

FATWA ON THE HERESY OF THE WAHHABISM

31 - The following is again a translation from the book *Ashadd al-jihad*:

Muhammad ibn Sulaiman al-Madani ash-Shafi'i (rahmat-Allahi 'alaih), [who passed away in Medina in 1194 A.H. (1780),] was questioned about Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab an-Najdi. He said, "This man is leading the ignoramuses of the present age to a heretical path. He is extinguishing Allahu ta'ala's light. But Allahu ta'ala will not let His light be extinguished in spite of the opposition of polytheists, and He will enlighten everywhere with the light of the 'ulama' of Ahl as-Sunnat." The [collection of the] questions and his answers at the end of Muhammad ibn Sulaiman's fatwas are as follows:

"Question: Oh great 'ulama', the stars who lead to the path of the Best of Creatures (the Prophet)! I ask you: Is a person to be permitted to disseminate his ideas if he says that this umma has wholly dissented from the essence of Islam and from the path of Rasulullah (sall-Allahu 'alaihi wa sallam), just by measuring with his short sight and narrow mind the knowledge he has gathered from various religious books, and if he says that he is mujtahid and, therefore, is able to derive knowledge on Islam from Allah's Word and Rasulullah's hadiths, although he does not have any of the qualifications stated as necessary by the 'ulama' of Islam for being a mujtahid? Should he not give up this claim of his and follow the 'ulama' of Islam? He says that he is an imam, that it is necessary for every Muslim to follow him and that his madhhab is necessary. He forces Muslims to accept his madhhab. He says that those who do not obey him are unbelievers, that they should be killed and that their possessions should be confiscated. Does this man tell the truth? Or, is he wrong? Even if a person fulfilled all the requirements necessary for making ijtihad and founded a madhhab, would it be jaiz for him to force everyone to adopt this madhhab? Is it necessary to adopt a certain madhhab? Or, is everyone free to choose any madhhab he like? Does a Muslim go out of Islam if he visits the grave of a Sahabi or a pious servant of Allahu ta'ala, vows something for him, cuts an animal near a grave, prays making a mediator of a dead person, takes some soil from such a grave to receive blessings or asks help from Rasulullah or a Sahabi to get redeemed from danger? Is it permitted to kill such a Muslim even though he says, 'I do not worship the dead person and do not believe that he has the power to do anything. I make an intercessor, mediator, of that person with Allahu ta'ala to make me attain my wish, because, I believe that he is a beloved servant of Allahu ta'ala.' Does a person go out of Islam if he swears by something [or somebody] other than Allah?

"Answer: It should be well understood that knowledge is to be learned from a master. Those who learn knowledge, one's religion, from books by themselves make many mistakes. Their mistakes are more than their correct conclusions. There is no one who can employ ijtihad today. Al-Imam ar-Rafii, al-Imam an-Nawawi and Fakhr ad-din ar-Razi said, 'The 'ulama' have come to a unanimous conclusion that there is no one left capable of employing ijtihad today.' No alim argued with al-Imam as-Suyuti, who was like an ocean in every science and a profound alim, when he declared that he was a relative (nisbee) mujtahid, that is, a mujtahid belonging to a formerly established madhhab, though he did not say that he was an absolute (mutlaq)

mujtahid or that he had his own madhhab. He wrote more than five hundred books. Every book of his shows that he was at a very high level in the sciences of tafsir and hadith and in every branch of Islamic knowledge. Is it apt to believe similar words of those who are very far from the high level of an alim such as al-Imam as-Suyuti while he was not accepted as a relative mujtahid? They should not even be listened to. And if one of them goes so far as to say that the books by the 'ulama' of Islam were wrong, we shall doubt his reason and faith. Because, we may ask: From whom has he acquired his knowledge? Since he has seen neither Rasulullah (sall-Allahu ta'ala 'alaihi wa sallam) nor any Sahabi, he should have learned by reading the books by the 'ulama' of Islam if he knows anything. If he says that the books of those 'ulama' are distorted, then how has he himself found the right path? He should explain this point to us! The imams of the four madhhabs and the great 'ulama' who came up in these madhhabs derived all their knowledge from ayats and hadiths. From which source has he acquired his knowledge which disagrees with theirs? It is obvious that he has not attained the degree of employing ijтиhad. The thing this man should do when he encounters a hadith ash-Sharif which he cannot comprehend is to search for the interpretations of that hadith ash-Sharif by mujtahids. He should adopt the interpretation he likes. Al-Imam an-Nawawi (rahimah-Allahu ta'ala), a profound alim, wrote in his book Rawda that his was the way to be followed. Only those profound 'ulama' who had attained the degree of ijтиhad could comprehend ayats and hadiths. Non-mujtahids are not permitted to attempt to understand ayats and hadiths. So, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab had better return to the right path and give up his heresies.

