

History of Muslims Fighting with the Wahhabiyyah as they Emerged

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

At the time Ibn ^Abdul-Wahhab and his assistants initiated their treacherous ideology by which they called the Muslims blasphemers, they were gaining control of eastern Arabia one tribe after another. This expansion eventually encompassed al-Yaman, Makkah, al-Madinah, and the tribes of al-Hijaz all the way to ash-Sham.

Debating With The Scholars Of Makkah

Initially, the Wahhabis sent a group to Makkah and al-Madinah thinking they would be able to spoil the belief of the scholars of these two holy cities and tamper with their belief through lies and fabrications. When they reached there and declared their beliefs, the scholars of Makkah and al-Madinah refuted them and established the Islamic evidences against them--which they could not refute. The scholars were certain about the Wahhabis' ignorance and misguidance and found them absurd and thoughtless.

After evaluating their beliefs and finding them full of many types of blasphemy, the Wahhabis fled like frightened zebras fleeing from a lion. Hence, after establishing the proofs, the scholars wrote an attestation against the Wahhabiyyah to the Head Judge of Makkah confirming the Wahhabis as blasphemous because of their beliefs. The aim of the scholars was to disclose the misguidance of the Wahhabis and make it known to the Muslims near and far. This action took place during the rulership of Sharif Mas^ud Ibn Sa^id Ibn Sa^d Ibn Zayn, the ruler of Hijaz who ordered the imprisonment of those unjust Wahhabis. Sharif Mas^ud Ibn Sa^id Ibn Sa^d Ibn Zayn died in 1165 A.H.

Some Wahhabis managed to escape their imprisonment. They went to ad-Dar^iyyah and spoke about what they encountered in Makkah. This made the Wahhabis more devilishly haughty, and they started attacking the tribes which were loyal to the prince of Makkah.

Outbreak Of Hostilities: Fighting In At-Ta'if, Makkah, And Juddah

The fighting between the Wahhabis and the prince of Makkah, Mawlana Sharif Ghalib Ibn Mus^id Ibn Sa^id Ibn Sa^d Ibn Zayd, broke out after 1205 A.H. Many battles took place between the prince and the Wahhabis. Although many people were killed, the Wahhabis' strength kept intensifying. Their innovations kept propagating until most of the Bedouin tribes paid allegiance to them--even the Bedouins who were under the rulership of the prince of Makkah.

In 1217 A.H., they marched with big armies to the area of at-Ta'if. In Dhul-Qa^dah{19} of the same year, they lay siege to the area the Muslims were, subdued them, and killed the people: men, women, and children. They also looted the Muslims' belongings and possessions. Only a few people escaped their barbarism.

After at-Ta'if{18} came under their control, the Wahhabis planned to march towards Makkah, but this was during the time the Muslims were performing Pilgrimage, and many of the Muslims from ash-Sham and Egypt were in Makkah. The Wahhabis knew if they attacked Makkah at that time all the people performing Pilgrimage would join in fighting them. They stayed in at-Ta'if until Hajj was over, and the people had returned to their countries. Then the Wahhabis and their armies set out to attack Makkah. Sharif Ghalib did not have enough power to face these armies, so he went to Juddah. The people of Makkah were afraid the Wahhabis would treat them in the same manner the people of at-Ta'if were treated, so they negotiated and surrendered to them. The Wahhabis granted the people of Makkah security and entered Makkah on the eighth of Muharram, 1218 A.H. They occupied themselves there for fourteen days ordering the Muslims to repent and embrace Islam--since the Wahhabis falsely claimed them as blasphemers. The people were prohibited from doing what the Wahhabis incorrectly believed to be blasphemy, like performing tawassul and visiting the graves.

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Having gained control of at-Ta'if and Makkah, the Wahhabis turned their armies towards Juddah to fight Sharif Ghalib. When they surrounded Juddah, Sharif Ghalib bombarded them with cannons and projectiles. He killed many Wahhabis and prevented the conquering of Juddah. After eight days, the Wahhabis departed Juddah to return to their own territories. The Wahhabis left some of their army in Makkah and appointed ^Abdul-Mu^in, the brother of Sharif Ghalib, as prince. ^Abdul-Mu^in only accepted this position to protect the people of Makkah and shelter them from the evil mistreatment of the harmful Wahhabis.

