

DID MUHAMMAD IBN 'ABDULWAHHĀB REVOLT AGAINST THE OTTOMANS AFTER MAKING TAKFIR? A CRITIQUE OF MOAZZAM BEGG AND DR YASIR QADHI¹

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Indeed all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His Aid and ask for His forgiveness, whomsoever Allāh guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger, to proceed:

PREFACE

Both Moazzam Begg and Dr Yasir Qadhi regurgitate, like other Harakīs and Sūfīs, the myth that the Ottomans ruled over the entire Muslim world. Begg states for instance, as relayed by the 5Pillars website,² that:

It is ruled by a monarchy that traces its history back to the takfir of the ruling Ottoman Caliphate, and siding with the British Empire in order to oust the Ottomans and establish a British installed puppet regime.

Then Begg states:

¹ Written by 'AbdulHaq al-Ashanti. Dated 23 December 2018. Even though this paper critiques ideas voiced recently by Begg and Qadhi, it also applies to all who share the same void notion.

² See "Moazzam Begg urges Muslims to oppose Saudi regime, even if it costs them their Hajj." 13th October 2018. From the 5Pillars website: <https://5pillarsuk.com/2018/10/13/moazzam-begg-urges-muslims-to-oppose-saudi-regime-even-if-it-costs-them-their-hajj/>

Accessed 23 December 2018.

Since that time, Saudi Arabia has been unashamedly serving the interests of Britain and America, while, ironically, calling any movement or organisation that seeks to change it “khawarij” and “takfiri”. Saudi rulers don’t do irony.

For the benefit of Begg from the outset, on 28 November 2018 *Arab News* reported:

Saudi Arabia has pledged on Wednesday \$50 million to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), which has been hit by the withdrawal of all US funding, an official said. The announcement was made at a press conference in the Saudi capital by the director of the King Salman Humanitarian Fund and relief Centre, Abdallah al-Rabeea.

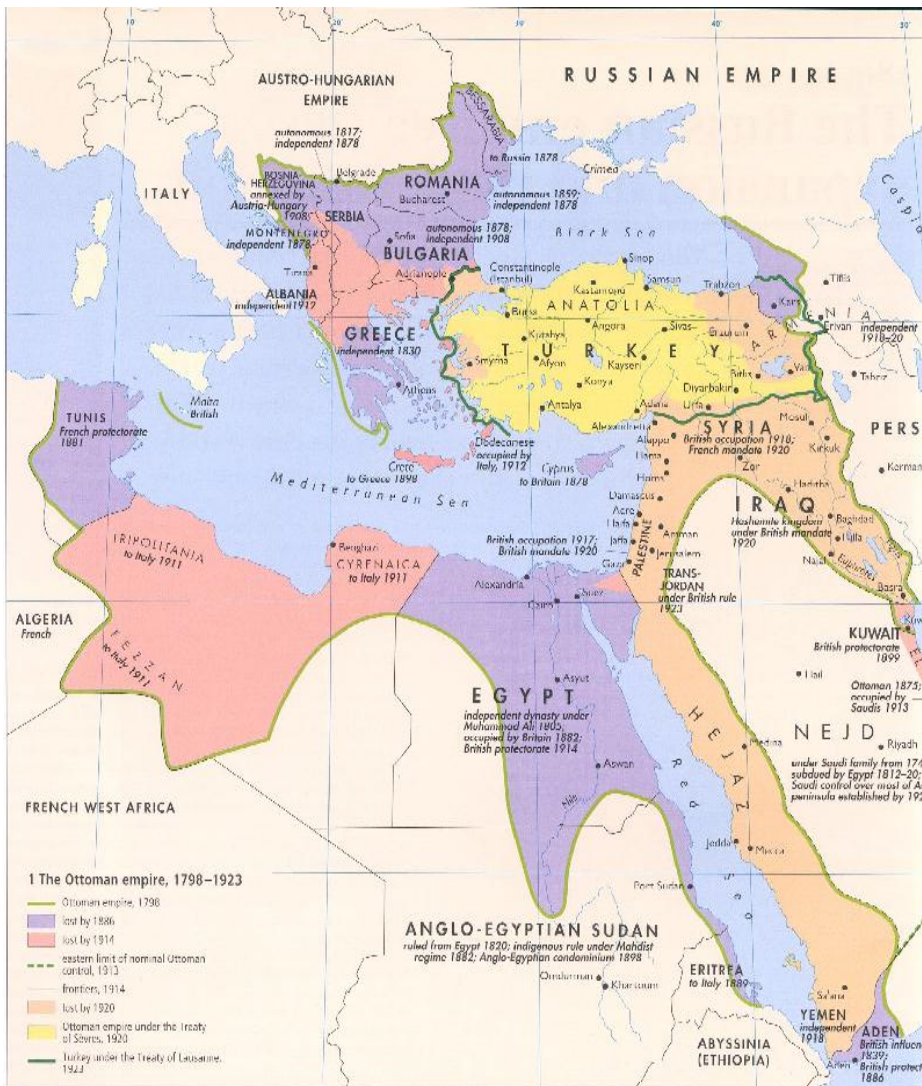
Saudi Arabia, was one of the top 10 nations in the world, with Kuwait, Qatar and UAE, to give aid to Syrian refugees. Clinics at refugee camps, financial aid to aid agencies, food, clothing and shelter has all been given, what has Begg done practically? Apart from write petite articles inciting agitation against Saudi Arabia. Not to mention British Salafi brothers involved in extensive aid work in Syria. As for Dr Yasir Qadhi then at an academic conference at Oxford University on Friday 7th December 2018, he asserted that Imām Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb (1703-1792 CE) revolted against the Ottomans after making takfeer of them.

Firstly, the Ottoman Empire did not rule of the entire Muslim world in the first place, both Begg and Qadhi fall into the simplistic and romantic notion of the Ottomans ruling over the entire Muslim world, which is an incorrect assertion promoted in the West initially by *Hiẓb ut-Tabreer* and their offshoots. Thus, *Hiẓb ut-Tabreer*, with its roots in Shām where the Ottomans did rule over, began to praise the Ottoman Empire as if it was a Khilāfah in the sense that *all* Muslims had to obey it and blindly follow it. We also know that Imām 'Uthmān Dan Fodio (Ibn Fūdī) for example had his own Empire, referred to as the Sokoto Caliphate, in the nineteenth century CE which was totally independent from Ottoman rule. The Mughal Empire was also independent from Ottoman rule, as were the 'Alawi rulers of Morocco. While the Mughal Empire had relations with the Ottomans³ the Moroccan dynasty of the Sa'dīs and 'Alawīs had no relations with the Ottomans whatsoever. Likewise, Najd in Arabia was independent from Ottoman rule. Refer to these maps of the Ottoman Empire which clearly show that the

³ An interesting book on this topic is by Naimur Rahman Farooqi, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations: A Study of the Political and Diplomatic Relations Between Mughal India and the Ottoman Empire, 1556-1748* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1989). Francis Robinson has also conducted some research on Mughal-Ottoman relations in his paper *Ottomans-Safavids-Mughals: Shared Knowledge and Connective Systems*. All of this research indicates that the Mughals had relations with the Ottomans but were not under their authority whatsoever.

