Some Perspectives on Wahabi History

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Shaykh al-Islam Mawlana AnwarAllah Faruqi has commented extensively on the Wahabi movement in light of the hadiths. He did so because there is no reason to hide those facts that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam himself pointed out and that are present abundantly in books of hadith. Hence, it is only judicial if these matters are presented before the general public so that they may save themselves from this fitna if they so wish.

In this regard, Shaykh al-Islam begins by presenting the hadith of *Bukhari* that is narrated by Abu Sa'id Khudri radiyAllahu 'anhu. He narrates that one day we were in the presence of the holy Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam whilst he was distributing booty when a man named Dhu'l Khuwaysara, who was from Banu Tamīm, stood in front of the Prophet and said in a very disrespectful tone: You are not distributing the booty fairly.

The Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam expressed anger at his words and replied: If I don't practice fairness, then who is there is this world who will? If I am unfair, then certainly you will remain bereft.

Umar radiyAllahu 'anhu was unable to withstand this disrespect. With utmost anger, he wielded his sword and sought permission from the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam to behead Dhu'l Khuwaysara. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam replied: Leave him, for he is not alone. A massive group will be born from his descendents who will offer Salah such that you will consider your own Salah to be deficient in comparison. They will recite the Qur'an but it will not reach below their necks. They will leave the religion as an arrow leaves its prey. [1]

Another hadith has been narrated in this regard from Abu Hurayra radiyAllahu 'anhu in *Kanz al-'Ummal* which adds that his forehead had marks of prostration and the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam placed his blessed hand on his own chest and said: The sign of this group is shaved heads and this group will continue to emerge in varying guises until the last of them will be with Dajjal. They are the worst of creation.

[1] Bukhari, 8:184

Commenting on this hadith, Shaykh al-Islam writes:

> According to this hadith, that man was an ardent worshipper so much so that his forehead had a mark due to excessive Salah. Every person can ponder over these hadiths and conclude that even after much worship and exertion, the man and those with his beliefs are the worst of creation. There is no reason for this apart from their disrespect and innate insolence.[2]

The third hadith in this regard is from *Imam Ahmad*, *Tabrani* and *Hakim* from AbdAllah ibn Umar radiyAllahu 'anhuma. He narrates that one day the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: There will be some people who emerge from the East. They will recite the Qur'an but it will not reach below their necks. When one horn of theirs will be cut, another will appear until the last of them will be with Dajjal.

Shaykh al-Islam's comments on this hadith should be read with utmost attentiveness:

> Hence, it so happened that the Khawarij emerged from the East and the Wahabis also emerged from the East. It is likely that this is the group towards which the hadith indicated.[3]

The hadith is that AbdAllah ibn Umar radiyAllahu 'anhuma narrates that one day the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam prayed for Syria and Yemen that, Oh Allah! Bless our Syria and Yemen. There were some people from Najd present too who asked: Ya RasulAllah! Pray for blessings for our Najd too. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam again prayed for Syria and Yemen. When the people from Najd once again insisted, the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam revealed the truth by saying: There will be earthquakes there and afflictions and the horn of Shaytan will emerge from there. This hadith is in *Bukhari*.[4]

Shaykh al-Islam comments on this hadith:

> This hadith clearly shows that tribulations will arise from Najd. The hadith above showed that these people will emerge from the East. Even though 'East' is general and India is East from Madina, however, all the people of Madina referred to Najd as 'East' [Sharq] and the Wahabis as 'Sharqi' whose residence was in Najd.
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> Hence, we learn that these hadith are in reference to the Wahabi movement. The Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam then told us of their signs such as them emerging from the East as we have just seen and also that their speech will be very sweet. Another trait is that after someone joins their group, they will not return.[5]

Shaykh al-Islam narrates numerous hadiths on this subject and then derives a conclusion that is enough to shock any Muslim. The one who shows wayfarers the dangers of their path is not an enemy. Muslims are already aware that their faith is

[2] Anwar-e-Ahmadi, p.280
[3] Ibid, p.307
[4] Bukhari, 9:214
[5] Anwar-e-Ahmadi, p.310

more valuable than their lives because if life is lost, it is regained after death but if faith is lost, its recovery is impossible. With this in mind, read the following from Shaykh al-Islam:

> It is without doubt that this group certainly has an inner defect due to which the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam said that after leaving the religion they will not return. One apparent reason for this is that in their vanity in supporting Tawhid and expelling Shirk and Bid'ah, these people not only insult the beloved people of Allah but also call upon others to do the same as if it's a fundamental of Islam. Due to this, they call the wrath of Allah upon themselves.[6]

