that are not important, in other words, that it abandons the main thing to pursue what is not essential. An example is reading the Koran slowly. Labn is reading the Qur'an and adzan is reading it in a high voice or softening the reading while ignoring the language rules so that the meaning changes.

Imam Ahmad’s opinion about reading the Koran by talbin was narrated as follows:

Ahmad and his companions made the reading of the Koran makooh by way of alhan, following the history that the Prophet mentioned the signs of the Day of Judgment, namely, "the Koran is chanted, and they give priority to someone who is not the most aqra (understands and reads well) and afdal (main) among them but so that he recites the Al-Quran as well as possible" (singing). Ahmad claimed that even if the miracle is in how the Koran is said and how it is to be followed, reciting it alters these things.
"Singing is prohibited if doing so alters the vowels and meaning of the letters in the Koran."

One tradition states that Ahmad and his companions recited the Koran by "alhan" and Ahmad said bid’ah. And Ahmad based his opinion on a history that states that the Prophet Muhammad mentioned the signs of the Day of Judgment, including the chanting of the Koran, and prioritized people who are good at chanting, not people who are best at recitation and afdal (main). Even though the miracle lies in the pronunciation and rules of the Koran, chanting the Koran can change them. If singing changes the content, meaning, and vowels of the letters of the Koran, then this is prohibited (al-Bahutiyy, 1402).

The issue is that there will be behavior that forgets to remember Allah or emulates a skeptical attitude, even though the situation is logically good and is also categorized as a situation that could lead someone to heresy, which is referred to as makruh. This is in addition to the worry that people will prioritize meaningless things over more significant issues. Imam Ahmad retorted, Categorized at this point is al-Qashaid, and Imam Ahmad continued, "Bid’ah, you are not authorized to sit in the majlis'. In addition to qashid, Imam Ahmad also produced taghbir, which was seen as a novel idea and a heretic. (Mufrij, 1424).

The following aspect, according to Imam Ahmad, that needs to be taken into account and feared might be categorized as bid’ah: the sunnah matter continued. At the same time, the Prophet only occasionally used it. Imam Ahmad asserts that Muslims must also pay attention to and follow the Prophet's practices, whether they were transient or ongoing, in addition to concentrating on "what the Prophet has done." According to Imam Ahmad, if practices are consistently carried out without being instructed or mandated to be always practiced, they might be classified as bid’ah, and the law is therefore makruh.

C. Application of Imam Ahmad’s Bid’ah concept

The heretical concept of Imam Ahmad, which was initiated several centuries ago, is still relevant today. All new matters can be categorized as bid’ah if they have an etymological meaning. However, heresy can be attached to all aspects, such as theological, syar'i, or worldly (Musawar, 2019). In reality, there are new things that cannot be categorized as bid’ah. However, some current understandings loudly voice parts of bid’ah. As a
result, it occasionally causes discomfort in society; on the other hand, there are cases that are essentially bid’ah, but there are no voices claiming to be bid’ah. Among the unique and intriguing things lately is the trending use of the terms "ustadz sunnah," "sunnah studies," "sunnah mosque," and similar terms.

The term "ustadz" means a teacher who guides and teaches someone about religion. The combination of the words ustadz and sunnah is common in various mass media and in the real world. It seems that the desired meaning is that the teacher teaches or delivers studies based on sunnah, which applies to all kinds of scientific disciplines, including Quranic interpretation, hadith, fiqh, Islamic history, and other study themes. Likewise, with the term "study of the sunnah," this expression is meant to mention the study delivered by the ustadz sunnah.

At first, the terms above seemed positive and stressed the importance of consistently adhering to the sunnah of the Prophet. Ibn Batthah has also used an expression that rhymes with the expression above when explaining the importance of believing in qadar: *wnjub al-iman bi al-qadar maudhi’ ijma’ ulama al-sunnah, tawatarat bibi adillah al-kitab wa al-sunnah, la majal ma’abu li syakk wa al-taraddud fi isbat al-qadr wa al-wujub al-iman bibi* (Al-‘Ukbariy, 1426, 149).

The term *Ulama al-Sunnah* is also used to refer to Hadith Ulama as said by Ibn Baz *wa man arada al-wuqf ‘ala katsir min zalika fal-yuraji’ ma katabahu ulama al-sunnah fi hadza al-bab* ( bin Baz, n.d.). The term "sunnah" was frequently used in turats books. This phrase emphasizes that they are the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah group, which differs fundamentally from other groups in terms of the ushuluddin, or main points, of religion. This difference includes disagreements with Shi’i groups, the Mu’tazilah, the Khawarij, and others.

On the one hand, the widespread use of these terms reinforces the message to congregations and loyalists that they are in sync. However, on the other hand, it seems that studies, ustadz, and mosques that do not have the word "sunnah" attached to them are not considered sunnah. Tickling things like this sometimes trigger the tendency for friction or discomfort between people.

These terms can be described as muhdats, never encountered at the time of the Prophet or his companions. The word good is not in its condition, and sometimes it creates discomfort among many people. In one
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history, it is explained that the Prophet had forbidden the use of the terms Muhajirin and Ansar;

Amru heard Jabir bin Abdillah say, "We once accompanied the Prophet in a war. Suddenly a friend of the Muhajirin pushed the back of another friend of Ansar. Then the Ansar friend said, "Hey Ansar people, come here!" Then Muhajirin's friend called, "Hey Muhajirin, come here!" Hearing calls like that, the Prophet "Why are you still using the methods of calling Jahiliyyah?" Friends say, "O Messenger of Allah, there was a friend from the Muhajirin pushing the back of a friend from Ansar." Then the Prophet said, "Leave calls in Jahiliyyah ways because that will have a harmful effect" (al-Nisaburiy, n.d.).

It is not forbidden to use the words Muhajirin and Ansar. These two terms are reasonable and even categorized as al-Quran terms. The praise of the Koran is aimed at these two groups of friends. It’s just that the use of good words is not in a good place and purpose, so it is prohibited, according to shari’ah. The editorial speech above indicates friction between friends. If analogous to the use of the term ustadz, mosque, or sunnah studies make it very easy for disparities between communities. Some feel that mosques, ustadz, and their studies are not sunnah. Therefore, not using the term above should be abandoned to maintain social harmony.

CONCLUSION

Bid’ah discourse is interesting even though many scholars have discussed it with various styles of argumentation. It’s just that this discussion sometimes needs clarification and clarity in the community because of the multiple understandings of these thoughts. The concept of Imam Ahmad is considered strong enough in formulating bid’ah so that later Muslims can apply it. So that they can be self-aware and not fall into one of the aspects prohibited by the Prophet Muhammad. The development of the terms ‘ustadz sunnah, sunnah mosque, and sunnah studies when viewed from the concept of heresy of Imam Ahmad can be classified as heresy which is criticized by makruh. The term above is counterproductive and can even create significant disparities in the Indonesian Muslim community.

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