
The Islaamic Fundamentalism of the Wahhabi Movement

Introduction

The word "fundamentalist" was originally used, as is well known, to describe an American Protestant movement which is said to have arisen out of the millenarian movement[1] of the 19th century, and which came into its own in the early twentieth century "in opposition to modernist tendencies in American religious and secular life"[2] The term is derived from a series of tracts, *The Fundamentals*, published in the USA in 1909.[3]

However, fundamentalism in the sense of a return to the fundamentals of a religion and a rejection of secularism, was soon discovered to be a world-wide phenomenon. There are among adherents of all religions of the world some who have been disillusioned with secularism and who have decided, therefore, to go back to their respective religions, and not only to reject secularism but to organize themselves and fight it, each from the point of view of his religion, and to provide alternatives to it. Thus there are fundamentalist Jews, fundamentalist Buddhists, fundamentalist Hindus, and so on. But the fundamentalism that is always in the news, and with which Western scholars, journalists, and policy makers are more concerned, is without a doubt Muslim fundamentalism. It would be a gross mistake, however, to think, as some people do, that Islamic fundamentalists form a homogeneous movement with common beliefs, common objectives and a united leadership. No groups which call themselves Islamic are farther apart from each other than the Shi'i fundamentalists and the Sunni fundamentalists. But even within the Sunnis, and also within the Shi'is, there are disparate groups and movements, all of which are dubbed by Western media fundamentalist.

What is it, then, that justifies the use of this one term to describe these diverse Muslim groups and organizations, and even states? Rejection of secularism is, no doubt, common to all of them; but in this rejection they are at one even with non-Islamic fundamentalist movements. Religious fundamentalism is by definition anti-secular.

But because so-called Muslim fundamentalists, as well as their opponents in the Muslim world and in the West, usually confuse anti-secular with anti-Western, or anti-American, the defining characteristic of Muslim fundamentalism has come to be that it is anti-Western, and thus a threat to Western civilization. It is paradoxical that this position is often taken, even by some in the West, who are themselves opposed to the extremes of secularism in their own countries. This equation of Western with secular does not, in my opinion, do justice to the West itself, since there is much in Western civilization that is more important and of greater value to the West, as well as other nations, than secularism.

And because the emphasis in characterizing Muslim fundamentalism has come to be placed on this supposed anti-Western standpoint, it was easy to move from that to dubbing as fundamentalist any Muslim individual or group that takes a non-Western position on any vital issue, policy or principle. Take, for example, the important question of democracy. No sane person would condemn everything democratic, because there is much in democracy that is of fundamental importance to human beings qua human beings; but it is surely chauvinistic to assume that any people in the world are enemies of the West who do not have democratic institutions and values that are identical with those that happen to be preferred by Western nations in the twentieth century.

Worse still, Islamic fundamentalism has come to be associated in many people's minds with terrorism, while the truth is that some of those actions which are truly terrorist, make a genuine Muslim shudder, first because he is a human being with a feeling heart, and second because the killing of innocent people who do not engage in actual combat with Muslims is strongly condemned by the Prophet of Islam, even when Muslims are actually at war with an enemy. But to say all this is not to deny the fact that there is a phenomenon in the Muslim world which can be described as fundamentalist. The question is about the proper characterization of that phenomenon, not about its existence.

Islamic Fundamentalism: Towards a Definition.

What, then, is Islamic fundamentalism? Let us start by seeing how it compares with Christian fundamentalism. The Christian fundamentalist movement is said to have been characterized by the belief that every word in the Bible is the word of God, and that the Bible is therefore infallible, by a literalist interpretation of the Bible, by belief in the virgin birth of Christ, in his second coming, in eternal punishment in Hell, and in the necessity of evangelical activities.

But the belief that the Qur'an is the infallible word of God in the literal sense is common to all Muslims. Their method of interpreting its verses is mainly that which is called literalist. They all believe in the virgin birth of Christ, and, though they are not millenarians, they all believe in his second coming. No Muslim denies punishment in Hell. And though not every Muslim is evangelical, Muslims on the whole have no objection in principle to evangelism. And so, if judged by these Christian criteria of fundamentalism, all Muslims are necessarily fundamentalists.