The founder of this group is Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab Najdi. The famous insulter, Dhu'l Khuwaysara, who is mentioned in the hadith, was from the tribe of Banu Tamīm and ibn Abd al-Wahhab is Tamīmi too. Shaykh al-Islam says that it wouldn't be strange if the latter was from the former's descendents. One sign of this group is that they will shave their heads with extreme vigour. Shaykh al-Islam quotes Shaykh Abd al-Rahman Ahral, the Mufti of Zabid, that the reality of ibn Abd al-Wahhab can be understood from just this one sign that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam told us about, i.e. they will shave their heads consistently. Shaykh al-Islam compares all the signs that have been mentioned about this group with people of his time and writes:

> It is proven from the signs that the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam mentioned that he has foretold regarding the Wahabiya and all the signs that he mentioned are to be found in them. Apart from the aforementioned hadith, 'Allama Zayni Dahlan in his *al-Durar al-Saniyya* mentions more of their signs. It is also proven from the hadiths that the Wahabiya are an offshoot of the Khawarij but because they emerged separately, they were given a different name and are named after their founder. This is why these people called themselves Muhammadi but when cautious scholars saw that people will revile them and this will cause disrespect to the name of the Prophet, they began calling them Wahabi.[7]

Atrocities of the Wahabis

Let us now see what Shaykh al-Islam writes regarding the atrocities that the founder of Wahabism and his acolytes committed against Muslims and the grief they caused them due to the Wahabis' disrespect towards the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam. It is a painful account that will cause tears to flow and the heart to tremble but it must be read with patience so that you become fully aware of their hatred for the Prophet. Shaykh al-Islam writes:

> Like the Khawarij, this group was also excessive regarding actions, up to the point that they deemed a person who forsakes the obligations to be a Kafir whom it is permissible to kill. They were so aggressive in the belief in Tawhid

[6] Anwar-e-Ahmadi, p.311
[7] Ibid, p.314

they considered a person who says ‘Ya RasulAllah’ a Kafir and so too someone who seeks help from the saints.

In every Friday sermon, ibn Abd al-Wahhab would say that anyone who makes the Prophet an intermediary is a Kafir. He considered visitation of graves to be impermissible. Hence, it is written in books that a caravan visited the shrine of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam from Ahsa. During their return journey, they reached Dur’iya, which was the headquarters of ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The Wahabis agreed a punishment to shave these people’s beards and to ride them on donkeys with their faces humiliatingly facing the donkey’s tails so that it becomes well known that whoever visits the shrine of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam, this is their punishment. Hence, this punishment was carried out.

They refrained from innovations so much that they burnt hundreds of copies of *Dala’il al-Khayrat*. A blind man used to climb the minaret of the Masjid and recite salutations upon the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam, so they had him killed.

ibn Abd al-Wahhab would say that whoever recites salutations on Friday morning or night will be in hell and whoever uses the title ‘Sayyidina’ for the Prophet is a Kafir. He would sometimes announce that if I had the power, I would destroy the green dome. He would say that my stick is better than the Prophet as it benefits me.[8]

A thought provoking incident

There is a hadith in *Musannaf ibn Abi Shayba* from Abu Tufayl which exemplifies the results of sitting in the company of the misguided. Shaykh al-Islam writes:

It is narrated that a boy was born during the time of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam. When he was presented before the Prophet, he was blessed with du’as and the Prophet pressed his blessed hand on his head. As a result, beautiful hair grew on his head that could be told apart from other hair.

When the boy grew up and the time of those Khawarij arrived who are mentioned in numerous hadiths – just like the Tablighi Jama’at of today, the Kharijis too presented various incentives to entice the youth to join their group. Unfortunately, this young boy succumbed to their deception and joined them until he developed love for them in his heart. As a result, he lost all the hair on his head.

When his father saw this, he locked him in the house. Abu Tufayl says that we went to this young boy and explained to him that you have seen the adversity of their company that the blessings of the du’a of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam have disappeared from your head. Abu Tufayl says that we continued to explain to him until he retracted from his stance. When love for them left his heart and he repented from their beliefs, then Allah once again

[8] Anwar-e-Ahmadi, p.316

> caused hair to grow back on his head and returned the blessings of the Prophet's sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam blessed hands.[9]

Commenting on this hadith, Shaykh al-Islam writes;

