

# SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE WAHHÂBIYA AND THE SANÛSIYA MOVEMENTS

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## Introduction

The Muslim World witnessed the appearance of several intellectual and religious movements emanated from different Islamic territories in the 18th and 19th centuries. A number of social, political and religious causes motivated the occurrence of these multifaceted movements. Decline of the Ottoman Empire and diminishing authority of the Caliph, growing political and cultural influence of Western powers throughout the Muslim World, moral laxity and superstitious accretions prevalent among believers for long, rising wave of nationalist trends to establish regional and nation-states, all of these aforementioned factors and some others inspired new ideas and orientations that occurred in the Muslim World. Among them the *Wahhâbiya* is of considerable importance as it has long-lasting influence on the other revivalist and puritanist movements. The *Wahhâbi* doctrine prompted some of those who had been striking for a promising development which might solve the problems of Muslim World and provide a new understanding of religion. Following the *Wahhâbiya* the *Sanûsiya* movement with its modern military and revivalist ideology played a remarkable role in the formation of Libyan history. This paper will focus on a comparative analysis of these movements taking their ideologies, doctrines and structure of organization into account. It will also concentrate on providing the readers with a descriptive account of the evolution of the *Wahhâbiya* and the *Sanûsiya* to explore the similarities, discrepancies and relations between the two.

## I. The Wahhâbi Movement

The title '*Wahhâbi*' was given to the followers of Shaikh Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb by his Muslim opponents. People to whom the '*Wahhâbi*' name was applied have rejected this opprobrious label. (Rentz, 1969, p. 270) Instead, the Wahhâbis called themselves *ahl al-tawhid* (People of Unity or Muwahhidûn), those who profess the doctrine of the Unity of God.

The founder Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb was born in Uyayna in Najd in 1703. His father and grandfather were Hanbalite *qâdis*, thus he was brought up and educated in this tradition. (Rantz, 1969, p. 270) He studied in famous learning centers; Medina, Basra, Bağhdad, Hamadhan, etc. spending many years in travel during which Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb perused philosophy and sufism. Having completed his studies Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb turned to Uyayna where he publicly preached his doctrines and met both success and opposition. The Governor of Uyayna was asked to expulse Muhammed b. Abd al-Wahhâb as a consequence of disputes caused by his teachings (E.I., first edition, p. 1087).

### **Implications of Ibn Taymiyya's Views For Wahhâbi Thought**

Before examining the doctrines of Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb I would like to analyse the influence of Ibn Taymiyya on Wahhâbi thought. This analysis will throw light on the development of the Wahhâbi movement and its doctrinal relation with the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya who seems to me as a prototype for Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb.

The originator of the Wahhâbiya movement had been a sûfi adept in his youth, but later came under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya's writings. (Rahman, 1969, p. 197) Ibn Taymiyya's teachings had three main implications for Wahhâbi doctrines:

1. *Concerning State and Religion:* According to Ibn Taymiyya the *Ulama* are responsible for the protection of Divine Law. A government is regarded as Islamic by virtue of the support it gives to Islam and to the *Ulama*. One can accept the rule of anyone who follows *Sharia*. This understanding had an important effect on the Wahhâbi ideology that accepted al-Sa'ud's dynasty as a legitimate and hereditary Islamic government after taking refuge in Dariyya, a territory controlled by al-Sa'ud family.

2. *Concerning the Sources of True Islam:* Ibn Taymiyya strives for the pure form of Islam in his enduring pursuit of Divine reality like *Ibn Hanbal*. *Ibn Taymiyya turns to the Qur'an and the Sunna* as the basis of divine law, refusing any accretions of later developments after the initial pristine years of *Salaf*, the first three generations of Islam. He insists on eliminating all the foreign elements which do not reflect the authentic core of Islam and the purity of Islamic teachings. The idea of going back to the *Qur'an* and the

authentic *Sunna* with a puritanistic attitude was adopted and applied by Muhammed b. Abd al-Wahhâb humiliating medieval scholars and rejecting the *qiyas*.