In the month of Rabi^ul-Awwal of the same year, Prince Ghalib left Juddah accompanied by Sharif Basha--the governor of Juddah and the representative of the Supreme ^Uthmaniyy{21} Sultan. They arrived in Makkah with their army and overpowered the Wahhabis. They expelled the Wahhabi army and this brought Makkah back under the authority of Sharif Ghalib.

The Capture Of Makkah

The Wahhabis left Makkah and became involved with fighting many of the tribes. They captured at-Ta'if and appointed ^Uthman al-Madaiyyiyy as the governor. This governor joined forces with some of the Wahhabis' soldiers and started fighting the tribes next to the borders of Makkah and al-Madinah until they pledged allegiance to them. They eventually subdued all the tribes and captured all the lands originally under the authority of the Governor of Makkah. After this, ^Uthman al-Madaiyyiyy mobilized his army in an attempt to capture Makkah. In 1220 A.H. they lay siege to Makkah and then surrounded it from all directions to tighten this siege. They blocked the routes to the city and prevented supplies from reaching there. It was a great hardship on the people of Makkah. Food became exorbitantly expensive and then unavailable. They resorted to eating dogs.

Sharif Ghalib was compelled to ask for reconciliation with the Wahhabis. He accepted for some people to arbitrate between them. He signed an agreement with conditions stipulating the rulership of Makkah would be kept for him, and the people of Makkah would be treated leniently. The Wahhabis accepted these conditions. They entered Makkah by the end of Dhul-Qa^dah in 1220 A.H. They also gained control of al-Madinah. They plundered what was in the room of the Prophet, sallallahu ^alayhi wa sallam, took all the money that was there, and did some disgraceful acts. They appointed a man among them, Mubarak Ibn Madyan, as the governor of al-Madinah.

The Wahhabis ruled Makkah and al-Madinah for seven years. During these years, they prevented the people of ash-Sham and Egypt from entering Makkah carrying the cloak{20} of the Ka^bah when they came to perform pilgrimage. The Wahhabis started to make the cloak for the Ka^bah from black material. They prevented the people from smoking tobacco. When they found someone smoking they punished him fiercely. During this time, the Wahhabis destroyed the domes built on the graves of the righteous Muslims.

The ^Uthmaniyy State Starts To React

Throughout these years, the ^Uthmaniyy State was in great confusion and chaos. The ^Uthmaniyy were engaged in fierce fighting with the Christians and they were trying to cope with disunity among the ruling power. One sultan would be appointed, then thrown out or possibly killed, until 1226 AH when the Sultan issued an order to the ruler of Egypt, Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha, to prepare to fight the Wahhabis.

The Army From Egypt

Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha organized a big army and by a mandate from the Sultan, appointed his son, Tusun Basha, as its commanding officer. Those troops left Egypt in Ramadan of the same year and journeyed by land and by sea until they reached Yanbu^ and regained it from the Wahhabis. In Dhul-Hijjah 1226 AH, the army reached an area between as-Safra' and al-Hadidah. A fierce fight broke out with the Bedouins who were in al-Harbiyyah. These tribes were loyal to the Wahhabis, and many other tribes also joined them. As a result, the Egyptian army was badly defeated, many of the soldiers were massacred, and all the belongings of the army were looted. A small number of this army made their way back to Egypt.

The Second Egyptian Campaign

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In 1227 A.H., Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha was determined to lead the army to al-Hijaz himself, so he mobilized more troops. In the month of Sha^ban some ranks of the army were sent before him--at the peak of their strength and preparedness. Among their artillery were eighteen canons. In Ramadan, the army captured what the Wahhabis formerly controlled and regained the area of as-Safra', al-Hadidah, and other places without a fight, i.e., by attracting the shaykhs of the Bedouin tribes to their side. Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha gave money to the leaders of these tribes and salaries were arranged for them. These arrangements were made under the management of Sharif Ghalib, the Sharif of Makkah, who fooled the Wahhabis into believing he was on their side. The first time the Egyptians were defeated, they had not consulted with Sharif Ghalib--so he was unaware of their need for a similar arrangement.