> We can derive many conclusions from this hadith:
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> The first is that whichever thing the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam touched with his blessed hands, it attained an ever lasting speciality and blessing.
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> Secondly, only those people were chosen to receive these blessings that were pious and if there was any negative effect on this piety, the blessings were taken away from them in order that people who seek guidance learn from this. This divine benevolence could only be obtained by people upon guidance and was never for people of misguidance.
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> Thirdly, whoever was touched by the blessed hand of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam, false beliefs cannot take hold in their heart. As we saw from this incident, false beliefs did not take over his heart and this is why he repented. Otherwise, it is evident from the hadith that whosoever's heart is taken over by false beliefs, he never returns to the right path.[10]

Identifying Wahabi beliefs in India

You have read Shaykh al-Islam's writings regarding the Wahabi movement in the previous pages. The discussion has created at least this much awareness within you that you can realise that from the time of the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam till the present day, there has always a disrespectful group that has emerged in differing guises and under various names. It appeared from the East, meaning Najd, as indicated by the Prophet sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam himself, whose words cannot be wrong. Hence, it is your duty as a Muslim to find this group, identify it via its signs and protect yourself from its mischief. Instead of writing things ourselves in order to identify the supporters of the Wahabi creed in India, we wish to present the admission of these people themselves.

Admission : The first

The biographer of Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi, a leader of the Deobandis, writes that whilst Thanwi was a teacher at the madrasa in Kanpur – Jami' al-Ulum – some women from the town bought sweets to the madrasa for Fatiha. Instead of reciting Fatiha, the students of Thanwi ate the sweets which caused a commotion. When Thanwi learned of this, he came and addressed the people;

> Brothers! Wahabis live here. Do not bring anything here for Fatiha or Niyaz.[11]

[9] Anwar-e-Ahmadi, p.304
[10] Ibid, p.305
[11] Ashraf al-Sawanih, 1:45

Admission : The second

Another leader of the Deobandis, Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi writes in a fatwa:

> Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was the leader of the Wahabis. His beliefs were very good.[12]

Admission : The third

Mawlana Zakariya Shaykh al-Hadith Saharanpur, Mawlana Abu'l Hasan Ali Nadwi and Mawlana Manzur Nu'mani are prominent names amongst the Tablighi Jama'at.

In the book *Sawanih Mawlana Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalwi*, words full of anxiety from Mawlana Manzur Nu'mani are recorded that he spoke at the time when Mawlana Ilyas neared his demise regarding who would succeed him. Read his words and discover some hidden secrets:

> One night, Mawlana Ali Miyan and I thought long and hard about this and had a discussion. It was concluded that if someone who was loved and respected by everyone who has a link with Mawlana Ilyas and his movement was to remain in the Markaz Nizam al-Din, then InSha'Allah, this work will continue in the same manner.
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> And in our eyes, the only person who fulfilled these criteria was Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariya.[13]

In his own words, Nu'mani met with Mawlana Zakariya the following morning and presented the recommendation of his accomplices that the latter should assume the role of Amīr at the Markaz. In this regard, Nu'mani writes the following crucial part of the conversation which is the focal point of our discussion:

> I also said that if this doesn't happen, then this whole gathering will become scattered in a matter of days. And I also say about myself in clear words that I am a very staunch Wahabi. There will be no special attraction for us that Hazrat's grave is here or this is the masjid he prayed in or this was his home.[14]

Admission : The fourth

Now read the response of Mawlana Zakariya. He replied:

> If this is Allah's will, then no one has to ask me to assume the role. I will stay here myself. Moreover, even if all of you try to force me out, I will still stay. And if Allah wishes for someone else to perform this role, then you and I shall both see him. Allah will cause him to do this work so let us wait and supplicate to Allah.

[12] Fatawa Rashidiya, 1:111
[13] Sawanih Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalwi, p.190
[14] Ibid, p.192

> If none of these things happen, then Molwi Sahib, I am a stauncher Wahabi than you. I will advise you that you needn't come here just because uncle's grave is here or his house or the places he sat.[15]

From Thanwi to Mawlana Manzur Nu'mani and Mawlana Zakariya, the admission of all the elders of the Tablighi Jama'at is before you that 'we are Wahabis', 'I am a staunch Wahabi' and 'I am a stauncher Wahabi than you.' If someone else had said these things about them, it would have been considered an allegation but if it's their own confession, then what can be said apart from that these people really are Wahabis. It must also be borne in mind that these confessions happened in their private conversations and in solitude, hence, there is no question of giving their words other meanings. Remember, according to Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, the followers of ibn Abd al-Wahhab are called Wahabi.

After such compelling evidence, there is no need for us to point fingers and show anyone who is a Wahabi and which group is working tirelessly against Wahabi ideology. If your relationship with your Prophet is strong in your heart, then it isn't difficult for you to decide who you are with.

And our duty is only to convey.

[15] Sawanih Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalwi, p.193