In what sense, then, can fundamentalism be a special characteristic of some Muslim individuals, or groups or movements? Only, I think, in the sense of their militancy in advocating, as fundamentals of Islam, some beliefs which they genuinely believe to be justified by a "literal" understanding of the texts, but which many other Muslims neglect, are ignorant of, or do not believe to be either Islamic or fundamental. One merit of the definition here is that it is broad enough not to confine this phenomenon to a particular age, or make it a reaction against an external culture, but is at the same time limited enough not to include all forms of genuine adherence to religion.

Characteristics of 'Abd Al-Wahhab's Fundamentalism

Judged by this special characterization of Islamic fundamentalism, Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab, the religious founder of Saudi Arabia, was a paragon of Muslim fundamentalist leaders. Here are some of the salient features of his fundamentalism:

- a. If the Christian fundamentalists were so-called because they laid down their main beliefs in tracts called The Fundamentals, 'Abd Al-Wahhab's movement deserves that name in view of the fact that the word 'fundamental' appears in many of his influential tracts.
- b. He spent most of his long life, from 1703 to 1792, concentrating on Islamic fundamentals: the fundamentals of faith, the method of obtaining religious knowledge, the necessity of establishing a strong state to propagate and defend the faith, and so on. He devoted his life to teaching those fundamentals, explaining them, arguing for them, urging people to believe in and act on them, and rebutting objections to them.
- c. He started one of the strongest, if not the strongest, modern Islamic movements that ultimately even had to engage in war with its opponents.
- d. Though his movement succeeded more than any other Islamic movement in modern times in achieving its goals in the land which was its field of activity, and though the movement which he started is to this day making good headway among Muslims worldwide, it is nevertheless still rejected by many as a dangerous aberration from the Islam with which they are familiar. But to be rejected by some adherents of the religion to which it belongs is a hallmark of a truly fundamentalist movement.
- e. His interpretation of sacred texts, especially in relation to divine attributes, is that which is called "literal".
- f. He was very much aware of the fact that he was not a mere preacher or arm-chair scholar but the leader of a movement that sought to effect a real change in society, and that, though the dissemination of knowledge was a first step and necessary condition for that change, it was not enough.

Like all practical social reformers he was convinced of the necessity of power for the realization of the goals which he advocated. Though he had followers, he did not organize them in the form of modern-day activist societies or political parties. He sought that power instead in the support of tribal chiefs, who were the counterparts of today's heads of state. One of them, Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud, the ruler of Dir'iya, accepted his teachings and promised to implement the Shari'ah and defend the movement, thus laying the foundation of the state that was later to be known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia..

g. Today's fundamentalism, whether Islamic or non-Islamic, is characterized, as we saw, by its rejection of Western secularism. But Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab did not face that problem. Western civilization, for him was non-existent. He was not, in fact, concerned even with other parts of the Arab or Muslim world. His was a very local movement. But he nevertheless faced a secularism of another brand, which he called jahiliyyah. Jahiliyyah, literally 'ignorance', is the Islamic term for any system of social life which is based on human ideas and whims, and not on divine guidance. The governance of those tribal chiefs was jahili, or secular, because they did not implement Islamic law.

For example, resort to deception to deprive females of their legitimate shares of inheritance, was widespread among their subjects, but none of them prohibited it or punished those who did it; the Islamic penal code was not applied.

Thus, when 'Abd Al-Wahhab ordered the Islamic punishment to be applied to a woman who confessed to committing adultery, there was an uproar among those chiefs, so much so that a powerful one of them threatened the chief in whose territory that punishment took place, to either kill the sheikh who ordered it, banish him, or face the consequences. He chose to banish him.

h. The mark of a good teacher is to pay close attention to the nature of his audience, and have the ability to address each type of them in the most appropriate manner. 'Ali, the fourth caliph after the Prophet, is reported to have said, "Speak to people in a way they can understand. Do you want them to disbelieve God and His Prophet?"[4] 'Abd Al-Wahhab heeded that advice to the maximum, and had the ability to put it into practice. Thus, whenever he wrote to scholars outside his Bedouin community, in Iraq, say, he would use classical Arabic of a high quality; but when he addressed his own people, even in writing, he would use very simple language, and would not even hesitate to use colloquial words and expressions.