"As for his calling Muslims 'unbelievers,' a hadith ash-Sharif declares, 'If a person calls a Muslim an "unbeliever," one of the two becomes an unbeliever. If the accused is a Muslim, the one who accuses becomes an unbeliever.' Al-Imam ar-Rafii (rahmat-Allahi 'alaih), with reference to Tuhfa, wrote in his book Ash-sharh al-kabir, 'The one who calls a Muslim a disbeliever but is unable to explain it away becomes a disbeliever himself, for he will have called Islam disbelief.' Al-Imam an-Nawawi, too, wrote the same in his book Rawda. Abu Ishaq al-Isfaraini, al-Halimi, an-Nasr Al-Muqaddasi, al-Ghazali, Ibn Daqiqi 'l-Id and many other 'ulama' said that he becomes a disbeliever whether he is able to explain it away or not.

"As to his permitting killing Muslims and confiscating their properties, a hadith ash-Sharif declares, 'I have been commanded to fight against disbelievers until they say La ilaha illa'llah.' This hadith ash-Sharif shows that it is not permissible to kill Muslims. This hadith ash-Sharif was said in the light of the sixth ayat al-karima of Surat at-Tawba which declares, 'Free them who make tawba and perform salat and give zakat.' The twelfth ayat al-karima of Surat at-Tawba declares, 'They are your brothers in Islam.' It is declared, 'We judge according to the appearance we see. Allahu ta'ala knows the secret,' [That author opposes this hadith sharif too, and says, "We do not care about the words. We look for the intentions and meanings," on the 146th page of his book. There are many such statements, incompatible with ayats and hadiths, in his book.] in a hadith ash-Sharif. Another hadith ash-Sharif declares, 'I am not ordered to dissect the hearts of men and see their secrets.' Hadrat Usama killed a man who had been heard to have said, 'La ilaha illa'llah'; when Usama claimed that the man had not had iman in his heart, Rasulullah declared, 'Did you dissect his heart?'

"It is not permissible for a mujtahid to compel people to accept his madhhab. If he is a Qadi at the court, he may give a ruling according to his ijтиhad and may order that his decree be executed.

"As for making nadhr for awliya', the Shafi'i 'ulama' explained this subject in detail. It is noted in the book Hiba with reference to the book Tuhfa: 'If someone makes a vow for a dead wali with the intention that the goods he vowed be for the wali, this nadhr is not sahih. If he vows without this intention his nadhr is sahih, and the goods vowed are to be given to the servants of the wali's tomb, the students and teachers of the madrasa near the tomb and to the poor who live near the tomb. If the people who are used to receiving the vowed goods assemble near the tomb, and if it is a custom of that country that the goods vowed should be given to them, the goods are given to them. If there is no such custom, then the nadhr is invalid. This is reported from as-Samlawi and ar-Ramli, too. Everyone knows that no one amongst those who make nadhr for a dead wali would ever think the goods vowed should be given to the dead wali. Because, everyone knows that the dead do not take or use anything and that the goods are to be given to the poor or to the people who serve at the tomb. This is why it is an 'ibada. In fact, according to the Shafi'i madhab it is not permissible to vow to do mubah, makruh or haram things. The 'ibadas and sunnas which are neither fard nor wajib can be vowed as nadhr.'

"Some 'ulama' said 'permissible' and some said 'not permissible' for kissing and rubbing one's face on graves. Those who said 'not permissible' said that it was makruh. Nobody said it was haram.

"As declared in the hadiths quoted at the beginning of our book, to have recourse to prophets and pious Muslims, that is, to put them as intermediaries, or to entreat Allahu ta'ala through them is permissible. There are many hadiths which show that it is permissible to have tawassul (recommendation of oneself to Allahu ta'ala) through pious deeds. It is certainly permissible to have recourse to the mediation of pious men while it is permissible to make so of good deeds.

