
Wahhabi's

The Myth & the Reality

Praise be to Allaah. There is never a man who brings some goodness to this world but he has enemies among mankind and the jinn. Even the Prophets of Allaah were not safe from that.

The enmity of people was directed against the scholars in the past, especially the proponents of the true call (of Islam as understood by the early Muslims). They were met with intense hostility from the people. An example of that is Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him); some of those who were jealous of him regarded it as permissible to shed his blood, others accused him of being misguided and of going beyond the pale of Islam and becoming an apostate.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab was simply another of these wronged scholars who were falsely accused by people, in an attempt to cause trouble (fitnah). People's only motives for doing that were jealousy and hatred, along with the fact that bid'ah was so firmly entrenched in their hearts, or they were ignorant and were blindly imitating the people of whims and desires.

We will mention some of the false accusations that were made against the Shaykh, and will refute them.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez al-'Abd al-'Lateef said: Some opponents of the salafi da'wah claim that Imam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab rebelled against the Ottoman Caliphate, thus splitting the jamaa'ah (main body of the Muslims) and refusing to hear and obey (the ruler). Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een li Da'wat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahaab, p. 233

He said: 'Abd al-Qadeem Zalloom claims that the emergence of the Wahhaabis and their call was a cause of the fall of the Caliphate. It was said that the Wahhaabis formed a state within the Islamic state, under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Sa'ood and subsequently his son 'Abd al-'Azeez, which was supplied with weapons and money by the British, and they set out to gain control of other lands that were under the rule of Caliphate, motivated by the urge to spread their beliefs, i.e., they raised their swords against the Caliph and fought the Muslim army, the army of the Ameer al-Mu'mineen, with the encouragement and support of the British. Kayfa hudimat al-Khilaafah, p. 10.

Before we respond to the false accusation that Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab rebelled against the Caliphate, we should mention the fact that the Shaykh believed that hearing and obeying the imams (leaders) of the Muslims was obligatory, whether they are righteous or immoral, so long as they did not enjoin disobedience towards Allaah, because obedience is only with regard to what is right and proper.

The Shaykh said in his letter to the people of al-Qaseem: "I believe that it is obligatory to hear and obey the leaders of the Muslims, whether they are righteous or immoral, so long as they do not enjoin disobedience towards Allaah. Whoever has become Caliph and the people have given him their support and accepted him, even if he has gained the position of caliph by force, is to be obeyed and it is haraam to rebel against him." Majmoo'at Mu'allafaat al-Shaykh, 5/11

And he also said: One of the main principles of unity is to hear and obey whoever is appointed over us even if he is an Abyssinian slave..." Majmoo'ah Mu'allafaat al-Shaykh, 1/394; quoted in Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een, 233-234.

And Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez al-'Abd al-'Lateef said: After stating these facts which explain that the Shaykh believed it was obligatory to hear and obey the leaders of the Muslims, whether they are righteous or immoral, so long as they do not enjoin disobedience towards Allaah, we may refer to an important issue in response to that false accusation. There is an important question which is: was Najd, where this call originated and first developed, under the sovereignty of the Ottoman state?

Dr Saalih al-'Abood answered this by saying: Najd never came under Ottoman rule, because the rule of the Ottoman state never reached that far, no Ottoman governor was appointed over that region and the Turkish soldiers never marched through its land during the period that preceded the emergence of the call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allaah have mercy on him).

This fact is indicated by the fact that the Ottoman state was divided into administrative provinces. This is known from a Turkish document entitled Qawaaneen Aal 'Uthmaan Mudaameen Daftar al-Deewaan (Laws of the Ottomans concerning what is contained in the Legislation), which was written by Yameen 'Ali Effendi who was in charge of the Constitution in 1018 AH/1609 CE. This document indicates that from the beginning of the eleventh century AH the Ottoman state was divided into 23 provinces, of which 14 were Arabic provinces, and the land of Najd was not one of them, with the exception of al-Ihsa', if we count al-Ihsa' as part of Najd. 'Aqeedat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab wa atharuha fi'l-'Aalam al-Islami (unpublished), 1/27

And Dr 'Abd-Allaah al-'Uthaymeen said: Whatever the case, Najd never experienced direct Ottoman rule before the call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab emerged, just as it never experienced any strong influence that could have an impact on events inside Najd. No one had any such influence, and the influence of Bani Jabr or Bani Khaalid in some parts, or the Ashraaf in other parts, was limited. None of them were able to bring about political stability, so wars between the various regions of Najd continued and there were ongoing violent conflicts between its various tribes. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab Hayaatuhu wa Fikruhu, p. 11; quoted in Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een, 234-235.