This persistent attention to the importance of conveying his message in a manner appropriate to his audience comes out very clearly in the fact that though he had the highest respect for a man like Ibn Taymiyyah, and though he very often quoted him extensively, his style was very different from his. Ibn Taymiyyah had lived in Damascus at a time when it was teeming with philosophers, philosophical theologians, Sufis, Christian and Jewish scholars, scientists, and so on.

But Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab lived in a simple cultural milieu where there was no such erudition. He therefore steered clear of Ibn Taymiyyah's style. While Ibn Taymiyyah resorted to elaborate, and in many cases rational, arguments to buttress and defend Qur'anic teachings on theological matters, 'Abd Al-Wahhab was mostly content with religious evidence. He avoided the subject of philosophical theology altogether. With the exception of his personal letters, his style is legalistic, concise, and somewhat terse.

i. Leaders of social reform movements usually come with ideas with which people are not familiar, and they are therefore prone to encounter challenge, criticism and opposition. While the leader and the elite around him might be able to defend their new thinking in the face of this opposition, the rank and file of the movement cannot do so. But the movement consists mainly of these common people, and the opposition might adopt a strategy of defying and embarrassing them by asking them questions they cannot answer, in the hope of weakening their hold on those new beliefs, and thus weakening the movement. This happened to 'Abd Al-Wahhab's followers, and he realized the importance of giving these people confidence in themselves and arming them with simple arguments they could understand and use effectively, even against people who were much more learned than they were. He encouraged them not to be intimidated by people who were known to be more learned than they because even a learned person is weak so long as he is on the side of falsehood, and a lay person is strong so long as he adheres to the truth. To this end he divided arguments for them into two categories: general arguments which even a lay person could use to answer any objection, and specific answers to the most commonly raised questions.

j. Many movements, Islamic and non-Islamic, are very short-lived. The beliefs and thoughts on which they are based do not have a strong hold even on the minds of those who join the movement. So once they face adverse circumstances, or even when the special circumstances which induced them to first join the movement change, they leave it and forget about it. But the teachings of other movements continue to have a strong hold on generation after generation of its members. Such was definitely the Wahhabi movement.

i. Twice in its history the movement, in the form of the Saudi state which was founded on it, was not only defeated by its enemies, but completely routed, its political and religious leaders killed or taken prisoner. But after each such defeat, the remaining members of the movement would come together and start all over again, advocating the same teachings with the same old conviction and zeal, and succeed once again in wielding power and forming a new Islamic state.

ii. Like Muslim scholars everywhere, the Islamic scholars of contemporary Saudi Arabia may differ in their opinions or their points of view on certain political issues, or on the proper Islamic ruling on something, but thanks to the Wahhabi movement there is a consensus among them on the fundamentals of faith and method, the like of which is nowhere to be found in any other part of the Muslim world.

iii. And thanks again to that movement, Saudi society, though not an ideal Islamic society, is the one that is more immune than any other Islamic society to the popular forms of shirk (the worshipping of other deities besides God) which the founder of the movement condemned.

iv. Far from fading, waning or shrinking, the movement, in its essentials, long ago transcended the boundaries of its homeland, and is still gaining momentum and flourishing in different parts of the world, and influencing other movements.

Tawheed, or Islamic Monotheism

Every Muslim says *la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasulu Allah*. This witnessing of the fact that there is no deity worthy of worship except God, is the fundamental pillar of the whole edifice of Islam. 'Abd Al-Wahhab said that it is not enough to profess this statement verbally; it is not enough to understand its true meaning, not enough to admit its truth, not enough even to actually worship none but God: one must add to all this one's denial of every other object of worship. One must also abstain from any belief, speech or act which violates one's profession of that belief. But he realized^[5] that the belief of most Muslims of his time with whom he came in contact, including the 'ulama (scholars of religion), did not satisfy all those conditions.^[6] Fundamentalists of his persuasion would say the same about Muslims of our day. To be a true believer in the Islamic sense of the word, one must:

a. Believe in God as the only creator and sustainer of every thing that exists. But this was admitted even by the idolatrous Arabs before the advent of Muhammad, and is accepted by the majority of human beings all over the world, so by itself this does not make a person a believer in the sense in which all messengers of God wanted them to be.^[7]

b. Believe that no one other than God deserves to be worshipped. To do so, one has to fulfill two main conditions:

1. Believe that God alone is worthy of worship, which means that it is not enough to worship Him, but you have to worship none besides Him. This, he explained, is the core of tawhid, it is the tawhid which all messengers of God advocated and the tawhid over which there was enmity between them and those who denied it. However, the majority of those who call themselves Muslims, including the 'ulama, are ignorant of this and do not therefore satisfy this condition, i.e., they do worship others besides God. But those Muslims would indignantly and emphatically deny such an accusation and insist that they worship none but Allah. The crucial question then becomes: what does worshipping consist of? Explanation of this point is a recurring theme of 'Abd Al-Wahhab's writings. Here are examples of the feelings and acts which, he explains, are expressions of worship and which, as such, are God's, and no one else's due:

i. **Love.** It is natural for a person to love many people and many things besides loving God. But he does not become a believer in God if he loves anything as much as or more than he loves Him. A person's utmost love must be for God only. The Qur'an says, "There are some people who associate partners (with God), whom they love as deeply as they love God. But those who believe love God more deeply (than they love anything else)." Commenting on this verse 'Abd Al-Wahhab observes that "God stated that they love God as they love those they took as equal to Him, which means that their love for God was great, but that did not make them Muslims. What, then, about one who loves a compeer more than He loves God? And what about the one who loves the compeer only, to the exclusion of God?"^[8]

ii. **Fear.** The Sheikh counts fear among acts of worship,^[9] and quotes the Qur'an: "Do not fear them; fear me" [2:150]. But this should not be taken to mean that one should not fear anything besides God - it is impossible to do so; rather, it should be taken to mean that one should not fear anything other than God as much as or more than one fears God, because only in this case would it interfere with one's obedience to God. The Qur'an itself says, "Surely we will try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of goods and lives and fruits" [2:155].^[10]

iii. **Supplication and invocation.** "Call on those whom you claimed (to be gods) apart from Him. They have no power to remove affliction from you or to transfer it. Those they call upon are themselves seeking the means to come to their Lord, which of them shall be nearer; they hope for His mercy, and fear His chastisement. Surely your Lord's chastisement is a thing to beware of" [17:56-7].^[11] 'Abd Al-Wahhab says that this is a clear indictment of the associationists who pray to the righteous, and that the verse states clearly that this supplication is a form of the major shirk (violation of tawhid).^[12]

iv. **Obedience.** Referring to some of the Christians and Jews the Qur'an says that they took their rabbis and monks as well as Jesus as lords besides God, whereas they were commanded to worship none but God [9:31]. In what way did they take them as gods? Only in the sense of obeying them in doing what God forbade.^[13] This means that absolute obedience is due to God only. To obey anyone other than Him in such an absolute way is to take that one as a god besides God.

2. The Islamic State. It is because of this principle of obedience being due to God only that Muslims reject the Western, secular idea of the separation of church and state. Divine commandments are to be obeyed irrespective of the aspect of life to which they pertain. No one, not an individual dictator, an elected national body, or a scholar of religion, has the right to make any legislation that contradicts what is stated in the Qur'an or the Hadith of the Prophet. If they do so they are putting themselves in God's place, and are as such committing an act of grave shirk..[14] And the same goes for those who voluntarily obey them or believe that they have such a right.

The Qur'an describes as taghut any one or any thing that is worshipped besides God. Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab says that there are many taghuts, but that the main ones are five: Satan, because he invites people to worship gods other than God; the unjust ruler who distorts God's rulings; one who rules in accordance with other than what God sent down, because God says "Anyone who judges according to other than what God sent down is an unbeliever,"[15] one who claims to know the ghayb (that which is beyond human senses), and one who approves of being worshipped besides God.[16] We see from this that three of the five main forms of violations of tawhid are related to government.

i. Sacrifice. Because animal sacrifice is a form of worship, slaughtering them for the sake of anyone other than God is a form of shirk. The Qur'an says to the Prophet, "Pray to your Lord and sacrifice." [17] And the Prophet himself says, "May God curse anyone who sacrifices to other than God." [18] Many of those who venerate saints in any of these or similar ways would emphatically deny that they are thereby worshipping them. Rather, they would say, as they used to say at the time of Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab, and as they are still saying, we know that they are not gods, that they do not have any power independently of God's, but we turn to them because they have a special place with God. They are not our gods, but our intermediaries to God. 'Abd Al-Wahhab replied by saying that that was exactly the argument of the idolatrous Arabs. They claimed that they worshipped idols only so that they "bring them nearer and closer to God" [39:3].

