

Wahhabism

Uncovering the Hidden Truth

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0. Preface and Permissions

Bismillah

All praise is due to Allah; may prayers of peace and blessings be upon his Messenger.

The following is a modified transcript of the Wahhabism documentary published by MuslimSkeptic titled “Wahhabism: Uncovering the Hidden Truth.” The transcript is provided for those who want to locate and cite the quotations given in the documentary. The original Arabic is provided for all quotations, as that is the easiest means by which to locate the source via search engines (e.g., Maktaba Shamela), as opposed to volume number, page number, etc., which vary by edition.

MuslimSkeptic intends to expand this transcript and eventually publish a book on the history and evolution of Wahhabism. For now, we hope this transcript is sufficient for academic researchers, students of knowledge, daees, imams, and scholars who are interested in primary source material from Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers.

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1. Introduction

The most beautiful aspect of Islam is *la ilaha illAllah*: There is no god except Allah.

But imagine if I told you that the true meaning of *la ilaha illAllah* is to hate other Muslims? What if I told you the true meaning of *la ilaha illAllah* is to kill other Muslims and take their property and enslave their women? If I told you that, you’d think that I’ve gone insane, that I’m a lunatic. You might even accuse me of being an ISIS terrorist.

What may shock you is that, historically, there have been Muslims who believed the central meaning of *la ilaha illAllah* is to hate and kill Muslims. This was actually the first deviant group in the history of Islam. They were known as the khawarij.

What made the khawarij so bad is that they declared the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ to be disbelievers. They also fought and killed the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ due to their extreme fanaticism.

What is interesting is that the Prophet ﷺ warned us of the danger of this group. One day, the Prophet ﷺ was distributing gold to different tribes. One man named Dhul Khuwaysira was not happy with the Prophet’s distribution so he told the Prophet ﷺ to “Fear Allah!” Imagine! This is a

person who thinks he is more just than the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ foretold the future of that man. The Prophet ﷺ told us in a sahih hadith:

“Among the off-spring of this man will be some who will recite the Qur’an but the Qur’an will not reach beyond their throats (meaning, they will recite like parrots and will not understand it nor act on it), and they will renegade from the religion as an arrow goes through the body of a hunted animal. They will kill the Muslims but will not disturb the idolaters. If I should live up to their time, I will kill them as the people of ‘Ad were killed (i.e., I will kill all of them).”¹

That is a dire warning from the Prophet ﷺ. But who are these people? Scholars have identified these people and labeled them: The Khawarij.

Now fast forward 1400 years.

Post October 7th, we have seen the strange rise of the Muslim Zionists, also known as the Madkhalis. These are Muslims who shockingly have, again and again, sided with Israel against the Palestinians. While the entire Muslim Ummah is shedding tears of grief for Palestine, these Madkhalis are calling for normalization with Israel. While the entire Ummah is boycotting pro-Israel companies like Starbucks and McDonald’s, these people have declared boycotting Israel is haram. But the most offensive claim that they’ve made is this: If the choice is between Israel and Palestine, Muslims should not prefer Palestinians – and maybe even they should side with Israel. Why? Because the Palestinians don’t have the correct aqida, or creed. They’ve fallen into deviance and even polytheism. Jews, as people of the book, are comparable to—or perhaps better than—these grave worshipping Palestinian polytheists!

Now, most of you will immediately be repulsed by all this. And you’ll wonder, how could any Muslim have this much animosity toward his fellow Muslims? How could any Muslim side with non-Muslim oppressors against other Muslims? But this is nothing more than the ugly horns of Kharijism once again stabbing the Ummah in the back. Once again, this is the khariji mindset that believes that, truly accepting *la ilaha illAllah* means hating other Muslims, in this case, the Palestinians.

What is the source of this neo-Kharijism we see today? The most shocking thing that I found out while looking for that answer is that it all comes down to just one man. How is that possible? How does one solitary man who lived over 200 years ago radically distort the religious understanding of so many Muslims today?

In trying to find the answer to this question, I realized that it’s not just Madkhalis who are the problem. Madkhalis are just one group of this man’s followers. Maybe the best way to visualize this is like a tree. Let’s call this the Salafi tree. To simplify things, let’s just understand Salafis as Sunni

¹ Sahih al-Bukhari 3344

Muslims who generally follow the school of thought of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, whether in terms of fiqh or aqida. Yes, I know, that's very simplified, but bear with me.

Needless to say, I have a lot of respect for Imam Ahmad, as do all Sunnis. A sub branch of Salafis adhere closely to the teachings of one particular Hanbali scholar named Ibn Taymiyya. Most Sunnis and Salafis also respect Ibn Taymiyya, even if they don't 100% agree with all his opinions. But stemming from this Ibn Taymiyya branch, this is where our main character comes in. His main beliefs diverge dramatically from those of Ibn Taymiyya and Imam Ahmad, in particular regarding sectarianism and hatred towards other Muslims. It is out of this branch that you get, not only the Madkhalis, other sectarian Salafis (i.e., Haddadis), but also ISIS.

My goal by the end of this video is to show you why we need to cut off this rotten branch from the rest of the Salafi tree so that we can purify Salafism and the legacies of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya, as well as rid the Ummah as a whole from the cancer of these neo-khawarij.

So who is this mystery man? It's none other than 18th century reformer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is a very polarizing figure. Many hate him and consider him a khariji deviant and the forefather of ISIS. Many others consider him Shaykh al-Islam. But what is the truth?

Before we go any further, I have a confession to make. I never took hate against Ibn Abd al-Wahhab seriously. I had thought it was all an exaggeration. It seemed to me that liberal people use the word "Wahhabi" to unfairly smear anyone who is a "conservative Muslim." If you think drinking and going to the club to dance and have fun with girls is bad, you must be a Wahhabi!

It seemed like the people who were most critical of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab were themselves these liberal Muslims who were just watering down Islamic beliefs and didn't care about important things like preserving Islam and preventing bida, or blameworthy innovations. So I never took their criticisms seriously.

But then I started noticing something. The Muslims most closely affiliated with the legacy of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab today were some of the most sectarian Muslims I knew, including the Madkhalis, ISIS, Haddadis, and other sectarians. These were the people who focus all their attention on nitpicking Muslims on what are ultimately secondary or tertiary matters of the religion. Meanwhile, they completely ignore the biggest problems that are destroying the aqida of Muslims around the world, things like liberalism, feminism, and atheism. They claim that these issues are not really a problem. The real problem is the fact that Muslims haven't studied the books of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and haven't adopted his position on the correct meaning of tawhid and shirk. Rather than joining with other Muslims to fight back against Zionists or Hindutva fascists who are oppressing Muslims around the world, the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab prefer to take advantage of the situation and stab Muslims in the back, to mass takfir Muslims and create as much division and

internal strife as possible. As we will see, back-stabbing is a recurring pattern with this group. And again, it's not just the Madkhalis who do all this. Madkhalis are only the symptom of a much deeper destructive problem. If we want to get to the root of the problem, we have to go directly to the source, and that is the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab himself.

2. Background on Ibn Abd al-Wahhab

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was born in 1703 in the city of Uyaynah, in the Najd region of central Arabia. He was born into a scholarly family and his father Abdul-Wahhab taught him the basics of the Hanbali school of Islamic law. At age 20, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab left Uyaynah and traveled to Makka and eventually settled in Madina.

As the young Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was maturing in this time, he became increasingly disturbed by certain practices he saw around him that he considered innovations that were contrary to correct Islamic belief, practices like building large tombs for the dead and visiting those tombs in order to venerate saints. One of the main teachers who influenced Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's understanding of these innovations was Muhammad Hayyat al-Sindhi. Al-Sindhi resided in Madina and was part of the Naqshabandi Sufi order. He was part of a broader network of eighteenth-century scholars who opposed grave veneration including al-San'ani, al-Shawkani, and Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi. These scholars are important, so just remember their names and we'll talk more about them later in the documentary.

3. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab vs. Ibn Taymiyya

What are the problems with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings? Followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab claim that he was a traditional Hanbali and everything he taught is faithful to the Hanbali school and the teachings of the great scholar Ibn Taymiyya. Ibn Taymiyya himself died in the year 1328 CE, about 400 years before Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. While Ibn Taymiyya was one of the most influential scholars of Islamic history, he was also very controversial. Some of his views diverged significantly from the positions of the Hanbali school of law and the Athari creed of theology.

First let's talk about the similarities between the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

Both of them divided tawhid into two main categories. Tawhid means the oneness of Allah. Ibn Taymiyya claimed that tawhid really has two distinct components, called Tawhid al-Rububiyya and Tawhid al-Uluhiyya. Tawhid al-Rububiyya means a person must believe that Allah is One in his Lordship, meaning Allah is the only Creator and He is the only Owner and Sustainer of the universe. No other being shares with Him in these roles. Tawhid al-Uluhiyya means a person only worships Allah alone and refrains from directing any act of worship to any other being. Ibn Taymiyya also claimed that the problem with the pagan idol-worshippers at the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was not that they disbelieved that Allah was the only Creator and Sustainer. They did believe in Him

as Lord, but they were directing their acts of worship to idols and viewed their idols as partners with Allah. In other words, these polytheists accepted Tawhid al-Rububiyya but failed in upholding Tawhid al-Uluhiyya. Ibn Taymiyya cited the Quran to justify this conclusion. For example, we read in the Quran 31:25:

“And if you asked them [meaning the polytheists], “Who created the heavens and earth?” they would surely say, “Allah.”

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٢٥

So the polytheists know that Allah is the Creator, but they insist on worshipping other gods as partners to Allah. According to Ibn Taymiyya, this is the essence of what makes them mushriks or polytheists. It's their violation of Tawhid al-Uluhiyya. Ibn Taymiyya writes:

“The polytheists from among the Arabs, whom the Messenger of God condemned as disbelievers and fought, and whose blood and property he deemed licit, did not say that their gods shared with God in creating the heavens and the earth and the universe. Rather, they affirmed that God alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the universe. [...] What their worship of them consisted of was supplicating them and taking them as intermediaries, channels, and intercessors.”²

المشركون من العرب الذين كفرهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وفاتلهم واستحل دماءهم وأموالهم لم يكونوا يقولون إن آلهتهم تشارك الله في خلق السموات والأرض والكون بل كانوا يقولون أن الله وحده خلق السموات والأرض والكون... وإنما كان عبادتهم لها أنهم يدعونها ويتخذونها وسائط وطرائق وشفعاء

According to this logic, the polytheists in the time of the Prophet ﷺ believed that there is no god except Allah. This means that the polytheists were actually monotheists when it came to knowing that there is only one supreme God. Their polytheism was only due to them thinking that Allah has intermediaries. The follower of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the infamous Madkhali known as Rabbi Faris Hammadi, expresses this point succinctly. “Even Abu Jahl said, “There is no god but Allah.””

The overwhelming majority of Sunni scholars historically have disagreed with Ibn Taymiyya. And they argue that this distinction between Tawhid al-Rububiyya and Uluhiyya is not that hard and fast. For example, Allah says in the Quran 19:81:

“[The polytheists] have taken other gods, instead of Allah, seeking strength and protection through them”

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا

² Ibn Taymiyya, Majmua al-Fatawa

Also in Quran 36:74:

“Still they have taken other gods besides Allah, hoping to be helped by them”

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ

Also in Quran 21:43:

“Or do they have gods—other than Us—that can protect them? They cannot even protect themselves, nor will they be aided against Us”

أَمْ لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُمْ مِنْ دُونِنَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ مَتَّأ يُصْحَبُونَ

These ayat indicate that the problem with polytheists is not only that they direct worship to other than Allah. They also believe that their idols help them, protect them, strengthen them, and provide for them. These are things that only a Rabb can do. So this is clearly shirk that is contrary to Tawhid al-Rububiyya, not just Uluhiyya.

Another important verse is Quran 21:22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allāh, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allāh, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe.”

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا ءَالِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

In this verse, Allah uses the plural for god, not rabb. If gods are only objects of worship and have no power over the universe, why would the existence of multiple gods cause ruin to the heavens and the earth?

There is much more that can be said about this debate, but the point is that Ibn Taymiyya’s categorization of tawhid is – to say the very least – a contested issue among Sunni scholars. Let’s put that aside for now. What’s relevant for this documentary is that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab adopts Ibn Taymiyya categorization of tawhid and he places it at the core of his teachings.

Also like Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takes this categorization of tawhid and applies it to Muslims practicing saint veneration, or going to the graves of saints, or awliya. Their critique of saint veneration is that it violates Tawhid al-Uluhiyya. How so? Well, one of the main practices both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab condemn is istighatha. Linguistically, istighatha means asking for help. One of the practices that was common in different periods of Islamic history is istighatha to the Prophet ﷺ as well as saints. Muslims go to the grave of the Prophet ﷺ or a saint and ask him to help them with some need. According to Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, this practice is shirk. This is because making dua for help is an act of worship and therefore, it should only be directed to

Allah. If you seek help from the Prophet ﷺ or saints, this is a violation of tawhid. You should only ask Allah directly for your needs. Isn't this what Allah says in the Quran in Surat al-Fatihah? **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** - Indeed it is only You we worship and indeed it is only You that we ask for help.

Both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab make an analogy with the polytheists in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. The polytheists of that time believed that their idols brought them closer to Allah and therefore helped them with their needs. This is referred to in the Quran 10:18:

“And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, “These are our intercessors with Allah.””

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

According to Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, this is exactly the same thing as istighatha. If you tell the person doing istighatha that he is committing shirk, he will tell you, “No, no, no, I only worship Allah, but I’m calling to the Prophet ﷺ or this saint as an intermediary to help me get closer to Allah.” According to Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, this is exactly what the mushriks said when they refused to abandon their polytheism, and Allah condemns them in the Quran as committing shirk. In the same way, we should consider those Muslims who do istighatha as committing an act of shirk.

Side note here: You might be asking, well, Daniel, what is the correct position on istighatha?

Throughout Islamic history, many scholars have prohibited istighatha. They say istighatha is a terribly sinful act, comparable to adultery, and they give their reasoning. Other prominent scholars permitted certain types of istighatha, for example, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. The topic of istighatha is complex and has many details beyond the scope of this documentary. But unfortunately, ignorant sectarians pretend like it is a straightforward and clear-cut issue. On this basis, they want to quickly attack any Muslim who has even a slightly different perspective from them, even if it’s an established position that a large number of Sunni scholars accept. Some of these sectarians even go so far as takfiring great scholars, like Taqi al-Din Subki and al-Suyuti on the basis of this issue.

But it’s very easy to point out how these sectarians don’t know what they’re talking about. For example, here is a pop quiz for you. Today, many people assume that it is not only shirk to call upon dead people for help, but it is also shirk to call upon other unseen beings for help like angels and jinn. People also believe that such a view can be traced to Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya. But this is false. For example, there is a famous hadith which legitimates calling out for help to angels as “slaves of Allah.” Although the authenticity of this hadith is questioned, it is clear that some major early scholars like Imam Ahmad accepted it. This is famously reported by his son.

“Abdullah the son of Imam Ahmad said: ‘I heard my father say: ‘I performed Hajj five times, twice riding and three times walking [...]. I lost my way during one Hajj and I was walking, so I began to call out: O slaves of Allah show me the way! I kept doing that until I found the road.’”³

قال عبد الله بن الإمام أحمد : سمعت أبي يقول : حججت خمس حجج ، منها تنتين راكباً ، وثلاثة ماشياً أو تنتين ماشياً وثلاثة راكباً ، فضلت الطريق في حجة ، وكنت ماشياً ، فجعلت أقول : يا عباد الله دلوني على الطريق ، فلم أزل أقول ذلك حتى وقفت على الطريق

So, Imam Ahmad called out to angels for help. Does this mean Imam Ahmad committed shirk? Furthermore, Imam Ahmad said that using jinn is makruh, not shirk.

“Imam Ahmad said [...] regarding a man who claims that he treats a possessed person for epilepsy using incantations and charms, and alleges that he speaks to the jinn and that some of them serve him: ‘I do not like anyone to do this; refraining from it is more beloved to me.’”⁴

قَالَ أَحْمَدُ - رَجَمَهُ اللَّهُ - فِي رِوَايَةِ الْبِرَوَاطِيِّ فِي الرَّجُلِ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ يُعَالِجُ الْمَجْنُونِ مِنَ الصَّرَعِ بِالرُّقَى وَالْعَزَائِمِ وَيَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ يُخَاطِبُ الْجِنَّ وَيُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَخْدُمُهُ قَالَ مَا أَحَبُّ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَفْعَلَهُ، تَرْكُهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ

Ibn Taymiyya also believes that it is permissible to call to jinn for help! He says:

“The point here is that the jinn interact with humans in various ways. Whoever among the humans commands the jinn with what Allah and His Messenger have commanded—namely, to worship Allah alone and obey His Prophet—and likewise commands humans to do the same, then such a person is among the best of the allies (awliyā') of Allah Most High. He is, in that regard, one of the successors and deputies of the Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم.

“And whoever uses the jinn in matters that are permitted to him, then he is like one who uses humans in matters that are permitted. This is like commanding them with what is obligatory upon them, forbidding them from what is forbidden to them, and employing them in permitted things—such a person is in the position of a king who does likewise.”⁵

وَالْمَقْصُودُ هُنَا أَنَّ الْجِنَّ مَعَ الْإِنْسِ عَلَى أَحْوَالٍ: فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ يَأْمُرُ الْجِنَّ بِمَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ وَحَدَّةِ طَاعَةِ نَبِيِّهِ وَيَأْمُرُ الْإِنْسَ بِذَلِكَ فَهَذَا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ أَوْلِيَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَهُوَ فِي ذَلِكَ مِنْ خُلَفَاءِ الرَّسُولِ وَنَوَائِبِهِ. وَمَنْ كَانَ يَسْتَعْمِلُ الْجِنَّ فِي أُمُورٍ مُبَاحَةٍ لَهُ فَهُوَ كَمَنْ اسْتَعْمَلَ الْإِنْسَ فِي أُمُورٍ مُبَاحَةٍ لَهُ وَهَذَا كَأَنْ يَأْمُرَهُمْ بِمَا يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَمَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَسْتَعْمِلُهُمْ فِي مُبَاحَاتٍ لَهُ فَيَكُونُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمُلُوكِ الَّذِينَ يَفْعَلُونَ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ

Ibn Taymiyya also says:

“Among them are those who employ [the jinn] in permissible matters—such as retrieving one’s property, or indicating the location of wealth that has no protected (legally entitled)

³ Abdullah ibn Ahmad Imam Ahmad, Masa'il al-Imam Ahmad

⁴ Ibn Muflih, Kitab al-Adab al-Shar'iyya

⁵ Ibn Taymiyya, Majmu'a al-Fatawa

owner, or repelling someone who harms him, and the like. This is like humans helping one another in such matters.”⁶

مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَعِذُّهُمْ فِي أُمُورٍ مُبَاحَةٍ إِمَّا إِخْصَارَ مَالِهِ أَوْ دَلَالَةٍ عَلَى مَكَانٍ فِيهِ مَالٌ لَيْسَ لَهُ مَالِكٌ مَعْصُومٌ أَوْ دَفْعَ مَنْ يُؤْذِيهِ وَنَحْوِ ذَلِكَ فَهَذَا كَاسْتِعَانَةِ الْإِنْسِ بِغَضِيهِمْ بِبَعْضِ

According to Ibn Taymiyya, it is permissible to call to the jinn to help you as long as you don't employ the jinn for something haram and you don't ask them to perform any miracles. Other than that, you can call on them to do things for you, just like a king calls on his servants.

Imagine, you're walking in the forest by yourself at night and you feel cold as the chilly night air fills your lungs. Do you call to Allah for help? After all, in one hadith, the Prophet ﷺ tells us to make dua to Allah for all our needs, even seemingly small and insignificant things:

“Let one of you ask his Lord for his every need, until he asks Him for salt, and asks Him for the strap of his sandal when it breaks.”⁷

لَيَسْأَلَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ رَبَّهُ حَاجَتَهُ حَتَّى يَسْأَلَهُ الْمِلْحَ وَحَتَّى يَسْأَلَهُ شِئْنَهُ نَعْلِهِ إِذَا انْقَطَعَ

But, instead of calling to Allah for your needs, maybe you think, I'm in this dark forest. Maybe there are some good jinn around that can help me. So you call out: “O jinn, bring me a warm jacket! O Jinn, bring me a warm blanket!” According to Ibn Taymiyya, calling to the jinn instead of Allah is perfectly fine. There's no problem with this and it's certainly not shirk because this is just like a king calling to servants.

Of course, many people listening will be shocked to hear that Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya did not necessarily consider it shirk to call upon angels and jinn for help. There is a reason for this. It is Ibn Abd al-Wahhab who considered calling upon angels and jinn for help to be clear shirk. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says:

“[And] just as they (the Mushriks) used to also call upon [Allah] day and night, then amongst them were those who would call upon the angels for intercession on account of their righteousness and nearness to Allah. They also called upon the righteous people, such as al-Lat or to a prophet such as Isa. [...]

“And when you have come to know that their [mere] affirmation of Tawhid al-Rububiyya did not enter them into Islam, and that their seeking the Angels, or the Prophets, or the Righteous, seeking their intercession and seeking nearness to Allah through all of that was the reason that made their blood and wealth lawful.

⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, Majmua al-Fatawa

⁷ Jami at-Tirmidhi 3604

“[When you have come to know all of these affairs], then you will have come to know [the true nature] of the Tawhid which the Messengers invited to and which the Mushriks refused to affirm and accept. And this Tawhid is the meaning of “La ilaha illa Allah”. For a deity in the view of the mushriks is the one who is sought for the sake of these affairs, whether it be an angel, a prophet, a tree, a grave or a jinn.”⁸

وَعَرَفْتَ أَنَّ التَّوْحِيدَ الَّذِي جَحَدُوهُ؛ هُوَ تَوْحِيدُ الْعِبَادَةِ - الَّذِي يُسَمِّيهِ الْمُشْرِكُونَ فِي زَمَانِنَا «الْإِعْتِقَادَ» -، كَمَا كَانُوا يُدْعُونَ اللَّهَ سُجْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا، ثُمَّ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يُدْعُو الْمَلَائِكَةَ لِأَجْلِ صَلَاحِهِمْ وَقُرْبِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِيَسْقِعُوا لَهُ، أَوْ يُدْعُو رَجُلًا صَالِحًا - مِثْلَ اللَّاتِ -، أَوْ نَبِيًّا - مِثْلَ عِيسَى.

وَعَرَفْتَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَاتَلَهُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الشِّرْكِ، وَدَعَاهُمْ إِلَى إِخْلَاصِ الْعِبَادَةِ لِلَّهِ؛ كَمَا قَالَ تَعَالَى: {فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ [أَحَدًا]، وَقَالَ: {لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يُدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ

وَتَحَقَّقْتَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَاتَلَهُمْ؛ لِيَكُونَ الدُّعَاءُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ، وَالذَّبْحُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ، وَالنَّذْرُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ، وَالِاسْتِغَاثَةُ كُلُّهَا بِاللَّهِ، وَجَمِيعُ أَنْوَاعِ الْعِبَادَةِ كُلُّهَا لِلَّهِ.

وَعَرَفْتَ أَنَّ إِفْرَارَهُمْ بِتَوْحِيدِ الرُّبُوبِيَّةِ لَمْ يُدْخِلْهُمْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ، وَأَنَّ قَصْدَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءَ وَالْأَوْلِيَاءَ - يُرِيدُونَ شَفَاعَتَهُمْ وَالتَّقَرُّبَ إِلَى اللَّهِ بِذَلِكَ - هُوَ الَّذِي أَحَلَّ دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ

عَرَفْتَ حِينَئِذٍ التَّوْحِيدَ الَّذِي دَعَتْ إِلَيْهِ الرُّسُلُ، وَأَبَى عَنِ الْإِفْرَارِ بِهِ الْمُشْرِكُونَ

وَهَذَا التَّوْحِيدُ هُوَ مَعْنَى قَوْلِكَ: «لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ»؛ فَإِنَّ «الْإِلَهَ» عِنْدَهُمْ هُوَ الَّذِي يُفَصِّدُ لِأَجْلِ هَذِهِ الْأُمُورِ؛ سِوَاءَ كَانَ مَلَكًا، أَوْ نَبِيًّا، أَوْ وَلِيًّا، أَوْ شَجَرَةً، أَوْ قَبْرًا، أَوْ جَنِيًّا لَمْ يُرِيدُوا أَنَّ «الْإِلَهَ» هُوَ الْخَالِقُ الرَّازِقُ الْمُدَبِّرُ، فَإِنَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ لِلَّهِ وَحْدَهُ - كَمَا قَدَّمْتُ لَكَ

«وَأَيْنَمَا يَعْتَوْنَ بِ «الْإِلَهَ»: مَا يَعْنِي الْمُشْرِكُونَ فِي زَمَانِنَا بِلَفْظِ «السَّيِّدِ

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers make the false claim that his views go back to Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya. In doing so, they have distorted the actual views of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya, while claiming to follow them. In reality, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's position implies that Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya endorsed the permissibility of shirk and therefore, they're mushriks. Obviously, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab never said this about them. But this is because he was famously ignorant, and likely not aware of all the writings of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya.

So is calling to angels and jinn shirk or not? Who is right? Giant scholars like Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya, or Ibn Abd al-Wahhab?

In any case, the question remains: What position do I think is correct? Well, some have accused me of having the same position as Yasir Qadhi. This is not true. From what I understand, Qadhi believes

⁸ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Kashf al-Shubuhat

istighatha is haram but it is not shirk. That's not my position. I also think it is haram, but I think, in many cases, istighatha is also shirk. But, is it known with certainty to be shirk?

This is a crucial, crucial distinction and this is what all the ignoramus Wahhabi youtubers simply cannot understand, which is why they have spent the past months takfiring me. If istighatha is known with certainty to be shirk, that means that, not only is the person doing istighatha is kafir, but on top of that, whoever denies that it is shirk is also a kafir. And this means that the vast majority of scholars of Islam are kafir, including Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya since they did not consider calling to angels and jinn to be shirk. This is what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's position entails, but this is not justified because determining whether an act of calling to the unseen is shirk or not requires ijtihad; it's not clear-cut. And the examples of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya are indicative of this fact. So again, I agree that in many cases, istighatha is shirk. Let me repeat that: in many cases istighatha is shirk. No way am I saying that it is not shirk. But the problem with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers is that they go the extra step of saying istighatha is known with certainty to be shirk, and that extra step is what triggers mass takfir, which is Islamically unjustified.

In any case, we'll talk more about istighatha in an upcoming video inshaAllah. So make sure to subscribe to the channel so you don't miss it.

Back to the topic at hand: Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

In everything we've discussed so far, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab have pretty much identical views, except for the istighatha to jinn. But here is where Ibn Abd al-Wahhab starts to significantly diverge from Ibn Taymiyya.

3.1 Ibn Abd al-Wahhab Discovered the Meaning of Tawhid

First of all, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab declared that he discovered the meaning of tawhid and that no one else in his era and no other scholars understood its meaning. Wait, what?! Yes, you heard me right. He writes:

"I will tell you about myself – I swear by Allah, the One besides whom there is no deity worthy of worship - I sought knowledge, and those who knew me thought that I had understanding. But at that time, I did not know the meaning of "La ilaha illa Allah", nor did I know the religion of Islam before this blessing that Allah bestowed on me. Likewise, none of my teachers knew it. Whoever among the scholars of Al-'Aarid claims that they knew the meaning of "La ilaha illa Allah" or understood the meaning of Islam before this time, or whoever claims that one of their teachers knew it, has lied, fabricated, deceived the people, and praised themselves for something they do not possess."⁹

⁹ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.51

وأنا أخبركم عن نفسي والله الذي لا إله إلا هو، لقد طلبت العلم، واعتقدت من عرفني أن لي معرفة، وأنا ذلك الوقت، لا أعرف معنى لا إله إلا الله، ولا أعرف دين الإسلام، قبل هذا الخير الذي من الله به؛ وكذلك مشايخي، ما منهم رجل عرف ذلك فمن زعم من علماء العارض: أنه عرف معنى لا إله إلا الله، أو عرف معنى الإسلام قبل هذا الوقت، أو زعم من مشايخه أن أحدا عرف ذلك، فقد كذب واقتري، ولبس على الناس، ومدح نفسه بما ليس فيه

Imagine how arrogant you have to be to think that no one in the world understands *la ilaha illa Allah* or understands Islam until you come along. But Ibn Abd al-Wahhab *swears by Allah* that this is the case for him. He also implies that, even before his time, no one really understood tawhid because he says that no one's teachers knew the meaning of tawhid either. Remember that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachers were in cities like Makka and Madina, so he is saying that the scholars in Makka and Madina also did not understand *la ilaha illa Allah*.

Furthermore, if he thought that his own teachers were ignorant in knowing the shahada, i.e., scholars who were Hanbalis like him and were equally opposed to istighatha and saint veneration like him, what do you think he thought of non-hanbalis outside of that region, scholars in the rest of the Muslim world? He thought they were even more ignorant!

This is why he says:

“This shirk that Allah has mentioned has today spread across the eastern and western parts of the earth, except for the strangers (ghuraba) mentioned in the hadith—and they are few in number.”¹⁰

وهذا الشرك الذي ذكره الله، قد طبق اليوم مشارق الأرض ومغاربها، إلا الغرباء المذكورين في الحديث، وقليل ما هم

He also says:

“Indeed, Islam today is strange (gharib), and most people cannot distinguish between it and disbelief. This is the kind of ruin from which there is no hope of success.”¹¹

فإن الإسلام اليوم غريب، وأكثر الناس لا يميز بينه وبين الكفر وذلك هو الهلاك الذي لا يرجى معه فلاح

As far as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is concerned, the entire globe, from east to west, from Muslim lands to non-Muslim lands, is drowning in shirk. But thankfully he is that sole beacon of light who actually understands tawhid who can bring guidance to the world!

Now Wahhabi apologists will claim that I am uncharitably reading Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's statement. But consider the words of Abd al-Rahman ibn Hasan (1780-1869). Abd al-Rahman was the grandson of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and was the highest ranking Wahhabi religious authority during his lifetime.

¹⁰ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.61

¹¹ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Mukhtasar Sira al-Rasul

He was raised and educated by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and wrote the first commentary of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *Kitab al-Tawhid*, known as *Fath al-Majid*. Abd al-Rahman says:

“Around the 10th century and beyond, there was no one among the scholars who spoke about tawhid, called to it, recognized this shirk or prohibited it, until Allah raised up Shaykh Muhammad b Abd al-Wahhab”¹²

وفي حدود القرن العاشر وما بعده، لا يعرف أحد من العلماء تكلم بالتوحيد ودعا إليه، وعرف هذا الشرك ونهى عنه، حتى أظهر الله هذا الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب، رحمه الله، في آخر هذه الأمة، وهي نعمة عظيمة، فبين حقيقة التوحيد، وأنواعه، على ما كان عليه سلف الأمة وأئمتها، لا يعدل عن طريقته

Listen closely: he's saying there was not a single scholar anywhere in the world who spoke about tawhid and shirk until Allah blessed all of creation with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Abd al-Rahman continues:

“[Ibn Abd al-Wahhab] travelled to Basra, then to Al-Ahsa and the two holy cities, hoping to find someone who could help him with what he had understood of the religion of Islam. However, he found no one; all of them approved the customs and practices that most people followed in these later centuries, up until the middle of the twelfth century [meaning after Ibn Abd al-Wahhab came to teach them].

“It is not known that anyone there called for tawheed in worship or denied the shirk that contradicts it. In fact, they believed it was permissible or even recommended. This widespread affliction involved the worship of idols of all sorts, graves, jinn, trees, and stones in all the villages, cities, deserts, among others. They continued in this state until the twelfth century [which is when Ibn Abd al-Wahhab started his dawah].”¹³

سافر إلى البصرة ثم إلى الإحساء والحرمين، لعله أن يجد من يساعده على ما عرف من دين الإسلام، فلم يجد أحداً؛ كلهم قد استحسن العوائد، وما كان عليه غالب الناس في هذه القرون المتأخرة إلى منتصف القرن الثاني عشر ولا يعرف أن أحداً دعا فيها إلى توحيد العبادة، أو أنكر الشرك المنافي له؛ بل قد ظنوا جواز ذلك أو استحبابه، وذلك قد عمت به البلوى من عبادة الطواغيت، والقبور والجن، والأشجار والأحجار، في جميع القرى والأمصار، والبادي وغيرهم، فما زالوا كذلك إلى القرن الثاني عشر

And just to make sure we got the point, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's grandson Abd al-Rahman concludes:

“It is not known that any scholar, during the time of our Sheikh (Ibn Abd al-Wahhab), may Allah have mercy on him, or before his time, denied shirk in ilahiyya or called people to worship Allah alone”¹⁴

¹² al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.11 p.572

¹³ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.14 p.162

¹⁴ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.11 p.402

لا يعرف عن أحد من العلماء، في العصر الذي قام فيه شيخنا، رحمه الله، ولا ما قبله، أنه أنكر الشرك في الإلهية، ودعا الناس إلى أن يعبدوا الله وحده

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab apologists will try to deny that their shaykh claimed to be the only one to understand tawhid, but, as we see, here is his grandson saying exactly this. And Abd al-Rahman wasn't a random grandson of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. He not only studied directly with his grandfather, he was raised by his grandfather and was his closest student.

So again, let it sink in that someone could ever claim to be the only person in the whole world who understands *la ilaha illAllah*. This is the type of delusional arrogance that defines Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his deviant teachings.

3.2 The Entire Muslim World Has Fallen into Shirk

The second shocking thing that is unique to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and distinguishes him from Ibn Taymiyya and other Hanbali scholars is how he declared that the people of the entire Muslim world - including Makka, Madina, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria - had become kafir mushriks. Why had they become kafir mushriks? Because they did not understand Tawhid as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had defined it! Again, compare this to Ibn Taymiyya. No where does Ibn Taymiyya make such sweeping statements condemning entire Muslim regions for being mushrik.

Many of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's contemporaries criticized him for mass takfiring Muslims, basically claiming the Muslim masses had apostatized from the religion. For example, his own brother, a Hanbali scholar in his own right, Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who we'll discuss in more depth later, said of his brother:

"The fact is that [...] you have taken this understanding of yours, opposed the Consensus, and declared the Ummah of Muhammad in totality to be disbelievers."¹⁵

The great Hanafi jurist Ibn 'Abidin was another contemporary of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Ibn Abidin has a very interesting comment comparing Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to the khawarij in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. He says:

"[The khawarij] takfir the companions of our Prophet ﷺ. [...] This is similar to what occurred in our time with the followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who emerged from Najd, took control of Makka and Madina and claimed to follow the Hanbali school of thought. However, they believed that they alone were the true Muslims and that anyone who disagreed with their beliefs was a polytheist (mushrik). Based on this belief, they deemed it

¹⁵ Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, The Divine Lightning

permissible to kill Ahl al-Sunna and their scholars until Allah Almighty broke their strength, destroyed their lands, and the Muslim armies defeated them in the year 1233 AH [1818 CE].”¹⁶

قَوْلُهُ: وَيَكْفُرُونَ أَصْحَابَ نَبِيِّنَا - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - (عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ هَذَا غَيْرُ شَرَطٍ فِي مُسَمَّى الْخَوَارِجِ، بَلْ هُوَ بَيِّنٌ لِمَنْ خَرَجُوا عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا) عَلِيٍّ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ -، وَإِلَّا فَيَكْفِي فِيهِمْ اعْتِقَادُهُمْ كُفْرَ مَنْ خَرَجُوا عَلَيْهِ، كَمَا وَقَعَ فِي زَمَانِنَا فِي أَتْبَاعِ عَبْدِ الْوَهَّابِ الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ نَجْدٍ وَتَعَلَّبُوا عَلَى الْحَرَمَيْنِ وَكَانُوا يَنْتَجِلُونَ مَذْهَبَ الْحَنَابِلَةِ، لِكِنَّهُمْ اعْتَقَدُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَأَنَّ مَنْ خَالَفَ اعْتِقَادَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ، وَاسْتَبَاحُوا بِذَلِكَ قَتْلَ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ وَقَتْلَ عُلَمَائِهِمْ حَتَّى كَسَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى شَوْكَهُمْ وَخَرَّبَ بِلَادَهُمْ وَظَفَرَ بِهِمْ عَسَاكِرُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ عَامَ ثَلَاثٍ وَثَلَاثِينَ وَمِائَتَيْنِ وَأَلْفٍ (قَوْلُهُ: كَمَا حَقَّقَهُ فِي الْفَتْحِ) حَيْثُ قَالَ: وَحُكِّمَ الْخَوَارِجُ عِنْدَ جُمْهُورِ الْفُقَهَاءِ وَالْمُحَدِّثِينَ حُكْمَ الْبَغَاةِ. وَذَهَبَ بَعْضُ الْمُحَدِّثِينَ إِلَى كُفْرِهِمْ. قَالَ ابْنُ الْمُنْذِرِ: وَلَا أَعْلَمُ أَحَدًا وَافِقَ أَهْلَ الْحَدِيثِ عَلَى تَكْفِيرِهِمْ، وَهَذَا يَقْتَضِي نَقْلَ إجماعِ الْفُقَهَاءِ

So Ibn Abidin also claims that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had declared the entire Ummah as mushriks and believed their blood to be halal.

Now, maybe these critics of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had a grudge against him and they exaggerated. But let's look at what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says himself:

“You have also heard the polytheists say: “Shirk is the worship of idols, but not the worship of the righteous.” And you have heard their claim: “We seek only from Allah, but we use their status [as intermediaries].” You have also heard what Allah has mentioned in response to all of this. Allah has blessed you with the acknowledgment of the scholars of the polytheists [i.e., scholars of the apparent Muslims] regarding all of this. You have heard their admission that the practices taking place in the **Two Holy Sanctuaries [Makka and Madina], Basra, Iraq, and Yemen** are acts of shirk [i.e., associating] with [Allah]. **They have admitted to you that the religion whose people they support – and who they claim are the great majority – they have admitted to you that their religion [i.e., that of apparent Muslims] is [in fact] shirk.** They have also admitted to you that the Tawhid they strive to extinguish, and strive to kill and imprison its adherents, is the religion of Allah and His Messenger.”¹⁷

وسمعت قول المشركين: الشرك عبادة الأصنام، وأما الصالحون فلا، وسمعت قولهم: لا نريد إلا من الله، لكن نريد بجاههم؛ وسمعت ما ذكر الله في جواب هذا كله

وقد من الله عليكم بإقرار علماء المشركين بهذا كله، سمعت إقرارهم أن هذا الذي يفعل في الحرمين، والبصرة، والعراق، واليمن، أن هذا شرك بالله، فأقروا لكم أن هذا الدين الذي ينصرون أهله، ويزعمون أنهم السواد الأعظم، أقروا لكم أن دينهم هو الشرك وأقروا لكم أيضا أن التوحيد الذي يسعون في إطفائه، وفي قتل أهله وحبسهم، أنه دين الله ورسوله

Wow, it's insane what he is saying here. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says here explicitly that in Makka and Madina, in Basra, in Yemen and elsewhere, these Muslims claim to be practicing Islam, but actually they're practicing a completely different religion and it is a religion of shirk. Focus on this sentence:

¹⁶ Ibn 'Abidin, Radd al-Muhtar

¹⁷ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.7

“They have admitted to you that the religion whose people they support -- and who they claim are the great majority -- they have admitted to you that their religion [i.e., that of apparent Muslims] is [in fact] shirk.”

He says explicitly that the religion of the great majority of the people in these regions is, by their own admission, shirk. They’re all just a bunch of mushrik pagans pretending to be Muslims! Furthermore, he depicts these Muslim regions as trying to destroy tawhid and kill the followers of his tawhid in order to extinguish Islam!

This is an absolutely insane depiction of the Muslim masses. There is nothing like this from Imam Ahmad or Ibn Taymiyya or even later Salafi scholars like Sh Ibn Uthaymin or Sh al-Albani. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is totally unique in this hyper-takfir of the world’s Muslims and portraying them as evil enemies of Islam simply because they don’t follow his understanding of tawhid.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab also declared that the vast majority of Syrian Muslims are kafir mushriks who worship Ibn Arabi. He says:

“And their leader is Ibn Arabi. Do they think that [the Syrians] do not say “There is no god but Allah?” But he came from Syria, [where] they worship Ibn Arabi, placing an idol on his grave that they worship. I do not mean all the people of Syria – far be it from me to claim that! Rather, there will always remain a group upon the truth, even if they are few and become strangers.”¹⁸

وإمامهم: ابن عربي، أيظنهم لا يقولون: لا إله إلا الله؟! لكن هو أتى من الشام، وهم يعبدون ابن عربي، جاعلين على قبره صنما يعبدونه، ولست أعني أهل الشام كلهم، حاشا وكلا؛ بل لا تزال طائفة على الحق، وإن قلت، واغتربت

Well, thank God he doesn’t takfir all of Syria, just most of Syria. Only a handful of Muslims in Syria; everyone else is a kafir mushrik!

For those of you keeping score, so far Ibn Abd al-Wahhab has mass takfired all of Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Makka, and Madina. Well what about Najd, his own region. Are they Muslims?

“It is known regarding the people of our land [i.e. Najd] and the land of al-Hijaz that those who reject the resurrection are more than those who believe in it, and those who do not know the religion are more than those who know it, and those who do not pray are more than those who pray, and those who refuse to pay zakat are more than those who pay it.”¹⁹

ومعلوم: أن أهل أرضنا، وأرض الحجاز، الذي ينكر البعث منهم أكثر ممن يقر به، والذي يعرف الدين أقل ممن لا يعرفه، والذي يضيع الصلاة أكثر من الذي يحافظ عليها، والذي يمنع الزكاة أكثر ممن يؤديها؛ فإن

¹⁸ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.2 p.245

¹⁹ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.43

Guess not! He says even in Najd, not to mention Hijaz, most people reject the resurrection! Obviously, rejecting the resurrection and, therefore, the afterlife is rejecting a pillar of iman, so he is mass takfiring even the Muslims in his region. At this point, an easier question to ask is, “Who hasn’t Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takfired?” And as we saw, the answer is just himself. Because as he said, only he understands the meaning of *la ilaha illAllah*. This is why it’s easy to see how Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had the gall to willy-nilly throw the entire Ummah outside of Islam.

3.3 The Shirk of Apparent Muslims at the Time of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab Is Worse than the Shirk of the Polytheist Quraysh

It wasn’t enough that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab claimed that the entire Muslim world had fallen into shirk. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab also claimed that the Muslims of his era were worse mushriks than the mushrik Quraysh who had explicitly rejected Islam and made war against the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

For example, in his famous book *Kashf al-Shubuhah*, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says:

“If you understand that what the adherents of shirk of our time [i.e., apparent Muslims] call “belief” (itiqad) is actually the same polytheism that the Quran was revealed about and for which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fought against the people, then you should know that the polytheism of the earlier generations is lighter than the polytheism of our time in two ways.”²⁰

إثبات أن شرك الأولين أخف من شرك أهل زماننا (بأمرين) فإذا عرفت أن هذا الذي يسميه المشركون في زماننا (الاعتقاد) هو الشرك الذي نزل فيه القرآن وقاتل رسول الله – صلى الله عليه وسلم – الناس عليه، فاعلم أن شرك الأولين أخف من شرك أهل زماننا بأمرين:

The first way that the polytheism of the earlier generations is lighter, according to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, is that the mushrik Quraysh prayed to idols in times of ease, but in times of hardship, they would only worship Allah. His proof for this are several ayat like Quran 17:67:

“And when adversity touches you at sea, lost are all those you invoke except for Him. But when He delivers you to the land, you turn away. And ever is man ungrateful.”

وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَهُكُمْ فَلَمَّا نَجَّيْكُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كُفُورًا

It is not clear why Ibn Abd al-Wahhab thinks this ayah is specifically referring to the polytheists in the time of the Prophet ﷺ rather than polytheists generally. There is nothing in any of the ayat he cites that indicates such specification; in fact, this particular ayah mentions the ingratitude of mankind in general. Nonetheless, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab insists that these general ayat are specifically

²⁰ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kashf al-Shubuhah*

referring to polytheists of the past, and this proves that the polytheists in the time of the Prophet ﷺ were clearly better than the polytheists of his own time. This argument is dubious at best.

The second argument that he gives is that the polytheists in the past worshipped angels, prophets, saints, as well as wood and stones. By contrast, the polytheists of today worship corrupt people. Obviously, angels, prophets, and saints are better than corrupt people, so that means the old polytheism was better.

This is another bad argument because Allah says in Quran 36:60-61:

“Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan? [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. And that you worship [only] Me?”

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ وَأَنْ أَعْبُدُونِي ۚ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

Polytheists past and present worship Satan, so how can it be said that the polytheists of the past are better or worse than polytheists of any other time? In Quran 6:137, Allah says:

“And likewise, to many of the polytheists, their partners [i.e., false gods] have made [killing] their children seem pleasing in order to bring about their destruction and to cover them with confusion in their religion.”

وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاؤُهُمْ لِيُرْذُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ ۚ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ

In this ayah, Allah connects polytheism with the practice of killing children, where false gods make such killing seem pleasing. This is the worst immorality, and of course the Qurayshi pagans were doing exactly this; they were burying their own daughters. So on what basis are their polytheism and their idols better than the alleged polytheism and idols of later times, especially since the Sufi practitioners of istighatha did not do things like bury their own daughters?

So Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's arguments are not very compelling. And when you step back and think about it, his claim is ridiculous on its face. Because, let's just grant that istighatha is shirk similar to worshipping idols like al-Lat and al-Uzza. Fine. But how can a Muslim who does istighatha but also proclaims that he is a Muslim, proclaims the shahada, a Muslim who is praying and fasting and observing halal and haram, a Muslim who loves Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, how can such a Muslim, even if he is judged to be a mushrik, how could he be worse than Qurayshi mushriks who not only rejected the Prophet ﷺ and the Quran, but also waged war against the Prophet ﷺ and the Sahabah? How could doing istighatha and venerating saints make you worse than Abu Lahab and Abu Jahl?!

This is a crazy claim from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, but this mentality that believing Muslims are even worse than the mushriks who waged war on the Prophet ﷺ is the kind of extremism that plagues

the entire Wahhabi movement up until this day. It is exactly this mindset that creates the most toxic sectarianism, where the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab view their biggest enemies as other Muslims, rather than disbelievers who are literally genociding Muslims by the millions.

Some of the apologists for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab will claim that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was not unique in considering the Sufi saint veneration of his time as worse than the shirk of the Quraysh. But the difference between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and these other scholars is that these scholars are not mass takfiring these Sufis and mass takfiring anyone who doesn't takfir them. This is the unique takfir doctrine of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab that we'll discuss next.

3.4 Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's Takfir Doctrine

The most problematic thing about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings is his takfir doctrine. Many scholars accuse Ibn Abd al-Wahhab of being a deviant khariji and its primarily due to his extremism in takfir. His takfir doctrine is deviant for several reasons that we'll discuss, but we first have to recognize how much of a divergence Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's takfir doctrine is from the rest of Sunnism.

Takfir means declaring someone a non-Muslim. Takfir is a serious matter because the Prophet ﷺ said:

"If a man says to his brother, O Kafir (disbeliever)!" then surely one of them is such (i.e., a Kafir)."²¹

إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ لِأَخِيهِ يَا كَافِرُ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهِ أَحَدُهُمَا

So calling someone kafir is potentially dangerous. If you're incorrect, then the accusation returns back to you. Given this, Islamic orthodoxy sets a very high bar for takfir.

Let me be very clear here: Takfir is an important part of Islam. You have to be able to draw clear boundaries between what is Islam and what is disbelief, who are the Muslims and who are the non-Muslims. Without takfir, you cannot draw clear boundaries, and without clear boundaries, the very concept of Islam itself becomes murky and undefined. However, takfir is something that requires extreme caution precisely because of the warning given by the Prophet ﷺ. The problem with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's takfir doctrine is that he throws caution to the wind and elevates takfir to being a pillar of Islam. Furthermore, he applies takfir in ways that no Muslim scholar of the past ever has.

3.4.1 Auto-Takfir: No al-Udhr Bi-l-Jahl

Let's look at the takfir doctrine of the one scholar that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab claims to be following: Ibn Taymiyya. By reading Ibn Taymiyya, we see immediately that his views of takfir are completely

²¹ Sahih al-Bukhari 6103

different from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's. For example, Ibn Taymiyya does not believe in auto-takfir: Just because someone holds a kufr belief, that doesn't automatically make that person a kafir. He says:

"Declaring a specific individual from among these ignorant people and their likes to be a disbeliever, such that he is judged as being among the disbelievers, is not permissible unless evidence from the Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم has been established for him, making it clear that his view contradicts the [divine] messengers – even if it is indisputable that his view is kufr. [...] Therefore, no one should declare any Muslim a disbeliever, even if they err and go astray, until the evidence is established for them and the right path is made clear to them. And whenever it is known with certainty that a person has faith (iman), that faith is not negated where there is doubt; rather, it can only be negated after establishing the evidence [for him] and eliminating specious arguments [he has for his mistaken view]."²²

وَإِذَا عُرِفَ هَذَا ، فَتَكْفِيرُ " الْمُعَيَّنِ " مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ الْجُهَالِ وَأَمْثَالِهِمْ - بِحَيْثُ يُحْكَمُ عَلَيْهِ بِأَنَّهُ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ - لَا يَجُوزُ الْإِفْدَامُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا بَعْدَ أَنْ تُقَامَ عَلَى أَحَدِهِمُ الْحُجَّةُ الرِّسَالِيَّةُ الَّتِي يَتَّبِعُونَ بِهَا أَنَّهُمْ مُخَالِفُونَ لِلرُّسُلِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ هَذِهِ الْمَقَالَةُ لَا رَيْبَ أَنَّهَا كُفْرٌ . وَهَكَذَا الْكَلَامُ فِي تَكْفِيرِ جَمِيعِ " الْمُعَيَّنِينَ " مَعَ أَنَّ بَعْضَ هَذِهِ الْبِدْعَةِ أَشَدُّ مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَبَعْضُ الْمُتَبَدِّعَةِ يَكُونُ فِيهِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ مَا لَيْسَ فِي بَعْضٍ فَلَيْسَ لِأَحَدٍ أَنْ يَكْفُرَ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنْ أَخْطَأَ وَغَلَطَ حَتَّى تُقَامَ عَلَيْهِ الْحُجَّةُ وَتُثَبِّتَ لَهُ الْمَحَجَّةُ . وَمَنْ ثَبَّتَ إِيْمَانَهُ بِبَيِّنٍ لَمْ يَزَلْ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُ بِالشَّكِّ ؛ بَلْ لَا يَزُولُ إِلَّا بَعْدَ إِقَامَةِ الْحُجَّةِ وَإِزَالَةِ الشُّبْهَةِ

So Ibn Taymiyya makes it clear that simply having a kufr view doesn't automatically make someone a kafir because that person may be ignorant. This is known as the excuse of ignorance, or *al-udhr bi-l-jahl*. Or sometimes, a person might not be ignorant in the sense of not having information, but in the sense of being deluded by an illogical argument or incorrect interpretation. In either case, Ibn Taymiyya requires an extensive process of *iqamat al-hujja*, or establishing the proof, before any takfir can be made of any single person.

If a Sufi, for example, goes to a grave to do istighatha, according to Ibn Taymiyya, that action is an act of shirk and therefore kufr, but that doesn't automatically mean the person is a mushrik kafir. He may simply be an ignorant person or he may be deluded by a wrong interpretation. Ibn Taymiyya says this explicitly:

"This shirk, if the proof of it is presented to him [i.e., the one committing it] and he does not desist, then he must be killed, as the likes of him among the polytheists are to be killed. [...] But if he is ignorant, knowledge not having reached him, and he does not know the truth about the shirk that was the basis upon which the Prophet fought the polytheists, then he is not to be judged a kafir, especially since this shirk has become widespread among those affiliated with Islam."²³

وهذا الشرك إذا قامت على الإنسان الحجة فيه ولم ينته، وجب قتله كقتل أمثاله من المشركين، ولم

²² Ibn Taymiyya, Majmu'a al-Fatawa

²³ Ibn Taymiyya, Jami' al-Masa'il

يُذَقَّنُ فِي مَقَابِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَلَمْ يُصَلَّ عَلَيْهِ. وَإِذَا كَانَ جَاهِلًا لَمْ يَبْلُغْهُ الْعِلْمُ، وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ حَقِيقَةَ الشِّرْكِ
الَّذِي قَاتَلَ عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - الْمَشْرِكِينَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُحْكَمُ بِكُفْرِهِ، وَلَا سَيِّئًا وَقَدْ كَثُرَ هَذَا الشِّرْكُ فِي
الْمُنْتَسِبِينَ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ، وَمَنْ اعْتَقَدَ مِثْلَ هَذَا قُرْبَةً وَطَاعَةً فَإِنَّهُ ضَالٌّ بِاتِّفَاقِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَهُوَ بَعْدَ قِيَامِ
الْحُجَّةِ كَافِرٌ

Notice already that Ibn Taymiyya acknowledges that the practices he considers shirk are widespread in Muslim lands, but unlike Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, he doesn't claim that the masses have all become kafir mushrik. Again, this is because Ibn Taymiyya believes that any given Muslim who practices istighatha could be ignorant, therefore he should not automatically be declared a kafir. What is required is *iqamat al-hujja*, or establishing the proof that istighatha is shirk for that specific person individually. This could be quite an involved process. In Ibn Taymiyya's view, establishing proof for a specific person requires a lot of time and effort because you have to sit the person down, show him all the evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, address all possible counter arguments that he may have to a satisfactory level. Only once all this happens and the person insists on doing istighatha, only then can he be declared a kafir. There is extensive due process that Ibn Taymiyya requires before making takfir on people in real life.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, by contrast, doesn't believe in any of this. He says, there is no excuse for ignorance and there is no need to establish the proof.

When the scandal of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's mass takfir without giving the excuse for ignorance began to spread, he wrote some small texts denying it.

One possibility is that he was confused and accidentally fell into contradiction. A far more likely possibility is that he simply wished to conceal his true views from outsiders and lied to them.

At any rate, later on some of his followers developed the habit of continuously citing these texts to deceive outsiders and prevent them from understanding Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's true khariji views. In this way they developed a type of taqiyya.

Let's look at some of these statements. For example, even I have cited this statement from him in the past:

“As for lies and slander [of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's critics], it is like when they say: “We declare general takfir [...], we declare takfir on those who do not declare takfir [chain takfir], and we declare takfir on those who do not fight [jihad in our army].” Similar claims, and countless more like them, are all lies and slander through which they divert people from the religion of Allah and His Messenger. [In actuality] we do not declare takfir on those who worship the idol which is on the grave of Abd al-Qadir [al-Jilani], and the idol which is the grave of

Ahmad al-Badawi, and others like them—due to their ignorance and the absence of someone to alert them.”²⁴

وأما الكذب والبهتان، فمثل قولهم: إنا نكفر بالعموم، ونوجب الهجرة إلينا على من قدر على إظهار دينه، وأنا نكفر من لم يكفر ومن لم يقاتل، ومثل هذا وأضعاف أضعافه. فكل هذا من الكذب والبهتان الذي يصدون به الناس عن دين الله ورسوله. وإذا كنا لا نكفر من عبد الصنم الذي على قبر عبد القادر، والصنم الذي على قبر أحمد البدوي، وأمثالهما، لأجل جهلهم وعدم من ينبيههم^٣، فكيف نكفر من لم يشرك بالله إذا لم يهاجر إلينا، ولم يكفر ويقاتل؟ [سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ] ٤. بل نكفر تلك الأنواع الأربعة لأجل محادتهم لله ورسوله. فرحم الله أمراً نظر لنفسه، وعرف أنه ملاق الله الذي عنده الجنة والنار. وصلى الله على محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم

Doesn't this sound exactly like Ibn Taymiyya? In another quote, he says:

“As for takfir, I only declare as a disbeliever the one who knows the religion of the Messenger, then after knowing it, insults it, forbids people from it, and shows enmity towards those who practice it. This is the one whom I declare a disbeliever. As for the majority of the Ummah, all praise is due to Allah, they are not like this.”²⁵

وأما التكفير، فأنا أكفر من عرف دين الرسول، ثم بعد ما عرفه سبه ونهى الناس عنه، وعادى من فعله؛ فهذا هو الذي أكفره، وأكثر الأمة والله الحمد ليسوا كذلك

These quotes might sound like Ibn Abd al-Wahhab accepts *al-udhr bi-l-jahl*, but he makes many statements that clearly contradict this. For example, as noted above, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab repeatedly claims that most apparent Muslims in the world are kafir mushriks. How is this possible if he gives them *al-udhr bi-l-jahl*?

But he is even more explicit in disavowing *al-udhr bi-l-jahl* in other texts.

“And it also teaches you great fear; for if you understand that a person can commit disbelief (*yakfur*) with a single word that comes from his tongue – and he may say it while being ignorant, and **he is not excused for his ignorance**.”²⁶

، وَأَفَادَكَ - أَيْضاً - : الْخَوْفَ الْعَظِيمَ؛ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا عَرَفْتَ أَنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ يَكْفُرُ بِكَلِمَةٍ يُخْرِجُهَا مِنْ لِسَانِهِ ، وَقَدْ يَقُولُهَا وَهُوَ جَاهِلٌ؛ فَلَا يُعَذَّرُ بِالْجَهْلِ - وَقَدْ يَقُولُهَا وَهُوَ يَظُنُّ أَنَّهَا تَقَرُّبُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ - كَمَا ظَنَّ الْكَافَرُ {خُصُوصاً إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَا قَصَّ عَنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى - مَعَ صَلَاحِهِمْ وَعِلْمِهِمْ - أَنَّهُمْ أَتَوْهُ قَائِلِينَ: {اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهاً كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ} فَحِينَئِذٍ يَعْظُمُ خَوْفُكَ وَجِرْصُكَ عَلَى مَا يُخْلَصُكَ مِنْ هَذَا وَأَمْثَالِهِ

Now, of course, no one doubts that a person can commit disbelief by saying a word of kufr, but why would we automatically deem that person a kafir? Why is there no possible excuse for ignorance?

²⁴ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Kitab Fatawa wa Masa'il

²⁵ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Kitab al-Rasa'il al-Shakhsiyya

²⁶ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Kashf al-Shubuhah

Elsewhere, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says explicitly that there is no *udhr bi-l-jahl*. He argues that if you are a Muslim who has read the Quran, then you should already know what is shirk and, therefore, you have no excuse.

“As for the fundamentals of the religion (*usul al-din*), which Allah has clarified and made firm in His Book, Allah’s proof is the Qur’an. Whoever the Qur’an reaches, the proof has reached him. However, the root of the confusion lies in your failure to distinguish between the establishment of the proof (*qiyam al-hujjah*) and the understanding of the proof (*fahm al-hujjah*).

“Most disbelievers and hypocrites among the Muslims have not understood Allah’s proof, even though it has been established for them, as Allah, the Most High, said: “Or do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are like cattle; rather, they are even more astray in their way.” [Quran 25:44]. The establishment of the proof is one matter, and its reaching someone is another matter. It has been established for them, but their understanding of it is a separate matter. Their disbelief occurs due to the proof reaching them, even if they do not understand it.”²⁷

وأما أصول الدين التي أوضحها الله وأحكمها في كتابه، فإن حجة الله هو القرآن، فمن بلغه القرآن فقد بلغته الحجة؛ ولكن أصل الإشكال، أنكم لم تفرقوا بين قيام الحجة، وبين فهم الحجة، فإن أكثر الكفار والمنافقين من المسلمين، لم يفهموا حجة الله مع قيامها عليهم، كما قال تعالى: {أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا} ١

وقيام الحجة نوع، وبلغها نوع، وقد قامت عليهم، وفهمهم إياها نوع آخر؛ وكفرهم ببلوغها إياهم، وإن لم يفهموها.

So Ibn Abd al-Wahhab doesn’t believe a Muslim can be excused for ignorance or lack of understanding so long as that person has been exposed to the Quran. Actually understanding the Quran is not a requirement for declaring a Muslim to be a kafir apostate.

This is a very serious issue because, if there is no excuse, this means that anyone who does *istighatha*, for example, is automatically a kafir mushrik and also an apostate. Furthermore, according to Islamic law, that person is liable for capital punishment. This is what happens when you erase *al-udhr bi-l-jahl*, and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab has no problem erasing it completely to promote his doctrine of automatic takfir.

Following the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, high-ranking Wahhabi authorities throughout history have also taken a dismissive stance towards the excuse for ignorance. In some cases they reject it completely. In other cases, they hold that it only applies in the most restricted circumstances. A good example is the major nineteenth-century Wahhabi authority Abdullah Aba Butayn (1780-1865). Butayn rejects the excuse for ignorance completely. In one statement, he mentions practices like

²⁷ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10, p.93

making requests from the dead, slaughtering animals for them, and making vows to them. He then says:

“Whosoever does that in these shrines today is a mushrik and a kafir without a doubt, by the evidence of the Quran, the Sunnah and the consensus. And we know that whoever does that from those who ascribe themselves to Islam don't fall into that except due to ignorance. For if they knew that it distances them from Allah to the utmost degree and that is from the shirk which Allah has prohibited, they would not advance towards it. And thus all of the scholars declared them to be disbelievers **and did not excuse them for ignorance**, like some of the astray people say: "Indeed these people are excused because they are ignorant.”²⁸

كل من فعل اليوم ذلك عند هذه المشاهد، فهو مشرك كافر بلا شك، بدلالة الكتاب والسنة والإجماع؛ ونحن نعلم أن من فعل ذلك ممن ينتسب إلى الإسلام، أنه لم يوقعهم في ذلك إلا الجهل، فلو علموا أن ذلك يبعد عن الله غاية الإبعاد، وأنه من الشرك الذي حرمه الله، لم يقدموا عليه، فكفرهم جميع العلماء، ولم يعذروهم بالجهل، كما يقول بعض الضالين: إن هؤلاء معذورون لأنهم جهال. وهذا قول على الله بغير علم، معارض بمثل قوله تعالى: قَرِيبًا هَدَىٰ وَقَرِيبًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمْ اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنََّّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ. سورة الاعراف. قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا * الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يُحْسِبُونَ أَنََّّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا. سورة الكهف

In recent times, both Ibn Baz (1912-1999) and Salih al-Fawzan (1933-) express views that are heavily influenced by traditional Wahhabism. In some places, they simply reject the excuse for ignorance. In other places they hold that it only applies under the most restrictive circumstances.

Consider the following quote from Ibn Baz:

Question [for Ibn Baz]:

“Many laypeople fall into significant violations of tawhid. What is the ruling concerning them? Are they excused due to ignorance? What is the ruling on marrying them, eating their slaughtered animals, and allowing them to enter Mecca?”

Answer:

“Whoever is known to call upon the dead, seek their assistance, make vows to them, or engage in similar acts of worship directed toward other than Allah is a mushrik and kafir. Such individuals cannot be married, are not permitted to enter the sacred mosque (Masjid al-Haram), and are not treated as Muslims. This ruling applies even if they claim ignorance, until they repent to Allah from such acts.”²⁹

[حكم وقوع الكثير من العامة في جملة من المخالفات الفادحة في التوحيد]

²⁸ al-Durar al-Sanniyyah vol. 10, p.405

²⁹ Ibn Baz, Kitab Tuhfat al-Ikhwan bi-Ajwibah Muhimmah Tata'allaq bi-Arkan al-Islam, p.37

يقع كثير من العامة في جملة من المخالفات الفادحة في التوحيد فما حكمهم؟ وهل يعذرون بالجهل؟ وحكم مناكرتهم وأكل ذبائحهم؟ وهل يجوز دخولهم مكة المكرمة؟

الجواب: من عرف بدعاء الأموات والاستغاثة بهم والنذر لهم، ونحو ذلك من أنواع العبادة فهو مشرك كافر لا تجوز مناكرته، ولا دخوله المسجد الحرام، ولا معاملته معاملة المسلمين، ولو ادعى الجهل حتى يتوب إلى الله من ذلك.

Salih al-Fawzan admits that the excuse for ignorance is valid, but holds that it is only applicable under extremely limited circumstances – like where a Muslim lives in an isolated place without access to the Quran and other basic religious texts. Otherwise such a Muslim cannot claim to be ignorant. Fawzan says:

“We say that the one who is excused for ignorance is the one who has not heard anything about Islam, [he lives] in an isolated place, he does not hear anything, he did not hear the Quran, he did not hear the hadiths, the dawah has not reached him; this one is excused for ignorance. But as for someone who lives with the Muslims, and in the Muslim countries, he hears the adhan all the time, and the people pray on his right and on his left, is this one to be said about that he is excused for ignorance? This one is ignorant on his own account; he has no desire for knowledge, he has no desire for the truth, he wants to remain on what he is upon; this one is not excused. Yes.”³⁰

نقول أن الذي يعذر بالجهل مثله هو الذي لم يسمع شيئاً عن الإسلام في مكان منعزل لم يسمع شيئاً ما سمع القرآن ما سمع الأحاديث ما بلغته الدعوة فهذا يعذر بالجهل أما إنسان يعيش مع المسلمين وفي بلاد المسلمين يسمع الأذن كل وقت والناس يصلون يمينه وشماله هذا يقال أنه يعذر بالجهل؟؟ هذا هو الذي يجهل نفسه لا يريد العلم ولا يريد الحق، يبقى على ما هو عليه هذا غير معذور نعم

المقدم: يقول في تكملة سؤاله: إذا نشأ شخص في بادية بعيدة أو حديث في الإسلام عهده هل يعذر بالجهل إذا دعا غير الله وهو منتسب إلى الإسلام؟

الشيخ: الذي يدعو غير الله يحكم عليه بالكفر ونعامله معاملة الكفار، أما إذا كان كما ذكر ما بلغه شيء فهذا حكمه إلى الله لكن نحن نحكم عليه بالدين الذي هو عليه على الكفر على الشرك على عبادة القبور نحكم عليه بـ [كلمة غير واضحة] هذا الذي يظهر لنا . أما إذا كان له عذر عند الله فهذا أمره إلى الله، يكون من أصحاب الفترة، يكون من أصحاب الفترة الذين ما بلغهم شيء. نعم ولكن اليوم كما تعلمون ما يخفى شيء، وسائل الإعلام منتشرة والقرآن يسمع في كل مكان من الدنيا الآن، السنة تسمع، الدعاة يتكلمون، الإسلام منتشر ما فيه تقريباً بلد في الأرض ما دخله الإسلام الآن ولا لا ؟ ما عندنا بلد ما فيه مساجد، ما فيه مراكز إسلامية، ما فيه أقليات مسلمة، الإسلام منتشر الآن، والشعائر تفعل في بلاد الكفر الآن شعائر الإسلام فالحجة قائمة والله الحمد. نعم

Again, what’s important to emphasize is that, without the excuse for ignorance, it becomes very easy to mass takfir large segments of the Ummah who may hold kufr beliefs solely due to ignorance. This is why Ibn Taymiyya strongly upholds *al-udhr bi-l-jahl* because he recognizes that ignorance must be taken into account before declaring a Muslim a kafir. But Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Wahhabi scholars

³⁰ Fawzan, Sharh Nawaqid al-Islam

up to this day have recklessly rejected this crucial principle, thus opening up the gates of boundless takfir.

3.4.2 Chain Takfir: Takfir as a Foundation of Islam

What makes Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's auto-takfir doctrine even worse is that he elevates auto-takfir into an obligation that all Muslims have. Some call this "secondary takfir" or "chain takfir." The idea of chain takfir was not invented by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It is something found in the Sunnah. But Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's innovation is he applies chain takfir to other Muslims. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab claims that, not only do Muslims have a duty to avoid istighatha, they also have a duty to takfir anyone who believes in the possible acceptability of istighatha. And if you fail in that duty, that means you are a kafir yourself! Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says this explicitly in multiple writings. For example, he lists the top ten greatest nullifiers of Islam, and in that list he includes:

"Whoever calls upon [saints or intermediaries], asks them for intercession, or relies on them has committed disbelief by consensus. Not declaring polytheists as disbelievers, doubting their disbelief, or validating their beliefs: Such a person has committed disbelief by consensus."³¹

الثاني: من جعل بينه وبين الله وسائط، يدعوهم ويسألهم الشفاعة، كفر إجماعاً
الثالث: من لم يكفر المشركين، أو شك في كفرهم، أو صحح مذهبهم، كفر إجماعاً

The polytheists he is referring to here includes Muslims who practice istighatha. If you have any doubt that a person who says the shahada, prays, fasts, loves the Prophet ﷺ but does istighatha, if you have any doubt that *that* person is a kafir, then you yourself are a kafir! Ibn Abd al-Wahhab further says:

"So reflect, O slaves of Allah, on what Allah has mentioned about the disbelievers: they acknowledged all of this for Allah alone, without any partners. Their polytheism only lay in the fact that they called upon the [dead] prophets and righteous, made them their representatives, made vows to them, and relied upon them, seeking from them nearness to Allah. As Allah says about them: "And those who take protectors besides Him [say], 'We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah.'" [Quran 39:3].

"If you understand this, then those false deities (*tawaghit*) in whom people place their beliefs—whether from the people of Al-Kharj or elsewhere - are well-known, both publicly and privately, for such practices. They are chosen for this and they order the people to do it. All of them are disbelievers and apostates from Islam. Whoever argues in their defense, or criticizes those who declare them disbelievers, or claims that their actions, even if invalid, do not constitute disbelief—then the least that can be said about such a person is that they are a sinner (*fasiq*), whose testimony and writings are not to be accepted, and who should not be

³¹ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.91

prayed behind. In fact, **[one's] Islam is not valid except by disassociating from these people and declaring them disbelievers.**³²

فتفكروا عباد الله، فيما ذكر الله عن الكفار، أنهم مقرون بهذا كله، الله وحده لا شريك له، وإنما كان شركهم: أنهم يدعون الأنبياء .
والصالحين، ويندبونهم، وينذرون لهم، ويتوكلون عليهم، يريدون منهم أنهم يقربونهم إلى الله، كما ذكر الله عنهم ذلك في قوله تعالى: {وَالَّذِينَ
اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى} ٣
إذا عرفتم ذلك، فهؤلاء الطواغيت الذين يعتقد الناس فيهم، من أهل الخرج وغيرهم، مشهورون عند الخاص والعام بذلك، وأنهم يترشحون
له، ويأمرون به الناس، كلهم كفار مرتدون عن الإسلام؛ ومن جادل عنهم، أو أنكر على من كفرهم، أو زعم أن فعلهم هذا، لو كان باطلا فلا
يخرجهم إلى الكفر، فأقل أحوال هذا المجادل، أنه فاسق لا يقبل خطه ولا شهادته، ولا يصلى خلفه بل لا يصح دين الإسلام، إلا بالبراءة من
هؤلاء وتكفيرهم

In other words, you don't have sound Islam unless you are constantly affirming that those who do istighatha are kafir mushrik apostates. By contrast, nowhere does Imam Ahmad or Ibn Taymiyya endorse this idea of chain takfir on the basis of istighatha or other secondary matters. Nonetheless, it is a critical part of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab teachings. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab even elevates takfir to an individual obligation of Islam at the same level as the shahada. He says:

“The foundation of Islam and its principle are two commands. The first is the command to worship God alone without partner, to agitate for this, to show loyalty for the sake of it, and to pronounce takfir on those who do not practice it. The second is to warn against the association of other beings in the worship of God, to be harsh in this, to show enmity for the sake of it, and to pronounce takfir on those who practice it.”³³

أصل دين الإسلام وقاعدته أمران
الأول: الأمر بعبادة الله وحده لا شريك له والتحريض على ذلك والمواالة فيه وتكفير من تركه
الثاني: الإنذار عن الشرك في عبادة الله والتغليظ في ذلك والمعاداة فيه وتكفير من فعله

In other words, Islam has two foundations: 1. The Shahada and 2. Making Takfir. And not only is takfir a foundation, you also must show enmity. Again, the enmity he is talking about is enmity towards other Muslims. These are other Muslims who don't even necessarily do istighatha. They just don't consider istighatha to be known with certainty to be shirk.

In another work, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab writes:

“If you are asked, “What is your religion?” say, “My religion is Islam.” Its foundation and basis are two things: The first: The command to worship Allah alone, with no partner, and encouraging that, and loyalty based upon that, and the takfir of whoever abandons it, and the warning against polytheism in the worship of Allah, and the severity in that, and enmity in it, and the takfir of whoever does it.”³⁴

³² al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.10 p.52

³³ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.2 p.202, 204–5

³⁴ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Talqin Usul al-'Aqida li-l-'Ammah from Majmu'a Rasa'il

فإذا قيل لك إيش دينك؟ فقل: ديني الإسلام، وأصله وقاعدته أمران: الأول: الأمر بعبادة الله وحده لا شريك له، والتحريض على ذلك، والموالاة فيه، وتكفير من تركه، والإنذار عن الشرك في عبادة الله، والتغليظ في ذلك، والمعادة فيه، وتكفير من فعله.

Again, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab makes takfir a foundation of faith. Without takfiring all those who do shirk according to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's definitions, then you are not actually a Muslim; you're a kafir.

So here is a question for you, dear reader. Have you ever explicitly disavowed istighatha and takfired its practitioners? No? Well, sorry, bad news. According to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab you're a full-blown, 5-star kafir. And you've always been one, you just never knew it!

This is such an extreme distortion of Islamic teachings, and unless you are familiar with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's writings, you would never know.

Ultimately, when Ibn Abd al-Wahhab makes the practice of takfir literally a foundation of Islam, he is breaking from the rest of the Sunni tradition. Al-Ghazali, al-Dehlawi, and others are clear that a Muslim's faith cannot depend on takfiring others on the basis of ijthadi matters.

And many scholars after Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, including many Salafi scholars like Sh Al-Albani, have recognized the dangers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's auto-takfir doctrine, which is why there's been a massive effort to try to conceal Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's words or massage them to imply that he doesn't endorse auto-takfir and chain takfir of fellow Muslims. But, as we will see later in the video, the best proof that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did believe in auto- and chain takfir is his leading an imperial jihad against the Ummah which led to the slaughter of countless Muslims.

3.4.3 Hatred Towards Muslims

In all the above quotes, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab makes it clear that a necessary part of sound faith is to show hatred and enmity to the people of shirk. Of course, what he means by people of shirk are those Muslims who do not accept his definition of shirk. He writes:

"The Description of Disbelief in *Taghut*: It is to believe in the falsehood of worshipping anything besides Allah, to abandon it, to hate it, to declare those who worship it as disbelievers, and to oppose them.

"The Meaning of Faith in Allah: It is to believe that Allah is the only true deity to be worshipped, without associating anyone with Him, and to dedicate all types of worship exclusively to Allah alone. It also means rejecting all worship of anyone other than Him, loving those who are sincere to Allah, allying with them, **hating the people of polytheism, and opposing them**. This is the way of Ibrahim, which anyone who turns away from has indeed made a fool of themselves."³⁵

³⁵ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.1 p161-163

فأما صفة الكفر بالطاغوت فإن تعتقد بطلان عبادة غير الله، وتتركها، وتبغضها، وتكفر أهلها، وتعاديهم، وأما معنى الإيمان بالله فإن تعتقد، أن الله هو الإله المعبود وحده، دون من سواه وتخلص جميع أنواع العبادة كلها لله، وتنفيها عن كل معبود سواه، وتحب أهل الإخلاص وتواليهم، وتبغض أهل الشرك وتعاديهم ; وهذه ملة إبراهيم التي سلفه نفسه من رغب عنها

When you understand that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab teaches how all the Muslims who don't accept his teachings are actually kafir mushriks, that helps you to understand how so many of the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are extremely harsh against their fellow Muslims. This is exactly why the focus of the Salafi sectarians is on interrogating other Muslims, subjecting them to aqida checks, and then denouncing them. Meanwhile, they don't show a fraction of this energy against the actual enemies of Islam. This khariji attitude didn't just come out of nowhere. This is coming straight out of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings, including in his famous *Kitab al-Tawhid*.

When you put all the pieces of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's takfir doctrine together, the auto-takfir, the chain takfir, and the requirement to show enmity towards mushriks, it becomes very disturbing to read what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says in his *Kitab al-Tawhid*. The fans of *Kitab al-Tawhid* challenge people to point to anything mistaken in the book, but the most shocking thing he says is this:

“Among them is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Whoever says ‘La ilaha illa Allah’ and disbelieves in what is worshipped besides Allah, his wealth and blood are protected, and his account is with Allah.’ This is one of the most significant clarifications of the meaning of ‘La ilaha illa Allah.’ For it does not make the mere utterance of it sufficient to safeguard one’s wealth and blood, nor merely understanding its meaning along with the utterance, nor even acknowledging its truth. It does not suffice even if one does not call upon anyone besides Allah alone, associating no partners with Him. **Rather, one’s wealth and blood are not safeguarded until one adds to this the act of disbelieving in whatever is worshipped besides Allah. If one is doubtful or hesitant, then their wealth and blood are not protected.** Oh, what an issue of great magnitude and immense significance this is! What a great clarification and definitive argument against any disputer!”³⁶

ومنها قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من قال لا إله إلا الله وكفر بما يُعبد من دون الله حرم ماله ودمه، وحسابه على الله ١. وهذا من أعظم ما يبين معنى لا إله إلا الله، فإنه لم يجعل التلفظ بها عاصماً للدم والمال، بل ولا معرفة معناها مع لفظها، بل ولا الإقرار بذلك، بل ولا كونه لا يدعو إلا الله وحده لا شريك له، بل لا يحرم ماله ودمه حتى يضيف إلى ذلك الكفر بما يُعبد من دون الله؛ فإن شك أو توقف لم يحرم ماله ودمه.

إفيا لها من مسألة ما أعظمها وأجلها! وياله من بيان ما أوضحه! وحجة ما أقطعها للمنازع

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is claiming here that if someone declares the shahada and accepts it with all his heart and at the same time refrains from worshipping anyone except Allah, this is **not** enough to make you a Muslim. To be Muslim, one has to go the extra step of disbelieving in whatever is worshipped besides Allah. What is problematic about this is, as we saw from his other statements, he

³⁶ Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid*

claims istighatha is shirk. So to be a Muslim, you must disavow istighatha and takfir its practitioners, otherwise, not only are you not a Muslim, but Ibn Abd al-Wahhab thinks you can be killed, your property taken, and your wife and children taken as slaves. This, of course, means that offensive jihad needs to be fought against you.

This is why *Kitab al-Tawhid* is actually a very subversive work. When the average Muslim reads it, it sounds pretty good. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is going hardcore against shirk and the mushriks. And you think, yeah, this sounds good, I guess Ibn Abd al-Wahhab really, really hates Abu Jahl; I can get on board with that! But if you read it with the understanding that, when Ibn Abd al-Wahhab refers to *mushrikin* and how their blood is halal, he is actually referring to the Ottoman scholars in Syria and the mufti of Makka and other Muslims around the world, then it's like, what? What the heck is going on here?! This is way too far!

But this is ultimately the whole point of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *aqida*: to justify hatred and war against other Muslims. This is pure Kharijism.

When Salafi sectarians demand that all Sunnis have to study *aqida*, they don't mean go study a traditional book of *aqida* like *Aqida Tahawiyya*. They mean, have you studied *Kitab al-Tawhid*. Whoever doesn't study and doesn't accept everything in *Kitab al-Tawhid*, that person is deemed a kafir mushrik, and as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab says in *Kitab al-Tawhid*, it is a foundation of Islam to takfir such people, fight them, and show enmity towards them.

This is exactly why the so-called "aqida bros" on social media are so sectarian and so harsh against other Muslims. They are just following the directions of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. When they give Muslims *aqida* tests and demand "What's your *aqida*?!" what they're really asking is, have you studied *Kitab al-Tawhid* and do you accept all of it? If the answer is no, then expect to be boycotted, ridiculed, and smeared. This is what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *dawah* in the present day amounts to under the guise of "learning *aqida*."

3.4.4 Offensive Jihad Against Muslims

When we talk about the wars waged by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, his defenders claim that he only engaged in defensive wars because others were attacking him first. But this shows a complete misunderstanding of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings and how he viewed his mission. As we saw in the previous section, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab views the entire Muslim world as kafir mushriks who are worse than the Qurayshi mushriks in the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Now ask yourself, what did the Prophet ﷺ do to the Qurayshi mushriks? Did he say, we will just live with them in peace with them till the end of time? No, the Prophet ﷺ waged offensive jihad against them with the purpose of wiping out idolatry in Arabia. On his deathbed, the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith recorded in both Bukhari and Muslim:

“Expel the pagans from the Arabian Peninsula.”³⁷

أَخْرِجُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ

So the mushriks of the Arabian peninsula had a choice: Either accept tawhid or be killed.

As we saw in the previous sections, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab viewed himself as undertaking the same mission as the Prophet ﷺ. He and his followers are the Sahaba and the rest of the Muslims in his time are the mushriks. It is necessary to force these mushriks to submit to tawhid, meaning tawhid as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab defines it. And whoever does not submit must be killed. This is how, according to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, tawhid can once again spread throughout the world. In one of his letters, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab leaves no doubt about this:

“We have prohibited them [meaning, our enemies] from committing shirk . . . and we are fighting them on account of it, as God says, ‘And fight them till there is no fitna,’ that is, shirk, ‘and the religion is God’s entirely’ (Quran 8:39)”³⁸

He is citing the main ayah from Surah al-Tawba that justifies offensive jihad against kufr and shirk and he is applying this ayah to Muslims. Coincidentally, the great Sahabi Ibn Umar mentions that this is exactly what the khawarij do:

“Al-Bukhari reported: Ibn Umar considered the Khawarij to be the worst of Allah’s creation and he said, “Indeed, they take verses that were revealed about disbelievers and use them against believers.””³⁹

عن البخاري وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَرَاهُمْ شِرَارَ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ وَقَالَ إِنَّهُمْ انْطَلَفُوا إِلَى آيَاتٍ نَزَلَتْ فِي الْكُفَّارِ فَجَعَلُوهَا عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

This is exactly what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers do. In fact, this is the core of Wahhabism. So if you understand Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s teachings, you understand he is engaged in war against Muslims that he had unilaterally declared to be mushriks. When this is fully understood, we see how destructive and dangerous this ideology becomes to Muslims around the world because, if you do not accept Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s specific understanding of tawhid and takfir, then you will be condemned as a mushrik and your blood and property become halal.

Now Ibn Abd al-Wahhab apologists will argue that I have misunderstood Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s teachings. So let’s bring an authoritative perspective to weigh in.

³⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari 4431

³⁸ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.1 p.95–96

³⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari 6531

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab personally educated his sons, and transmitted his teachings to them, such that they became the religious leaders of his movement after he died (*Aal al-Shaykh*). These sons provide the clearest and most complete account of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's jihad policies towards other Muslims.

"The sons of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, may Allah have mercy on them, were asked: "For those who are not under your leadership and do not belong to your state, is their land generally considered a land of disbelief and war?"

They answered:

"What we believe and worship Allah with is that whoever follows Islam, obeys his Lord in what He commands, and refrains from what He forbids and prohibits, is a Muslim whose wealth and blood are inviolable, as indicated by the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the Ummah. We do not declare anyone who follows the religion of Islam as a disbeliever merely because they have not joined our domain and state. Rather, we only declare as disbelievers those whom Allah and His Messenger have declared disbelievers. Whoever claims that we takfir people generally or that we obligate migration to us for those who can practice their religion openly in their own lands has lied and fabricated against us."⁴⁰

This sounds exactly the quote we read earlier. They are denying that they do mass takfir or command jihad. But look at what they say immediately after this:

"However, as **for those who have received our call to tawhid** and the observance of Allah's obligations but refuse to accept it, persist in shirk, and neglect the obligations of Islam, **we takfir them, fight them, and launch raids against them—even in their own domains.**"⁴¹

So here, they clarify: Whoever has received our call and rejected it. This means, whoever rejects Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's call, meaning he rejects Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's definition of tawhid and everything that comes with it, then they takfir that person and launch offensive jihad against them. So, this clarifies what the earlier part of the quote means. When they say, we don't mass takfir the Muslims, this is nothing more than word games. They don't mass takfir the "Muslims," but they define Muslims as only those who accept the Najdi dawah of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Everyone else who calls himself a "Muslim," meaning the vast majority of the Ummah is actually a mushrik in their eyes, not an actual Muslim. They continue:

"Everyone we have fought has received our call. What we are certain of and believe is that the people of Yemen, Tihamah, [Makka and Madina], the Levant, and Iraq have received our call and understood that we command sincere worship of Allah alone and denounce what most people practice—associating partners with Allah by supplicating to others besides Allah,

⁴⁰ Al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.252-253

⁴¹ Ibid.

seeking their help during hardships, asking them to fulfill needs, and seeking relief from distress. We command the establishment of prayer, the giving of zakat, and adherence to all Islamic obligations. We forbid indecency, evil acts, and all forms of innovation. Such people do not need to be invited before being fought, as the Prophet - peace be upon him - raided Banu al-Mustaliq while they were unaware and attacked the people of Makka without warning or invitation.”⁴²

سئل أبناء الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب، رحمهم الله تعالى: من لم تشمله دائرة إمامتكم، ويتسم بسمّة دولتكم، هل داره دار كفر وحرب على العموم؟

فأجابوا: الذي نعتقه وندين الله به، أن من دان بالإسلام، وأطاع ربه فيما أمر، وانتهى عما نهى عنه وزجر، فهو المسلم حرام المال والدم، كما دل على ذلك الكتاب والسنة وإجماع الأمة، ولم نكفر أحداً دان بدين الإسلام، لكونه لم يدخل في دائرتنا، ولم يتسم بسمّة دولتنا، بل لا نكفر إلا من كفر الله ورسوله، ومن زعم أنا نكفر الناس بالعموم، أو نوجب الهجرة إلينا على من قدر على إظهار دينه ببلده، فقد كذب. وافترى.

وأما من بلغته دعوتنا إلى توحيد الله، والعمل بفرائض الله، وأبى أن يدخل في ذلك، وأقام على الشرك بالله، وترك فرائض الإسلام، فهذا نكفره ونقاتله، ونشن عليه الغارة، بل بداره؛ وكل من قاتلناه فقد بلغته دعوتنا، بل الذي نتحقق ونعتقه: أن أهل اليمن وتهامة، والحرمين والشام والعراق، قد بلغتهم دعوتنا، وتحققوا أننا نأمر بإخلاص العباد لله، وننكر ما عليه أكثر الناس، من الإشراك بالله من دعاء غير الله، والاستغاثة بهم عند الشدائد، وسؤالهم قضاء الحاجات، وإغاثة اللّهفات؛ وأنا نأمر بإقام الصلاة، وإيتاء الزكاة، وسائر أمور الإسلام؛ وننهى عن الفحشاء والمنكرات، وسائر الأمور المبتدعات؛ ومثل هؤلاء لا تجب دعوتهم قبل القتال، فإن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أغار على بني المصطلق وهم غارون، وغزا أهل مكة بلا إنذار ولا دعوة.

So the sons of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab explain that according to their father's doctrine, most apparent Muslims are actually kafirs, and that it is necessary to wage an offensive jihad against them – killing them and taking their wealth. They have no excuse of ignorance because they have already heard about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings. Those who are disbelievers include the apparently Muslim people of Makka, Madina, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq.

Another early Wahhabi scholar includes the entire Ottoman empire.

“The second matter is disbelief in what they worship other than Allah. And the meaning of that is takfir of the *mushrikin*. So whoever does not make takfir upon the mushriks of the Turkish state [i.e. the Ottoman Muslims] and the grave-worshippers like the people of Makka and [upon] others from those who worship the righteous and left the Tawhid of Allah for shirk and exchanged the Sunnah of his Messenger with innovations, then he is a disbeliever like them even if dislikes their religion and hates them and loves Islam and its people.”⁴³

الأمر الثاني: الكفر بما يعبد من دون الله، والمراد بذلك تكفير المشركين، والبراءة منهم، ومما يعبدون مع الله. فمن لم يكفر المشركين من الدولة التركية، وعباد القبور، كأهل مكة وغيرهم، ممن عبد الصالحين، وعدل عن توحيد الله إلى الشرك، وبَدَل سُنَّةَ رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالبدع، فهو كافر مثلهم، وإن كان يكره دينهم، ويغضهم، ويحب الإسلام والمسلمين؛ فإن الذي لا يكفر المشركين، غير مصدق بالقرآن، فإن القرآن قد كفر المشركين، وأمر بتكفيرهم، وعداوتهم وقتالهم.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.291

When we sum up all of these teachings, we see that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had declared war on the entire Ummah, an Ummah that he viewed as being nothing but idol-worshipping mushriks.

4. Sulayman Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and al-San'ani

If Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's own words are not enough to disqualify him as a khariji deviant, then consider what his own brother Sulayman ibn Abdul-Wahhab had to say. Sulayman was himself a learned and well-respected Hanbali scholar of his time.

Nonetheless, Sulayman addressed his brother with a very harsh refutation:

"The People of Knowledge have mentioned the statements and words that if said by a Muslim make him an apostate; but neither did they say that the one making a vow to other than Allah is an apostate nor did they say that the one who touches the graves, takes dust from them for blessing is an apostate as you proclaim.

"If you have something clear and obvious as proof, then you should make it clear to us because it is not permissible to conceal knowledge. The fact is that you do not have this proof, for you have taken this understanding of yours, opposed the Consensus and declared the "Ummah of Muhammad in totality to be disbelievers, when you said, "Whoever does these actions, then he is an disbeliever," and, "Whoever did not do it, then he is an disbeliever."

"According to some of the People of Knowledge, these practices have filled the Muslim world for more than 700 years; but the People of Knowledge who did not do these actions never declared those People of Knowledge who did them to be disbelievers. Neither party even declared the laws of the apostates to be in effect over them, but quite the contrary! Their judgement was that these people were Muslims."⁴⁴

So here Sulayman recognized that his brother's takfir doctrine against those who do istighatha is completely unprecedented and the result is, he is takfiring the whole Ummah. Furthermore, Istighatha has filled the Muslim world for centuries, but no scholar did mass takfir like Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is doing. He continues:

"This is in contradiction to what you say; whereas you have declared the urban centres and other lands of the Muslims to be upon kufr and apostasy. You even made their lands to be Abodes of War - even the Two Sacred Precincts [Makka and Madina] - which the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, informed us in the clear and manifest Ahadith that these two places would always be lands of Islam, idols would never be worshipped in them

⁴⁴ Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *The Divine Lightning*, Translated by Al-Hajj Abu Jāfar al-Hanbali

and that even at the end of time the False Messiah would enter all the lands except the Two Sacred Precincts.

“According to you, all these lands are Abodes of War, Dar al-Harb, its population disbelievers due to the fact that they worship idols. According to you, they are associating partners with Allah and committing the shirk that expels one from the religion. Indeed, to Allah we belong and to Him we return! I swear by Allah that for a surety this is the very essence of opposition to Allah, His Messenger and the scholars of Islam without a doubt!”⁴⁵

Sulayman is shocked that his brother has declared war on the Ummah and deemed all the Muslim lands, including Makka and Madina as Dar al-Harb. He continues:

“The most strict and harsh in these matters that we know of - these same matters that you declare the Ummah to be disbelievers due to them, such as vows and so forth - are Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim and they, may Allah have mercy on both of them, have clearly and unequivocally stated in their own words that this is not the shirk that expels one from the religion.

“Quite the contrary, they clearly stated that there are many different types of shirk that are much greater than this, and that this Ummah has people who do this action and are stubborn about it; but with this said, they did not declare the one who does so to be a disbeliever...”⁴⁶

So, to summarize this quote, Sulayman makes a few key points:

1. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab auto-takfiring those who do istighatha is unprecedented. No one in his time or before had this view. Even the scholars who were most harsh on istighatha, namely Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim didn't go as far as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.
2. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's stance on auto-takfir plus chain takfir has the result that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is declaring the whole Ummah to be kafir mushrik apostates.
3. Because he is declaring the entirety of the Ummah as kafir apostates, he is declaring war on the entirety of the Ummah, including the Muslims in Makka and Madina.

Something to keep in mind. Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab wasn't a sufi-loving *Ashari* (not that there's anything wrong with that). He himself was completely against istighatha and condemned the innovations around saint veneration in his time. But his problem with his brother is that his brother goes too far. He is absolutely shocked that his brother is inventing this new takfir doctrine and declaring the entire Ummah as kafir mushriks in order to justify offensive jihad against them. How do you think Ibn Abd al-Wahhab reacted to his brother's refutation? Yup, he takfired Sulayman! And then he declared jihad against him.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Another famous statement on Ibn Abd al-Wahhab involved the eminent scholar Ibn al-Amir al-San'ani (1688-1769). Like Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Al-San'ani strongly opposed veneration of the dead, seeing it as resembling shirk. When San'ani initially heard about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and heard that he was also opposed to saint veneration, he wrote a poem praising Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Word of this poem spread and the Wahhabis were celebrating because everyone else was calling them khawarij deviants and here is the great scholar San'ani writing a poem of praise for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. But then, some of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's books reached San'ani and when San'ani read those books, he realized he had made a huge mistake. So he publicly retracted his praise and disavowed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab as a deviant takfiri.

All this is documented by al-San'ani in his commentary on his well-known poem of his ["Mahw al-Hawba fi Sharh Abyat al-Tawba"]. Al-San'ani says:

"[The] esteemed Shaykh Abd al-Rahman al-Najdi had come to us [...]. He described to us certain matters about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab that he criticized, such as his shedding of blood, his plundering of wealth, his attempts to kill people - even through assassination, and his takfir of the entire Ummah of Muhammad in all regions.

"We remained hesitant about what Shaykh Abd al-Rahman had conveyed until Shaykh Mirbad arrived. He was insightful and brought with him some of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's letters, in which he compiled arguments for the takfir of believers, their killing, and the looting of their wealth. He clarified to us Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's conditions, actions, and statements.

"We observed that his behavior was that of a man who had learned a portion of the Shari'a but did not delve deeply into its study, nor did he learn under someone who could guide him on the path of guidance, direct him toward beneficial knowledge, and properly educate him. Rather, he only read some works of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyya and the writings of his student Ibn al-Qayyim, and he imitated them without mastery—even though both scholars prohibited blind imitation (taqlid)."⁴⁷

محمد بن إسماعيل الأمير فعبارة في شرح قصيدة مذكورة له الموسوم: بمحو الحوبة في شرح أبيات التوبة لما بلغت هذه الأبيات نجدا يعني القصيدة الأولى وصل إلينا بعد أعوام من بلوغها رجل عالم يسمى: الشيخ: مرید بن أحمد التميمي وكان وصوله في شهر صفر سنة ١١٧٠هـ، وأقام لدينا ثمانية أشهر وحصل بعض كتب شيخ الإسلام: ابن تيمية والحافظ: ابن القيم بخطه وفارقنا في عشرين من شوال ١١٧٠هـ، راجعا إلى وطنه وكان من تلاميذ الشيخ: محمد بن عبد الوهاب الذي وجهنا إليه الأبيات فأخبرنا ببلوغها ولم يأت بجواب عنها وكان قد تقدمه في الوصول إلينا بعد بلوغها الشيخ الفاضل: عبد الرحمن النجدي ووصف لنا من حال ابن عبد الوهاب أشياء أنكرها عليه من: سفك الدماء ونهب الأموال وتجاربه على قتل النفوس ولو بالاعتقال وتكفيره الأمة المحمدية في جميع الأقطار فبقي معنا تردد فيما نقله الشيخ: عبد الرحمن حتى وصل الشيخ: مرید وله نبأه ووصل ببعض رسائل ابن عبد الوهاب التي جمعها في: وجه تكفير أهل الإيمان وقتلهم ونهبهم وحقق لنا أحواله وأفعاله وأقواله فرأينا أحواله أحوال رجل عرف من الشريعة شظرا ولم يمعن النظر ولا قرأ على من يهديه

⁴⁷ Siddiq Hasan Khan, Abjad al-Ulum

نهج الهداية ويدله على العلوم النافعة ويفقهه فيها بل طالع بعضا من مؤلفات الشيخ: أبي العباس ابن تيمية ومؤلفات تلميذه: ابن القيم الجوزية. وقد هما من غير إتقان مع أنهما يحرمان التقليد.

This experience is common for those who first hear about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. At first, he sounds very good. He sounds like a staunch defender of tawhid. This is due to not knowing all of his teaching, and I personally was in that same exact boat. But then when you delve deeper and understand what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings really were, it is disturbing and something that is completely deviant. This is what many scholars in Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's time said about his teachings.

The Ibn Abd al-Wahhab apologists today will claim that whoever criticizes their shaykh is only doing so out of bias or due to some love for shirk. But this is bogus. As we saw, both Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab, al-Sanani, and others were also completely opposed to istighatha and other innovated practices. Yet they recognized that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings go way too far and are not only deviant but also dangerous.

5. The Wars of Wahhabism

Now all this would be bad enough if Ibn Abd al-Wahhab were a quiet shaykh who wrote his deviant ideas far from the arena of politics. But, in actuality, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab immediately teamed up with political authorities and went to war.

According to traditional Islamic teachings, religious scholars are supposed to keep their distance from the government. This is so that the rulers don't use religious scholars to twist Islamic teachings for their own benefit. This is based on the hadith where the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever goes to the gates of the ruler will be tested (be faced with fitna). A servant does not move closer to the ruler but that he moves further away from Allah.”⁴⁸

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ أَتَى أَبْوَابَ السُّلْطَانِ افْتُنَّ وَمَا ارْزَادَ عَبْدٌ مِنَ السُّلْطَانِ قُرْبًا إِلَّا ارْزَادَ مِنَ اللَّهِ بُعْدًا

Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya were famous for keeping their distance from governmental rulers as well as opposing religiously misguided government policies. Because of their brave stances, they were severely persecuted by the authorities of their time. Imam Ahmad was imprisoned and tortured for opposing the Abbasid government, which was spreading the Mu'tazali doctrine of the created Quran. Meanwhile, Ibn Taymiyya was imprisoned several times for opposing government-backed policies, and ultimately he died in jail at the Citadel of Damascus.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab took a different approach. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab immediately teamed up with rulers and encouraged his followers and his family (*Aal al-Shaykh*) to do the same.

⁴⁸ Musnad Ahmad

In the mid-eighteenth century, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab formed a tight alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud. Ibn Saud was born in Diriyya in Najd, the central region of Arabia. His ancestors had settled Diriyya and Ibn Saud became the emir in 1727. Nearly two decades later, in 1745, Ibn Saud formed an alliance with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who had accumulated a loyal group of hardcore followers. The deal that Ibn Saud made with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is as follows: Ibn Saud promised to make Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's ideas as the official doctrine of his state and he promised to spread those ideas by force. In return, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was required to tell his followers to support Ibn Saud and fight in his wars. This political-religious alliance proved to be beneficial for both parties, but it resulted in a great deal of war and bloodshed.

By 1747, the surrounding areas of Diriyya accepted Wahhabism and pledged their allegiance to Ibn Saud. This included the areas of 'Uyayna, Huraymila', 'Ammariyya, and Manfuha. But neighboring Riyadh, which was ruled by Dahham ibn Dawwas, was a hold out. So Ibn Saud initiated attacks against Riyadh. Initially, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers claimed these wars were purely defensive. "Oh we're just protecting ourselves from all the enemies surrounding us!" For example, in a letter Ibn Abd al-Wahhab sent to an Iraqi scholar, he writes:

"To this day we have not fought anybody except to defend ourselves and [our] women. They are the ones who came to us in our lands and left [us] no choice."⁴⁹

In reality, however, Ibn Saud and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab were the aggressors. This is obvious from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's own teachings, but it is also what independent historians say. Cole Bunzel, in his book *Wahhabism* published in 2023 by Princeton University Press, acknowledges that perhaps in the early days, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers were being opposed by other scholars and authorities in Najd. But this opposition was not because Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was peacefully teaching his understanding of tawhid. The problem was, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers were aggressively takfiring the scholars and authorities who did not accept his teachings. The apologists for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab today claim that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takfiring scholars and authorities was only a response to the takfir of his opponents. But Bunzel rejects this:

"The claim that the opponents of Wahhabism were the first to engage in takfir is not believable at all."⁵⁰

Bunzel continues:

"Exactly when the transition from defensive jihād to offensive jihād in Wahhābism took place is difficult to say, but we can be sure that the transition was taking place no later than 1752, which is when the town of Ḥuraymilā' committed [alleged] apostasy (*ridda*)."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibn Ghannam, *Tarikh*

⁵⁰ Bunzel, *Wahhabism* p.200

⁵¹ Ibid.

According to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, apostasy meant refusing to be ruled by Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab ruled over their new territories like co-rulers. They ensured that all their subjects adhered to strict Wahhabi teachings. They were so strict, in fact, that in 1753, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab ordered the execution of a man who was spreading the teachings of his brother Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Keep in mind that his brother Sulayman as a fellow Hanbali probably agreed with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab on 99% of Islamic topics. But because Sulayman disagreed with the mass takfir and other innovations of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, for that he was considered an apostate and liable for execution.

Going back to 1752, a group of men in Huraymila were inspired by Sulayman and initiated a coup to break off from Ibn Saud and Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Now, theoretically, if a group breaks their pledge and secedes from a ruler, the ruler is justified in using force to regain what was lost. But this was not enough for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab declares the entire town of Huraymila as apostates. In his book *Mufid al-Mustafid*, he claims they have not only apostatized from Islam, they are actually mushriks who practice polytheism. Therefore, offensive jihad is justified against them. Their blood and property has become halal. Now, this move from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to frame things in terms of shirk and offensive jihad proves two things. First, it proves that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did engage in mass takfir. He takfired an entire town and accused them of being mushriks simply for rejecting his and Ibn Saud's political rule. Secondly, by declaring all the inhabitants of Huraymila as mushriks, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is depicting the Saudi state as warriors against shirk while their political enemies are magically transformed into mushriks who must be eliminated. The significance of this is that the political aspirations of Ibn Saud become religiously mandated. There is convenient religious justification to aggressively drive expansion of the Saudi political power.

The attack on Huraymila in 1755 was the biggest offensive that the Wahhabis had ever engaged in up to that point. Ibn Saud's son, Abd al-Aziz led the charge of 1000 soldiers in a surprise attack. One hundred men from Huraymila were killed. After Huraymila, the Wahhabi forces conquered the area of al-Mihmal. The area of al-Washm was conquered in 1767. All-Aarid was conquered in 1773 and Riyadh finally came under Saudi control. The regions of Sudayr and al-Kharj were also conquered by 1781 and 1784 respectively, which meant that pretty much all of Najd was now under Saudi rule.

Now, where were the Ottomans all this time? All of the Arabian peninsula was under Ottoman rule, so technically the Saudi expansion was a revolt against the Ottoman Caliphate. The Saudis were now looking to take over Hijaz in the West and expel the Ottomans, who they viewed, of course, as nothing more than kafir mushriks in need of swift elimination.

The question is, why didn't the Ottomans quickly crush the Wahhabi rebellion? The answer is that the Ottomans were not in a strong position to stop the rebellion because they were busy defending the Ummah from Russia, which was actively invading Muslim lands in Southeast Europe. The Ottomans were further taxed when, at the turn of the century, the British and the French invaded Egypt and Algeria. In the process, these European states initiated genocides that would claim millions

of Muslim lives. While the Ottomans prioritized fighting a defensive jihad against these invading European powers, the Wahhabis took this as an opportunity to wage jihad against the Ottomans.

By 1765, Muhammad ibn Saud died. His eldest son, Abd al-Aziz became the second ruler of the Saudi State. Abd al-Aziz was also the son-in-law of ibn Abd al-Wahhab and ibn Abd al-Wahhab was his primary advisor.

Abd al-Aziz continued to wage war against the Muslims of Najd until Riyadh fell into Wahhabi control in 1773. After this, all of Najd came under Wahhabi control. In the 1790s, the nascent Saudi state began expanding east and north with raids against the Muslims in Qatif and Ahsa as well as lower Iraq and Syria. Accounts of these raids reveal disturbing details. Consider the following event which happened in 1797, as described by Wahhabi historian Ibn Bishr:

“In [that year] in [the month of] Ramadan, Sa’ud - may the worshipped One have mercy upon him - set out with the victorious armies and the famous horses, from all of the areas of Najd and its [bedouin] Arabs and intended the North (i.e., Iraq). He attacked the known al-Shuyukh market near Basrah and killed many of them. The people fled and drowned in the river.”⁵²

وفيهما في رمضان سار سعود رحمه المعبود , بالجنود المنصورة والخيال العتاق المشهورة , من جميع نواحي نجد وعربانها وقصد الشمال , وأغار على سوق الشيوخ المعروف عند البصرة , وقتل منهم قتلى كثيرة , وهرب أناس وغرقوا في الشط

Even in Ramadan, the plundering Wahhabi raiders did not spare fasting Muslims, fasting Muslims who they drove into the rivers, forcing them to drown to death.

In 1802, the Wahhabis committed their most infamous massacre in the Iraqi city of Karbala. According to Ibn Bishr, Saud, who was the son of Abd al-Aziz, arrived outside the city, climbed its walls, and entered it by force. They then killed most of the city’s people in the markets and homes. They raided the mosque of the Prophet ﷺ grandson Husayn. They looted the entire city and slaughtered 2,000 of its inhabitants. Other accounts place the total death toll at 4500.

One of the habits of the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is that they gloat about slaughtering Muslims. In one letter, the son of Abdul-Aziz writes to the governor of Ottoman controlled Baghdad, threatening him. He writes:

“Your statement that we took Karbala, slaughtered its people, and took its property - alhamdulillah! We make no apology for this, and we say, ‘the disbelievers shall have the likes thereof.’”⁵³

⁵² Ibn Bishr, ‘Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd vol.1, p.240

⁵³ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.284

وقولك: إنا أخذنا كربلاء، وذبحنا أهلها، وأخذنا أموالها، فالحمد لله رب العالمين، ولا نتعذر من ذلك، ونقول: {وَاللَّكَافِرِينَ أَمْتًا لَهَا} [سورة محمد آية: ١٠]

Speaking more generally about his bloodthirstiness, he continues:

“As for what you mentioned that we kill the disbelievers, this is something for which we make no apology and that we do not minimize. We shall do more of it [...] We abase the disbelievers, shed their blood, and make booty of their property, by the might and power of God. [...] The verses and hadiths concerning jihad and encouraging it are countless; we have no labor but jihad, and we have no appetite save for the possessions of the disbelievers.”⁵⁴

وأما ما ذكرت: إنا نقتل الكفار، فهذا أمر ما نتعذر عنه، ولم نستخف فيه، ونزيد في ذلك إن شاء الله، ونوصي به أبناءنا من بعدنا، وأبنائنا يوصون به أبناءهم من بعدهم، كما قال الصحابي: على الجهاد ما بقينا أبدا

ونرغم أنوف الكفار، ونسفك دماءهم، ونغنم أموالهم بحول الله وقوته، ونفعل ذلك اتباعا لا ابتداء، طاعة لله ولرسوله، وقربة نتقرب بها إلى الله تعالى، ونرجو بها جزيل الثواب، بقوله تعالى: {فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُرُوهُمْ وَأَقْعُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ فَإِنْ تَأَيَّسُوا وَأَقَامُوا

الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ} [سورة التوبة آية: ٥]. وقوله: {وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ} [سورة الأنفال آية: ٤٠] وقوله تعالى: {فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ} [سورة محمد آية: ٤] الآية وقوله: {قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصَرِّكُمُ عَلَيْهِمْ} [سورة التوبة آية: ١٤]

ونرغب فيما عند الله من جزيل الثواب، حيث قال تعالى: {إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَنْبِشُوا بَيْنَكُمْ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ} [سورة التوبة آية: ١١١] وقال تعالى: {هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ تَأْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ وَأُخْرَى تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ} [سورة الصف آية: ١٠-١١] والآيات والأحاديث ما تحصي في الجهاد، والترغيب فيه

ولا لنا دأب إلا الجهاد، ولا لنا مأكلا إلا من أموال الكفار

The Wahhabi penchant for gloating about slaughtering Muslims continues to this day on social media. Contemporary followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab glorify this massacre because the victims were Shia. But these ignorant neo-khawarij forget that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takfired Sunnis and Shiis equally, and thus, many Sunnis were also slaughtered by the Wahhabi armies.

In 1803, for example, the Wahhabis began pressing Westward in order to conquer Hijaz. This resulted in the siege of Taif. Uthman al-Mudayifi was the Wahhabi commander leading the siege. Ibn Bishr describes what happened:

⁵⁴ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.280-282

“[Uthman’s forces] marched to Taif, where Ghalib al-Sharif had fortified himself, prepared, and armed for battle against them. However, when those forces besieged him, Allah cast fear into his heart, and he fled to Makka, abandoning Taif. Then, Uthman and his forces entered and seized the city by force without facing any resistance. They killed its people in the markets and homes, slaughtering around two hundred individuals. They looted the city, seizing vast amounts of wealth—money, goods, weapons, fabrics, jewelry, and valuable merchandise—so much that it could neither be contained nor counted.”⁵⁵

فساروا إلى الطائف وفيها غالب الشريف وقد تحصن فيها، وتأهب واستعد لحربهم. فنزلته تلك الجموع فيها فألقى الله في قلبه الرعب وانهزم إلى مكة، وترك الطائف فدخله عثمان ومن معه من الجموع وقتحه الله لهم عنوة بغير قتال، وقتلوا من أهله في الأسواق والبيوت، فقتل منهم عدة مائتين. وأخذوا من البلد من الأموال الأثمان، والأمتاع، والسلاح، والقماش، والجواهر، والسلع الثمينة ما لا يحيط به الحصر ولا يدركه العد

Keep in mind that this is the sanitized Wahhabi description of the siege. But Ahmad Dahlan, the Grand Mufti of Makka provides a different perspective. In his book *Khulasat al-Kalam*, he says:

“When [the Wahhabis] entered Taif, they carried out a mass killing, sparing neither the old nor the young, neither the rulers or the subjects, neither the nobles or the commoners. They slaughtered even the nursing infant on his mother’s chest. They climbed onto rooftops, dragging out those who had hidden and killing them. They found a group studying the Qur’an and killed them all, exterminating everyone in the houses. Then they moved to the shops and mosques, killing those inside—even slaying men in the mosque while they were bowing or prostrating—until they annihilated these people entirely.”⁵⁶

ولما دخلوا الطائف قتلوا الناس قتلاً عاماً واستوعبوا الكبير والصغير، والمأمور والأمير، والشريف والوضيع، وصاروا يذبحون على صدر الأم الطفل الرضيع، وصاروا يصعدون البيوت يخرجون من توارى فيها، فيقتلونهم. فوجدوا جماعة يتدارسون القرآن فقتلهم عن آخرهم حتى أبادوا من في البيوت جميعاً. ثم خرجوا إلى الحوانيت والمساجد وقتلوا من فيها، ويقتلون الرجل في المسجد وهو راکع أو ساجد، حتى أفنوا هؤلاء المخلوقات

Of course, Dahlan may be embellishing, but his account is not substantively different from what the Wahhabi historians themselves say.

In 1803, Abd al-Aziz died and his son Saud took his position as leader of the Wahhabis.

True to his Wahhabi roots, Saud combined blood lust with a bitter hatred for Muslims. This was more than evident in the letters he wrote to Muslim leaders, demanding they surrender to his rule. For example, in one letter, he taunts the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, who had been a Christian slave who had converted to Islam. Saud writes:

⁵⁵ Ibn Bishr, ‘Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd vol.1, p.259-260

⁵⁶ Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, *Khulāṣat al-kalām* (section Dhikr Qissa Ahl al-Ta’if wa ma waqa’ahum min al-Wahhabiyya)

“I hope that you die upon your Christian religion and are among the pigs of hellfire.”⁵⁷

This is how the Wahhabi leader addressed the Muslims leaders. In another letter to the Ottoman governor of Sham in Syria, Saud writes:

“I summon you to God alone without partner, as the Prophet said in his letter to Heraclius, ‘Submit, and you shall be safe.’”⁵⁸

The governor responds to this letter, outraged that the Wahhabi leader has takfired the entire region of Sham. He also calls the Wahhabis khawarij for taking up arms and rebelling against the Ottoman caliphate.

The Wahhabis wrote many of these letters to rulers in Iraq and Syria, takfiring them and then threatening them, if you do not accept our rule and our beliefs, then we will wage jihad against you, slaughter you, and take your women and children.

These weren’t empty threats. The attack on Sham, for example, happened around 1820 as described by Ibn Bishr:

“The news reached [Sa’ud] that in the deserts of the Levant, among its Arab tribes from the ‘Anaza, Bani Sakhr, and others [they were gathering]. However, when he arrived in that region, he found none of them, as someone had warned them beforehand. [...] When Ibn Sumayr and his followers heard of Saud’s approach, they fled with their Bedouin forces and descended into the Ghor region of Hawran. Saud then moved through that area, advancing and retreating, passing by the villages around Muzayrib and Busra. His forces plundered whatever goods and food they found and set the villages ablaze. The inhabitants had fled upon hearing of his march.

“Saud then encamped at ‘Ayn al-Bijjah, where the Muslims [i.e., his soldiers] drank from its waters, and their horses and armies were watered [...]

“Afterward, he returned to his homeland, carrying abundant spoils of horses, goods, furnishings, and food. Many people from the Levant were killed, and this raid caused great fear and panic throughout the Levant, including Damascus and its surrounding regions, as well as all its Bedouin tribes.”⁵⁹

بلغه الخبر أن بوادي الشام وعربانه من عنزة وبني صخر وغيرهم فيها , فلما وصل تلك الناحية لم يجد فيها أحداً منهم , وإذا قد سبقه النذير إليهم , فاجتمعوا على دوخي بن سمير رئيس ولد علي من عنزة , وهو من وراء الجبل المعروف بطويل الثلج قرب نابلس , نازلين عين

⁵⁷ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.286

⁵⁸ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.9 p.287

⁵⁹ Ibn Bishr, ‘Unwan al-Majd vol.1, p.309-310

القهوة من جبال حوران , ولما بلغ ابن سمير ومن معه إقبال سعود إليهم انهزم بمن معه من البوادي ونزلوا الغور من حوران , فسار سعود في تلك الناحية , وأقبل فيها وأدبر , واجتاز بالقرى التي حول مزيريب وبصرى , فنهبت الجموع ما وجدوا فيها من المتاع والطعام , وأشعلوا فيها النيران , وكان أهلها قد هربوا عنها لما سمعوا بمسيره , ثم نزل عين البجة , وروى منها المسلمون!! وشربت خيلهم.... وجيوشهم

ثم رجع قافلاً إلى وطنه ومعه غنائم كثيرة من الخيل والمتاع , والأثاث والطعام , وقتل من أهل الشام عدّة قتلى , وحصل في الشام رجة ورهب عظيم بهذه الغزوة , في دمشق وغيرها من بلدانه وجميع بواديته

The Wahhabis terrorized the Muslims of the Middle East with raiding, plundering, and murdering for decades.

Then in 1806, the Wahhabis set on attacking Makka, which was under Ottoman rule. Prior to the attack, Saud sent another shocking letter which was addressed to all the people of Makka, the scholars, the guardians of the sanctuary, and the Sultan's judge.

This letter starts off with [*al-salam `ala man ittaba'l-huda*] "Peace be upon those who follow guidance." He didn't start the letter with the [*Al salamu `alaykum*] because that is, of course, only the greeting given to fellow Muslims. Instead, he gave the customary greeting that is given to Christians because, according to the Wahhabi invaders, all the people of Makka and its scholars were collectively kafir mushriks, so no greetings of salam should be given to them. The letter reads:

"You are the neighbors of God and the inhabitants of His Sacred Sanctuary, secure under His protection. We invite you to the religion of God and His Messenger: "Say: O People of the Book! Come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Quran 3:64)⁶⁰

من سعود عبد العزيز الى كافة اهل مكة و العلماء الاغوات و قاضي السلطان
السلام على من اتبع الهدى، أما بعد
فأنتم جيران الله وسكان حرمة، آمنون بأمنه، إنما ندعوكم لدين الله ورسوله: «قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ»، فأنتم في وجه الله ووجه أمير المسلمين سعود بن عبدالعزيز، وأميركم عبدالمعين بن مساعد، فاسمعوا له وأطيعوا ما أطاع الله والاسلام

The ayah cited in the letter implies that all the residents of Makka are not Muslim, they are kafirs, and the Wahhabis are inviting them to embrace Islam for the first time.

After a period of siege, the Wahhabis were able to conquer Makka Mukarrama. After doing so, they forced the Sunni scholars in the city to sign a document. What is interesting about this document is that it is a confession. This document reads as follows:

⁶⁰ Ibn Bishr, 'Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd

“We bear witness – as scholars of Makka, who have affixed our signatures and seals to this document – that the religion upheld by Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (may Allah have mercy on him) and to which the leader of the Muslims, Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz, has called, consisting of the monotheism of Allah and the rejection of polytheism as mentioned in this book, is indeed the truth, without doubt or uncertainty. We also bear witness that the types of polytheism mentioned in this book, which have occurred in Makka, Medina in the past, and in Egypt, Syria, and other lands up to the present time, constitute disbelief that permits the shedding of blood and the confiscation of wealth, and warrants eternal punishment in Hellfire.

“Whoever does not embrace this religion, act according to it, ally with its adherents, and oppose its enemies is, in our view, a disbeliever in Allah and the Last Day. It is incumbent upon the leader of the Muslims and upon the Muslims to strive against and fight such a person until they repent to Allah from what they are upon and adhere to this religion.

“I testify to this, and it is written by the one in need of Allah, the Exalted: Abd al-Malik ibn Abd al-Mun’imi, the Mufti of Makka, may Allah pardon and forgive him...”⁶¹

نشهد - ونحن علماء مكة، الواضعون خطوطنا، وأختامنا في هذا الرقيم - أن هذا الدين، الذي قام به الشيخ محمد بن عبد الوهاب، رحمه الله تعالى، ودعا إليه إمام المسلمين سعود بن عبد العزيز، من توحيد الله، ونفي الشرك، الذي ذكره في هذا الكتاب، أنه هو الحق الذي لا شك فيه ولا ريب، وأن ما وقع في مكة والمدينة، سابقا، ومصر والشام وغيرهما من البلاد إلى الآن، من أنواع الشرك المذكورة في هذا الكتاب، أنه: الكفر، المبيح للدم والمال والموجب للخلود في النار؛ ومن لم يدخل في هذا الدين، ويعمل به، ويوالي أهله، ويعادي أعداءه، فهو عندنا كافر بالله واليوم الآخر، وواجب على إمام المسلمين والمسلمين، جهاده وقتاله، حتى يتوب إلى الله مما هو عليه، ويعمل بهذا الدين.

أشهد بذلك، وكتبه الفقير إلى الله تعالى: عبد الملك بن عبد المنعم، القلعي، الحنفي، مفتي مكة المكرمة، عفى عنه، وغفر له.

So the Wahhabis forced the scholars of Makka to confess that:

1. Their previous teachings were kufr and shirk
2. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s teachings were true beyond doubt
3. The Saudi state was correct in killing them and taking their property through jihad because Makka was Dar al-Harb and a land of kufr and shirk.

This letter reveals, again, the mentality of the Saudi Wahhabi state: Only the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are the true Muslims. Literally everyone else in the Ummah, even the residents of Makka itself and its most senior scholars, are kafir mushriks and jihad must be waged against them.

This whole incident is reminiscent of the time the khawarij forced Sayyidna Ali, the fourth caliph, to retake the Shahada. These khawarij claimed that Ali had fallen into kufr because of a political decision he had made. So they demanded that he retake his shahada and rejoin the “Muslims.” Just

⁶¹ al-Durar al-Saniyya, vol.1 p.314

like the khawarij did to the Sahaba, the Wahhabis held the Muslims hostage and killed them if they did not concede.

This is how the Saudi state continued to expand until the Ottomans finally decided to put an end to their reign of terror. The Ottomans commissioned Muhammad Ali of Egypt to take back Makka and Madina. By 1818, the Egyptian forces had regained control, not only of the Hijaz but also Najd, destroying Diriyya and taking the Saudi and Wahhabi leaders prisoner.

Of course, the Saud clan would once again come to rule Najd and the Hijaz once the European powers defeated the Ottomans in World War 1. As they had done previously, the Saudis took advantage of the Ottomans being preoccupied with defensive wars against invading European powers. The modern Saudi state was founded in 1932 and the family of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab known as Aal Shaykh continued to be in charge of all religious institutions in the country.

6. Was Ibn Abd al-Wahhab a Khariji?

In authentic hadith, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

“O Allah! Bestow Your blessings on our Sham! O Allah! Bestow Your blessings on our Yemen.” The People heard this and said, “And also on our Najd.” But the Prophet just repeated himself, “O Allah! Bestow Your blessings on our Sham (north)! O Allah! Bestow Your blessings on our Yemen.” The people said, “O Allah's Apostle! And also on our Najd.” But again, the Prophet just repeated the same dua. After the third time of the people asking for the Prophet to also include Najd, he said, “Najd is the place of earthquakes and afflictions and from there comes out the horn of the head of Satan.”⁶²

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ بْنُ سَعْدٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَوْنٍ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ ذَكَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي شَأْمِنَا، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي يَمَنِنَا". قَالُوا وَفِي نَجْدِنَا. قَالَ "اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي شَأْمِنَا، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي يَمَنِنَا". قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَفِي نَجْدِنَا فَأُظِنُّهُ قَالَ فِي الثَّالِثَةِ "هُنَاكَ الزَّلَازِلُ وَالْفِتَنُ، وَبِهَا يَطْلُعُ قَرْنُ الشَّيْطَانِ"

So, what's in Najd?

Historically, the people of the Najd are characterized by ignorance and lack of knowledge about Islam. Najd was the land of the famous false prophet Musaylima who fought against the Muslims, and was killed in 632 in the Battle of Yamama. During the late seventh century, Najd then became a homeland for the khawarij, who also waged war on the Muslims. Despite their ignorance, they claimed to know the religion better than the Prophet's ﷺ Companions, who they takfired and killed.

⁶² Sahih al-Bukhari 7094

When the Wahhabi movement arose, many scholars described them as khawarij, and linked them to the hadith condemning the Najd. These scholars noted that a defining feature of the khawarij is that they declare mass takfir on Muslims and fight them instead of non-Muslims. Earlier we saw that the great Hanafi jurist Ibn Abidin (1784-1836), in *Radd al-Muhtar*, explicitly condemns the Wahhabis as khawarij and says that they are at war with Ahl al-Sunna.

The great Maliki jurist Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Sawi (1761-1825) makes this connection in his commentary on Quran verse 35:8, which reads:

“What about those whose evil deeds are made alluring to them so that they think they are good?”

أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا

Al-Sawi says:

“It is said that this verse was revealed concerning the khawarij, who distort the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna and thereby deem the shedding of Muslim blood and the seizure of their wealth as lawful. This is exactly what is observed today among their likes—a group [...] known as the Wahhabis. They think they are upon something [true], but indeed, they are the liars. Satan has gained control over them and made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Satan, and indeed, the party of Satan will be the losers. We ask the Most Generous Allah to eradicate them.”⁶³

يقول في تفسير الآية الكريمة: [أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا تَذْهَبُ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَاتٍ [إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ] [فاطر: ٨]

وقيل: هذه الآية نزلت في الخوارج الذين يحرفون تأويل الكتاب والسنة ويستحلون بذلك دماء المسلمين وأموالهم، كما هو مشاهد الآن في نظائرهم، وهم فرقة بأرض الحجاز يقال لهم: الوهابية، ويحسبون أنهم على شيء ألا إنهم هم الكاذبون استحوذ عليهم الشيطان فأنسأهم ذكر. - الله أولئك حزب الشيطان ألا إن حزب الشيطان هم الخاسرون - نسأل الله الكريم أن يقطع دابرهم

Sulayman ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the book we quoted earlier also condemns his brother as a deviant and notes that his teaching conflicts with hadith. According to hadith, the Prophet ﷺ calls for Allah to bless the Hijaz as a place of Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ condemns Najd as a place of misguidance. Sulayman observes that his brother Ibn Abd al-Wahhab has the exact opposite view, claiming that the Hijaz is a place of shirk, and that true Islam is only found in his Saudi state in Najd.

The modern Wahhabis have another parallel with the khawarij.

⁶³ Ahmad al-Sawi, Kitab Ara' al-Sawi

What made the khawarij deviant is they were attracted to extremes. They believed that if someone drinks wine or commits adultery, then that sin would take the person out of Islam. But none of the Sahaba agreed with this. A Muslim can commit sins, even major sins, but they won't lose their iman because of that. But the khawarij did not accept this. They began takfiring Muslims left and right and then killed those Muslims as apostates. And when the Salaf told them that their takfir was not justified, they accused the Sahaba of defending sins. If you say drinking wine is just a sin and is not kufr, that means you're defending drinking wine. And if you say committing adultery is just a sin and is not kufr, that means you're defending adultery.

This was the twisted logic of the khawarij, but we see the exact same reasoning from the Wahhabis. Just like the khawarij exaggerated every issue into a matter of iman and kufr, the Wahhabis also exaggerate every secondary and tertiary difference of opinion into a matter of iman and kufr. Rather than seeing other Muslims as confused sinners who are in need of guidance, the Wahhabis view Muslims as just a bunch of polytheists who must takfired, boycotted, and killed.

The typical Wahhabi response to this is to say that khawarij declared takfir on the basis of *actions*. That is what made them khawarij, but we only declare takfir on the basis of *aqida*.

But it was none other than Ibn Taymiyya who refuted this argument. Ibn Taymiyya says it's not just about actions:

“The person who makes an interpretation (*ta'wil*), with the intention of following the Prophet ﷺ, is not declared to be a disbeliever, and is not declared to be sinful, if he performed ijtihad and made a mistake. This is well known among the people with regards to matters involving actions. However, when it comes to matters of belief (*aqida*), many people declare those who make mistakes to be disbelievers.

“[However] this statement is not known to have been said by any of the Companions or the Followers who followed them with excellence, nor from any of the Imams of the Muslims. In fact, it originates from the statements of the innovators (*Ahl al-Bida*), who innovate new beliefs and declare those who oppose to be disbelievers, such as the Khawarij, Mu'tazilites, and Jahmites. This also occurred among many followers of the Imams, such as some of the followers of Malik, Shafi'i, Ahmad, and others.”⁶⁴

أَنَّ الْمُتَأَوَّلَ الَّذِي قَصَدَهُ مُتَابِعَةُ الرَّسُولِ لَا يَكْفُرُ، بَلْ وَلَا يَفْسُقُ إِذَا اجْتَهَدَ فَأَخْطَأَ. وَهَذَا مَشْهُورٌ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ فِي الْمَسَائِلِ الْعَمَلِيَّةِ. وَأَمَّا مَسَائِلُ
الْعَقَائِدِ فَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ كَفَرُ الْمُخْطِئِينَ فِيهَا
وَهَذَا الْقَوْلُ لَا يُعْرَفُ عَنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ لَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ، وَلَا عَنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ أَيْمَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّمَا هُوَ فِي الْأَصْلِ مِنْ أَقْوَالِ أَهْلِ الْبِدْعِ،
الَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ بِذَعَةٍ وَيَكْفُرُونَ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ، كَالْخَوَارِجِ وَالْمُعْتَزِلَةِ وَالْجَهْمِيَّةِ، وَوَقَعَ ذَلِكَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ أَتْبَاعِ الْأَيْمَةِ، كَبَعْضِ أَصْحَابِ مَالِكٍ
وَالشَّافِعِيِّ وَأَحْمَدَ وَغَيْرِهِمْ

⁶⁴ Ibn Taymiyya, Minhaj al-Sunna

Ibn Taymiyya says it very clearly here. Even in matters of aqida, exaggerating an issue or inventing new distinctions and then takfiring anyone who doesn't accept them is from none other than the khawarij. It's almost as if Ibn Taymiyya is describing Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Najdi dawah to the T.

7. Wahhabi Apologetics

When the modern followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are presented with his shocking takfiri views and his involvement with brutal massacres of Muslims, they have one of two reactions. They either claim that he is being misrepresented. Or they claim that there is nothing wrong with his takfiri views and the brutal massacres.

All the hardcore supporters of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab have this same vibe. They're deeply confused and conflicted.

For example, one of the common talking points of the Ibn Abd al-Wahhab apologists is that, if it weren't for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, all of Arabia would be covered in idols and the whole world pretty much would have regressed to abject paganism. This is simply false. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was only one of many revivalists that lived in the 18th century who advocated for stricter adherence to the Quran and Sunnah. These revivalists all opposed the practices of saint veneration and other innovations. And they worked to educate the Muslim masses in order to eliminate these beliefs and practices. The best example of this is Shah WaliAllah al-Dehlawi, who you may remember, had one of the same teachers as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Shah WaliAllah strongly condemns istighatha.

“Realise that asking needs from the dead, [even] while recognising that this is a means to having it fulfilled, is kufr. It must be avoided. This kalimah (i.e. the shahadah) forbids it, and yet people today are engrossed in it.”⁶⁵

But even though he thinks istighatha is kufr, he is not 100% certain due to the absence of a clear Quranic verse or mutawatir hadith. He says:

“Anyone who goes to the [graves of saints] for a need he requests of them, indeed he has committed a sin more grievous than murder and adultery. His likeness is not but like those who worship the creation or like those who call on Lat and ‘Uzza [for help]. However, we do not state explicitly that he has disbelieved due to the absence of a text from the Lawgiver in this specific matter. Anyone who assigns life to the dead and requests his needs from them, ‘his heart is surely sinful’ (Qur’an, 2:283), and [this act] is included in His statement (Exalted is He), ‘that is iniquity’ (Qur’an, 5:3).”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Shah Wali Allah, al-Khayr al-Kathīr, al-Majlis al-‘Ilmī, p. 105

⁶⁶ Shah Wali Allah, al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyyah, 2:45

تفهيم – كل من ذهب إلى بلدة أجمير أو إلى قبر سالار مسعود أو ما ضاهاها لأجل حاجة يطلبها فإنه أثم إنما أكبر من القتل والزنا. ليس مثله إلا مثل من كان يعبد المصنوعات أو مثل من كان يدعو اللات والعزى إلا أنا لا نصرح بالتكفير لعدم النص من الشارع في هذا الأمر المخصوص. كل من عين حيوان الميت وطلب منه الحوائج فإنه أثم قلبه داخل في قوله تعالى ذلكم فسق

What is ironic is that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab would takfir Shah Wali Allah for this view because, according to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's chain takfir principle, Shah Wali Allah has not takfired the mushriks, therefore Shah Wali Allah is himself a kafir apostate and his blood is halal. This is despite the fact that Shah Wali Allah doesn't simply think istighatha is haram; he actually considers it shirk.

But, putting that aside, we see many scholars in that time period who were strongly opposed to istighatha, but unlike Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, they didn't declare the whole Ummah to be kafir mushrik and wage offensive jihad against them. That's a huge difference.

Here is a brief list of other revivalists who lived in Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's era and opposed saint veneration without takfiring the whole Ummah. The point of this list is not to say I agree with every opinion of every scholar here, but simply to point out that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab didn't have a monopoly on opposing shirk and bid'a.

Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī (1688-1769) in Arabia

Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Shawkānī (1759-1834) in Arabia

Muhammad ibn 'Alī al-Sanūsī (1787-1859) in North Africa

Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī (1802-1854) in Iraq

Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī (1703-1762) in South Asia

Shāh Ismā'īl al-Dihlawī (1779-1831) in South Asia

8. Avoiding Debate

The other important tendency of today's Wahhabis is they avoid direct debate with knowledgeable people. This avoidance is yet another characteristic they share with the khawarij. Knowledgeable Sahaba like Ibn Abbas challenged the khawarij to debate, and in one instance when the khawarij accepted to debate, they lost and agreed to leave Kharijism. But in general, the khawarij avoided debating the more knowledgeable Sahaba because they knew they would be defeated.

Similarly, the Wahhabis run from debate, and they run for the same reason. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is legendary for being ignorant, and for creating his movement out of ignorant tribes from the Najd. You'll recall in the quote we saw earlier, the great scholar Saṇānī describes Ibn Abd al-Wahhab as being someone with a great deal of ignorance.

During Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's life, religious scholars in Makka and elsewhere began challenging him and his followers to debates. They did this to expose to the public that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was ignorant, and that his

views were deviant if not outright kufr. After being humiliated in public debates, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's followers ran away and stopped participating. Instead, they simply began killing those who disagreed with them.

This is described by Ahmad Zayni Dahlan (1816–1886) the distinguished Shafi'i scholar, and the Grand Mufti of Makka.

“In the beginning of their movement, they sent a group of their scholars, thinking they could corrupt the beliefs of the scholars of the Two Holy Sanctuaries (Makka and Madina) and introduce doubts to them through lies and deception. However, when they arrived at the holy cities and presented their beliefs and what they relied upon, the scholars of the Haramayn responded to them and established proofs and arguments against them, which they were unable to refute.

“It became clear to the scholars of the Haramayn that they were ignorant and misguided. They found them to be objects of ridicule and mockery, like frightened donkeys fleeing from a lion.”⁶⁷

كانوا في ابتداء أمرهم أرسلوا جماعة من علمائهم ظننا منهم أنهم يفسدون عقائد علماء الحرمين ويدخلون عليهم الشبهة بالكذب والمين، فلما وصلوا إلى الحرمين وذكروا لعلماء الحرمين عقائدهم وما تملكوا به، رد عليهم علماء الحرمين وأقاموا عليهم الحجج والبراهين التي عجزوا عن دفعها، وتحقق لعلماء الحرمين جهلهم وضلالهم ووجدوهم ضحكة ومسخرة، كحمر مستنفرة، فرت من قسورة، ونظروا إلى عقائدهم فوجدوها مشتملة على كثير من المكفرات.

فبعد أن أقاموا البرهان عليهم كتبوا عليهم حجة عند قاضي الشرع بمكة تتضمن الحكم بكفرهم بتلك العقائد ليشتبه بين الناس أمرهم، فيعلم بذلك الأول والآخر، وكان ذلك في مدة إمارة الشريف مسعود بن سعيد بن سعد بن زيد المتوفى سنة خمس وستين ومائة وألف، وأمر بحبس أولئك فحبسوا وفر بعضهم إلى الدرعية، فأخبرهم بما شاهدوا فازدادوا عتوا واستكبارا، فصاروا يغيرون على بعض القبائل الداخلين تحت طاعة أمير مكة، ثم انتشب القتال بينهم وبين أمير مكة مولانا الشريف غالب بن مساعد بن سعيد بن سعد بن زيد وكان ابتداء القتال بينهم وبينه من سنة خمس بعد المائتين والألف ووقع بينهم وبينه وقائع كثيرة قتل فيها خلانق كثيرون، ولم يزل أمرهم يقوى وبدعتهم تنتشر إلى أن دخل تحت طاعتهم أكثر القبائل والعربان الذين كانوا تحت طاعة أمير مكة

Personally, I have experienced this from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab supporters. Remember two years ago, I challenged my Madkhali critics to debate me. Not a single one agreed to the challenge. They claimed debating is a bida. Really? It's a bida? Sounds like you're just like those donkeys Mufti Dahlan was mentioning.

Then over the past few months, I've been challenging another group of sectarians to debate me on the topics of takfir and sectarianism. I even offered these people \$2000 to debate plus the advantage of debate partners so it would be 4 of them versus just me. And this time the old “debating is bida” excuse wouldn't fly because the main person I challenged claims to be a professional debater. But

⁶⁷ Ahmad Dahlan, Fitna al-Wahhabiyya

still, the only response I got to these challenges was a lot of braying. They're truly the followers of their shaykh!

9. Wahhabism and the End of Khilafa

As we have seen, the defining characteristic of Wahhabis is their hatred and backstabbing of the Ummah.

Nothing better represents this than the alliance of the Wahhabis with the British in the early 20th century. The Wahhabis experienced a re-emergence of political power due to military campaigns led by Abd al-Aziz Ibn Saud (1880-1953). Ibn Saud reconquered Riyadh in 1902 and over the next decade expanded his rule across Najd. But Ibn Saud wasn't satisfied with Najd alone. He desired to annex the Hijaz - a goal that had eluded earlier members of the Saud dynasty. Annexing the Hijaz required defeating the Ottomans and the Arab tribes allied with the Ottomans. The opportunity to defeat the superior Ottoman forces came with World War 1. In 1914, the Ottomans issued a jihad proclamation, calling on the world's Muslims to fight back against the British and other allied European powers who were threatening to destroy the Caliphate. But Ibn Saud and the Wahhabis rejected this call for Muslim unity. In fact, Ibn Saud saw this as the perfect time to go the opposite direction and formalize an alliance with the British.

In 1915, Ibn Saud signed the Treaty of Darin. This treaty made the Wahhabi Najd a British protectorate. The treaty formalized Ibn Saud and Wahhabis as allies of the British against the Ottomans in World War 1. As a reward for backstabbing the Ottomans, the British formally recognized Najd and offered it British protection. They also gave Ibn Saud a £20,000 loan and a shipment of arms, as well as a monthly stipend of £5,000.

Isn't it amazing that just £5,000 a month is all it took for the Wahhabis to sell out the Ummah to the enemies of Islam? The Wahhabis knew the British were invading and massacring Muslims, burning down their homes and their mosques, but they sided with the British anyway and celebrated when Sunni Muslims were being slaughtered.

If you think I'm exaggerating, just consider the fatwa from top Wahhabi authority Sulayman ibn Sahman, who lived from 1850 to 1930. Ibn Sahman was one of the highest ranking authorities in the entire history of the Wahhabi movement. Ibn Sahman's fatwa has been preserved as a historical manuscript by King Saud University and, at time of recording, you can still download it directly from their manuscript database.

The fatwa states that Ottoman Sunni Muslims are all kafir murtads. Furthermore, their level of kufr is worse than that of Jews and Christians, who are standard kafirs, or what they term "kafir asli."

“Question: What is your opinion regarding the [Ottoman] Turkish state and the Christians - may Allah curse them all: Which of the two is greater in disbelief? And which of the two groups deserves to be granted victory over the other?

Answer: [...] The disbelief of these people, the cursed Turkish state, is more severe than that of the Jews and Christians, and far more harmful to Islam and the Muslims than the Christians. This is because they are apostates from Islam, and the apostate is more severe in disbelief than the disbeliever who was never a Muslim (i.e., kafir asli). [...]

There is no doubt that these apostates - from among the Turkish soldiers and others - are more disbelieving than the Jews and Christians, as is well known from the words of Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyya], as he explicitly stated regarding the Nusayris. It is known that they outwardly display Islam; that they pronounce the two testimonies of faith; that they perform Friday and congregational prayers; and they appoint [Sharia] judges, as they did when they took control of Egypt.⁶⁸

: مسألة

- ما قولكم - أدام الله فضلكم - في الدولة التركية والنصارى -لعنهم الله جميعا
إيهما أعظم كفراً ؟ وأي الطائفتين يجب انتصارها على الأخرى؟ افتنا مأجوراً. أثابك الله الجنة أمين

:الجواب

الحمد لله، والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده، اعلم وفقك الله- أن كفر هؤلاء-الدولة التركية الملعونة - أغلظ من كفر اليهود والنصارى وأعظم ضرراً على الإسلام والمسلمين من النصارى بكثير ؛ لأنهم مرتدون عن الإسلام، والمرتد عن الإسلام أغلظ من كفر الكافر الأصلي؛ لما سنبينه من الأدلة القاطعة والبراهين الساطعة
ولا شك أن هؤلاء المرتدين من العساكر التركية وغيرهم، أكفر من اليهود والنصارى، كما هو معلوم من كلام شيخ الإسلام، وكما صرح به في النصيرية ومن المعلوم أنهم يتظاهرون بالإسلام، [ويتلفظون] بالشهادتين، ويصلُّون الجمعة والجماعة، وينصبون القضاة، لما [استولوا على مصر

So, Ibn Sahman is citing Ibn Taymiyya and claiming that Ibn Taymiyya's opinion about Nusayris applies to the Ottomans. Now to understand how crazy this is, you have to realize who the Nusayris are. Nusayris believe that Ali ibn Ali Talib is literally God. They believe Ali is the Divine incarnation of God and they worship him as God. So of course, Ibn Taymiyya and all other Muslim scholars throughout history said that Nusayris are not Muslim. But how in the world are you going to compare Nusayris, who believe God was a man walking the earth, with Sunni Ottomans? How completely insane is this? If you remember, this is exactly the twisted logic of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who said that the Sunni Muslims of Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Makka, and Madina were all mushriks worse than Abu Jahl. Why? Because some people in those places have Sufi practices like istighatha, therefore, because of auto-takfir and chain takfir, they're all mushriks worse than Abu Jahl. This is the deviant Wahhabi takfir doctrine we discussed earlier. And, as we've seen, Ibn Taymiyya has nothing to do with this deviance. Never did Ibn Taymiyya mass takfir Sufis or entire regions where Sufis

⁶⁸ Sulayman ibn Sahman, 1915 Unpublished Fatwa Retrieved from King Saud University Manuscript Database #3422

practicing istighatha lived. Yet, here is this so-called “scholar,” Ibn Sahman citing Ibn Taymiyya and applying Ibn Taymiyya’s opinion about Nusayris in order to mass takfir the Sunni Ottomans.

Now the second part of the question was, who should the Muslims want to be victorious, the British or the Ottoman Turks? To answer this, Ibn Sahman refers to the sirah. He points out that, when the Persians and the Romans were at war, the Sahaba were cheering for the Romans. Why? Because at least the Romans were Christians and were Ahl al-Kitab, i.e., People of the Book, whereas the Persians of the time were mushrik fire-worshippers. So on that basis the Sahaba were more in favor of the Romans. Ibn Sahman applies this logic to the British and the Ottomans.

“Once it becomes clear to you that the Persians were worshipers of statues and idols; and that the Romans were People of the Book; and that the polytheists among Qurayshi disbelievers rejoiced at the victory of the Persians over the Romans, because both were idol worshipers; and that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his companions rejoiced at the victory of the Romans over the Persians, because they were People of the Book, - and although both groups [Persians and Romans] were disbelievers who had never been Muslim, the Muslims rejoiced at the Romans’ victory because they were People of the Book, while the Persians were not, but rather idolaters.

“It is also known that the disbelief of the apostate is more severe than that of the disbeliever who has never been Muslim (al-kafir al-asli), as we have already established with evidence. Therefore, rejoicing at the victory of the People of the Book over idol worshipers in our time [i.e., the Turks] is even more appropriate. This is because they are apostates so their disbelief is worse than the disbelief of those who have never been Muslim.”⁶⁹

فإذا تبين لك: أن أهل فارس عبدة أوثان وأصنام، وأن الروم أهل كتاب، وأن المشركين من كفار قريش يفرحون بنصر فارس على الروم؛ لأنهم وإياهم عباد أوثان وأصنام، وكان رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وأصحابه يفرحون بانتصار الروم على الفرس؛ لأنهم أهل كتاب وكُلُّ من هؤلاء وهؤلاء كُفِرَ هُم كُفَرِ أَصْلِي، وقد فرح المسلمون بانتصار الروم لأنهم أهل كتاب على الفرس لأنهم ليسوا بأهل كتاب، بل كانوا من عبدة الأوثان والأصنام، وقد كان من المعلوم أن كفر المرتد أغلظ من كفر الكافر الأصلي لما قَدَّمْنَا من الأدلة؛ فكان الفرح بانتصار أهل الكتاب على عبدة الأوثان في هذه الأزمان بطريق الأولى والأحرى؛ لأن كفرهم لأجل ردتهم عن الإسلام أغلظ من كفر الكافر الأصلي،

Keep in mind that in 1915, the Ottoman Caliphate included not only Turkey, but also Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and the Hijaz, Makka and Madina. According to Ibn Sahman, Muslims in these regions are apostate kafir mushriks— whose disbelief is more severe than that of Christians and Jews. Therefore, the real Muslims, meaning the Wahhabis, should hope and pray that the British invaders wipe them all out.

⁶⁹ Sulayman ibn Sahman, 1915 Unpublished Fatwa Retrieved from King Saud University Manuscript Database #3422

This shocking fatwa is not well known because Wahhabis have aggressively hidden these historical documents which reveal the truth about their movement. The fatwa was endorsed by Abdullah bin Abd al-Latif (1848-1920) who was a direct descendent of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and was the highest ranking Wahhabi scholar of his time. Abdullah was also the direct teacher of Ibn Saud (1875- 1953).

Ibn Saud, who would eventually found the modern Saudi state, truly believed the Wahhabi doctrine that the British were superior to Sunni Muslims.

All of this is reported by Harry St John Bridger Philby (1885-1960). Philby was a high-ranking British colonial intelligence officer who served as advisor to Ibn Saud, and was one of Ibn Saud's close friends. Philby reports his conversations with Ibn Saud in the book "Arabia of the Wahhabis" published in 1928.

Philby says:

"Ibn Sa'ud hastened to explain that most of their time had been spent in close contact with their English hosts and that they had seen but little of the local Muslims. He then seized the opportunity of launching out into one of his favourite themes—the comparative merits of Christians and non-Wahhabi Muslims, lumped together in the category of Mushrikin. *Why!" he said, 'if you English were to offer me of your daughters to wife I would accept her, making only the condition that any children resulting from the marriage should be Muslims. But I would not take of the daughters of the Sharif or of the people of Makka or other Muslims, whom we reckon as Mushrikin. I would eat of meat slain by the Christians without question. Ay, but it is the Mushrik, he who associates others in worship with God, that is our abomination. As for Christians and Jews,' here he quoted a text from the Quran, 'they are "people of a book," though,' and here somewhat naively he permitted himself a delightful dash of inconsistency, 'I like not the Jews—they are contemptible by reason of their too great love of money.' Sincere as he was in his own religion, Ibn Sa'ud was fully convinced of the practical advantages of a British alliance, and it seemed to me in these days that anything like a cordial reaction on our part would result surely and steadily in the establishment of the toleration of Christians as a basic factor of the Wahhabi creed."⁷⁰

Ibn Saud conveys to this British colonial officer how Islam gives a higher status to Christians and Jews above non-Wahhabi Muslims. He also says his eagerness to ally with the British empire against the so-called mushrikin. Elsewhere, Ibn Saud even admits that he believes the Ottoman Turks are an inferior race:

"Ibn Sa'ud, by way of commentary [on a Quranic chapter he had read] turned to me and remarked that he [...] was of the stock of Isma'il— 'cousins to you [Christian Britons], for you

⁷⁰ Harry St John Bridger Philby, *Arabia of the Wahhabis*

are of the stock of Ishaq.' The Turks, he said, were Awlad Iblis [children of the devil], being Tatars by origin."⁷¹

According to Ibn Saud, the British and the Wahhabis are cousins because the British are descended from Isaac and the Wahhabis are descended from Ishmael. But the Ottoman Turks are nothing more than the children of Satan.

Phillby continues:

"Thus in every way within his power Ibn Saud, in preparation for his coming campaign, was laying the foundations of a general acceptance of his basic policy of an alliance with Britain."⁷²

Ibn Saud's hatred for Sunni Muslims resulted in numerous massacres that have been extensively documented by historians.

For example, did you know that the Wahhabi murdered over 3000 Yemeni pilgrims?

In 1923, Ibn Saud's paramilitary gangs shot dead over 3,000 Yemeni pilgrims heading toward Makka to perform the annual Hajj. When the Yemenis arrived in the southern provinces, one of Ibn Saud's gangs started shooting the pilgrims, killing 3105.

This massacre is described in the book "The Great Massacre of Pilgrims," by Professor Hamoud Al-Ahnoumi. Professor Ahnoumi claims that this massacre took place for a number of reasons. Ahnoumi says that Ibn Saud did not want the Yemenis to interfere with his plans to conquer the Hijaz in alliance with Britain. Ahnoumi also says that this massacre was a British "acceptance test" for Ibn Saud, so that Ibn Saud could prove to the British that he was willing to do anything they asked. Ahnoumi says:

"Britain was preparing Ibn Saud to be its first man and main agent in the region, who would implement its disruptive and differentiating project, but it wanted him to carry out an acceptance test that would qualify him to be its man who could carry out any ugly thing it asked of him."⁷³

At the time of Ibn Saud, another Wahhabi massacre took place in Taif. As mentioned earlier, in 1803 there was an infamous massacre in Taif which saw the Wahhabis kill 200 Sunnis. In 1924, they carried out another massacre where they massacred 500 Sunnis. Then they robbed the remaining residents, leaving them no food. As a result, thousands starved to death. This is all described in the book "The

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ As quoted in article "The forgotten massacre of Yemeni pilgrims in Tanomah, Sadwan of Saudi Arabia" <https://english.almayadeen.net/articles/feature/the-forgotten-massacre-of-yemeni-pilgrims-in-tanomah-sadwan>

Hijaz” by Malik Dahlan, published by Oxford University Press in 2018. The book collects the testimonies of multiple eyewitness accounts of the atrocities:

“British diplomats played down the situation in their initial reports [...but] As more refugees arrived from Taif and it became clear that a number of British subjects had been killed or robbed during the attack, the evidence of Wahhabi brutality became clear. Yasin Khan, the Indian Pilgrimage Officer, wrote: ‘After the occupation of the town the Wahhabis behaved most brutally, killing the peaceful inhabitants treacherously and indiscriminately. About five to eight hundred men are said to have been killed. ... Seven men were taken out to ransom of 7,000 pounds.’

“Dr Munir-ud-Din submitted another account of events as described by his patients who had fled Taif: On 2 September they heard firing of bullet outside the walls of Taif. ... Ibn Saud’s men entered the town in the afternoon of 5 September with the words: ‘Heaven for you! Slaughter these mushrikeen [idolators], these kuffar [unbelievers], these enemies of Allah!’ They then made their way towards the tomb of Abdullah bin Abbas, demolished the cupola, levelled the grave to the ground and set fire there with the words: ‘Demolish the cupola of the mushrikeen that they worship.’ From that time onwards the bullets were shot all over indiscriminately into the houses of the town until 8am on the Saturday. ... When they entered a house they levelled their guns and pointed swords and knives towards the inmates and demanded that they surrender all gold and other coins. ... As soon as gold was collected the adults were often shot dead. ... On Saturday, some people were made to carry the dead bodies towards the tomb of Abdullah bin Abbas. The dead bodies were thrown there with the words that these kaffirs need not be buried but should be left there for dogs to devour. ... Dead bodies were also tied with rope and dragged by mules. ... Some soldiers of the Hashemite government who were left in the town threw off their uniforms and joined the common people as Arabs so as to be saved from being slaughtered.

“The testimony of another eyewitness, Runsi Ihsanullah, a British subject, described how the inhabitants of Taif were taken outside the town into Shubrah with no personal belongings or clothing except what they were wearing, while the Wahhabis collected all the valuables found in their homes. In the next three days no food was given to the captured, and when they were allowed to return to Taif, most decided to flee to other villages, as nothing was left in their homes. During that exodus many died on the way with no access to water. That event brought the estimated number of dead into the thousands. Another account states that the survivors were made to walk to Makkah barefoot in their underclothes with instructions to deliver a message that the Wahhabis were on their way, and those who supported Sharif Hussein would ‘meet the fate of Taif, otherwise they would be spared’. The atrocities reflect the extreme poverty of the Bedouin from the famished desert tribes, but also the political extremism inherent in the Wahhabi doctrine. In order to justify the killing of fellow Muslims

they first proclaimed them kuffar and mushrikin. They also reportedly called the conventional Sunni admiration of the Prophet Mohammad a form of idolatry.”⁷⁴

When you understand this history, you recognize that it is not an exaggeration to say that Wahhabis today literally prefer the US, Israel, and European powers over other Muslims. You might have thought I was exaggerating when I said that Wahhabis are working with the enemies of Islam today to slaughter Palestinians and betray the Ummah. But what do you think now that you know this history and you’ve seen their statements? Still think I’m exaggerating?

From the very beginning of the Saudi state, the Wahhabis conspired with the Europeans against the Caliphate and against the wider Ummah. Remember the Ibn Sahman fatwa from 1915? At this time, the Caliphate began calling all the Muslims of the world to support them. The Wahhabis favored the British to destroy the Ottomans, which would allow the Wahhabis to retake Hijaz and the Arabian Peninsula. This is exactly what happened at the end of the war, leading to the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate and the seizure of its lands, including Palestine, which was then given to Jews to establish Israel. And, of course, the rest of the Arab lands were divided up into nation states, creating the dysfunctional mess known as the modern Middle East we know today.

The depressing situation we have today in Palestine and the Middle East is a result of exactly what the Wahhabis worked for. Wahhabis have for centuries stabbed the Ummah in the back; they’ve repeatedly celebrated when Muslims were attacked and killed by non-Muslims; they’ve always preferred non-Muslims dominating over the Muslims with so-called “incorrect aqida.” Just like Ibn Saud worked with the British to destroy the Ottomans, Wahhabis in our time helped the US to destroy Iraq in two Gulf Wars. And we see many Wahhabis today encouraging and helping the US and Israel to destroy the Muslims in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen.

This is something no Muslim should ever forget. Because the Wahhabis lie and claim that what distinguishes them from other Muslims is their belief in "Tawhid" and following the Salaf. All of this is a propaganda hoax. What distinguishes Wahhabis is takfir and betrayal of all other Muslims, allying with non-Muslims against other Muslims, loyalty to the Saudi state over religion, and racism towards non-Saudis. That is the legacy of Wahhabism.

10. Saudi Wars

Throughout its long history, the Wahhabi state of Saudi Arabia has only ever gone to war with Muslims, never non-Muslims. The Saudi state has always valued jihad warfare, which is why the Saudi flag features a sword under the shahada.

⁷⁴ Malik Dahlan, *The Hijaz* (Oxford University Press, 2018), p.103-104

However, although the Saudi state has existed for almost 300 years (since 1744), it is unique in that it has never fought a war against a non-Muslim state in its history.

This is due to nothing other than the Wahhabi doctrine that non-Wahhabi Muslims are kafirs who are worse than the mushriks who fought the Prophet ﷺ and worse than Jews and Christians.

Let us look at the Saudi state's military history. Notice that in every conflict, the other side is Muslim.

1. Wahhabi Wars of Expansion (1744–1818)

Combatants: First Saudi State vs. Arabian tribes, local rulers, and the Ottoman Empire

2. Ottoman–Saudi War (1811–1818)

3. Saudi-Rashidi Wars (1903–1918)

4. Saudi-Hashemite Wars (1918–1925)

5. Kuwait-Najd War (1919–1920)

6. Saudi–Yemeni War (1934)

7. Gulf War (1990–1991)

8. Intervention in Yemen (2015–present)

The closest that the Saudi state has ever come to fighting non-Muslims is its symbolic participation in the Arab-Israeli wars between the 1940s and 1970s.

Compare this with other Muslim nations. Egypt fought the British and Israel. Indonesia fought the Dutch. Algeria fought the French. Libya fought the Italians. The Ottomans fought the Russians and the British. Pakistan and Bangladesh fought multiple wars against India. Iran fought Russia and Israel. Lebanon and Palestine have fought Israel. Bosnia and Albania fought Serbia. And the list goes on. But when it comes to the one and only Wahhabi state in history, they prefer to fight and kill other Muslims only.

11. How Did Wahhabism Transform into Salafism?

Remember the Salafi tree at the beginning of the presentation? Unfortunately, Wahhabism has hijacked the legacies of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya. This is why so many Salafis are so sensitive about Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. These Salafis are generally good Muslims who are yet to be red-pilled about the nature of Wahhabism. They don't really know the history of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab

and his true teachings because there has been a massive propaganda campaign to hide crucial facts about the history of Wahhabism.

Today, Wahhabis hate to be called Wahhabis. But prior to the mid-20th century, Wahhabis had no problem calling themselves “Wahhabis.”

For example, the leading Wahhabi scholar mentioned before, Sulayman ibn Sihman (1850-1930) wrote a work titled: “The Divine Gifts in the Defense of the Muhammadan Wahhabi Sect.”

But because of Wahhabi behavior, the Wahhabi brand had quickly become tarnished. Basically, from the time of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab until the early 20th century, the wider Muslim Ummah considered Wahhabis to be khariji deviants. This was a massive PR problem.

This is actually acknowledged by Husayn ibn Ghannaam (1739-1810). Ibn Ghannaam is one of the most famous Wahhabi scholars. He was a contemporary of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and was a direct associate of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's sons. Ibn Ghannam wrote the earliest history of Wahhabism, which is known as “Tarikh Najd,” which we cited earlier. Although Ibn Ghannam is a strong supporter of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, he acknowledges the fact that virtually all the scholars of the era had declared Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to be a khariji and a deviant outside of Ahl al-Sunna.

Ibn Ghannam says:

“The majority of scholars from various regions and eras asserted definitively that this individual [Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab] [...] is among the most evil of the misguided, the impious, and the disbelievers—and one of the worst of kharijites and depraved people.”⁷⁵

بل جزم أكثر علماء الأمصار في تلك الأزمان والأعصار بأن هذا المبين لآثار السلف الأخيار المتبع لهدى نبيه المختار من أقباح الضلال، والفساق والكفار وأشر الخوارج والفجار،

So even the biggest supporters of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab recognized how despised Ibn Abd al-Wahhab really was. But things changed during the reign of Abd al-Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud (1875-1953). Widely known as “Ibn Saud,” he’s the founder of the modern state of Saudi Arabia.

In 1925, Ibn Saud conquered the Hijaz, which caused widespread opposition from the world's Muslims. They did not want to see Makka and Madina overrun by these khariji Wahhabis. Ibn Saud responded to this backlash by denying that the Saudi state was a deviant khariji government. Ibn Saud wanted to integrate with the rest of the Sunni world. So he had to start eliminating or downplaying many of the khariji teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.

⁷⁵ Tarikh Najd

Of course, the more hardcore Wahhabis didn't like these reforms. So they rebelled against Ibn Saud in the 1927 Ikhwan revolt. But Ibn Saud ultimately crushed this revolt and proceeded with his campaign to make Wahhabism more palatable to the Sunni masses.

This is where Rashid Rida comes in. Rashid Rida was the famous student of Muhammad Abduh. Muhammad Abduh is the famous Muslim reformer who collaborated with the British colonial powers in the 19th century to modernize Islam in Egypt. Rashid Rida was Abduh's closest and most influential student.

By the early 20th century, Rashid Rida became the most important figure in terms of publishing Islamic books. He published the reformist journal *al-Manar*. He also printed and distributed many key Islamic texts.

But then Rida made a monumental decision that would change the history of the Ummah. Rida formed a partnership with Ibn Saud to reform Wahhabi religious teachings. This reform meant that Wahhabis would start adopting certain ideas from Abduh and Rida.

Now, why would Rashid Rida be interested in Wahhabism in the first place?

To understand this, we first have to understand that Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida were modernists. As modernists, they wanted the Muslim world to "catch up" with Europe so that Muslims could "progress" just like the Europeans had. So how could this happen? Well, they believed that what caused Europe to modernize was reforming Christianity. Christianity had a Protestant reformation which eliminated the superstitions and backwards beliefs of the Europeans. By eliminating the superstitions, Christians could become rational and scientific, and this led to modernization of Europe. Muslim modernists like Abduh and Rida wanted to do the same thing for Islam. They wanted to modernize Islam by eliminating all superstitious and "backwards" beliefs and practices and basically turn Islam into a type of simplified, rationalistic, Enlightenment deism.

Abduh and Rida equated this new simplified rationalistic deism with "tawhid." This was their new definition of "tawhid." All other aspects of Islam were downplayed or eliminated. For example, Abduh famously claimed that there is no such thing as jinn and anywhere that the Quran mentions jinn, it actually means microbes or germs. In this way, the "superstitious" belief in jinn is eliminated in favor of a scientific interpretation. Abduh and Rida wanted to similarly downplay or, in some cases, even eliminate doctrines involving angels, miracles, the supernatural power of Sufi awliya, magic, amulets, seeking baraka, and on and on. They considered all these Islamic doctrines to be associated with irrational, non-scientific superstitions. They consider these doctrines superstitious because they depart greatly from a scientific materialistic worldview.

Now this is where things get interesting. Abduh and Rida redefined the concept of "shirk" to include these non-scientific superstitions. If you believe in miraculous karamat pious awliya, that's not only irrational superstition; that's also shirk! So this is how Abduh and Rida not only redefined "tawhid,"

but also “shirk.” And they made it their mission to spread so-called “tawhid,” which is just a kind of rationalistic deism, and eliminate “shirk,” which they define as irrational superstition.

But now Abduh and Rida face a huge problem.

Pre-modern Islamic teachings do not teach a simplified rationalistic deism. Furthermore, there are many Islamic texts which legitimate amulets, seeking baraka, interactions with jinn, interactions with angels, interactions with the dead, belief in the supernatural power of Sufi awliya, belief in the reality of magic. All of this is not only acknowledged and endorsed in the Islamic tradition, it is even endorsed by figures like Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya! As we saw earlier, Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya endorse things like calling to angels and jinn. They also endorse seeking baraka and even the use of certain types of Quranic amulets. So this becomes a huge problem for Abduh and Rida.

But Rida found a solution for this. He appealed to the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab from almost 200 years before him. Rida finds in Ibn Abd al-Wahhab a premodern figure who goes against Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya in calling all these things shirk. This is great news for Rashid Rida. The only problem is, Wahhabism has such a bad reputation. So to solve this Rida rebrands Wahhabism as Salafism. The term Salafism was popularized by Rashid Rida in the twentieth century. A lot of Salafis don't know this fact because it's been repressed for the simple reason that Rashid Rida is a known reformist modernist.

In any case, Rida developed a strong relationship with the early 20th century Saudi government, which had just taken control of the Hijaz. Rida used his journal *al-Manar* and other publications to launch an international propaganda campaign to convince the Muslims of the world that Wahhabism was actually not a deviant kharij doctrine, and that everything they had heard about ibn Abd al-Wahhab was false.

Meanwhile, Rida sent many of his students to advise on the reform of religious and educational institutions within Saudi Arabia, for example, students like Taqi al-Din al-Hilali (1893-1987) and members associated with the Egyptian organization Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyah. Since this time, Saudi has aggressively promoted reformed Wahhabism around the world under the title of Salafism. The good news is, Salafism can be purified of these elements. We can cut off the rotten branch from the Salafi tree.

12. The Aftermath of Wahhabism

Let me make something absolutely clear. I am a big fan of the Salafi movement insofar as the Salafi movement upholds the methodology of Imam Ahmad in fiqh and aqida. When it comes to *that* Salafism, I'm a fanboy. But as we saw, the Salafi movement is not just Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya. So, if you ask me, what do I think of Sh al-Albani, Ibn Uthaymeen, and Uthman al-Khamis, I have a great deal of respect for these Salafi scholars, even if I don't agree with everything they teach.

But if you ask me about other Salafis, like Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and other ISIS figures, then no, I obviously don't respect them and I condemn them as deviants. If you ask me about takfiris like Muhammad Shams al-din, Dimishqiyya, and other Salafis who takfir Imams Ghazali, Nawawi, Ibn Hajar, and others, then no, I find them disgusting. And if you ask me about Madkhalis like Muhammad Raslan and Sulayman Ruhayli, they're also disgusting deviants. There's nothing strange about making these distinctions. In fact, Salafis make these distinctions amongst themselves.

But what is not often recognized by Salafis is that the worst tendencies of Salafism come directly from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Both Madkhalism and ISIS should be seen as the rotten fruits of the Najdi dawah.

12.1 Madkhalis

To learn more about Madkhalis, watch our video essay "The Madkhali Virus." The key characteristic of the Madkhalis that they take from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is undying loyalty to the House of Saud. Just like Ibn Abd al-Wahhab tied himself and his dawah inextricably to Ibn Saud, similarly the Madkhalis have redefined all of Islam to mean complete subservience to Gulf monarchies.

Also, following in the footsteps of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the Madkhalis have extreme hatred for the Ummah. If you've ever had the displeasure of dealing with these bootlickers, you know this well. The only Muslims they have any brotherly kindness for are Muslims who pledge allegiance to the Saudi monarchy. Everyone else is a deviant who, at minimum, must be boycotted. And if someone dares to publicly criticize the Gulf monarchies, then he is branded a khariji or even an apostate who should be killed. This is how Madkhalis, following in the footsteps of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, have made the blood of all Muslims licit.

It is hard for me to understand how any Salafi who sees the deviance of the Madkhalis could also admire Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was like a Madkhali on steroids. He was the ultimate Madkhali. He literally takfired Huraymila for daring to leave Ibn Saud's coalition. From day one, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab enmeshed his definition of Islam with the political power of the House of Saud, even ensuring that his family would have official religious roles in future Saudi regimes. Without a shadow of a doubt, the Madkhalis and the entire state religious establishment in Saudi are the direct result of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's deviance.

12.2 ISIS

The only group that openly preaches and teaches the full khariji doctrine of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab today is ISIS. Let me make it absolutely clear: Most supporters of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab completely reject ISIS. But this is due to an ignorance of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's actual views and history. If they knew Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's actual views and history, they would immediately recognize that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was the 18th century version of ISIS.

People might think, well Daniel is just biased against the Najdi dawah so he's comparing it to ISIS. But, the reality is ISIS explicitly says they're the true followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. This is what Cole Bunzel points out in recent academic book *Wahhabism*, published in 2023 by Princeton University Press. Bunzel says:

"The centrality of Wahhabism to the Jihādī Salafī movement became even more evident with the rise of the Islamic State in the 2010s. When the Islamic State came to the world's attention in 2013, its fidelity to Wahhabism was loudly trumpeted by its official representatives and online supporters. [...] The recruits in Islamic State training camps were made to study textbooks about Wahhabi creed. In the summer of 2015, the Islamic State's official publishing house began the printing of classic Wahhabi texts, from Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *Arba' qawa'id fi-l-din* and *Kashf al-shubuhāt* [...]

"The purpose of printing these texts was to inculcate in the new generation of jihadis a proper understanding of Islamic belief, one that was exclusivist and militant. In the introduction to one of these works, the anonymous editor likens the Islamic State to the early Wahhabi dāwa, claiming that the Islamic State "is again renewing tawhid, jihad, and the sunna," as the Wahhabis had done before. The official scholars and wicked preachers in Saudi Arabia, by contrast, have forsaken the Wahhabi heritage: "They lyingly ascribe themselves to the imam Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, knowing full well that today the Islamic State, its dāwa, and its jihad are an extension and embodiment of the mission of tawhid and jihad initiated by the Messenger of God and his companions and renewed by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his descendants."⁷⁶

You can even see prints of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's *Kitāb al-Tawhid* with ISIS's seal on the cover.

ISIS see themselves as the true successors of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, claiming they are reviving the original mission of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to purify the Muslims lands of shirk, just like ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and his followers did centuries ago. ISIS argues that Saudi Arabia and the Salafī dawah as a whole has abandoned the true teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, leaving ISIS to carry the torch. Members of ISIS today claim that Salafī scholars like Sh al-Albani and others have rejected Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's actual teachings. They view these Salafis as watered down versions, whereas they're the "real thing," the real Najdi dawah. I think this is exactly right. ISIS are the true followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and now that you've seen Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's takfiri teachings and his history committing atrocities against countless Muslims, hopefully you've realized this too.

12.3 Haddadis

Other than Madkhalis and ISIS, a third prominent group of Wahhabis are known as the Haddadis.

⁷⁶ Cole Bunzel, *Wahhabism*

Like Ibn Abdul Wahab, the Haddadis are ultra-sectarian and embrace mass takfir of Muslims. Haddadis today have caused a huge amount of fitna because they go online to takfir great Sunni scholars like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Abd al-Salam, Al-Nawawi, Al-Subki, Ibn Hajar, and Al-Suyuti.

What is the basis for this takfir? As we've seen, Ibn Abdul Wahab justified mass takfiring Muslims by claiming they had fallen into shirk. However, shortly after the life of Ibn Abdul Wahab, his followers added a second justification for mass takfir, namely the doctrine of Allah's attributes or *sifat*.

The Quran and Hadith describe Allah as having different attributes. Allah is described as having a face, eyes, and hands. He is also described as loving, hating, and being located above others. But how should these descriptions be interpreted? Should they be interpreted literally or metaphorically? For instance, when we read in the Quran that Allah has a hand, does this mean that he has a literal hand? Or is the hand simply a metaphor for Allah's power?

Throughout history, Muslim scholars have differed on how to interpret Allah's attributes, which led to the emergence of three different theological schools, the Ahl al-Hadith, the Asharis, and the Maturidis. Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Abdul Wahab all belong to the Ahl al-Hadith, who incline more towards literalistic interpretations. However, historically, most Muslim theologians have been Asharis or Maturidis, with Asharis being the biggest group. Asharis and Maturidis incline towards metaphorical interpretation. Historically, Ahl al-Hadith, Asharis, and Maturidis have been the largest group. Asharis and Maturidis all accuse their counterparts of being wrong. However, aside from a minority of extreme elements, they didn't actually mass takfir each other. But then Ibn Abdul Wahab's followers come onto the scene and immediately begin mass takfiring Asharis and Maturidis.

The practice of mass takfiring Asharis and Maturidis goes at least as far back as the aforementioned Abd al-Rahman Ibn Hassan. Remember, he's the direct student and grandson of Ibn Abd al-Wahab and is among the highest-ranking Wahabi authorities in history. Abd al-Rahman makes mass takfir of Asharis when he states:

“And this sect, which affiliates itself with Abu'l-Hassan al-Ash'ari, has described the Lord of the Worlds with the attributes of being non-existent and inanimate. Indeed, they have committed a grave falsehood against Allah and have opposed the people of truth from among the Salaf, the Imams, and their followers. Thus, this sect, which has deviated from the truth, its devils have devoted themselves to diverting people from the path of Allah. They have rejected Allah's oneness and divinity and permitted polytheism, which Allah does not forgive. They allowed others to be worshipped besides Him and denied His attributes through negation. The Imams of Ahlus Sunnah and their followers, have well-known works refuting this obstinate, kafir sect.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ al-Durar al-Saniyya, v.2 p.210

وهذه الطائفة التي تنتسب إلى أبي الحسن الأشعري وصفوا رب العالمين بصفات المعدوم والجماد؛ فلقد أعظموا الفرية على الله، وخالفوا أهل الحق من السلف والأئمة وأتباعهم؛ وخالفوا من ينتسبون إليه، فإن أبا الحسن الأشعري، صرح في كتابه الإبانة، والمقالات، بإثبات الصفات؛ فهذه الطائفة المنحرفة عن الحق قد تجردت شياطينهم لصد الناس عن سبيل الله، فجحدوا توحيد الله في الإلهية، وأجازوا الشرك الذي لا يغفره الله، فجوزوا أن يعبد غيره من دونه، وجحدوا توحيد صفاته بالتعطيل

فالأئمة من أهل السنة وأتباعهم لهم المصنفات المعروفة في الرد على هذه الطائفة الكافرة المعاندة، كشفوا فيها كل شبهة لهم، وبيّنوا فيها الحق الذي دل عليه كتاب الله وسنة رسوله، وما عليه سلف الأمة وأئمتها من كل إمام رواية ودراية

To this day, Wahabis consider Ash'aris and Maturidis to be either extreme deviants or kafirs, who should be killed unless they change their views. These Wahabis go online to generate endless fitna by attacking Muslims for supposedly not having the correct understanding of Allah's attributes, and then mass takfiring these Muslims as well as the great scholars of Islamic history.

12.4 Mass Takfir of the Ummah

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab mass takfired the Ummah, as we have seen, but his deviant takfir doctrine has been adapted by Wahhabis over the centuries. What has remained the same is this central idea at the core of Wahhabism, which is the same idea at the core of Kharijism, which is the mass takfir, mass hatred, and mass killing of other Muslims.

There are three central beliefs that all the Wahhabi groups we've discussed, the Madkhalis, the Haddadis, and ISIS all share.

First of all, Wahhabism claims that (more or less) all non-Wahhabis have beliefs which make them kafirs. So, think about all the non-Wahhabi Muslim groups. They fall into one of these four categories:

1. Sufis
2. Followers of the traditional Sunni madhabs, i.e., Hanafis, Shafiis, Malikis, and Hanbalis
3. Asharis and Maturidis
4. Shia

Obviously, there's overlap with these categories, but overall, these four categories cover the vast majority of the Muslims in the world. Yet, all four categories are considered to be kafirs or, at the very least, are considered to be upon kufr and shirk according to the Wahhabis. This means that, when a Wahhabi thinks of the Ummah, he doesn't consider the majority of nearly 2 billion Muslims in the world today to actually be Muslim. Rather he sees them as mostly kafirs.

Let's go through the four categories one by one and explain the Wahhabi reasoning:

1. Sufis and those who fall under the broad category of Sufi practitioners are kafir mushriks because they believe that istighatha and tawassul, i.e., calling on the dead with requests, are permissible. Contemporary Wahhabi scholar Saleh Fawzan clearly states this:

Questioner:

“We are from Southern Russia and many of those who ascribe themselves to Islam fall into Major Shirk over there because they take their religion from the shaykhs of the Sufis. How should we deal with them? Shall we deal with them as being polytheists or as being ignorant Muslims?”

Fawzan:

“You know that they are polytheists (Mushrikūn). But don’t leave them. Call them to Allah, explain to them, maybe they are ignorant. Call them to Allah and explain to them, since you know the truth, explain to them so that Allah may guide them. And if they don’t accept, then leave them and distance yourself from them.”⁷⁸

السؤال: فضيلة الشيخ وفقكم الله يقول السائل: نحن من جنوب روسيا وكثير من المنتسبين الى الإسلام يقعون في الشرك الأكبر هناك بسبب أخذ دينهم عن شيوخ الصوفية، السؤال: ما كيفية تعاملنا مع هؤلاء، هل نتعامل معهم معاملة المشركين أو معاملة المسلمين الجاهلين؟

الجواب: الشيخ صالح الفوزان: أنتم تعلمون أنهم مشركون ولكن ما تتركونهم، أدعوهم إلى الله وبيّنوا لهم ربما أنهم يجهلون، أدعوهم إلى الله وبيّنوا لهم، لماعرفتم الحق بينوه لهم لعل الله أن يهديهم، فإن لم يقبلوا فاتركوهم وابتعدوا عنهم

2. Generally speaking, members of all four traditional Sunni legal schools are kafirs because they do not takfir those who engage in istighatha and tawassul. If you remember Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s chain takfir principle, you know that according to the Wahhabis, whoever refuses to takfir a kafir becomes a kafir himself. So all the followers of the traditional Sunni madhahib are considered to be kafir because none of the four schools considered the practitioners of istighatha to be kafir mushriks. When we look at the history of the four traditional madhahib, Hanafi, Shafii, Maliki, and Hanbali, there were some major scholars who viewed istighatha to be permissible, scholars like Taqi al-Din al-Subki (1284-1355 CE), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505 CE), and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (1503-1566 CE). Other scholars from the four schools considered istighatha to be haram, but they also did not takfir the practitioners of istighatha.

For Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and other Wahhabis, all these Sunni scholars are kafirs, not because they necessarily practiced istighatha themselves, but because they do not consider istighatha to be shirk or they do not takfir the practitioners of istighatha. Furthermore, because of the chain takfir principle we explained earlier, whoever doesn’t takfir scholars like Subki, Suyuti, and Haytami, and all these other traditional Sunni scholars, he is also a kafir.

⁷⁸ Fawzan, Sharḥ Faṭḥ al-Majīd

Scholars from all the four legal schools in the Ottoman empire rejected Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings. In response, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takfired all of them. Makka in the Ottoman era is very relevant because, at the time of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Makka was one of the leading centers of Islamic learning and scholarship. Top scholars from all four legal schools taught there. Earlier I mentioned that when the Wahhabis took control of Makka in 1806, they forced the scholars there to sign a letter stating that the residents of Makka were upon disbelief and shirk before the coming of the Wahhabis. The letter implies that the scholars themselves were on disbelief and shirk. The scholars who signed the letter included major authorities from all four legal schools – including Makka's official Hanafi mufti, official Shafii mufti, official Maliki mufti, and official Hanbali mufti.

The letter, along with the names of the scholars who signed it have been preserved till today; they are found in *Al-Durar al-Saniyya* Vol.1 pages 314-315.

During the time of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, top scholars from all the four schools in Makka and throughout the Ottoman empire rejected Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings. In response, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab takfired all of them. And you might remember from earlier that when the Wahhabis invaded Makka, they forced the scholars representing all the four schools to sign a letter stating that they had been kafirs because they were upon shirk.

Now all of this applies today. Consider Azhar University in Egypt, which teaches all four madhahib. Do Wahhabis consider the scholars and students at Azhar to be kafirs? The answer is, yes. The scholars of al-Azhar are kafirs for at least two reasons. First, they do not takfir those who do istighatha. Second, some of them consider istighatha to be permissible, following the opinions of al-Subki, al-Suyuti, and al-Haytami.

From a historical perspective, Azhar was part of the Ottoman empire during the time of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. He takfired the scholars of al-Azhar along with those of other cities in the Ottoman empire like Makka and Istanbul. And Wahhabis continue to takfir the scholars of Azhar to this day. For example, listen to the statements of Wahhabi Abu Jafar al-Khulayfi here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNZppRqLhEk>

3. Asharis and Maturidis are kafirs because they deny that Allah is literally located above the throne, and that Allah literally speaks with letters and sounds.

As we saw already, the Haddadis focus on takfiring the Asharis and Maturidis due to their interpretation of the Attributes of Allah. Oftentimes Wahhabis do not go right out and explicitly say that Asharis and Maturidis are kafirs. Rather they express this indirectly, by saying that whoever denies that God is literally located above the throne is a kafir. Here is an example from Ibn Baz:

https://youtu.be/7Ha_-bDWLgc

4. And finally, the Shia are kafirs for a variety of reasons – like denying the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, or insulting the Companions, or accepting some form of istighatha or tawassul – and so on.

What this amounts to is that Wahhabis have formulated grounds for takfiring any Muslim who does not accept Wahhabism. This is how they takfir the vast majority of the Ummah.

What makes this all the more disturbing is that Wahhabism claims that because (more or less) all non-Wahhabis have beliefs that make them kafirs, there is an obligation to kill them by waging jihads against them, or by arresting them and executing them as apostates (murtads).

This is something that most Wahhabis keep hidden from the Muslim masses. But the reality is, Wahhabis believe that there is an obligation to kill Asharis, Maturidis, Sufis, the scholars and the followers of the four Sunni legal schools, and Shia. As you know by now, this is exactly what Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his early followers did, and it's endorsed in all their writings. They did attack and kill the Sunni scholars and laypersons of the Ottoman empire for practicing tawassul and istighatha, or for simply refusing to takfir those who engage in these practices. Wahhabis also later added the claim that the Ottomans were kafirs because they were Asharis and Maturidis. Just as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers launched numerous raids attacking and killing Sunnis, they did the same with Shia. In our times, ISIS has adopted the same policies.

What is critical to understand is that modern Wahhabi youtubers, like Muhammad ibn Shams al-Din, Farid al-Bahraini, Jake Brancatella, and others all believe that this takfiri ideology is legitimate, and that's why they promote Wahhabi writings and ideas which legitimize these behaviors.

12.5 Takfir as a Loaded Gun

Of course, these Wahhabis don't always advertise their belief in the legitimacy of mass takfir and mass killing. This is because Wahhabism holds that you can temporarily suspend the obligation of killing non-Wahhabis based on the excuse for ignorance (*al-udhr bi-l-jahl*). So even though non-Wahhabis have beliefs which make them kafirs who should be killed, these non-Wahhabis may be ignorant about why their beliefs are wrong. As long as they are ignorant, then they are not to be killed. Rather you educate them about why they are wrong and once the non-Wahhabis have been presented with enough proofs, if they still refuse to change their beliefs, then they should be killed.

In other words, Wahhabis insist that they have an obligation to kill Asharis, Maturidis, Sufis, followers of the four legal schools, and Shia, *but* Wahhabis can suspend the killing until the time when these groups have been presented with sufficient proofs of their error.

Now we come to a key point. Wahhabis admit that there are no clear standards for determining when a non-Wahhabi has been presented with sufficient proof of his error. At what point does the non-Wahhabi no longer have the excuse of ignorance? This is a question with no clear cut answer. Rather, it's highly subjective and a matter of ijtihad. So, on one extreme, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab believed

that anyone who had simply heard the Quran had already been presented with sufficient proof such that they no longer have the excuse of ignorance. At the other end of the spectrum, there are other Wahhabis who argue that an individual may require decades of education before the excuse of ignorance no longer applies.

But the point is, Wahhabis who hold that non-Wahhabis should receive a long education before they are killed insist that this is their personal *ijtihād*. However, at the same time, they accept as legitimate the *ijtihād* of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and ISIS that non-Wahhabis should be killed without a long education. According to them, it's all legitimate *ikhtilaf*.

Many Wahhabi youtubers will claim that they do not agree with ISIS massacres. But it's not that they don't agree with ISIS massacres because they think ISIS is a deviant group with deviant *usul*. In reality, they disagree with ISIS just as a matter of practical *ijtihād*. It's an *ikhtilafi* issue for them, like the *ikhtilaf* between Hanafis and Shafis on whether eating shrimp is *halal*.

This is also why Wahhabi youtubers will never call out Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and ISIS as deviants for killing sufis and shia. They might not personally accept the mass killing of sufis and shia done by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and ISIS, but they don't think that the mass killing of sufis and shia is due to deviance. They just chalk it up to a difference of opinion. Of course, there are some Wahhabis, in particular the Madkhalis, who make a big deal about having a problem with ISIS and consider them a deviant group, but their issue with ISIS is not that ISIS is mass takfiring and mass killing sufis and Shia! Their problem with ISIS is that ISIS does not have the backing of the *Wali al-amr*, meaning they're not backed by a state government. That's literally their only issue. If ISIS were being openly backed by the Saudi government, then Madkhalis would have no problem with them. When Madkhalis denounce ISIS as "takfiri," they don't have a problem with ISIS mass takfiring Muslims. They have a problem with ISIS takfiring the Gulf rulers. That's literally their only problem. This is how all the different strands of Wahhabism, whether ISIS or Madkhali or Haddadi, are all united in their hatred and mass takfir of the Ummah.

You can even do this test yourself. Next time you come across a Wahhabi, ask him if he condemns the bombing of a Sufi, Ashari, or Shia mosque. If the Wahhabi is an ISIS-type, he'll say: *Of course I don't condemn the bombing of a Sufi, Ashari, or Shia mosque; that's legitimate jihad!*

If the Wahhabi is a Madkhali type, you have to modify your question slightly. You have to ask: if the Gulf rulers ordered the bombing of a Sufi, Ashari, or Shia mosque, would you condemn it? The Madkhali would say, *Of course I don't condemn it; that's the legitimate actions of the ruler!*

If the Wahhabi is a Haddadi type, and you ask him to condemn the bombing of a Sufi, Ashari, or Shia mosque, he might do *taqiyya* at first and say something generic like, "I don't agree with indiscriminate violence." But this is just playing word games: Sure, you don't believe in "indiscriminate" violence; but you do believe in "discriminate" violence, namely violence that discriminately targets Sufis, Asharis, Shia, and non-Wahhabis more generally.

Ask him specifically, do you condemn the mass takfir and slaughter of Sufis, Asharis, Shia, and non-Wahhabis, and do you consider this to be deviant?" At this point, the Haddadi is stuck because if he does condemn all this as deviance, he will also have to condemn his shaykh Ibn Abd al-Wahhab as a deviant, and he won't do that. At most, he can say that he just does not agree with the ijtiḥād of those Wahhabis who do slaughter Sufis, Asharis, and Shia and bomb their mosques, but it's just an ikhtilāfi issue, not a matter of deviant aqida.

This is how you smoke out the Wahhabis and expose them for their violent hatred towards 95% of the Ummah.

The other important point about the subjectivity of the excuse for ignorance is that Wahhabis use this as a blackmail tactic. Again, the key characteristic of the principle of excusing for ignorance is that it is highly subjective. Since the Wahhabis have justifications for why 95% of the Ummah have kufr beliefs, they can always claim that any particular Muslim is upon kufr and has already received sufficient education and hence should be considered a kafir and fought through jihad. Alternatively, the Wahhabi can always claim that this particular Muslim has not received sufficient education, and hence is ignorant and should not be declared a kafir and fought, at least not yet.

This is extremely important for understanding Wahhabis. Wahhabis have already collected evidence, which to their minds, proves that all non-Wahhabis endorse kufr. The only question is whether to declare them kafirs now and fight them now, or give them some more time.

What guides Wahhabis in these decisions is political interests, rather than principles. Whenever a non-Wahhabi opposes Wahhabi rule and political interests, Wahhabis declare him to be a kafir who's received sufficient instruction. But whenever a non-Wahhabi does not oppose Wahhabis, they just excuse him as ignorant and leave him alone.

It's actually really sick how these Wahhabis operate. Whenever Wahhabis encounter a political rival, or a potential ideological opponent who will not submit to them, they do detailed research into his beliefs. If that person's beliefs aren't public, the Wahhabis demand that he make public his beliefs. If the person refuses, the Wahhabis say he is "hiding his aqida" and hiding your aqida makes you a deviant. They then continuously harass this opponent with aqida tests, demanding that he answer questions in order to gather more material and build up a file of alleged kufr beliefs. Then they use that file to attack the opponent. They start by calling him a deviant, but if he refuses to bend the knee, they escalate to saying that he is "upon kufr" or he is a "shirk apologist." And if he still refuses to submit, they then declare him a kafir. At that point, they know that declaring him a kafir means that he is an apostate which means his blood is ḥalāl. And, of course, this is precisely what the Wahhabis have been doing to me.

This is how Wahhabis operate and, in the context of social media, these are the tactics Wahhabis use to make sure no social media figure, shaykh, imam, or daee openly opposes them or calls out their deviance.

12.6 Saudi Politics

From the very beginning, the House of Saud has used the takfiri ideology of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to advance its geopolitical interests. Just consider the biggest political opponents of Saudi since the 18th century till today.

(1) Traditional Sunnis - like the Ottomans - were the first major enemy of the nascent Saudi state. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab labeled them as kafir mushriks and said that offensive jihad is necessary to cleanse their shirk from the Arabian peninsula and beyond. The Saudi state, of course, promoted these teachings most intensely between the 18th and early 20th centuries when it was at war with the Ottomans.

(2) Twelver Shia - like those in Iraq and Iran - were also labeled by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers as kafir mushriks. The Saudi state promoted these ideas in the early 19th century, and then strongly again after the Iranian revolution in 1979. The Saudi monarchy feared that an Islamic revolution, like what happened in Iran, would also happen in Saudi and topple their rule. So for these political reasons, they aggressively spread the idea that Twelvers are kafir mushriks. In reality, most non-Saudi affiliated Sunni scholars of modern times consider Twelvers to be Muslims and even many of the greatest Sunni scholars of history consider them to be Muslim, including Ibn Taymiyya, al-Ghazali, Ibn Abidin, and others.

(3) Islamists - like the Muslim Brotherhood - have also been labeled by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab followers as khariji kafirs, or they are at minimum extreme deviants who deserve to be killed. Again, this religious ruling is based purely on the political interests of the Saudi state since 1979. Saudi most heavily promoted anti-Islamist sentiment in the 1990s to repress the Ikhwan-inspired Şahwa movement, which was growing in influence in the country. Eventually, opposition to the Şahwa movement led to the emergence of Madkhalism. Madkhalism became even more prevalent over the past two decades of the War on Terror and then the Arab Spring, effectively becoming a tool to advance Saudi secularization. And, as we all know, Madkhalis today are the biggest promoters of Saudi normalization with Israel. They don't always say that they want normalization with Israel directly. Rather, they support Israel indirectly by, for example, opposing any boycott of Israel. They have also shamelessly attacked Palestinians, claiming that Palestinians are mushrik grave worshipers and are, in fact, deviants because they work with Shia Iran.

As you can see, since the time of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, takfir for political purposes has been a central tool used by the Saudi state.

And I myself have become a primary target of this politically motivated sectarianism. Why? Because in 2022, I criticized Saudi for organizing Halloween celebrations. I also criticized Saudi for its secularization agenda and its willingness to normalize with Israel at the expense of the Palestinians.

In response, for the past 2 years, Salafi sectarians have non-stop takfired me, threatened to kill me, and initiated smear campaigns against me, where they accuse me of (simultaneously) being a quburi grave worshipper, a Rafidi Iranian agent, and a Khariji terrorist, all wrapped into one!

This is despite the fact that I consider myself an admirer of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya and follow many of their positions.

In the view of these Salafi sectarians, my biggest deviance is that I claim that the most dangerous enemies of Islam are atheists, liberals, Zionists, and Hindutvati Hindus. For such Salafis, this is wrong. Those are not the greatest enemies of Islam. Rather, the greatest enemies of Islam are actually the entire Muslim Ummah which has fallen into shirk, and it is necessary to constantly attack them or takfir them or kill them. This requires using social media to non-stop highlight errors in their aqida and understanding of tawhid so you can expose them as mushriks.

Again, we shouldn't condemn Salafism as a whole, partly because doing so would be tantamount to condemning many essential Islamic ideals championed by scholars like Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya.

But Salafis are not one group. The most admirable of the Salafis are those who lean towards the teachings of the Hanbali school and Ibn Taymiyya. They are some of the best Muslims.

The most problematic Salafis are those who lean towards the teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the political policies of the Saudi state.

Those who care about the future of the Salafi movement have an obligation to purify it. That means forcing it in the direction of Imam Ahmad and Ibn Taymiyya, while stripping away or marginalizing its links with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Saudi state.

Salafis should be encouraged in the direction of cooperating with other Muslims, rather than takfiring and killing them. That means pushing them to build alliances with traditional Sunnis, Twelver Shia, and Islamists under the broad banner of Islam. Establishing such alliances does not mean denying that these other groups have some beliefs that are deviant or even extremely deviant. It simply means recognizing them - in general - as fellow Muslims, so that the Ummah doesn't descend into nonstop civil war. It means not treating fellow Muslims as if they are the greatest enemies of Islam, and further from Islam than pagan Qurayshis, atheists, liberals, Zionist Jews, and Hindutvati Hindus.

There is nothing strange or un-Islamic in such a perspective. If it seems strange and un-Islamic, this is only due to the deviant sectarian ideology of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab that has been propagated by the Saudi state over the past two centuries.

13. Conclusion

My primary problem with the Wahhabis is not that they are harsh or arrogant. That's not the main issue. My problem is they are a deviant neo-khariji group that is at war with Ahl al Sunna. They are a khariji group that has transformed *la ilaha illAllah* into a war cry against Muslims. This is what Ibn Abidin, al-Sawi, and many other scholars from the 18th and 19th centuries have said. Wahhabis will respond and say that, yes, they are harsh, but that is because they love Islam so much. But if unbridled, indiscriminate harshness were the mark of orthodox Islam, then the most orthodox Muslims would be the khawarij. But as we know, the khawarij are a deviant group who waged war on the Sahaba and the Salaf. They were in fact the first Islamic heresy. The descendants of the khawarij are Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his followers, and like the khawarij, their main problem is they takfir all other Muslims, or at minimum, accuse them of committing shirk. They have no right to call themselves Ahl al-Sunna, when in reality they are at war with Ahl al-Sunna. They are not orthodox, they are khawarij.

And they should get no credit for eliminating shirk in Arabia. Many Muslims in Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's time were also opposed to shirk practices, they just didn't combine that with mass takfir, offensive jihad against Muslims, and a religious-political alliance with a war lord, in the way that Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did. In reality, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab didn't start a movement to eliminate shirk. He started a movement to eliminate Sunnism and replace it with Kharijism. And this Kharijism continues to plague the Muslim world, with groups like the Madkhalis, Salafi sectarians, and ISIS.

May Allah grant us true hidaya.