Around the end of Dhul-Qa^dah, the army entered al-Madinah. When the news about the victory of the Muslim army reached Egypt, the Muslims celebrated the event for three days. They decorated the city, displayed fireworks, and fired their guns in celebration. They conveyed this good news to all the Christian kings.

The army traveling by sea captured Juddah at the beginning of Muharram, 1228 A.H., and then headed towards Makkah to regain control. The army did not engage in any battles with the Wahhabis as a result of the secret arrangements the Sharif managed to achieve. When the army reached Juddah, the Wahhabiyy army and princes fled Makkah. Al-Madayiqiyy, the Wahhabi princes of at-Ta'if, and their army fled at-Ta'if when they got word the Muslim army regained control of Juddah and Makkah.

The prince of the Wahhabis, Prince Su^ud, went to Hajj in 1227 A.H., before these events took place. After Hajj he went to at-Ta'if and then back to ad-Dar^iyyah. It was some time before he learned about the defeat in al-Madinah the Wahhabis suffered at the hands of the Sultan's army. When he arrived in ad-Dar^iyyah he got word of the capture of Makkah and at-Ta'if.

The Good News Reaches The Sultan

In Rabi^ul-'Awwal, 1228 A.H., Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha sent delegates to the capital of the state (Istanbul) carrying good news and keys. A written correspondence explained the keys were from Makkah, al-Madinah, Juddah and at-Ta'if. They entered the palace of the Sultan in a dignified and royal parade, followed by drummers announcing the great victory as songs were chanted joyfully. Fireworks were lit and cannons were fired; the delegates who brought the keys were honored. The Sultan promoted the rank of Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha, decorated him with many medallions, and granted him other medallions with an authorization to decorate the officers of his choice.

In Shawwal, 1228 A.H., before Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha left Egypt for al-Hijaz, Sharif Ghalib caught ^Uthman al-Madayiqiyy, the Wahhabi governor of at-Ta'if, who was one of their greatest agents and rulers. He was placed in iron chains and sent to Egypt. He arrived in Egypt in Dhul-Qa^dah--after Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha left for al-Hijaz. From Egypt, ^Uthman al-Madayiqiyy was sent to the capital of the state--where later he was killed.

Punishing Some Wahhabis And Replacing Sharif Ghalib Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha reached Makkah in Dhul-Qa^dah, arrested Sharif Ghalib Ibn Mus^id and sent him to the capital of the state. Sharif Yahya Ibn Surur Ibn Musa^id, Sharif Ghalib's nephew, was appointed as the Sharif (Governor) of Makkah.

In Muharram, 1229 A.H., Mubarak Ibn Madyan, the Wahhabi governor of al-Madinah was sent to the capital. He was carried around Constantinople in a disgraceful manner for the people to see. He was killed after this, and his head was hung on the gate of the government building. The same thing was done to ^Uthman al-Madayiqiyy as a punishment for all the crimes they committed during their rulership.

Sharif Ghalib was sent to Salonika{22}, held in high regard, and treated well until he died in 1231 A.H. He was buried there, and a dome was constructed over his grave--and to this day, the people still visit his grave. Sharif Ghalib's rulership over Makkah lasted for twenty-six years.

Uprooting The Wahhabis

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Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha continued to fight the Wahhabis, and he sent a large number of troops to Saudi Arabia in the areas of Turabah, Bishah, Ghamid, Dhahran, and ^Asir. His aim was to eradicate the Wahhabis, so he personally led the army in pursuit of them. In Sha^ban, 1229 A.H., he located them, killed and captured many, and demolished their strongholds. Prince Su^ud, the head of the Wahhabis, died in Jumadal-Ula, and his son, ^Abdullah, took over the leadership.