"Remember," says the Sheikh, "that the form of shirk committed by the associationists whom the Prophet battled against was that they made supplication to God, but also to idols and saints like Jesus and his mother, and to the angels, saying that they were their intermediaries with God. They did believe that God, exalted He is, is the One Who benefits and harms and disposes (of all affairs). God stated this about them in His saying, "Say: 'Who provides you out of heaven and earth, or who has power over hearing and sight, and who brings forth the living from the dead or the dead from the living, and who disposes of affairs?' They will surely say, 'God'" [10:31][19],[20]

ii. Believe that God must be worshipped in the manner prescribed by His Prophet. Here comes the importance of professing faith in Muhammad's prophethood. The meaning of this profession, according to the Sheikh, "is to obey his orders, to believe what he says, to avoid what he forbids, and not to worship God except in the way He prescribes." [21]

iii. Believe in the names and attributes which God ascribed to Himself: "To God belong the names most beautiful; so call Him by them, and leave those who blaspheme His names" [7:180]. [22] A true believer is, therefore, one who takes these names and attributes as they are, without likening them to the attributes of created things (otherwise one would be an anthropomorphist), and without explaining them away as being only metaphorical, which amounts to denying them. [23]

Two Modern Accusations

Some modern critics of 'Abd Al-Wahhab accuse him of being a literalist, yet others say that he failed to distinguish between what is properly Islamic and what is merely Arabian. To what extent is this true?

a. Literalism

This term is used in a pejorative way by opponents of the fundamentalists, whether they be Christians or Muslims, to condemn their method of interpreting Scripture. But the method that is being condemned as literalist is, in fact, the method that all of us use most of the time in interpreting any discourse. How do we usually interpret what other people say? By giving the words and expressions they use, the meanings that are usually intended by them in contexts that are similar to the context in which they used those words and expressions.

We deviate from this normal procedure only when it becomes clear to us that the speaker or writer whose words we are trying to understand did not, for some reason, use those words in the usual way we use them.

Thus, it is only after we have interpreted a speaker's discourse in the so-called literalist way that we judge whether what he said was right or wrong, good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, etc.

This method is thus not peculiar to so-called fundamentalists. As a matter of fact, it is not peculiar to them even in the interpretation of Scripture, because even those who reject a religion start by interpreting its language in this so-called literalist way, and only then come to the conclusion that it is not acceptable to them.

So-called liberal interpretation is thus no more than self-deception, because the liberal starts by interpreting the statements of Scripture in this normal way that he calls literalist, but when he finds the meaning of a statement unacceptable to him or to his contemporary culture, he reinterprets it so as to make it more in tune with the requirements of his personal prejudices or the prejudices of his contemporary culture. But such a person will only be deceiving himself, even if the motive is to make the religion more acceptable to his contemporaries, because the religion that they accept after this new interpretation is not the original religion that is called Islam, or Christianity or Judaism, but a distorted form of it. He will, in fact, be inviting people to a religion of his own making, which he dishonestly attributes to God, or Jesus or Muhammad. God warns His Prophet against such distortion: "O Messenger! Convey that which was sent down to you from your lord, otherwise you will not be conveying His Message" [5:67].

This normal method of interpreting texts, which is said to be literalist, should not be confused with another method that is also sometimes described as literal, and which is indeed an irrational method. This is when the interpreter isolates the speaker's or writer's words from their context, especially in idiomatic phrases, or when he pays no attention to the special uses of words or phrases by a certain speaker or a certain community. But fundamentalists are not usually accused of this kind of literalism, since their main aim is to understand what is really meant by the words which they take to be words of God or of one of His true prophets. As a matter of fact, it is so-called liberals who resort to this kind of irrational interpretation.

b. Arabism.

