

Wahhabis

By Bilge Dogan

The founder of Wahhabism was Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab of Banu Tamim tribe. He was born in Uyaina village near Huraimila town in the Najd Desert in 1111 and died 1206(1792). Formerly, with the idea of travelling and trading, he went to Basra , Baghdad, Iran, India and Damascus, where he won the name "Shaikh an-Najdi" because of his clever and defeatist attitude. He saw and learnt a great deal at these places and set his heart on the idea of becoming a chief. He had thought it proper to found a new religious reformation and movement to reach his goal, and, in preparation for this goal, attended the lectures of the Hanbali 'ulama' in the blessed city of Medina and later in Damascus for some time. When he went back to the Najd, he wrote pamphlets on religious subjects for villagers. His harmful, heretical ideas which he took from Mu'tazila and other bid'a-groups and introduced in these small books deceived many ignorant villagers, particularly the inhabitants of Dar'iyya and their ignorant chief, Muhammed ibn Sa'ud (grand grand father of Saudi royal family) as a tool to disseminate his reformation which he named Wahhabism. He introduced himself as the qadi and Muhammed ibn Saud as the Hakim. He had it declared that both would be succeeded only by their children

In 1306 when the book Mirat al-Haramain was written, the amir of the Najd, 'Abdullah ibn Faisal, was a descendant of Muhammed ibn Sa'ud, and the qadi, that is, the head of religious affairs, was a descendant of Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab.

Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's father , "Abd al-Wahhab, who was a pious pure alim in Medina, his brother Sulaiman ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and his masters had apprehended from his statements, behaviour and heretical ideas, which he frequently had put forward as questions to them when he was a student in Medina, that he would harm Islam from inside in future. They advised him to correct his ideas and the Muslims to avoid him. But they encountered the very thing they were afraid of very untimely, and he started disseminating his heretical ideas openly under the name of Wahhabism. To deceive the ignorant, stupid people, he came forward with reformism and innovations much impetuous to deem as kafirs the true Muslims who followed the Ahl as-Sunnat wa'l-Jamaa. He regarded it polytheism to ask Allahu taala for something through the mediation of the Prophet or other Prophets or awliya and to visit their graves.

According to Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the person who talks to the dead, when praying near a grave becomes a mushrik (Fat'h al-majid, p208) He asserted that attributing an action or effect to someone or something beside Allah, for example , saying "[such and such] medicine cured" or " I obtained whatI asked through our master Rasulullah" was polytheism, and the Muslim who said so would become polytheist. Although the false documents Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab made up to support his statements were nothing but all lies and slanders, the ignorant people who couldn't distinguish right from wrong, the unemployed , opportunists and the hard-hearted soon accepted his ideas and took part of his side and regarded the pious Muslims of the right path as kafirs.

When Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab applied to the rulers of Dar'iyya with the view of disseminating his heresies easily through them, they willingly cooperated with him with the hope of extending their territories and increasing their power. They strove with all their might to disseminate his ideas everywhere. They declared war against those who refused and opposed another in joining the army of Muhammed ibn Sa'ud when it was said that it is halal to plunder and kill non-Wahhabis. In 1143, Muhammed ibn Sa'ud and Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab hand in arrived at the conclusion, that those who wouldn't accept Wahhabism were kafirs and mushriks and it was halal to kill them and confiscate their possessions, and publicly announced their declaration seven years later. Then Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab started fabricating ijtihaad when he was thirty-two years old and announced his false ijtihaads at his forty.

As-Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zaini Dahlan, Mufti of the blessed city of Mecca, described under the topic "Al-fitnat al-Wahhabiyya" the heretical tenets of Wahhabism and the tortures of the Wahhabis inflicted upon Muslims (Al-futuhāt al-Islamiyya, v2, p228-233, Cairo 1968) He wrote: " To deceive the Ahl as-Sunna 'ulama' in Mecca and Medina, the Wahhabis sent their men to cities, but these men could not answer the questions of ulama. It became evident that they were ignorant heretics. A verdict about their being disbelievers was written and issued everywhere. Sharif Mas'ud ibn Sa'id, Amir of Mecca, ordered that the Wahhabis shall be imprisoned. Some Wahhabis fled to Dari'yya and told what had happened to them.

The ulama of Hijaz belonging to all the four madhhabs, including Muhammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's brother Shaikh Sulaiman and also his masters who trained him studied Muhammad's books, prepared answers to his disunionist writings, which were destructive to Islam, and wrote, to call the attention of Muslims, well-documented books in refutation to his heretical writings and proclaimed Wahhabite tenets to be heretical and harmful.