Shortly before the time of Pilgrimage, Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha left these areas and departed for Makkah. He performed Hajj and stayed in Makkah until Rajab, 1230 A.H. Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha left Hasan Basha{23} in Makkah and returned to Egypt in the middle of Rajab, 1230 A.H. He had spent one year and seven months residing in al-Hijaz, because he would not go back to Egypt until he had arranged the affairs of al-Hijaz and destroyed the Wahhabi factions spread throughout the Bedouin tribes of al-Hijaz and Eastern Arabia.

The Third Egyptian Campaign

The Wahhabi prince, ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud, was still in ad-Dar^iyyah when Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha made preparations for an army to fight him. The troops were sent under the leadership of his son, Ibrahim Basha. Prior to this, ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud corresponded with Tusun Basha Ibn Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha; Tusun Basha was in al-Madinah, to make a peace accord with ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud. In this proposed accord, he agreed to pay his loyalty to Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha on the condition he was left as the governor of that area. Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha did not approve this arrangement. The army was mobilized under Ibrahim's command at the end of 1231 A.H. Ibrahim Basha and his army reached ad-Dar^iyyah in 1232 A.H. where they battled ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud. In Dhul-Qa^dah, 1233 A.H., they conquered the Wahhabis.

When Egypt received news of the victory, the people were extremely triumphant and rejoiced for seven days. They set off fireworks and fired 1,000 canons in celebration of this great event.

Some Of The War Expenses

Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha had a tremendous concern for fighting the Wahhabis by sea. He spent great amounts of money to attain his goal. Some of those who used to serve him said on one occasion 45,000 riyals{24} were paid to transport ammunition{25}. This costly payment was one of many times such things occurred. Another time, one transport in particular was made for ammunition carried from Yanbu^ to al-Madinah. Each camel cost six riyals, half of which was paid by the governor of Yanbu^ and the other half by the governor of al-Madinah. Upon the arrival of the shipment from al-Madinah to ad-Dar^iyyah, the fee for the transport of ammunition alone was 140,000 riyals.

The Capture Of The Wahhabis' Leader

Ibrahim Basha caught ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud and sent him and many of the Wahhabi princes to Egypt. They arrived on the seventeenth of Muharram, 1234 A.H., where people gathered to see the Wahhabi leader paraded around the capital riding on a camel. After this, ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud was brought to see Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha. Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha stood up for ^Abdullah Ibn Su^ud, was gentle with him, and smiled as he let Abdullah sit beside him. Muhammad ^Aliyy Basha talked to him.

Al-Basha: Why do you keep rebelling? Ibn Su^ud: The war goes on; you lose sometimes and you win other times. Al-Basha: How did you find my son, Ibrahim Basha? Ibn Su^ud: He was not reckless but he put forth effort and so did we until what Allah had willed happened. Al-Basha: I will petition our master, the Sultan, on your behalf. Ibn Su^ud: What Allah willed to be shall be.

Al-Basha ordered a robe{26} to be put on Ibn Su^ud before he left to the house of Isma^il Basha in Bulaq{27}. Abdullah Ibn Su^ud had a small metal box with him.

Al-Basha: What is this? Ibn Su^ud: This was taken by my father from the room of the Prophet. I am taking it with me to the Sultan.

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Al-Basha ordered the box to be opened. They found three Mushafs in it--the like of which no one had ever seen--and with them were 300 large pearls, one large emerald, and a golden ribbon.

Al-Basha: You have taken much more than that. Ibn Su[^]ud: This is what I found kept by my father. He did not take all what was in the room for himself. The Bedouin tribesmen, the people of al-Madinah, the Aghas of al-Haram, and the Sharif of Makkah also removed things from the Prophet's room. Al-Basha: That is true. We found some of these things with the Sharif.

Then [^]Abdullah Ibn Su[^]ud was sent to the place of the Sultan. In Muharram, 1235 A.H., Ibrahim Basha returned to Egypt from al-Hijaz after he destroyed ad-Dar[^]iyah such that it was abandoned by its inhabitants. When Ibn Su[^]ud reached the headquarters of the Sultanate in Rabi[^]-ul-'Awwal, he was paraded around the city for all the people to see. He was then put to death at the Door of Hamayun (as a punishment for his crimes). The chiefs of his followers were executed in different places.