Did Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb Revolt Against the Ottomans After Making Takfir?
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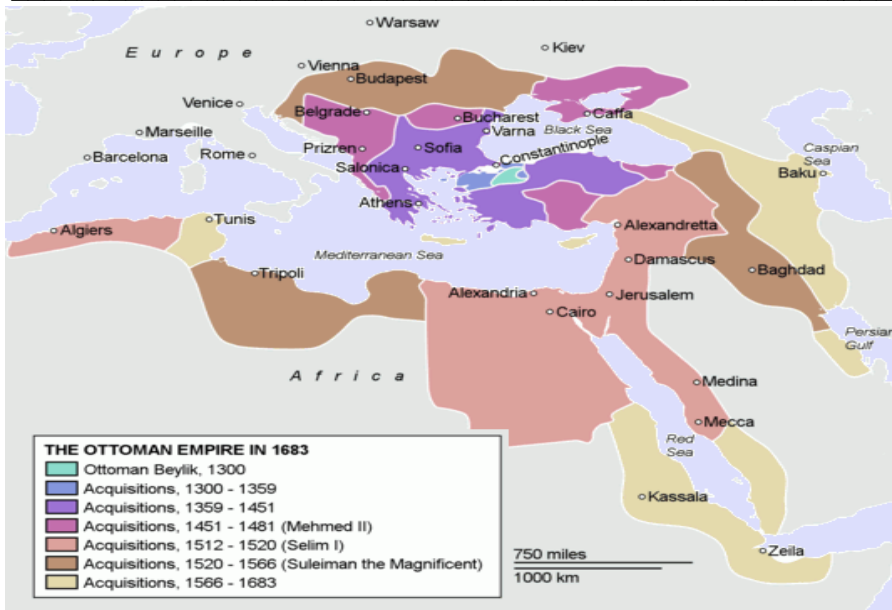
Ottomans did not have authority in Najd, just as the Ottomans had no authority in West Africa, Morocco, Sudan, India and Persia:



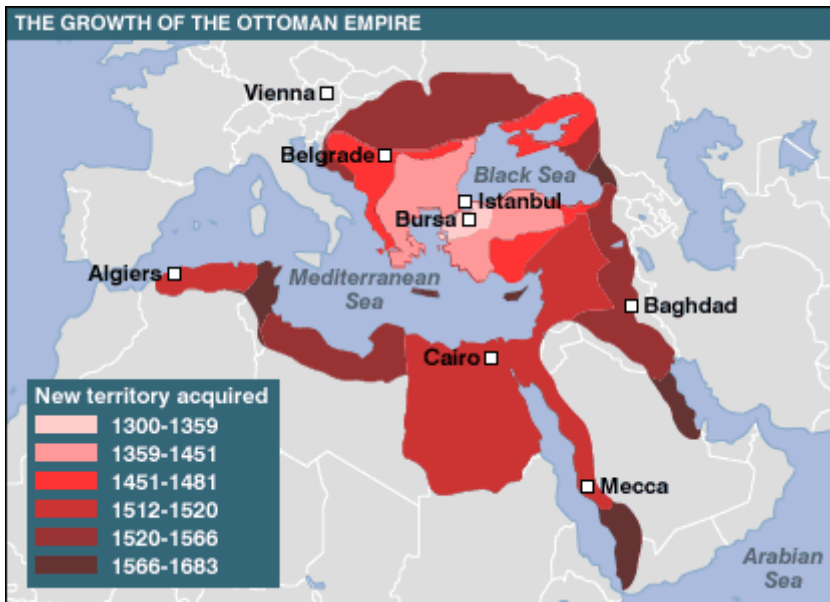
Ottoman Empire, 1798-1923:
<http://ww1.huntingdon.edu/jlewis/syl/IRcomp/MapsOttoman.htm>

See:

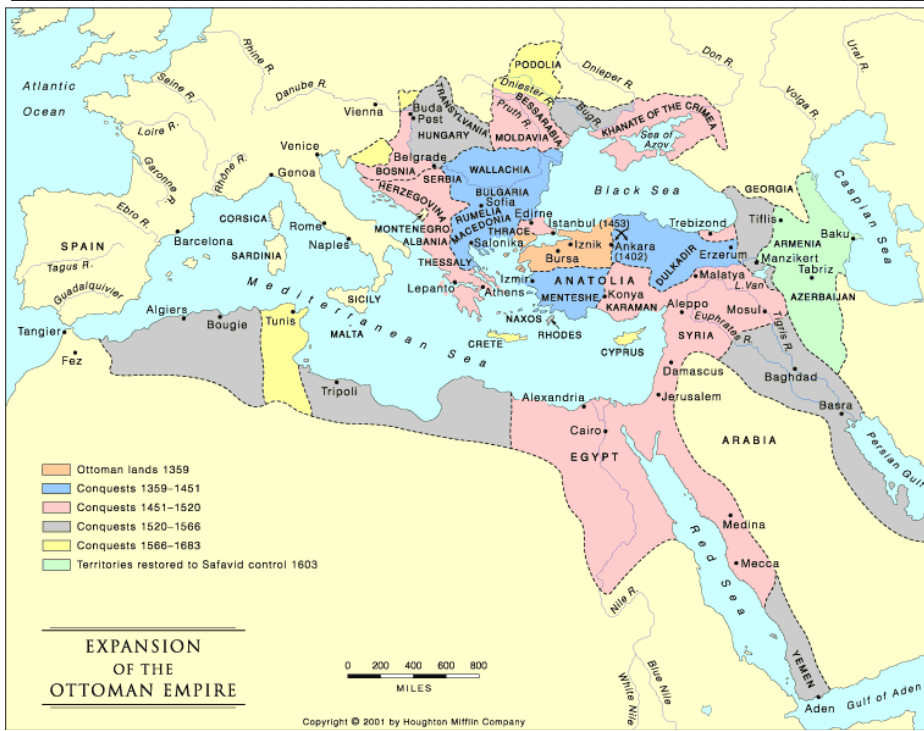
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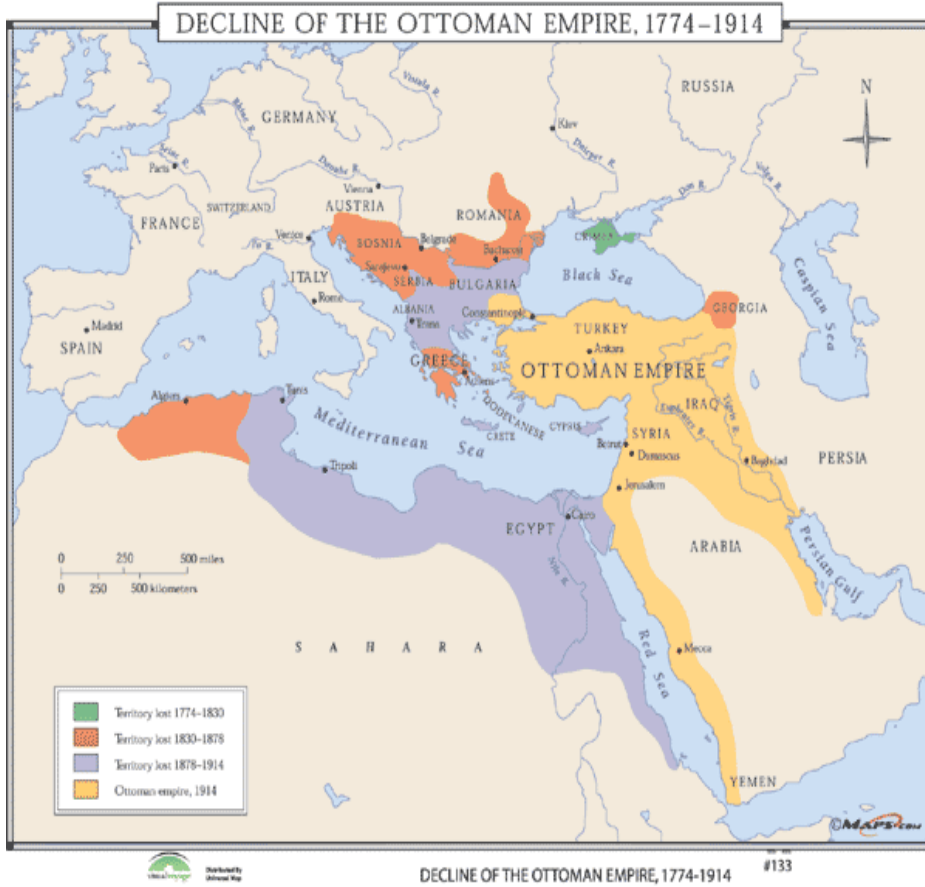


See: <http://www.mideastweb.org/Middle-East-Encyclopedia/ottoman.htm>



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See: http://worldmapsonline.com/UnivHist/30335_6.gif

Dr 'Ajeel al-Nashmī said:

.... لم تحرك دولة الخلافة ساكنا ولم تبدر منها أية مبادرة امتعاض أو خلاف يذكر
رغم توالي أربعة من سلاطين آل عثمان في حياة الشيخ ..

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...⁴

Dr al-Nashmī said, answering this question:

لقد كانت صورة حركة الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب لدى دولة الخلافة صورة قد بلغت
من التشويه والتشويش مداه فلم تطع دولة الخلافة إلا على الوجه المعادي لحركة
الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب سواء عن طريق التقارير التي يرسلها ولايتها في الحجاز

⁴ *Majallat al-Mujtama'*, issue no. 510

أو بغداد أو غيرهما ..أو عن طريق بعض الأفراد الذين يصلون إلى الأستانة يحملون
الأخبار .