"As to swearing by some being other than Allahu ta'ala, it is disbelief only if that being is highly esteemed and attributed as a partner to Allahu ta'ala. The hadith ash-Sharif, 'He who swears by someone other than Allah become a disbeliever,' which was related by Hakim and Imam Ahmad and quoted in al-Munawi's book, explains this fact. But al-Imam an-Nawawi, depending on the majority of the 'ulama', wrote that it was makruh and added that the ijma' of Muslims was a document.

"The 114th ayat al-karima of Surat an-Nisa' declares, 'We put into Hell in the hereafter together with unbelievers the person who, after tawhid and guidance have been taught to him, dissents from the right path of Rasulullah and departs from the believers in belief and deeds.' It is understood from this ayat karima also that it is necessary for every believer to follow the path of Ahl as-Sunnat wal-Jamaat. It should not be forgotten that the wolf will devour the lamb out of the flock. Likewise, he who remains outside Ahl as-Sunnat wal-Jamaat will go to Hell."

After the above passage, Hadrat Dawud ibn Sulaiman goes on:

"This is the end of our short quotation from the profound scholar Muhammad ibn Sulaiman

al-Madani's long fatwa on this subject. This will be sufficient for those whom Allahu ta'ala has decreed guidance. Muhammad ibn Sulaiman died in 1195 A.H. (1780). The heretic Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was born in the Najd desert in 1111 A.H. (1699) and died in 1206 (1792). Muhammad ibn Sulaiman unmasked the ignorance of this man and refuted his opinions and claim that he employed ijtihad. He proved and disseminated in Muslim countries the fact that Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab had not learned anything or received faid from any scholar of Islam and that he had fallen into heresy on account of calling Muslims polytheists.

"Hanafi scholar Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-'Azim al-Makki [(rahmat-Allahi 'alaik) d. 1052 A.H. (1643)] listed and confuted the heretical statements of Ibn Hazm Muhammad 'Ali [az-Zahiri, d. 456 A.H. (1064)] in his book Al-qawl as-Sadid. Ibn Hazm ordered everybody to employ ijtihad and said that it was haram to follow other people. He presents the 58th ayat al-karima of Surat an-Nisa', 'If you cannot agree on a matter, do it the way Allahu ta'ala and His Prophet said,' as a support for these words of his. 'Abd al-'Azim said in answer: 'Thanks to Allahu ta'ala, we are not outside the state of following the great Islamic scholar al-Imam al-azam Abu Hanifa. We are honored by following that exalted imam and his great students and the profound 'ulama' who poured light into the world such as Shams al-aimma and other real 'ulama' who came throughout a millennium (rahimahum-Allahu ta'ala).'

"Ibn Hazm was an Andalusian. He was in the Zahiriyya madhhab, which was founded by Dawud al-Isfhani [az-Zahiri, d. Baghdad, 270 A.H. (883)], whose madhhab was forgotten in a short time. Ibn al-Ahad, az-Zahabi and Ibn Ahmad ibn Khallikan [d. Damascus, 681 A.H. (1281)] said, 'Even those who greeted Ibn Hazm hated him. They disliked his ideas. They all agreed that he was a heretic. They could not speak good of him. They warned the sultans to beware of him. They told Muslims to keep away from him.' Ibn al-'Arif said, 'Ibn Hazm's tongue and al-Hajjaj's sword did the same thing.' Ibn Hazm had many wicked, heretical ideas incompatible with the Hadith. Al-Hajjaj [Al Hajjaj az-zalim as-Saqafi, who died in 95 A.H. (714), was the Governor of Medina and Iraq during the caliphate of Abd al-Malik and his son Walid.] killed one hundred and twenty thousand innocent people without any reason. And Ibn Hazm's tongue led astray hundreds of thousands of Muslims who came after the 'good time' defined in the Hadith ash-Sharif. He died in 456 A.H. (1064).

"May Allahu ta'ala protect all my Muslim brothers against heretical and corrupt paths! May He bestow upon us the belief and deeds compatible with the correct ijtihads of the 'ulama' of the four madhhabs! May He assemble us as the followers of their madhhabs beside the prophets, Siddiqs, martyrs and the pious on the Day of Judgement! Amin." [Dawud ibn Sulaiman, Ashadd al-jihad, written in 1293 A.H., published in Bombay, 1305 A.H. Arabic reprint and Turkish version in 1390 (1970).]