Conclusion

This is a very brief summary of the story of Muhammad Ibn [^]Abdul-Wahhab. To talk at length on each of these details would be very lengthy. The tribulations inflicted by the Wahhabis were a calamity for the Muslims. The Wahhabis shed a great deal of blood and robbed a great deal of money; their harm was prevalent and their evil spread.

Many of the hadiths of the Prophet, sallallahu [^]alayhi wa sallam, spoke explicitly about this tribulation. One narration said:

which means: << *There will be people who come from the eastern side of Arabia who will recite Qur'an, but their recitation will not pass beyond their collarbones*{28}. *They will go out of Islam as swiftly as the arrow goes through the prey. Their sign is shaving their heads.*>> This hadith was mentioned in many narrations, including Sahih-ul-Bukhariyy and other books of hadith. There is no need to expound on listing these narrations or their narrators because they are well-known and of the sahih{29} classification.

The Prophet said: "*Their sign is shaving their heads.*" This is an explicit reference to the Wahhabi sect. They used to order all those who follow them to shave their heads. None of the previous sects, i.e., those who came before the Wahhabis, like the Khawarij or other innovators, had this sign.

As-Sayyid [^]Abdur-Rahman al-Ahdal, the Mufti of Zabid, used to say: "There is no need for writing against the Wahhabis. For, in refuting them, it is sufficient to mention the hadith of the Prophet, sallallahu [^]alayhi wa sallam: << *Their sign is shaving their heads*>> since no other innovators had ever done it."

It happened once that a woman made her point against Ibn [^]Abdul-Wahhab when they compelled her to follow them and she did. He ordered her to shave her head. She told him: "Since you order the woman to shave her head, you have to order the man to shave his beard. The hair of the woman is her decoration and the decoration of the man is his beard." Ibn [^]Abdul-Wahhab could not answer her.

Among of what the Wahhabis used to do was to prevent the people from asking the Prophet, sallallahu [^]alayhi wa sallam, for his intercession--although the hadiths about the Prophet's intercession are numerous and are of the mutawatir{30} classification. Most of his intercession is for the Muslims of his nation who committed major sins. The Wahhabis also prohibited Muslims from reading Dala'il-ul-Khayrat--which includes saying as-Salat on the Prophet and mentioning many of the Prophet's complete descriptions. They said this is blasphemy. They also prevented Muslims from saying as-Salat on the Prophet on the minarets after the Adhan. Once a righteous blind Muslim was calling Adhan and said as-Salat on the Prophet after the Adhan{31}. The Wahhabis brought him to Ibn [^]Abdul-Wahhab who ordered his execution.

If I [the author] was to pursue the mischievous things the Wahhabis did, I would fill notebooks and lots of papers. However, what has been mentioned thus far is enough.

Allah, subhanahu wa ta^ala, knows best.

Footnote

18. At-Ta'if is a city in Hijaz.
19. Dhul-Qa^dah is the eleventh month of the Islamic lunar calendar.
20. The cloak of the Ka^bah is the cloth covering the Ka^bah.
21. The ^Uthmaniyy State was the Islamic state governing Turkey, parts of the ex-USSR, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, ex-Yugoslavia, Albania, Iraq, the Arabic peninsula, Egypt, ash-Sham, Libya, and other areas.
22. Salonika is a town in Greece.
23. Hasan Basha was one of the leaders of the Egyptian army.
24. Riyals were a unit of silver currency at that time.
25. This transport of ammunition involved crossing the Red Sea by ship and then crossing the land by camel.
26. Clothing with a nice garment is a traditional show of generosity.
27. Bulaq is an area in Cairo.
28. This means they do not understand the meaning of what they read.
29. A sahih hadith is a hadith which is related by a trustworthy Muslim from another trustworthy Muslim back to the Prophet or his Companion, and is devoid of any defect in this narration.
30. A mutawatir hadith is a hadith related by a large number of Muslims who witnessed it and conveyed it to large group of people who conveyed it to another large number and so on, until it reached us. Such a hadith is narrated in a way which is impossible for the narrators to have agreed to lie about it.
31. Adhan is the Call for Prayer.

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