The view that the Caliphate had of the movement of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was very distorted and confused, because the Caliphate only listened to those who were hostile towards the movement of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, whether that was via reports sent by their governors in the Hijāz, Baghdad and elsewhere, or via some individuals who reached Istanbul bearing news.⁵

Secondly, although it is true that Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb held the same view of Ahl us-Sunnah that Muslims should not revolt against their leaders, the Ottomans were not his leaders to begin with. Let's turn to what some Islāmic historians have concurred, as opposed to the mere diatribes of the unqualified!⁶ Shaykh 'Abdul'Azeez Āl-'AbdulLateef said:

Some opponents of the Salafī da'wah claim that Imam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb rebelled against the Ottoman Caliphate, thus splitting the Jamā'ah (main body of the Muslims) and refusing to hear and obey (the ruler).⁷

Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb said in his letter to the people of al-Qaseem:

وأرى وجوب السمع والطاعة لأئمة المسلمين برّهم وفاجرهم ما لم يأمرُوا بمعصية الله
ومن ولي الخلافة واجتمع عليه الناس ورضوا به وغلبهم بسيفه حتى صار خليفة وجبت طاعته وحرم
الخروج عليه

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 Allāh. Whoever has become Caliph and the people have given him their support and accepted him, even if he has gained the

⁵ *Al-Mujtama'*, issue no. 504; quoted in *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een*, p. 238-239

⁶ Refer to the book by Professor Sulaiman Bin Abdurrahman al-Huqail (Professor of Education at Imām Muhammad bin Saud University, Riyadh), *Muhammad Bin Abdulwahhāb – His Life and the Essence of his Call* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, KSA, First Edition, 1421 AH/2001 CE), with an introduction by Sheikh Saleh Bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh.

⁷ Abdul'Azeez ibn Muhammad Āl 'AbdulLateef, *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een li Da'wat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahāb* (Riyadh: Dār ul-Watan, 1412 AH), p. 233

position of caliph by force, is to be obeyed and it is harām to rebel against him.⁸

And he also said:

الأصل الثالث : أن من تمام الاجتماع والسمع والطاعة لمن تأمر علينا ولو كان عبداً حبشياً ..

One of the main principles of unity is to hear and obey whoever is appointed over us even if he is an Abyssinian slave...⁹

And Shaykh 'Abdul'Azeez Āl-'AbdulLateef said:

وبعد هذا التقرير الموجز الذي أبان ما كان عليه الشيخ من وجوب السمع والطاعة لأئمة المسلمين برّهم وفاجرهم ما لم يأمرؤا بمعصية الله : فإننا نشير إلى مسألة مهمة جواباً عن تلك الشبهة فهناك سؤال مهم هو : هل كانت " نجد " موطن هذه الدعوة ومحل نشأتها تحت سيطرة دولة الخلافة العثمانية ؟

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 Allāh, 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 Sālih al-'Abūd answered this by saying:

لم تشهد " نجد " على العموم نفوذاً للدولة العثمانية فما امتد إليها سلطانها ولا أتى إليها ولاية عثمانيون ولا جابت خلال ديارها حامية تركية في الزمان الذي سبق ظهور دعوة الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب رحمه الله ومما يدل على هذه الحقيقة التاريخية استقرار تقسيمات الدولة العثمانية الإدارية فمن خلال رسالة تركية عنوانها : " قوانين آل عثمان مضامين دفتر الديوان " يعني : " قوانين آل عثمان في ما يتضمنه دفتر الديوان " ، ألقها يمين علي أفندي الذي كان أميناً للدفتر الخاقاني سنة 1018 هجرية الموافقة لسنة 1609م من خلال هذه الرسالة يتبين أنه منذ أوائل القرن الحادي عشر الهجري كانت دولة آل عثمان

⁸ *Majmū'at Mu'allafāt al-Shaykh*, vol.5, p.11

⁹ *Majmū'ah Mu'allafāt al-Shaykh*, vol.1, p.394; quoted in *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een*, pp.233-234

تنقسم إلى اثنتين وثلاثين إيالة منها أربع عشرة إيالة عربية وبلاد نجد ليست منها ما عدا الإحساء إن
اعتبرناه من نجد... .

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 'AbdulWahhāb (may Allāh 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 *Qawāneen Āl 'Uthmān Mudāmeen Daftar ad-Dīwān* (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.¹⁰

And Dr 'Abdullāh al-'Uthaymeen said:

ومهما يكن فإن " نجداً " لم تشهد نفوذاً مباشراً للعثمانيين عليها قبل ظهور دعوة الشيخ محمد بن عبد
الوهاب كما أنها لم تشهد نفوذاً قوياً يفرض وجوده على سير الحوادث داخلها لأية جهة كانت فلا نفوذ
بني جبر أو بني خالد في بعض جهاتها ولا نفوذ الأشراف في بعض جهاتها الأخرى أحدث نوعاً من
الاستقرار السياسي فالحروب بين البلدان النجدية ظلت قائمة والصراع بين قبائلها المختلفة استمر حاداً
عنيفاً

Whatever the case, Najd never experienced direct Ottoman rule before the call of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb 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 Khālid in some parts, or the Ashrāf in other parts, was limited. None of them were able to bring about political stability, so wars between

¹⁰ 'Aqeedat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb wa atharuha fi'l-Ālam al-Islami (unpublished), vol.1, p.27.

the various regions of Najd continued and there were ongoing violent conflicts between its various tribes.¹¹

Imām 'Abdul'Azeez ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Bāz (*may Allāh have mercy on him*) said in response to this false accusation:

لم يخرج الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب على دولة الخلافة العثمانية فيما أعلم وأعتقد فلم يكن في نجد
رئاسة ولا إمارة للأتراك بل كانت نجد إمارات صغيرة وقرى متناثرة وعلى كل بلدة أو قرية - مهما
صغرت - أمير مستقل... وهي إمارات بينها قتال وحروب ومشاجرات والشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب لم
يخرج على دولة الخلافة وإنما خرج على أوضاع فاسدة في بلده فجاهد في الله حق جهاده وصابر وثابر
حتى امتد نور هذه الدعوة إلى البلاد الأخرى...

Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb 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 'AbdulWahhāb 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 Allāh and persisted until the light of this call spread to other lands...¹²

Finally, the Ottoman Empire was already in a state of decline and stagnation by the eighteenth century, indeed by the seventeenth century, which the *da'wah* of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb cannot be held accountable for whatsoever. In 1699, the Ottomans signed the Treaty of Karlowitz which marked the end of the Austro-Ottoman War and led to the loss of Ottoman control of Central Europe, heralding the rise of the Habsburg Monarchy as the main power in Central Europe. In 1700 the Treaty of Constantinople was also signed, which marked the end of the Russo-Turkish War between 1686 and 1700. Herein, the Russian Tsar Peter the Great assumed control of the Azov Region from the Ottomans. Was the *da'wah* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?

¹¹ 'Abdullāh ibn Sālih al-'Uthaymeen, *ash-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Hayātuhu wa Fikruhu* (Riyadh: Dār ul-'Ulūm, 1412 AH) p.11; quoted in *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een*, pp.234-235.

¹² Conversation recorded on tape; quoted in *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een*, p. 237

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Capitulations System circumvented the independence of the Ottoman state. It was a system which meant that European traders living in Ottoman territory were not required to observe the law of the land and thus had their own courts and laws by which they were ruled by, they were no longer subject to government control. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?

From 1789-1807 the Nidhām ul-Jadeed Era (Nizam-I Jedid) took shape in the Ottoman Empire, in which the Ottoman Ruler of the day Selim III sought to shift the military along the lines of Western European military structures with French as the language of military instruction. In 1826 the Janissaries, the Ottoman military unit for centuries and were becoming viewed as holding too much power, revolted against the Ottomans and in what is known in history as the Auspicious Incident wherein 130,000 Janissaries were killed by Ottoman forces. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?

By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the gap between the technical skills of some western and northern European countries and those of the rest of the world grew wider and the Ottomans were left lagging. In 1774 the Ottomans lost Crimea to the Russians, and other territories to the Austrians, and signed the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in the wake of the Ottoman defeat at the Battle of Kozludzha bringing an end to the Russo-Turkish War (1768-1774). Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this??