3. *Concerning Sufi Doctrines and Practices:* In the light of recent scholarly works, Ibn Taymiyya is said to have been a *sûfi* of the *Qadiriyya* Order. But he regards the idea of mystical unity with God and ecstatic aspects of sufism as un-Islamic, therefore rejects these teachings. It should be noted that he did not reject sufism itself but denounced intercession, saint veneration and grave cults. (Helms, 1981, p. 81-82) Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb, inspiring from above notion, developed his doctrine to such extent that the Wahhâbis opened the Prophet's tomb and sold or distributed its relics and jewels. (Troeller, 1976, p. 14).

### Nature of Wahhâbi Doctrines

Muhammed b. Abd al-Wahhâb wrote on various Islamic subjects such as theology, exegesis, jurisprudence and on the life of Prophet Muhammad. His works were collected and published in twelve volumes under the title of *Muallafât al-Shaykh al-Imâm Muhammad Abd al-Wahhâb* by the Islamic University of Imâm Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud.

In his works Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb denounced a number of beliefs and practices prevailing among Muslim society. He begins his discourse by stressing the unity of God. He underlines the doctrine of *tawhid*, God's uniqueness as omnipotent Lord of creation. He stresses the unity of God in deserving worship and absolute devotion of the servants. He regards the associations of persons or things with the Lord as a violation of the doctrine of God's Oneness. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb condemns the intercession, *tawassul*, which was applied and practiced by a large number of Muslims during their prayer to God. He warns the believers against showing excessive devotion to saints and against the use of saints' graves as places of worship for *tawassul*. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb considers these external elements as polytheism, *shirk*. He seeks to purify Muslim community from and such kind of external elements by returning to the ways of Prophet and of the first generations of pious Muslims. (Yassini, 1982, p. 66; Rentz, 1969, p. 271-272) He states that the true Islam is that of the first generations (al-Salaf al-Salih) and protests all those later innovations as superstitious accretions which brought what he calls 'new



Gods' into Islam. (Hourani, 1983, p. 37) As a result of this attitude to sufi tradition the Wahhâbis felt that it was an obligation upon them to destroy all the existing alien components. Accordingly they attacked the graves of the Companions of the Prophet, tombs of saints, venerated trees and stones. An obvious example of this zealous hatred was seen when the Wahhâbis plundered *Karbala*, a Shi'i holy city, and destroyed Husayn's tomb. (Yassini, 1982, p. 6; Troeller 1976, p. 14)

Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb rejected all kinds of innovations, defined by him as any doctrine or action not based on the *Qur'an*, *Sunna* or on the authority of Companions. Among the innovations are practices such as celebrating the prophets's birth, the use of rosary, adding minarets and ornaments to mosques, etc. Following practices may lead the believer to *shirk* in Wahhâbi understanding

1. To visit the tombs of saints to gain God's favour.
2. To introduce a name of a prophet, of a saint or of an angel into prayer.
3. Seeking intercession from any being but God.
4. Interpretation of the *Qur'an* by *ta'wil*.

According to Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb's system, attendance at public prayer is obligatory, smoking of tobacco is forbidden and subject to punishment, shaving of the beard and the use of abusive language are also to be punished. (E.I. First Edition, p. 1086)

With regard to fundamental basis of Islam, Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb places a great emphasis on the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*. He attacks the blind acceptance of authority in religious matters in general, thus comes to oppose to the earlier *Ulama* who lack independent thinking. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb finds it essential to go beyond the medieval authorities to the *Sunna* of early generations. Rejecting *qiyas*, he recognizes only two major authorities; the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet Muhammad along with the precedents and the *ijma* of the companions. (Rahman, 1969, p. 197). In Wahhâbi mentality a number of concepts were given a prior importance such as *tawhid*, *shirk* and *bid'a* (innovation) mentioned above. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb also explained his doctrine of *Dâr al-Islam*, *Dâr al-Harb*, *Fitna*, *Hijra* and *Jihad*.



Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab distinguishes between *dâr al-Islam* and *dâr al-harb* extending the scope of *dâr al-harb* to some other Muslim countries which he believed 'unlawful'. Therefore those who live in *dâr al-harb* where there is no freedom, have to perform *hijra*, emigrating from every country in which *shirk* and *kufir* are apparent. Another usage of *hijra* appears in Wahhabi texts as a spiritual understanding which necessitates keeping away from all sinful things, forbidden by God and Prophet Muhammad. (Helms, 1981, p. 87).

Any kind of political division of the *Ummah* and civil war regarded as *fitna*, social disturbance. The first *fitna* appeared under Ali's Caliphate when the Kharijites left him. Wherever a *fitna* occurs it must be abolished by declaring a *jihad*, holy war. The followers of Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb had been indoctrinated to believe that the opponents of the Wahhâbi cause were enemies of Islam who should be fought against. (Yassini, 1982, p. 64).

#### **Involvement of Wahhâbis into Politics: Religion and State**

The modern history of Sa'udi Arabia began in the eighteenth century with the alliance between Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb, the founder of the Wahhâbi movement, and Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud, Âmir of Dariyya, son of the founder of the Sa'udi dynasty. When Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb was forced to leave Uyayna he went to Dariyya where he was received by the chieftain Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud 1745. Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud accepted Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb's doctrine and undertook its defence and propagation after agreeing on that the political sovereignty should rest with Ibn al-Sa'ud whereas religious outhority should belong to Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb. The Sa'udi-Wahhâbi alliance was further cemented by an intermarriage between the two families. (Troeller, 1976, p. 13)

The Sa'udi-Wahhabi alliance seems to be a turning point through which the Wahhâbi movement gained an official acceptance and confirmation from a strong dynasty that used religious authority of Wahhâbi doctrines as a binding force among Arab tribes.

One of the significant aspects of this alliance in the formation of Sa'udi Arabian history was the fact that it led to an effective union of political-military organization and religious ideology which carried out Saudi-Wahhabi expansion. As Abd al-Aziz b. al-Rahman states, all desert tribes came under the control of al-Sa'ud family obeying their orders and

instructions. The Wahhabi doctrines and socio-political teachings of religion enabled al-Sa'ud dynasty to hold their political authority firmly for ruling the nomad tribes successfully.

The Wahhâbi *Ulama* gave explicit support and approval to the hereditary rule of al-Sa'ud family and the Wahhâbi shaikhs utilized the concept of equality as a political tool to control the Bedouin tribes by eliminating tribal particularism. (Helms, 1981, p. 77-79, 84)

Principally through the Wahhâbi movement that Abd al-Aziz and the previous Sa'udi rulers had been able to transcend tribal and urban loyalties while still using their social structure as a basis for political manipulation. Membership of an Islamic community theoretically served to equalize social differentials and as the tribes embraced the Wahhâbi doctrine they came to accept the *imamate* of al-Sa'ud, leader of a legitimate state validated by Islam. (Ibid, p. 113).

As a far-reaching effect of this co-operation the Sa'udi dynasty firmly established its control in the political arena assuming certain titles which enjoy temporal power such as *amîr*, *hakîm* and *malîk*, king.

#### **Relation Between the Ottaman Rule and the Sa'udi-Wahhâbi Dynasty**

Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb declared that Islam protected by the Ottoman Sultan was not the true Islam implying that the Sultan was not the legitimate leader of the *Umma*. The Wahhâbis held that the Arabs were worthier than the Turks with regard to *Imamate* or leadership. Thus the authority of the Ottoman rule was rejected and challenged. (Hourani, 1983, p. 38) When the rapid expansion of Wahhâbi movement was reported to Istanbul, the Ottoman Caliph Sultan Mahmud II urged Muhammad Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, to drive the Wahhabis out of Holy cities. Under the Caliphal instruction Muhammad Ali Pasha launched a series of military attacks on Wahhâbi controlled territories. In 1818 he reached Dariyya and captured the capital of Wahhâbi-Sa'udi alliance. (Troeller, 1976, p. 14).

Although the Wahhâbiya movement was put down their expansion did not fade away. After the recovery and restoration of the Sa'udi dynasty Abd al-Aziz, son of Abd al Rahman, entered Riyadh in 1901 by which the Sa'udi dynasty regained its authority in the region and Najd, Hidjaz, Mecca,

Medina and Djidda were all occupied. After an international recognition of hereditary authority of kingship of the Sa'udi family new developments in the political arena facilitated the consolidation of Sa'udi-Wahhâbi alliance as a nation-state.

### Later Developments in the Wahhâbi World

The Wahhâbi world could not remain alien to the changing nature of world events and patterns of international relations in the modern era. New developments in different spheres of life rapidly occurred. Today the Wahhâbi doctrine is supported by the political power of the state as the official form of Islam in the Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia as it has been from the outset of the Wahhâbi-Sa'udi alliance. The members of royal family seem to be advocates of Wahhâbi ideology. The *Mufti* and the chief *Qadi* come from the House of Shaikhs. The Courts are largely Wahhâbi in character. The spread of education and the improvement of communication systems have made it easier to transmit Wahhâbi doctrines to different segments of population.

Under the influence of new developments and the toleration of less-strict rulers the Wahhâbis of Sa'udi Arabia have shown a growing openness towards not only non-Wahhâbi Muslims but also non-Muslims. The Shi'ites of the Eastern regions used to be unwelcomed residents in the eyes of the government, but gradually they have seen their situation improve and the Wahhâbi King has been an honoured guest at official functions in Shi'ite towns.

The spirit of tolerance has been extended to Christian persons and powers as well. A large number of Christians have been employed in recent years by the government. The armed forces of Arabia have been trained in the past, first by an English military mission and more recently by one from U.S.A.

Until recently illustrations showing human face or form were taboo among the Wahhâbis, though the *Qur'an* itself contains no sweeping prohibition of representational art. The press in Sa'udi Arabia is now being published with photographs and drawings. The attitude toward tobacco is also changing, smoking is no longer regarded as a moral laxity deserving punishment. (Rentz, 1969 p. 275).



The organization of formal education and introduction of secular subjects into education took place in 1925. When Abd al-Aziz ordered the creation of the Directorate General of Education the *Ulama* opposed to the introduction of secular education fearing that it may damage the fabric of Wahhâbi society. Nevertheless, Abd al-Aziz insisted on the establishment of a new educational system and carried out his plan. In the course of time scientific and technical subjects and foreign languages were included in curriculum. Girls were allowed to have access to public education in 1959. None of these elements could not have been accepted during the early period of Wahhâbi movement.

The acquisition of wealth during the past twenty or thirty years posed a serious problem for the Wahhâbi society. Particularly under the period of Sa'ud's rule the extravagance and ostentation of a very un-Wahhâbi-like character tainted the atmosphere of Saudi Court. Those who claimed that the Sa'udi family departed from Islam with the wealth occupied the Grand Mosque in 1979, but their revolt was put down by the Sa'udi rule.

## II. The Sanûsiya Movement

The Founder of the Sanûsiya Movement and His Successors:

The founder of the Sanûsiya Order was an Algerian scholar whose full name is al-Sayyed Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanûsî al-Khattâbî al-Hasanî al-Idrisî. He was born at Tursh, near Mostaganem (Algeria) in about 1787. He lost his father while still a little child. His first teacher was his aunt Sayyidah Fâtimah. Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanûsî learnt the Qur'an by heart at a tender age and proceeded to the study of traditional religious sciences.

Muhammed b. Ali al-Sanûsî went to Fes in 1821 where he studied Qur'anic exegesis, tradition (hadith), the principles of law and jurisprudence. He left Fes for Morocco where he developed an interest and tendency towards mysticism after coming under the influence of the *Tijâniya* Order. He then performed the pilgrimage to Mecca where he lived from 1830 to 1843. al-Sanûsî wanted to study at *al-Azhar*, an outstanding Islamic University, but shaikhs of the university accused him of being a reformist. Thus he had to leave Cairo upon the objections and oppositions raised against him, and went to Mecca. al-Sanûsî stayed in the Hijaz for about six years studying under the supervision of a number of shaikhs at

Mecca and Medina. During his studies al-Sanūsī was influenced by Ahmad b. Idris, Head of the Moroccan Order of *Khadiriya* or *Idrisiya*.

When Ahmad b. Idris died in Yaman his two chief disciples organized his followers into two new sub-Orders, the *Mirghaniye* and the *Sanūsīya*. al-Sanūsī organized and established his first *zawiya* and the first headquarter of the Order at Abu Qubays, near Mecca, in 1837. This year is regarded as the official date of the foundation of the Sanūsīya Order. For the views they expressed al-Sanūsī and his followers could not stay there long. The oppositions al-Sanūsī faced, when he started to expose his teachings explicitly, forced him to leave the Hijaz in about 1841 and turn back to his native land, *Cyrenaica*.

In 1843 al-Sanūsī founded the mother *zawiye* (lodge) of the Order, *al-Zawiya al-Baida* on the central Cyrenaican plateau. From his headquarters al-Sanūsī sent a number of messages to various parts of Cyrenaica, spreading his doctrines and teachings. As a positive response to his call a considerable number of *zawiyas* were built in Egypt, Marmaraica, Tripolitania, Fazzan, Southern Tunisia, southern Algeria and the Sudan. al-Sanūsī has always tried to keep away from Turkish authorities by stretching the desert between himself and the Ottoman rulers. He therefore moved the seat of the Order to Jaghbûb, then this city became an important centre for the Sanūsīya Order. It was not only out of the reach of Turkish, French or Egyptian administrations but also was on the main pilgrimage route from Northwest Africa. Jaghbûb was the most central point at that time to be within the equal touch with the lodges of Sanūsīya Order located in different regions. In Jaghbûb al-Sanūsī introduced an intense educational programme and died there in 1859.

After the death of al-Sanūsī his two surviving sons inherited the succession. Of them al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdī took over the position for administrative affairs whereas the spiritual leadership was left to al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharif.

al-Mahdī was born at al-Baida in 1844 and received his early education in Mecca. al-Mahdī succeeded his father at the age of sixteen. He remained as Head of the Order from 1859 until 1902 during which period the Order reached its zenith in terms of both the number of the *zawiyas* and influence of the Organization. Muhammad al-Mahdī was associated by his followers

with al-Mahdî, *the Hidden Imam*. He often denied such ideas categorically and emphatically. Although the Sudanese Mahdî sent him a special messenger who carried a letter asking for his support he declined his request.

In 1895 Muhammad al-Mahdî transferred the centre of his activity to Kufra which gained great prominence as a consequence of this move. He did not stay there long, after four years al-Mahdî left for Qîru in central Sudan where he died in 1902. His brother al-Sharif had died six years before him, in 1896. After the death of al-Mahdî his cousin took over the leadership of the Order, Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif who was born in Jaghbûb, in 1873, where he received his early education under al-Mahdî's and his father's supervision. His leadership falls into three periods:

1. 1902-1912, resisted the French in the Sahara.
2. 1912-1918, directed the Bedouin against the Italians and the British.
3. 1918-1926, stayed in Turkey.

Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif formed what may be called the "Sanûsi Government". He died in the Hijaz in 1933. When he withdrew from political and military leadership of the Order al-Mahdî's son Sayyid Muhammad Idris succeeded him.

### **Relations Between the Ottomans and the Sanûsiya Order**

The Ottoman Administration had an important influence on the development of the Sanûsiya Order for the Order was born and grew under the Turkish governership body. Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were parts of the Ottoman Empire until 1912. al-Sanûsî and his successors took the view that the Caliphate had been usurped by the Ottomans in 1517. Although the Turks knew the fact that al-Sanûsî and his followers did not approve Istanbul, the Ottoman authorities tolerated the Sanûsiya Order.

Turkish authorities left the Sanûsiya to perform many of the functions of a government in the interior since the Turkish Administration was in the town. From time to time Central Government sent an envoy to the Head of the Order with gifts and instructions to report what was going on in the Sahara. As a response, the Head of the Order sent a deputation to Istanbul to express loyalty and pay respect.



The Turkish Administration operated through the contacts of its local official who were generally Arabs of the country. Turkish Authorities and local shaikhs of the tribal sections co-operated to collect taxes and to maintain security. It was to the common interest of the Turkish Administration and of the Sanûsiya that there should be order, security, justice and trade in the country. In addition, the tribes should not get out of hand. The Sanûsiya gave support to the Turkish Administration in collecting taxes. This assistance and the Islamic nature of the Ottoman Empire enabled Turkish authorities to collect taxes without constant resistance and disturbance.

Abdul Majid I issued a decree (ferman) in 1856 which exempted the Sanûsî properties from taxation and permitted the Order to receive and collect a religious tithes from its followers. Toleration and friendly approach of the Ottoman rule empowered the Sanûsiya Order to strengthen and buttress its position in dealing with the tribes. The tribes first began to see themselves as a nation through the Sanûsiya's relations with the Turkish Administration. Despite being under the Ottoman rule the Arabs did not feel themselves subject to yoke and oppression.

The Ottoman Government and the Sanûsiya Order became closer in their common adversity when they felt that the Italian invasion was imminent. For the sake of Islam both parties reacted together against the threats from Christian powers, i.e. the French advance in the Sahara and the Italian invasion of Libya.

### **Long-Lasting Wars and the Sanûsiya Movement**

Looking at the historical process the wars which were launched by Italy in Libya can be divided into three periods.

The first war declared on the Ottomans by the Italians in 1911 and ended in 1917. During the Ottoman-Italian war, tribal forces reinforced the Turkish resistance as an unexpected assistance although the Italians assumed that the Arabs would not enter the war on the Ottoman side. As the war went on, the Bedouins launched guerilla activity around the Italian forces. From that onwards the leadership, organization and maintenance of the war has been mainly undertaken by the Sanûsiya Order and its adherents.

Between 1916 and 1923 Sayyid Idris experienced an intense diplomatic war against England and Italy. During this second period the Sanûsiya Order achieved a diplomatic status putting primary emphasis on political activity. Accordingly, the Order began to lose its religious character gradually transforming into a rather political organization. The third period began with the declaration of war by Italy in 1923. Having an overwhelming superiority in men, equipment and war experience over the Bedouin forces the Italians put down their resistance. By the end of the last defeat members of the Sanûsiya Order were driven into exile and its organization had been entirely disrupted in 1932. Not until the declaration of United Nations in 1952 did Libya gain her independence. After the declaration of Libya's liberation Sayyid Idris, son of al-Mahdi, became independent constitutional King of Libya.

### **Characteristics of the Sanûsiya Organization**

The development and achievements of the Sanûsiya Order seem to have ties with a set of social relations in Cyrenaica where the Sanûsiya Order established itself firmly only because there existed appropriate conditions that permitted the Organization to take its roots strongly. In the Bedouin society there was a tribal solidarity emanated from harsh and austere environmental conditions. Surroundings united them against natural forces although there were tribal competitions in the pact. The Sanûsiya Order became widely accepted since it was founded on the prevailing Bedouin brotherhood though there being a number of Islamic Orders around the Bedouins.

As far as the Bedouins of Cyrenaica are concerned they were, to a great extent, ignorant of doctrinal, ritual and moral teachings of Islam. Although they were, in fact, proud of being Muslims it is doubtful whether the Bedouins knew how to pray in a prescribed manner. At any rate al-Sanûsî was appealing not to a pagan people but to a Muslim people to show in their lives the faith they professed. It was his achievement to have given their religion an organized form and a direction. By doing so al-Sanûsî exercised a persistent and transformative influence on their morality.

The Bedouins, al Sanûsî found in Cyrenaica, were not only Muslims but also inveterate devotees of saints and *marabouts*. Each section of a Bedouin society, from the smallest to the largest, had its shaikh or shaikhs whom they

respected. The precarious authority of the shaikhs rested not on force but on the renown esteem they enjoyed in the tribe. al-Sanūsī was in the long tradition of these respected shaikhs and *marabouts*. The attachment to the Sanūsīya Order springs from personal devotions of the Bedouins to the personality of al-Sanūsī and his family which represented large tribal divisions vis-a-vis the Turkish authorities. al-Sanūsī derived his sanctity from the fact that he was considered a holy man. The bedouins' respect for al-Sanūsī enabled him and his family, in the long run, to turn this respect into a political organization which would lead a significant resistance to foreign invaders.

### **Foundations of *Zawiyas* (Lodges) and Their Functions**

The *zawiyas* hold paramount importance for all the Islamic religious orders since they are used as centres of various activities. The Sanūsīya Order followed tradition of founding *zawiyas* as means of their cause and its propagation.

A tribal *zawiya*, as Avans-Pritchard puts it, seems generally to have been established in the following manner. "A tribe or tribal section saw with envy that a neighbouring tribe or section had a *zawiya*. They sent a deputation to the Head of Order and asked him for a shaikh to teach their children, cater for their religious needs, settle the disputes among them and so forth. The Head of the Order granted them a shaikh chosen among the learned and pious men who surrounded him at Jaghbug. The Shaikh probably took with him one or two compainons, *Ikhwan*, Brothers of the Order to help him start and organize the new *zawiya*. The Shaikh of a new *zawiya* would point out to the local tribesman that he and his companions had no means of supporting themselves or of maintaining the new *zawiya*. At Shaikh's request they were given a part of land around the *zawiya* to cultivate it and become self-supporting organization. Apart from land they received donations and collected tithes from the *Bedouin* tribes. Properties of the *zawiya* were administered by the shaikh of *zawiya* without direct influence and interference of the Head of the Order."

al-Sanūsī founded his first *zawiya* in the Hijaz in 1837. The second one was established in Cyrenaica in 1843 which became a famous learning centre. Following the foundations of network *zawiyas* a large number of people became adherents of the Order.



### Essence of the Sanûsiya Doctrines

As far as al-Sanûsî's works are concerned he seems to have been influenced by al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiya and Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhâb. Imitating al-Ghazali he tried to reconcile methods and approaches of the Ulama and those of the Sufis. Although there were different ways or paths, according to al-Sanûsî, the truth is one and all the Orders lead to the same truth.

The founder of the Sanûsiya Order accepts only the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* as primary and authentic bases of Muslim life in all its aspects. Although he associates himself with the *Malikite* rite he differs from traditional interpretation of the school in certain matters. al-Sanûsî rejects blind imitation and acceptance of the past. He thinks that imitation (taqlid) is contrary to the teachings of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*. He argues that no one is bound to accept any of four traditional rites as a definite starting point. He concludes his argument on this matter by saying that adherence to the rite of any particular *Imam* without a support for it in the *Qur'an* or in the *Sunna* is a gross ignorance and blindness. He rejects both *ijma* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogy) insisting on going back to the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*.

As for the unity with God the Sanûsiya Order differs from traditional Islamic Orders in that the former renounces the idea of unity with God. al-Sanûsî persists in that the perfection should be sought through spritual identification with the Prophet Muhammad rather than with God. Those who desire to attain such perfection must imitate Prophet Muhammad's actions and practices and contemplate the essence of the Prophet himself.

al-Sanûsî asserts that tombs of the saints should not be given any special veneration. The impact of the Wahhabî thought is quite understandable concerning the prohibition of saint-reverence whether alive or dead. al-Sanûsî and his successors very strongly disapproved of any external element to experince God. Hence they outlawed music, dancing, singing, tobacco and coffee, etc. Doctrines of al-Sanûsî were not accepted by the *Ulama* and his teachings were denounced publicly by Shaikh al-Hamish. He asserted that al-Sanûsî and his followers departed from Islamic path pursuing errors.

### Conclusion

In what preceded an attempt has been made to shed light on different aspects of the Wahhâbiya and the Sanûsiya movements. It seems to me that a comprehensive understanding of both movements lies in a historical exploration of these significant organizations. With this approach and consideration in mind I examined the historical evolution of the Wahhâbiya and the Sanûsiya in order to penetrate into their political, military and religious doctrines. What I tried to do is to analyse various dimensions of the above mentioned movements and their far-reaching influences. The historical account of political, military and religious aspects of these two revivalist and puritanist movements unveiled the similarities and discrepancies between them.

The Wahhâbiya and the Sanûsiya emerged as revivalist and puritanist movements in Muslim World claiming that they would reestablish real Islam and purify it from external elements. Having been launched historically later the Sanûsiya movement had been influenced by the Wahhâbiya. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhâb and al-Sanûsî were inspired by Ibn Taymiyya whose doctrines have been accepted and adopted by both leaders. Analogous to Ibn Taymiyya both leaders insisted on turning back to fundamental sources of Islamic belief, the *Qur'an* and the authentic *Sunna*. In doing so, they intended to eliminate innovations of later developments to restore the pristine form of Islam performed by the Prophet and his Companions.

There is no doubt that the Wahhabîs and the Sanûsîs denounced a number of beliefs and practices prevalent among Muslim societies such as intercession, saint veneration, visiting the shrines of saints, smoking of tobacco and other external elements regarded as innovations. Concerning sufi doctrines both rejected the idea of unity with God. The Wahhâbîs and the Sanûsîs differed in that while the former refused sufi doctrines and displayed a violent attitude to sufi practices attacking and destroying the tombs without any toleration, the latter accommodated mystic thought to find a way to reconcile the methods of the *Ulama* and the *Sufis* as al-Ghazali did in the past, thus they demonstrated an embracing manner extending it to the other Islamic Orders.

While Muhammad Ibn al-Wahhâb claimed that he was a follower of the *Hanbalite* sect and al-Sanûsî asserted that he was an adherent of the *Malikite* sect both are said to have been departed from their traditional schools about certain matters. Both leaders condemned the blind acceptance of previous scholars, rejecting *qiyas* and *taqlid*. When they exposed their doctrines publicly the Ulama did not accept them on the ground that Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhâb and al-Sanûsî endangered the unity of *Umma* by asserting false doctrines.

The Wahhâbiya and the Sanûsiya appear to have involved in politics in different degrees and manners in that the former allied itself with the Sa'udi family while the latter was led by the Sanûsiya family itself in the political arena. In the case of Wahhâbi-Sa'udi alliance the religious authority and temporal power seem to have been separated. Regarding the Sanûsiya movement both elements of power were held by the members of Sanûsiya family and by the top chiefs of tribes who obeyed the central authority of the Sanûsiya Order. The Wahhâbiya movement was existent until today. Diffusion of the Sanûsiya doctrines were carried out by the *zawiyas* which had been established to serve wide range of activities.

Central authority of the Ottoman caliphate was challenged by the Wahhâbis. They held the view that the Ottoman Sultan was not a legitimate ruler of the *Umma* and launched an overt revolt against the Ottoman authority in Arabia region. On this issue the Sanûsîs took a different stance that although they did not approve the Ottoman rule completely there had been no military confrontation. Instead the leaders of the Sanûsiya Order co-operated with the Ottoman rulers and provided them with the assistance to collect taxes without causing a social disturbance.

The concept of *Jihad* was emphasized by both movements to facilitate the consolidation of unity. Nation of religious brotherhood has been used as a tool for political unity and obedience to central authority. It occurs that the Sa'udi dynasty strengthened its temporal power by utilizing religious doctrines of the Wahhâbiya which stressed the necessity of a united *Umma* and the legality of the Sa'udi leadership. Likewise, religious aspects of the Sanûsiya's preaching added a new dimension to tribal solidarity which motivated the elimination of intertribal disputes.



One of the common characteristics of these two movements worth mentioning here is that both played important roles in the creation of nation-states. The Wahhâbiya in Arabia and the Sanûsiya in Libya stimulated the emergence of independent kings in their own lands. During this long process of establishing self-governing kingdoms the Wahhâbiya preserved its religious features since the religious and temporal powers were separated at the outset of Wahhâbi-Sa'udi alliance. As for the Sanûsiya, the fact appears that the Order has lost its religious significance and became a purely political organization because of its active involvement into political affairs.

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