We will complete this discussion by quoting what Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn 'Abd-Allaah ibn Baaz said in response to this false accusation. He said (may Allaah have mercy on him):

Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab did not rebel against the Ottoman Caliphate as far as I know, because there was no area in Najd that was under Turkish rule. Rather Najd consisted of small emirates and scattered villages, and each town or village, no matter how small, was ruled by an independent emir. These were emirates between which there were fighting, wars and disputes. So Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab did not rebel against the Ottoman state, rather he rebelled against the corrupt situation in his own land, and he strove in jihad for the sake of Allaah and persisted until the light of this call spread to other lands... Conversation recorded on tape; quoted in Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een, p. 237

Dr. 'Ajeel al-Nashmi said: ... The Caliphate did not react in any way and did not show any discontent or resentment during the life of the Shaykh, even though there were four Ottoman sultans during his lifetime... Majallat al-Mujtama', issue # 510.

If the above is a reflection of the Shaykh's attitude towards the Caliphate, how did the Caliphate view the call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab?

Dr. al-Nashmi said, answering this question: The view that the Caliphate had of the movement of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab was very distorted and confused, because the Caliphate only listened to those who were hostile towards the movement of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, whether that was via reports sent by their governors in the Hijaz, Baghdad and elsewhere, or via some individuals who reached Istanbul bearing news. Al-Mujtama', issue #504; quoted in Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een, p. 238-239.

With regard to Zalloum's claims that the Shaykh's call was one of the reasons for the fall of the Caliphate and that the English helped the Wahhaabis to topple it, Mahmoud Mahdi al-Istanbuli says concerning this ridiculous claim:

This writer should be expected to produce proof and evidence for his opinion. Long ago the poet said:

If claims are not supported by proof, they are used only by the fools as evidence.

We should also note that history tells us that the English were opposed to this call from the outset, fearing that it might wake the Muslim world up. Al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab fi Mar'aat al-Sharq wa'l-Gharb, p.

And he says: The ironic fact is that this professor accuses the movement of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab of being one of the factors that led to the destruction of the Ottoman Caliphate, even though this movement began in 1811 CE and the Caliphate was abolished in 1922 CE. Op. cit., p. 64

What indicates that the English were opposed to the Wahhabi movement is the fact that they sent Captain Foster Sadler to congratulate Ibrahim Pasha on his success against the Wahhabis – during the war of Ibrahim Pasha in Dar'iyah – and also to find out to what extent he was prepared to cooperate with the British authorities to reduce what they called Wahhabi piracy in the Arabian Gulf.

Indeed, this letter clearly expressed a desire to establish an agreement between the British government and Ibrahim Pasha with the aim of destroying the Wahhabis completely.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Manzoor al-Nu'maani said: The English made the most of the hostility that existed in India towards Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and they accused everyone who opposed them and stood in their way, or whom they regarded as dangerous, of being Wahhabis... Similarly the English called the scholars of Deoband – in India – Wahhaabis, because of their blunt opposition to the English and their putting pressure on them. Di'aaya Mukaththafah Didd al- Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, p. 105-106

From these various quotations we can see the falseness of these flawed arguments when compared to the clear academic proofs in the essays and books of the Shaykh; that falseness is also obvious when compared to the historical facts are recorded by fair-minded writers. Da'aawa al-Munaawi'een, 239, 240.

Finally, we advise everyone who has slandered the Shaykh to restrain his tongue and to fear Allaah with regard to him. Perhaps Allaah will accept their repentance and guide them to the straight path.

And Allaah knows best.

Why is so much of what is said about Shaykh al-Islam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab so hostile, and why are his followers called Wahhabis?

Answer: Praise be to Allaah.

You should note that one of the ways in which Allaah deals with His chosen slaves is to test them according to the level of their faith, to show who is sincere and who is not. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Alif-Laam-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’aan, and none but Allaah (Alone) knows their meanings.] Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested. And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allaah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allaah knows all that before putting them to test)”
[al-‘Ankaboot 29:1-3]

Those who are most severely tested are the Prophets, then the next best and the next best, as it says in the saheeh hadeeth of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

If you study the seerah (biography) of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), you will see that he went through severe tests; he was even accused of being a liar, a sorcerer and a madman; garbage and filth were thrown on his back; he was expelled from Makkah; and his feet bled in al-Taa'if. This was the situation of all the Prophets who were rejected before him (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Shaykh al-Islam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allaah have mercy on him) suffered the same as other sincere scholars and daa'iyahs, but in the end the message of truth that he brought prevailed. How could it be otherwise? How could the light of truth be extinguished? Think about this man and how Allaah helped him to sow the seeds of Tawheed throughout the Arabian Peninsula and put an end to all kinds of shirk.

If this indicates anything, it indicates that he was sincere in his call and made sacrifices for that cause as far as we can tell, and of course his efforts were supported and helped by Allaah.

But the enemies of this call have spared no effort to make false accusations concerning it. They claimed – falsely – that the Shaykh claimed to be a prophet, and that he did not respect the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) properly, and that he condemned all the ummah as kaafirs... and other fabrications and lies that were told about him. Anyone who examines these claims will realize for sure that they are all lies and fabrications. The books of the Shaykh which are widely circulated bear the greatest witness to that, and his followers who answered his call never mentioned anything to that effect. If the matter were as they claim, his followers would have conveyed the same ideas, otherwise they would have been disloyal to him. If you want to know more details about this and to clarify the matter, you should read the book *Da'aawa al-Manaawi'een li Da'wah al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab* by Dr 'Abd al-'Azeef al-'Abd al-Lateef, which will answer all your questions, if Allaah wills.

With regard to calling his followers Wahhaabis, this is just another in a long series of fabrications made up by the enemies of his call, to divert people away from the call of truth and to place a barrier between his call and the people so that the call will not reach them. If you study the story of how al-Tufayl ibn 'Amr al-Dawsi (may Allaah be pleased with him) became Muslim, you will see the parallels with what happened in the case of Imam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab.

Ibn Hishaam narrated in his *Seerah* (1/394) that al-Tufayl set out towards Makkah, but Quraysh intercepted him at the gates of the city and warned him against listening to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). They made him think that he was a sorcerer who could cause division between man and wife... they kept on at him until he took some cotton and put it in his ears. Then when he saw the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), he thought to himself that he would take out the cotton and listen to him, and if what he said was true then he would accept it from him, and if he what he said was false and abhorrent, he would reject it. When he listened to him, all he could do was become Muslim on the spot.

Yes, he became Muslim after putting cotton in his ears. Those who oppose the call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab fabricated lies the same way Quraysh did. Quraysh understood full well that the call of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had the power to reach people's hearts and minds, so they exaggerated in their lies about the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in an attempt to stop the truth reaching people. Similarly we see that those who speak against Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and his followers repeat the same lies that were told against the original call.

You should – if you follow the truth – not pay any attention to these lies and fabrications. You should look for the truth of the matter by reading the books of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, for his books are the greatest proof that these people are lying, praise be to Allaah.

There is another subtle point that should be noted, which is that the Shaykh's name was Muhammad, the attributive of which is Muhammadi. The word Wahhabi is the attributive derived from al-Wahhaab (the Bestower), who is Allaah, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower [al-Wahhaab]” [Aal 'Imraan 3:8]

As al-Zajjaaj said in *Ishtiqaaq Asma'-Allaah*, p. 126, al-Wahhaab “is the One Who gives a great deal. This form (fa''aal) in Arabic is indicative of something that is done to a great extent. Allaah is al-Wahhaab (the Bestower) Who gives to His slaves one after another.”

Undoubtedly the path of al-Wahhaab is the path of truth in which there is no crookedness or fabrication, and His party is the one that will prevail. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whosoever takes Allaah, His Messenger, and those who have believed, as Protectors, then the party of Allaah will be the victorious” [al-Maa'idah 5:56]

“They are the party of Allaah. Verily, it is the party of Allaah that will be the successful” [al-Mujaadilah 58:22]

Long ago they accused al-Shaafa'i of being a Raafidi (Shi'ah) and he refuted them by saying:

"If being a Raafidi means loving the family of Muhammad, then let the two races (of mankind and the jinn) bear witness that I am a Raafidi."

We refute the claims of those who accuse us of being Wahhabis by quoting the words of Shaykh Mullah 'Imraan who was a Shi'i but Allaah guided him to the Sunnah. He said:

"If the follower of Ahmad [the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)] is a Wahhaabi, then I affirm that I am a Wahhaabi

I reject the association of any other with Allaah, for I have no Lord except the Unique, the Bestower (al-Wahhaab)

Those who were called by the Prophet accused him of being a sorcerer and a liar."

(See: Manhaaj al-Firqat al-Naajiyah, Methodology of the saved sect by Shaykh Muhammad Jameel Zayno, p. 142-143.)

And Allaah knows best.

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