In 1791 CE the Ottomans could not sufficiently defend their territories to the extent that the British Prime Minister of the day, William Pitt, contemplated sending British troops to help the Sultan against the Czar of Russia during the Ottoman-Russian War.¹³ In 1838 during the First Egyptian-Ottoman War the German Field Marshall, head of the Prussian Army and military strategist Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, was requested by the Ottoman Sultan at the time Mahmud the Second to modernise the Ottoman army and advise Ottoman generals in their fight against Muhammad Ali Pasha. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this??

Muhammad Ali Pasha and his son Ibrahim Pasha, Ottoman vassal leaders of Egypt who had wanted complete control of Egypt independent from Ottoman hegemony, and both famed for their campaigns against the First Saudi State, later fought against the Ottomans during the First Egyptian-Ottoman War (1831-33) and the Second Egyptian Ottoman War (1839-41). The French and Spanish siding with Muhammad Ali Pasha, while the British, Austrians, Prussians

¹³ Selim Deringil (Boğaziçi University, History Department), *The Turks and Europe: Uninvited Guests of Sharers of a Common Destiny?* Paper presented to the *Center for European Studies*, 24 February 2005.

and Russians aligned themselves with the Ottomans. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?? Lieutenant Laue of Prussia was also requested. Moltke published some of the letters he had written during that time as *Letters on Conditions and Events in Turkey in the Years 1835 to 1839*. Nicolas the First of Russia had also sent an army to aid the Ottomans against Muhammad Ali Pasha before in 1832 during the First Turko-Egyptian War. So non-Muslim military strategists and troops were used to fight against other Muslims:

Prussian advisors were viewed as the least suspect; and Helmuth von Moltke along with several others, aided Mahmud II from 1833-1839.¹⁴

Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this? The *Tanzimat* (*Tandhimāt*) reform era (1839-1876) brought with it a range of reforms such as the development of a secular school system, the introduction of new codes of commercial and criminal law based on French law and the abolition of the Jizya. A European governance style was adopted via the establishment of councils and ministries which saw huge reforms in terms of taxation, administration, governance and the economy. Building on the Nidhām ul-Jadeed Reforms a century earlier, the Tanzimat introduced liberalising policies which in some quarters were viewed as awarding increased privileges and lavish tax breaks and freedoms to non-Muslims. The European states welcomed the changes. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this? Lubna A. Alam states in a paper entitled *Keeping the State Out: The Separation of Law and State in Classical Islamic Law* that:

The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, enacted a fifteen-year statute of limitations on all crimes, including *qadhif*. This seemingly minor difference between classical Islamic doctrine and actual Ottoman practice exposes the wide shift that occurred in Islamic law during the Ottoman period. **The Ottomans' changes to the practice of Islamic law put them outside the classical era of Islamic law,** and “in the minds of most Muslims the Ottomans are simply not sufficiently representative of the classical tradition...¹⁵

The Ottoman Penal Code of 1858 was based on the Napoleonic Code of 1810 and put aside Islamic punishments. It established a French-type court system with tribunals, courts of appeal and a high court of appeal all based on the hierarchy of the secular court system. This secular

¹⁴ Suraiya N. Faroqhi (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Vol.3, The Later Ottoman Empire 1603-1839* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.106.

¹⁵ Lubna A. Alam, *Keeping the State Out: The Separation of Law and State in Classical Islamic Law* (Reviewing Rudolph Peters, *Crime and Punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and Practice from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*), *105 Michigan Law Review*, pp. 1255-1264 (April 2007):

<http://www.michiganlawreview.org/archive/105/6/alam.pdf>

criminal code and court system remained until 1923.¹⁶ Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?

Under the Ottoman Sultān 'AbdulHameed the Second (1876-1909) a new constitution called the '*Kanūn-i Esāsī*' (Qānūn al-Asāsī) was established. The Constitution proposed a parliament divided into two parts: The senators were elected by the Sultān, and the Chamber of Deputies was elected by the people, although not directly (they chose delegates who would then choose the Deputies). There were also elections held every 4 years to keep the parliament changing and to continually express the voice of the people. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this? The Ottoman Constitution on 1876 states under 'Chamber of Deputies': **“Article 66. The election is held by secret ballot. The mode of election will be determined by a special law”** and under 'Law Courts' says: **“Article 87. Affairs touching the Şariat (i.e. *Sharee'ah*) are tried by the tribunals of the Şariat. The judgment of civil affairs appertains to the civil tribunals”**¹⁷ hereby differentiating between the *Sharee'ah* and Civil Law. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this? A secular law school, the Istanbul Law Faculty, was established in 1875 to train judges, advocates and public prosecutors for the non-Islamic courts.¹⁸ Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?

During the Crimean War (1854-1856)¹⁹ the Ottomans had to seek the help of Britain and France against the Russians. Was the *da'wab* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb

¹⁶ Ihsan Yilmaz, *Muslim Law, Politics and Society in Modern Nation States – Dynamic Legal Pluralisms in England, Turkey and Pakistan* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005), p.90.

¹⁷ <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/1876constitution.htm>

¹⁸ Ihsan Yilmaz, *op.cit.*, p.92.

¹⁹ The roots of this war go back to 1851 when the French forced the Ottomans to make them the “sovereign Christian authority” of the Holy Land which the Russians rejected due to two treaties which were previously made with the Ottomans in 1757 and 1774. The Ottomans thus reversed their decisions and made the Russians the official sovereign Christian authority of the Holy Land and then the French responded with a show of military force in the Black Sea forcing Sultān 'AbdulMajeed 1 to change his mind. The newest treaty, between France and the Ottomans, confirmed France and the Catholic Church as the supreme Christian organization in the Holy Land, supreme control over the various Christian holy places, and gave the keys to the Church of the Nativity previously in the hands of the Greek Orthodox Church, to the Catholic Church. Angry at this, the Russian tsar sent the 4th and 5th army corps deployed and mobilised along the Danube River. The Russians tried to negotiate another treaty wherein they would regain authority over the Christian communities within the Ottoman empire and the British Prime Minister of the day, Aberdeen encourage the Ottomans to reject this, which led to war. Benjamin Disraeli blamed Aberdeen and Stratford (who negotiated with the Ottomans on behalf of the British) for causing the war and this led to Aberdeen's resignation from

responsible for this?? The Ottoman state was in such a state in the nineteenth century that the European powers of France,²⁰ Russia and Britain were occupying parts of its territory and various Ottoman provinces were semi-autonomous and under effective control of local rulers. 1830 marked the Greek Revolution which was a seminal event in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Was the *da'wah* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this??

The Ottoman Empire was riddled with political intrigue, internal revolt, coup attempts and in cases fratricide. Was the *da'wah* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this?? The Ottomans had a state policy towards Arabic which was strong and institutionalized but then weakened, creating a barrier between most Muslims and the sources of Islām. Due to this, a whole host of religious innovations, invented 'spiritual' exercises and odd customs flourished along with blind following of madhhabs. Was the *da'wah* of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb responsible for this??? Allāh says,

﴿وَإِنْ تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبَدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ﴾

“And if you turn away (i.e. refuse), He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you.”

{*Muhammad* (47): 38}

Allāh also says, in another beautiful verse which shows Allāh's Wisdom:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى

الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion – Allāh will bring forth (in place of them) a people He will love and who will love Him (who are) humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allāh and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allāh; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

office. After a diplomatic process the Sultan proceeded to war, his armies attacked the Russian army near the Danube and the Russian Tsar Nicholas responded by dispatching warships, which destroyed a squadron of Ottoman frigates in northern Turkey at the Battle of Sinop on 30 November 1853. The destruction of the Turkish fleet and heavy Ottoman casualties alarmed both Great Britain and France, which stepped forth in defence of the Ottoman Empire. In 1853, after Russia ignored an Anglo-French ultimatum to withdraw from the Danubian Principalities, Great Britain and France thus declared war.

²⁰ Who conquered much of the Algerian coast and announced they were rulers of it, as the British were 'masters' of India.

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 54}

Hence, Begg and Qadhi's odd claims, which are totally unsubstantiated, are not only wholly inaccurate but also demonstrate that neither have any comprehension of Islamic history, they merely think that people will blindly follow them. Imām Muslim (*rahimahullāh*) reports in his Saheeh on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) stated in the hadeeth:

((كفى بالمرء كذباً أن يحدث بكل ما سمع))

"It is sufficient a lie for a person to relay all he hears."