This accusation is sometimes leveled against fundamentalists by some non-Muslim scholars, but it is leveled most of the time by modernist Muslims. Whenever the latter find something in Islam which they deem to be unsuitable for modern times, they are prone to say that it is merely a facet of Arab culture that found its way into Islam through the Arab 'ulama. But the fact of the matter is that most of what these modernists dismiss as merely Arab culture was in fact a culture that the Arabs adopted after the advent of Islam, and because of it. It is a fact, though it might seem paradoxical, that nothing is more similar to contemporary secular culture than the purely Arab culture that was prevailing before the advent of Islam. It is that culture which Islam condemned as jahiliyyah (ignorance) and which it replaced with a culture based on true moral values. And it is this jahili culture which fundamentalists like 'Abd Al-Wahhab fight against whenever they see it recurring.

In that jahili culture women used to mix freely with men, as they do now. They used to dress in the same way as women in the secular societies now dress, i.e., exposing many parts of their bodies; they would even sometimes go in the nude. It was only after the advent of Islam that it became the custom for Arab women to spend most of their time at home, to cover their bodies, and to keep away from men. But you will now find some who tells you that the hijab (women's Islamic dress, covering the head and the body) is an Arab custom, and not an Islamic requirement.

The Wahhabi Movement Today

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that after every hundred years, God sends people to the Muslim nation to revive the religion. Sheikh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab is considered to be one such revivalist, the revivalist of his century, the twelfth Islamic century. A revivalist, or renewer (mujaddid), is by definition not an innovator. He does not come with anything substantially new. His task is only to take people of his time back to the true religion and explicate it for them in a manner and in a language they can understand and appreciate. It is for this reason that many of those who accept Sheikh Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab as an imam (leader) and a mujaddid (renewer) - and there are hundreds of them now in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the Muslim World - are averse to being called Wahhabis, because this might give the impression that they are following some special teachings or doctrines which were of Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab's making.

The so-called Wahhabi 'ulama [23] do not really follow any special teachings of Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab, but only his call for going back to the fundamental sources of the Islamic religion. This is amply demonstrated in their attitude towards his writings. They read them, but not necessarily all of them; they do not confine themselves to them, but go to the original sources whence he got his teachings, and to the earlier great scholars who helped him shape his views and teachings; they do not confine themselves to the problems which he tackled, but deal with the problems of their times, each in his own manner and style. While having great deference for him, they do not hesitate to differ with him on some points. But this in itself is a good measure of the success of Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab's movement.

Footnotes

[1] "In the 1830s and 1840s a great deal of excitement was generated in the United States by expectations of the Second Advent of Christ and an ensuing thousand years of of peace (the "millennium") Micropaedia, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1992.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Alan Bullock, et al., The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, second edition, 1990, London.

[4] Fath al-Bari, Vol. 1: 127.

[5] Unless otherwise indicated, the source of all quotes from the Sheikh's writings is volume 1 of the collection of his works, called, Mu'alafat al-Shaykh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab, Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh.

[6] p. 399.

[7] p. 200.

[8]p. 25.

[9] p. 189.

[10] A.J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, George Allen and Unwin, 1955.

[11] Arberry, (with minor changes).

[12] op. cit., p. 25.

[13] loc. cit.

[14] It is for this reason that in Saudi Arabia the oath of allegiance is formulated in a way that takes account of this important Islamic fact: ...I pledge allegiance to God, then to my king and my country, and to obey my superiors, except in matters of disobedience (to God).

[15] 5:44.

[16] p. 377f.

[17] 108:2.

[18] p. 35.

[19] Arberry and A. Y. Ali, The Holy Qur'an, English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary (with minor changes).

[20] p. 398f.

[21] p. 190.

[22] Arberry.

[23] Al-Shaykh Sulayman Ibn 'Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abd Al-Wahhab, Taysir al-'Aziz al-Hamid fi Sharhi Kitabi al-Tawhid. Al-Maktab Al-Islami, Beirut, 1988, pp. 636, 645ff..

[23] Even though Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab did not call to a new sect/group made by him, nor those Scholars and common people who learn from the Shaykhs works, regard themselves as Wahhabis, they only follow the teachings of Ibn Abdul Wahhab which is to return to the correct Islam, the Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions.