

Modernization in Islam

Sheikh ` Abdul-Majeed Subh, a prominent Azharite scholar, states: “First of all, it should be clear that what is mentioned in the hadith is renovation (tajdid) and not modernization (tahdith). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, “Almighty Allah sends every 100 years a person who renovates the religion of the Ummah.” It refers to leading the Ummah (Muslim Nation) to come back to the complete and true Islam. It does not refer to modernizing the religion itself. Moreover, there is a big difference between modernization and renovation. Modernization can be taken in the means which lead to the objectives. For example, among the objectives of Shari` ah is to take care of the orphan; if today Muslims tried to establish social institutions to take care of orphans, then we apply modernized methods and means to achieve the aims and objectives of Shari` ah. Also education in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to be in the Mosque. If today, we came to educate our children in schools that include modernized means for education, then we made use of those modernized means to achieve the objectives of Shari` ah which always call Muslims to be creative and active.

Having clarified the above, it is wrong to say that every innovative act is bid` ah (innovation in religion). This is rigidity that harms Islam and Muslims bearing into consideration the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) who is reported to have said, “Whoever enacted a good [sunnah](#), he will gain its reward and a similar reward for those who do it after him.

This is a call for creativity and a true Muslim is the one who makes use of the social and scientific development to achieve the objectives of Shari` ah as we are now using the internet and the like to deliver the call of Islam in its right and true image. We also use this modernized means to defend Islam, refute misconceptions about it, etc. So, we have to differentiate between the means and objectives as we clarified above.”