MUHAMMAD ALI PASHA AND HIS SON IBRAHIM PASHA, THEIR ROLE AGAINST THE FIRST SAUDI STATE (1744-1818 CE)

What indicates that the British were opposed to the "Wahhabi movement" is the fact that Captain George Forster Sadleir (1789-1859 CE)²¹ was sent to **"congratulate Ibrahim Pasha on his success against the Wahhabis"** during the war of Ibrahim Pasha in Dir'iyyah. Sadleir also wanted to find out to what extent Ibrahim Pasha would be prepared to cooperate with the British authorities to reduce what they called "Wahhabi piracy in the Arabian Gulf." Indeed, this clearly expressed a desire to establish an agreement with Ibrahim Pasha with the aim of destroying the "Wahhabis" completely. Sadleir made an arduous journey from India to Riyadh to see the ruins in Dir'iyyah, which was razed to the ground by Ibrahim Pasha.²²

Ibrahim Pasha had fronted the war effort against the First Saudi State in 1817 and gave gifts to the tribes in order to win over their support. Ibrahim had taken over the campaign against the First Saudi State from his father Muhammad Ali Pasha, an Albanian originally, who himself had been viewed with suspicion by the Ottomans. Muhammad Ali Pasha wanted Egypt to be free from Ottoman rule himself and become a hereditary rulership system. Following Napoleon's

²¹ An officer of the 47th Regiment in the India British army at a time when securing sea routes to India was Britain's main interest. The British were concerned about the rise of the *da'wah* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and branded any opposer to British colonial rule in India as being a "Wahhabi", this thus contributed to further scaremongering against the *da'wah* of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb (*rahimahullāh*).

²² Jalal AbualRub, Alaa Mencke (ed.), *The Biography of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab* (Orlando, Florida: Madinah Publishers, 1424 AH/2003 CE), pp.224-231.

invasion of Egypt wherein he wanted to extend his influence, protect French trade interests and weaken Britain, a power struggle within Egypt was created between Egyptian Mamluks and the Ottomans between 1801 and 1805. This was largely caused due to the wrangling over the military due to the impact and shock of Napoleon's invasion. Egypt was officially part of the Ottoman Empire and there were Ottoman Turkish troops stationed and garrisoned there, most of these troops in any case were originally Albanian, Circassian and from the Balkans. The Ottomans had controlled Egypt since 1517 and the Ottoman-Mamluk War.

Muhammad Ali Pasha arose as a median party with his loyal Albanian forces and assumed control over Egypt in the aftermath of Mamluk and Ottoman tensions. Yet on March 1 1811 Muhammad Ali Pasha's Albanian troops on his orders slaughtered the Mamluks at the Cairo Citadel after inviting them to what they thought was a celebration. His troops then assumed military control of Egypt and ousted the Mamluk remnants. This is the one who led the war campaign against the First Saudi State. While 1831-33 witnessed the First Egyptian-Ottoman War wherein Muhammad and Ibrahim Pasha wanted control over Syria from the Ottomans as due reward for aiding the Ottomans during the Greek War of Independence (1821-30) in 1825 and gaining results. The Greeks three years later however after negotiations gained the aid of Great Britain, the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of France and each sent a navy to Greece. In 1828 the Egyptian Army withdrew due to French naval pressure and Ottoman troops gave in, after 8 years of war Greece was then declared an independent sovereign state under the 1830 London Protocol.

Muhammad Ali Pasha then assumed nominal control over Syria but it was essentially still a vassal state of the Ottomans. Muhammad Ali Pasha then in 1838 declared himself an independent ruler and made his intent known to the world powers of the day. The Ottoman Sultan declared him a traitor and this led to the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War. Ibrahim Pasha had a sizeable force already in Syria. These are the ones who led the war against the First Saudi State.

During the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War (1839-41), which was fought mainly in Syria, the Ottomans tried to reclaim lands lost to Muhammad Ali Pasha in the First Egyptian-Ottoman War. In July 1839 an Ottoman fleet sailed to Alexandria but surrendered to Muhammad Ali Pasha. The British, Austrians, Prussians and Russians sent a delegation to negotiate and advised the Ottomans to stand firm against Muhammad Ali Pasha. The British also aided the Ottomans in a number of naval expeditions in Shām which left Muhammad Ali Pasha's forces severely weakened. The British and Austrians blockaded the Nile Delta, seized control of Beirut and took Acre. British Admiral Charles Napier reached an agreement with Muhammad Ali Pasha wherein

he left off any claims to Syria and was then made the full independent ruler of Egypt.²³ He signed the 1840 Convention of London and downsized his army and navy, and left off any claims to the Hijaz and Crete, he mainly wanted control of Egypt and Sudan. This is the one who led the war campaign against the First Saudi State.

However, in 1807 the Ottomans encouraged him to wage war against the First Saudi State. Muhammad Ali Pasha merely sent forth Albanian troops to fight and many of them were killed. In September 1818 the First Saudi State was defeated and 'Abdullāh bin Saud the head of the estate was forced to listen to the lute and then publicly beheaded in Istanbul. The scholars of the area were also executed such as Sulaymān bin 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb, *rahimabullāh*, who was placed into a canon and then fired. Shaykh Muhammad ibn Manzūr al-Nu'mānī said:

لقد استغل الإنجليز الوضع المعاكس في الهند للشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب ورموا كل
من عارضهم ووقف في طريقهم ورأوه خطرا على كيانتهم بالوهابية ودعواهم وهابيين
... وكذلك دعا الإنجليز علماء ديوبند - في الهند - بالوهابيين من أجل معارضتهم
السافرة للإنجليز وتضييقهم الخناق عليهم ...

The British made the most of the hostility that existed in India towards Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and they accused everyone who opposed them and stood in their way, or whom they regarded as dangerous, of being Wahhabis... Similarly the British called the scholars of Deoband – in India – Wahhaabis, because of their blunt opposition to the English²⁴ and their putting pressure on them.²⁵

²³ All of this also reveals just how entrenched political intrigue, national army power and coups are riddled within certain Muslim countries today. Many simplistically put this merely at the feet of colonialism, yet it is evident that colonialism and imperialism aside, there is a tradition of such intrigue within many countries for centuries.

²⁴ Hunter in his book *The Indian Musalmans* noted that during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 CE the British feared uprising from the “Wahhabi” Muslims who were revolting against the British. See W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, which was first published in London by Trübner and Co. in 1871. Then printed in Calcutta by Comrade Publishers in 1945, 2nd edition. It was also printed in Lahore by Sang-e-Meel Publications in 1999. It was also printed in New Delhi by Rupa & Co. in 2002.

In Bengal during this time many Muslims, including the old, the young and women, were all branded as being “Wahhabis” and rebels against the British Empire and were hanged from 1863-1865. See Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1972), pp.79-80. Hunter stated in his book that:

Shaykh 'Abdul'Azeez Aal-'AbdulLateef concludes:

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.²⁶

Other historians in this field who have also affirmed the above include Qeymuddin Ahmad, who noted:

In 1577, when the great Ottoman Sultan, Salim (1512-20), conquered Egypt, the Caliphate passed on to the Ottomans, and the Arabian Peninsula too came under their control. On account of its distant position and inhospitable terrain, however, Arabia was not under effective Turkish control. Local chiefs held sway in its different, geographically well-defined zones such as the Hijaz and Najd areas and the southern coastal areas.²⁷

There is no fear to the British in India except from the Wahhabis, for they are causing disturbances against them, and agitating the people under the name of jihad to throw away the yoke of disobedience to the British and their authority.

Those who were imprisoned in the Andaman Islands and tortured were those intellectual scholars of the Salafi community such as Shaykh Ja'far Thanesarī, Shaykh 'AbdurRahmān, Shaykh 'AbdulGhaffār, Shaykh Yahyā 'Ali (1828–1868 CE), Shaykh Ahmad 'Abdullāh (1808-1881 CE), Shaykh Nadheer Husayn ad-Dehlawī and many others. See Mohamed Jafar, *Taareekh ul-'Aajeeb* and *Taareekh-i-Aajeeb: History of Port Blair* (Nawalkshore Press, 2nd Edition, 1892).

Ahmad Ridha al-Brailwī (born 14 June 1865 CE/10 Shawwāl 1272 AH) was assigned the job of dissension and opposed every plan to oppose the British, he rallied around himself a band of fanatical and heretical supporters entrenched in baseless folkloric traditions and superstitions who were later known as the Brailwīs. For further reading see:

- ✓ Muinuddin Ahmed Khan, *A History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal* (Karachi, 1965).
- ✓ Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp.276-77.
- ✓ Qeyamuddin Ahmad (Professor of History at Patna University), *The Wahhabi Movement in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994, 2nd edition). Particularly Chapter Seven "The British Campaigns Against the Wahhabis on the North-Western Frontier" and Chapter Eight "State Trials of Wahhabi Leaders, 1863-65."

²⁵ *Di'āya Mukaththafah Didd al- Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb*, pp. 105-106.

²⁶ *Da'āwa al-Munaawī'een*, pp.239, 240

²⁷ Qeyamuddin Ahmad (Professor of History at Patna University), *The Wahhabi Movement in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994, 2nd edition), p.27

Indeed, an honest and informed non-Muslim historian, Michael Field, noted:

The Nejd, which is culturally and politically the dominant part of the Kingdom, was never part of the Ottoman Empire, and no part of the Kingdom was ever ruled by a European colonial power.²⁸

Shahi stated in *The Politics of Truth Management in Saudi Arabia*:

Since the Abbasids in the tenth century, Najd had hardly ever been ruled by a major Islamic empire. Even the Ottomans, who made one of the largest empires in the world, which stretched from Baghdad to Budapest, had minimal reasons to invade and control the area. It did not have any economic, strategic or political significance for the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. The rulers of the Ottoman Empire regarded the Arabian Peninsula as an insignificant and rather primitive zone whose only importance was the holy sites, such as Mecca and Madinah.²⁹

With regards to the claim that the followers of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb **“considered everyone as an apostate unless they followed the Wahhabi school of thought”³⁰** then we say, and this has been repeated so many times that it almost becomes

²⁸ Michael Field, *Inside the Arab World* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), p.181

²⁹ Afshin Shahi, *The Politics of Truth Management in Saudi Arabia* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p.45.

³⁰ Professor Madawi al-Rasheed (Professor of Anthropology of Religion at *Kings College, University of London*) for example she states in an article entitled *'Saudis in quest for a 'Luther' to bring tolerant Islam'* (dated: 30/6/06):

The foundation narrative of the Saudi state assumed that all Muslims were blasphemous except those who subscribed to its own religious interpretations and become subservient to its political will...Today this religious discourse has backfired and began to haunt those who initially sponsored it. The same Saudi religious discourse that accused all other Muslims of blasphemy is now turned against the Saudi regime itself, as this regime is labelled a regime of blasphemy by Bin Laden and many religious scholars. While previously state sponsored religious interpretations declared other Arab and Muslim leaders as blasphemous, for example Nasser, Qaddafi, Bourguiba, Khomeini and Saddam, today the Al-Saud themselves are considered blasphemous and unfit to rule. The establishment of the Saudi state was based on mass excommunication of other Muslims. Today the Al-Saud themselves and their ulama are

repetitive, why cannot the words of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhab be transmitted by the claimants for us to see where he allegedly **“considered everyone as an apostate unless they followed the Wahhabi school of thought”**??

The claim about the **“Wahhabis revolting against the Ottomans”**³¹ is not a new claim and was mentioned by some of the antagonists of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb during his time such as Dahlān, az-Zahāwī and even Ibn 'Ābideen.

declared blasphemous by people who had been brought up on Saudi religious interpretations.”

Originally accessed June 2006 from <http://www.madawi.info/index.php/site/more/52/>

See Madawī al-Rasheed, “Saudis in quest for a ‘Luther’ to bring tolerant Islam” in Joshua Craze and Mark Huband (eds.), *The Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Challenge of the 21st Century* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), pp.262-268

Well it has not **“backfired and began to haunt those who initially sponsored it”** as not only did the senior scholars of Saudi Arabia never ever support extremists mavericks, but the Khawārij of the era have always had an issue with Saudi Arabia as they want to place their own selves in authority. Also, it is surprising how any academic could make the error of thinking that the **“Saudi religious discourse”** has **“accused all other Muslims of blasphemy”**, considering all of the overwhelming evidence which indicates the contrary. As for the contention that the Saudi state “was based on mass excommunication of other Muslims” this chapter clearly indicates that this is incorrect.

³¹ For example, Khaled Abou El Fadl stated in his article *The Crusader: Why we must take Bin Laden's writings seriously* in the March/April 2006 edition of the *Boston Review* that:

Wahhabis allied themselves with the Saudi family, which in turn relied on the British for military and logistical support, and it is British support that enabled Wahhabi fighters to wage war against the Ottomans. In doing so, the Wahhabis helped the British defeat and dismantle the Ottoman caliphate. Generations of Wahhabi scholars simply ignored this inconsistency; others denied that the British alliance ever existed; and still others masked the contradiction by greatly exaggerating the supposed heresy or apostasy of the Ottomans.

The real inconsistency is in the fact that the Ottomans themselves sought help from the British and French against the Russians during the Crimean War aswell! So maybe a more detailed study of history needs to be undertaken by some!? While Schwartz, in a poorly researched book entitled *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*, claims that: **“Soon the itinerant Arab and the imperial British shared a goal: the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire.”** (p.67) It is not surprising that Schwartz would make such historical errors, as within the book there is scant reference to the Qur'ān and hadeeth, if there is any reference to them at all! Karen Armstrong also made a similar error in this regard by saying **“Abd al-Wahhab declared the Ottomans sultans to be apostates, unworthy of the obedience of the faithful and deserving of death.”** So within this excerpt from Armstrong are two mistakes, naming Muhammad ibn

The main individuals who wrote propaganda tracts against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb were Ibn Afaliq,³² Ahmad bin 'Ali ash-Shāfi'ī al-Qabbānī,³³ Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Qadarī,³⁴ 'Alawī al-Haddād,³⁵ Ibn Suhaym,³⁶

'AbdulWahhāb as “**Abd al-Wahhab**” which is the name of his father and the regurgitated claim about making *takfeer* and *khurūj* against the Ottomans. Karen Armstrong, *The Battle of God: A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000), p.44.

Some have tried to utilise the claim of the alleged “British spy”, yet even Hamid Algar, a Shi'ite author who abhors what he pejoratively refers to as “Wahhabism”, admits that this is false and invented by Shi'ites!

³² Muhammad ibn 'AbdurRahmān ibn Afaliq (d.1163 AH/1750 CE) from al-Ahsa and a contemporary of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb who witnessed the beginnings of the *da'wah*. The manuscript of the treatise wherein Ibn Afaliq states his lies against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb is present in the *State Library* of Berlin, it was quoted by 'Abdul'Azeez ibn Muhammad Āl 'AbdulLateef in *Da'āwa al-Munāwi'een li Da'wat al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahāb* (Riyadh: Dār ul-Watan, 1412 AH), p. 58. Ibn Afaliq wrote a letter to the 'Ameer of 'Uyaynah 'Uthmān ibn Mu'ammār, trying to incite Ibn Mu'ammār against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb. Yet when Ibn Mu'ammār did not agree with the claims of Ibn Afaliq, Ibn Afaliq then began writing against Ibn Mu'ammār and accusing him of also making *takfeer* of Muslims! Refer to the book by Professor Sulaiman Bin Abdurrahman al-Huqail (Professor of Education at Imām Muhammad bin Saud University, Riyadh), *Muhammad Bin Abdulwahhāb – His Life and the Essence of his Call* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, KSA, First Edition, 1421 AH/2001 CE), with an introduction by Sheikh Saleh Bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh, p.163.

³³ Another contemporary of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb but not much is known about his life, the treatise of al-Qabbānī is mentioned by Ahmad ibn Ali al-Basarī in *Fasl al-Khitāb fī Rad id-Dalālāt Ibn 'AbdulWahhāb*, p.65. A manuscript of the book is in the library of *Imām Muhammad ibn Saud University* in Riyadh. This also demonstrates that the opposers claims have been preserved in order to refute them and it also refutes the claims that the followers of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb totally destroyed, desecrated and ransacked the works, writings and books of their opposers! Qabbānī had two writings against Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb, the first was a copy in his handwriting of a book entitled *Kitāb Rad ad-Dalālah wa Qama' al-Jahālah* by another scholar called Ahmad Barakat ash-Shāfi'ī al-Azharī at-Tandatāwī. While the second is entitled *Kitāb Naqd Qawā'id ad-Dalāl wa Rafd 'Aqā'id ud-Dullāl* which is a response to a letter sent by Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb to the 'Ulama in Basra.

³⁴ Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb wrote to him advising him during his time. Al-Qadarī authored *Risālatun fī'r-Radd 'alā'l-Wahhābiyyah* which is extant in manuscript form in the library at *Imām Muhammad bin Saud University*, Riyadh.

³⁵ He authored *Misbahu'l-Anamī wa Jalāl-dh-Dhlām fī Radi Shubuhāt Bida'i-n-Najd* (Cairo: Matba'atu'l-Āmirah, 1335 AH).

Dahlān,³⁷ Zahāwī,³⁸ Hasan ibn 'Umar ash-Shatti,³⁹ Ali Naqī al-Kanhūrī,⁴⁰ Muhammad Ibn Najib Suqīya,⁴¹ Muhammad ibn Jawad Mugniya,⁴² Bin Diyaf,⁴³ Abu'l-Fidā Ismā'īl at-Tamīmī, Umar bin Abi'l-Fadl Qāsim al-Mahjūb,⁴⁴ 'AbdulWahhāb Ahmad Barakāt ash-Shāfi'ī al-Azharī at-Tandatāwī⁴⁵ and others of even lesser significance.

³⁶ Sulaymān ibn Muhammad ibn Suhaym (d.1181 AH) was one of the scholars of Riyadh, who left for al-Ahsa after Riyadh fell to the first Saudi state. He was also an arch-enemy to the da'wah of Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and was one of the first to initiate falsehood against the Imām, sending such writings to other Muslim countries.

³⁷ Ahmad ibn Zaynī Dahlān (d.1304 AH), a partisan Sūfī judge who lived in Makkah and was a Shāfi'ī Muftī who spread much in the way of propaganda against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb.

³⁸ He authored *al-Fajr us-Sādiq* (Cairo: Maktabah Maleejī, 1323 AH).

³⁹ This is one of the writers who the Nottingham preacher Abu Ja'far Hasan "al-Hanbali" relies heavily upon within his polemical discourse against the Salafī method. Abu Ja'far al-Hanbali has claimed that ash-Shāfi'ī received "numerous death threats" [not specifying either who these threats were from nor the nature of them with adequate documentation]. See here for more on Abu Ja'far Hasan "al-Hanbali":

<http://salafimanhaj.com/the-reality-of-abu-jafar-al-hanbal-and-the-so-called-hanbali-text-society>

⁴⁰ A Rāfidī who authored *Kashf un-Niqābi 'an Aqā'id Ibn 'AbdulWahhāb* (Najaf: Matba'atu'l-Haydarāyah, 1345 AH).

⁴¹ As noted by Muhammad Tawfeeq in his book *Tabyeen ul-Haqq wa's-Sawāb bi'r-Rad 'alā 'Atbā'ī Ibn 'AbdulWahhāb* (Syria: Matba'atu'l-Fayhā), p.8

⁴² In his book *Hadhihi Hiya'l-Wahhābiyyah* (1964 CE).

⁴³ Ahmad ibn Abi'd-Diyāf (d. 1291 AH/1874 CE) born in Tunis in 1219 AH/1804 CE. He served as secretary to an influential minister of the Husayni state in Tunis, Shakir Sahib at-Tābi', then took to writing from 1827 to the 1860s. In his *Ithāf Ahl iz-Zamān* within his summary of Hammuda Pasha's reign in Tunisia (1782-1814 CE) he discusses a so-called "Wahhabi proclamation". See Adel Sulaiman Gamal, Richard Mortel and A.H. Green (Trans.), *A Tunisian Reply to a Wahhabi Proclamation. In Quest of an Islamic Humanism*, vol.22.

⁴⁴ Died 1222 AH/1807 CE, he was a student of Abu'l-Fidā Ismā'īl at-Tamīmī at *Zaytuna University*. His father was an authority in Mālikī fiqh who served as *Qadi* of Tunisia and also as the Chief *Mufti* of the *Sharee'ah Court*. Mahjūb was a famed *khateeb*, poet and eloquent writer yet his writings against the phenomena that he labelled "Wahhabiya" were rather polemical wherein he justifies *tawassul*, the building of shrines and other innovations. The writings of these Tunisian scholars demonstrated the support that Tunisia had for the Ottoman fight against the so-called "Wahhabis". See Adel Sulaiman Gamal, Richard Mortel and A.H. Green (Trans.), *A Tunisian Reply to a Wahhabi Proclamation. In Quest of an Islamic Humanism*, vol.22.

⁴⁵ Not much is known about this individual's life except that he authored three books and moved to Makkāh towards the end of his life in the late 18th century CE. The historian of Najd, Ibn Turki

There is also a work by Shaykh Ahmad bin 'AbdirRahmān bin Rasheed al-'Uyūn entitled *Dafa' al-Irtiyāb 'an Shaykh Sulaymān bin 'AbdulWahhāb* [Averting the Doubts from Shaykh Sulaymān bin 'AbdulWahhāb]. As for Mustafā ibn Ahmad ash-Shāttī then he was the Mufti of the Hanbalis in Damascus in the early 20th century CE. However, even his own cousin, Muhammad bin Jameel Shattī, as relayed in *Mukhtasar Tabaqāt ul-Hanābilah*, describes Mustafā bin Ahmad Shattī as an extreme Sūfī who believed in *Wahdat ul-Wujūd*.

So is there any wonder that the likes of him would write against Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb?! The fact that he held this position in Syria is also something which needs to be taken with a pinch of salt as during that time of stagnancy anyone could gain a position regardless of the person's actual competency in creed and fiqh. There is scant referral to Mustafā ibn Ahmad ash-Shattī within the biographical dictionaries of the Hanābilah due to his obscurity. He died in 1348 AH/1929 CE.

As for Ibn Jarjees, then he was born in 1231 AH in Baghdad and later travelled to Najd to study with Abū Butayn. When he returned back to Irāq he authored works claiming that Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb contradicted the beliefs of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn ul-Qayyim. Ibn Jarjees authored *al-Minba al-Wahabiyah fi'r-Radd 'ala'l-Wahabiyyah*, which is a book in which Ibn Jarjees tries to prove that the dead have the same lives as the living. Ibn Jarjees was refuted by Abū Butayn in his book *Ta'sees ut-Taqdees fi'r-Radd 'ala Ibn Jarjees*. The book was published in Egypt in 1344 AH.

'AbdulLateef ibn 'AbdurRahmān ibn Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb also authored *Minhāj ut-Ta'sees wa't-Taqdees fi'r-Radd 'ala Dawud Ibn Jarjees*, this work was completed later by Mahmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī of Irāq (1273-1342 AH). Muhammad Basheer ibn Muhammad as-Sahsawānī from India (1250-1326 AH) was an Indian scholar who went to Makkah and debated Dahlān. He later wrote a large work refuting Dahlān entitled *Siyānat ul-Insān 'an Waswasat Shaykh Dahlān*.

THE STATEMENTS OF IMĀM MUHAMMAD IBN 'ABDULWAHHĀB REGARDING TAKFEER

Moazzam Begg, Yasir Qadhi, Namira Nahouza, Abu Ja'far al-Hanbali and many others, in continuing with their intellectual denial, has tried to portray Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb as one who killed his opponents merely the grounds that they did not agree with

considered him to be one of the four most prolific writers against Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb. See Samer Traboulsi, *An Early Refutation of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's Reformist Views. Die Welts des Islams*, vol.42, no.3, 2002, pp.373-390.

him. Yet when we turn to the actual writings of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb we find contrary to what is asserted. Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb (*rahimahullāh*) stated:

As for takfeer: then I make takfeer of whoever knows the deen of the Messenger of Allāh (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) and then after this abuses it, forbids the people from it and oppresses whoever practices it, this is the one who I make takfeer of and most of the Ummah, all praise is due to Allāh, are not like this (category of people).⁴⁶

He also said:

We only make takfeer of whoever associates partners in worship with Allāh and we likewise make takfeer of those who beautify this for the people.⁴⁷

However, this takfeer is based on the manhaj of Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah which safeguards the principles of the Sharee'ah which the Imāms of the da'wah have highlighted in many instances; and this is only for the people of knowledge who are firmly grounded in Islamic knowledge. The Imāms of the da'wah make a distinction between *takfeer un-naw'* (making *takfeer* on account of the act) and *takfeer al-'ayn* (making specific *takfeer* of the person who committed the act of kufr). They apply kufr to the statement and the action, as mentioned in the Divine Legislation in the Qur'an and Sunnah, but this does not necessitate making *takfeer* of whoever falls into those (sayings or actions of *kufr*). Shaykh 'AbdulLateef bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Hasan stated:

The fifth principle: it does not necessitate that doing one of the branches of īmān by the servant leads him to be called 'a believer', just as it does not necessitate doing one of the branches of kufr leads him to be called 'a disbeliever'. Even if the kufr committed is as mentioned in the hadeeth: "*Two from my Ummah have kufr: those who curse the lineages of people and those who wail over the dead*"; and the hadeeth, "*Whoever swears and oath to other than Allāh has disbelieved*", these hadeeth however do not rightfully allow the term 'kufr' to be applied to a person absolutely.⁴⁸

Rather, just we mentioned previously: the conditions have to be maintained and the preventative factors have to be exhausted. In regards to a specific (takfeer of someone) then the da'wah of Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb narrowed the scope for takfeer in accordance with the texts of the Sharee'ah and in any case takfeer exists within all of the Islamic Madhāhib that are linked to the Sunnah. You will not find a book of fiqh except that within it will be the regulations

⁴⁶ *Ad-Durur as-Saniyyah*, vol.1, p.83

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol.10, p.128

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.484

regarding the apostate, Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb did not make takfeer on account of sins as the Khawārij did. Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb said:

I do not make takfeer of any of the Muslims due to sins and I do not expel them from the fold of Islām.

He also said in another instance:

Another matter that is mentioned to us from the enemies of Islām is that we make takfeer due to sins such as: using tobacco, drinking alcohol, committing zinā or due to any other major sin. We free ourselves for Allāh from even saying this.

The Shaykh (*rahimahullāh*) neither made takfeer generally nor of those who opposed him or did not pledge obedience to him. The Shaykh said in a letter to one of the scholars of 'Irāq:

Also from them (false allegations) is that you mentioned that I make takfeer of all the (Muslim) people except for those who follow me, this is incorrect. It is strange how this could even enter the mind of an intelligent person, or is this stated by a Muslim or a disbeliever or an astrologer or a madman?⁴⁹

Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb also said, in a letter to Ismā'īl al-Jara'ī of Yemen:

As for the saying that we make takfeer generally then that is a falsehood invented by the enemies who block people from the deen by it. We say: glory be to Allāh! This is a sheer lie!⁵⁰

Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb did not make takfeer via conjecture, rather there has to be verification and in this way the ignorant is excused due to his ignorance and the proofs have to be established. Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb said when explaining this in a letter to Muhammad ibn 'Eeid, one of the religious personalities of Tharmada:

As for the assertion of the enemies that I hold them to be disbelievers only by conjecture, or I hold an ignorant person against whom no argument has been established to be a disbeliever, then these are sheer lies and false accusations by those who intend to drive the people away from the deen of Allāh and His Messenger.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid., vol.1, p.80

⁵⁰ Ibid. vol.1, p.10; also *Majmū' Mu'allafāt is'-Shaykh*, vol.5, p.100

⁵¹ *Ar-Rasā'il ash-Shakhsiyyah, ar-Risālah ath-Thālitha* [The Third Treatise], pp.24-5; also *Majmū' Mu'allafāt is'-Shaykh*, vol.5, p.25

Shaykh 'Abdullāh bin ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb:

We say about those who have died: those nations are gone and we do not make takfeer except of those to whom the truth of our da'wah was conveyed to, clarified to and the proofs were established upon and then rejected it out of pride and stubbornness.⁵²

Shaykh 'Abdullāh bin 'AbdulLateef said:

Shaykh Muhammad (rahimahullāh) did not make takfeer of the people except via beginning with establishing the proofs and the da'wah, because at that time there was a dearth of knowledge of the message (of Islām) and for that reason he said 'due to their ignorance and the lack of anyone who makes them aware'. However, as for those who the proofs are established upon then there is nothing to prevent takfeer being made on such people.⁵³

Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb (*rahimahullāh*) did not make takfeer except in matters wherein there was a consensus, the Shaykh said with regards to the issue of abandoning the prayer out of laziness but without rejecting (the obligation of the prayer):

We do not make takfeer except on those matters which all of the scholars have reached a consensus on.⁵⁴

The Imām also stated (*rahimahullāh*) in a letter exonerating himself from fabrications concocted by Ibn Suhaym:

Allāh knows that the man ascribed to me what I never said and did not even occur to me. One such ascription is that "the people for the last six hundred years had not been on the right path" and that I hold anyone who seeks the intercession of pious people to be a disbeliever" and that I hold al-Busayrī to be a disbeliever. My answer to all of these is: this is nothing more than a false accusation.⁵⁵

In a letter to the Shareef of Makkah at the time, Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb stated:

As for falsehoods and accusations, their example is the assertion that we hold the people to be disbelievers in general; that we hold migrating to us obligatory and that we affirm the disbelief of a person who does not hold to what we do and does not fight with us to be disbelievers. This and other

⁵² *Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah*, vol,1, p.134

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol.10, p.434

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, vol.1, p.102

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* vol.5, pp.11-12, 62

such assertions are totally false levelled against us in order to drive the people away from the deen of Allāh and His Messenger.⁵⁶

Rasheed Ridā stated:

The books of the Shaykh contain what is contrary to the allegations. These books tell us that they do not pass the verdict of disbelief except against those who commit acts that are acts of disbelief according to the consensus of the Muslims.⁵⁷

Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb (*rahimahullāh*) also stated:

In regards to what has been said of me, that I make takfeer on the general body of Muslims then this a slander of the Enemies, as well as their saying that I say whoever adheres to the Religion of Allah and His Messenger while living in another land then it will not suffice him until he comes to me first then this also is a false accusation. Rather adherence to the Religion of Allah and His Messenger is done in any land however we do make takfeer of the one who affirms belief in the Religion of Allah and His Messenger then turns away from it and diverts the people from it, likewise whoever worships idols after knowing that it is the religion of the Polytheists and a form of beautification to the common people, then this is what we make takfeer of as does every scholar on the face of the earth, they make takfeer of these people, except for the stubborn or ignorant person and Allah knows best, Wa Salām.⁵⁸

Henceforth, the Shaykh and Dr 'AbdusSalām as-Sihaymī, a Professor from the Fiqh Department at the Sharee'ah College of the Islamic University of Madeenah stated in his book *Fiker ul-Irbāb wa'l-'Unf fi'l-Mamlakati'l-'Arabīyyah as-Saudiyyah* [The Ideology of Terrorism and Political Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia]:

After reviewing these transmitted statements, it becomes clear that Imām Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhāb and the Imāms of the da'wah after him traversed the methodology that the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) and his companions traversed along with the successors (tābi'een) and those who followed their way

⁵⁶ Ibid. vol.3, p.11

⁵⁷ Muhammad Basheer ash-Sahaswani, *Siyānat ul-Insān min Wasawis id-Dahlān* (Riyadh: Najd Press, 1396 AH), p.485

⁵⁸ Taken from *ad-Durar-us-Saniyyah* (The Personal Letters of ash-Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abdil-Wahhāb, *rahimahullāh*) letter no.19 page 57. Some of the quotes here were originally translated by Abū 'Imrān al-Mekseekee.

such as the four Imāms, Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn 'Taymiyyah, Ibn ul-Qayyim and others from Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah. Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'AbdulWahhab did not oppose them at all.⁵⁹

Written by the one in need of Allāh's Aid,

'AbdulHaq ibn Kofi ibn Kwesi ibn Kwaku al-Ashanti

London

24 December 2018 CE/15th Rabī' uth-Thānī 1440 AH

⁵⁹ 'AbdusSalām bin Sālim bin Rajā' as-Sihaymī, *Fikr ul-Irhāb wa'l-Unf fi'l-Mamlakati'l-'Arabiyyah as-Saudiyyah: Masdaruhu, Asbābu Instishāruhu, 'Ilāj* [The Ideology of Terrorism and Political Violence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Its Origins, the Reasons for its Spread and the Solution]. Cairo: Dar ul-Menhaj, 1426 AH/2005 CE, p.45.