

Letter of Clarification by Shaykh Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Abd Allāh



Translation of a letter written by Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb dispelling rumours and slanderous accusations made against him and explaining the background of their origin as occurs in al-Durar al-Saniyyah (1/54-56). This is one of many that refute what is spread today by the Ṣūfīs and Shī‘ītes (out of ideological hatred) and ignorant, misinformed or malicious academics, writers, politicians and policy-makers who ascribe the ideology of ISIS and al-Qaeda to Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. He was no more than a peaceful preacher to whom enmity, hatred and violent aggression was shown because he educated the common people with respect to the foundations of Islām. Centuries of bigotry, partisanship, intellectual decline and blind-following coupled with enmity were mobilised against his call and he only resorted to fighting in order to protect himself from unlawful, unjustified, oppressive violence. Al-Qaeda and ISIS try to justify their extremism by making claims of following a) the Salaf, b) Ibn Taymiyyah c) Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. Upon investigation, these claims are spurious. However, there are political and ideological motivations at work which prevent the mainstream realisation that ISIS and al-Qaeda are the heretical renegade Khārijites whom the Prophet (ﷺ) foretold and whom the Salaf fought and wrote against. Their opportune ascriptions are simply marketing and propaganda tactics that have deceived both ignorant Muslims who have joined them and ignorant or unscrupulous academics who believe them to be truthful in what they claim.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

From Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb to the brother for the sake of Allāh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān bin ‘Abd Allāh: May peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of Allāh. To proceed:

Your letter reached me and it pleased the heart. May Allāh make you from the pious leaders and from the callers to the religion of the chief of the messengers. I do inform you that I am – by the praise of Allāh – a follower and not an innovator. My creed and religion with which I show devotion to Allāh is the school of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah, that which the leading scholars of the Muslims are upon such as the Four Imāms and those who follow them until the establishment of the Hour. However, I explained [the matter] of making devotion purely and sincerely for Allāh alone to the people and prohibited them from invoking the living [from afar] and the dead from amongst the righteous and others. [I prohibited them] from granting them a share in [acts of worship] that only Allāh is worshipped with such as sacrifice [of animals for food], making oaths, reliance, prostration and others which are the sole right of Allāh and in which none shares with Him, neither a near angel and nor a sent messenger. This is what the Messengers called to, from the first to the last of them, and it is what Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah are upon.

“As for fighting, then we do not fight anyone except in order to protect our lives and our sanctity”

I also explained to them that the first to enter Shirk (associationism) in this nation were the Rāfiḍah (Shī‘ites), those who invoke ‘Alī and others, and they request the fulfilment of needs and removal of hardships from them... So then some of the chiefs [of the tribes] rejected this because it conflicted with the habits they had been raised upon...and they began to make their revilements and enmity to be directed towards what I commanded them with of Tawḥīd (monotheism) and what I prohibited them of Shirk. They deceived the common-folk into [believing] that this opposes what the majority of people are upon and they ascribed numerous types of fabrications to us.

From them is what you have mentioned, that I declare all people to be disbelievers save those who follow me and that I claim their marriages are invalid. How strange! How can such [a thought] enter the mind of an intelligent person? And does a Muslim utter the likes of this? I exonerate myself in front of Allāh from this statement which does not emanate except from the defective in intellect, absent of comprehension.

In conclusion, what has been mentioned about me of [the employment of] ways besides [simply] calling the people to Tawḥīd and prohibition against Shirk is all from slander.

From the strangest of what I saw taking place from some of the opposing chiefs is that when I explained to them the speech of Allāh the Exalted and what the [Qur'ānic] exegetes explained regarding His saying the Exalted, **“Those whom they invoke themselves seek a means of nearness to their Lord as to which of them would be nearest”** (17:57), and His saying the Exalted, **“And they say: These are our intercessors with Allāh”** (10:18), and His saying, **“We do not worship them except that they may bring us closer to Allāh”** (39:3) and what Allāh mentioned of the affirmation of the disbelievers [of His Lordship] in His saying, the Exalted, **“Say: Who provides for you from the heaven and earth?”** (10:31) and [verses] besides them, they said: It is not befitting for us and our likes to act upon the Qur'ān or the speech of the Messenger, and nor upon the speech of the earlier scholars, we do not take except what has been mentioned by the latecomers. So I said to them that I dispute with a Ḥanafī by referring to the speech of the later Ḥanafīs, and [likewise], the Mālikī, Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī, I dispute each of them through the books of the latecomers from their scholars within each school, those whom they depend upon. When they rejected that, I then cited for them the statements of the scholars from every school. I mentioned to them what these [scholars] had said after invocations by the graves and making oaths to

them had appeared [in their time]. They then acknowledge this and verified it, but it only increased them in aversion.

As for takfīr (excommunication), then I [only] make takfīr of the one who came to know [the reality] of the the religion of the Messengers and after he came to know it, reviled it, prohibited the people from it and showed enmity towards whoever acted upon it. This is the one who whom I declare a disbeliever, and the majority of the [Muslim] nation – and all praise is due to Allāh - are not like that.

As for fighting, then we do not fight anyone except in order to protect our lives and our sanctity. We only fight as a reactionary response [to counter aggression], “**And the recompense of evil is an evil like thereof**” (42:40). Likewise, the one who openly reviled the religion of the Messenger after he came to know [of its reality]. And peace [be upon you].

Refer to al-Durar al-Saniyyah (1/54-56) and it is also in his Mu'allāfat (5/36-37).
Translated by Abu 'Iyaad Amjad Rafiq ♦ abuiyaad.com ♦ @abuiyaadsp