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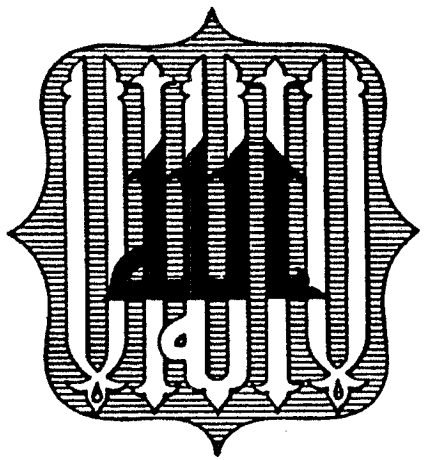

There is no god but Allah

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The Editor wishes to emphasize that views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Editor

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE WAHHĀBĪYA AND THE SANŪSĪYA MOVEMENTS
A Comparative Approach

Talip Küçükcan *

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. The decline of the Ottoman empire and diminishing authority of the Caliph, growing political and cultural influence of the Western powers throughout the Muslim World, moral laxity and superstitious accretions prevalent among believers, and a rising tide of nationalist trends to establish regional and nation-states; all of these factors and some others inspired new ideas and orientations that occurred in the Muslim World. Among them the Wahhābīya is of considerable importance as it has had a long-lasting influence on other revivalist and puritan movements. The Wahhābī doctrine prompted some of those who had been seeking for a promising development which might solve the problems of the Muslim World and provide a new understanding of religion. Following the Wahhābīya the Sanūsīya 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. The paper will also concentrate on providing the reader with a descriptive account of the evolution of the Wahhābīya and the Sanūsīya, exploring the similarities, discrepancies and relations between the two.

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1. The Wahhābī Movement

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

The founder, Muhamnmad b. Abd al-Wahhāb was born in Uyayna in Najd in 1703. His father and grandfather were Hanbalite *qādis*, thus he was brought up and educated in this tradition. (Rentz, 1969, p. 270) He studied in famous learning centres; Madina, Basra, Baghdad, Hamadhan etc. spending many years in travel during which he studied philosophy and sufism. After having completed his studies, Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb turned to Uyayna where he publicly preached his doctrines and met both success and opposition. The Governor of Uyayna was asked to expel him as a consequence of disputes caused by his teachings. (E.I., first edition, p. 1087).

Implications of Ibn Taymiyya's Views for Wahhābī Thought

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

The originator of the Wahhābīya movement had been a sufi 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 Wahhābī doctrines:

1. Concerning State and Religion: According to Ibn Taymiyya the *Ulama* are responsible for the protection of the 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 in important effect on the Wahhābī ideology, which accepted the al-Sa'ud's dynasty as a legitimate and hereditary Islamic government after taking refuge in Dariyya, a territory controlled by the 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'ān 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 unity of Islamic teachings. The idea of going back to the Qur'ān and the authentic Sunna with a puritan attitude was adopted and applied by Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb, rejecting medieval scholars and also *qiyas*.
3. Concerning Sufi Doctrines and Practices: in the light of recent scholarly works, Ibn Taymiyya is said to have been a sufi of the *Qadiriyya* Order. But he regards the idea of mystical unity with God and ecstatic aspects of sufism as un-Islamic and 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, pp.81-82) Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb, developed his doctrine to such extent that the Wahhābīs opened the Prophet's tomb and sold or distributed its relics and jewels (Troeller, 1976, p. 14)

Nature of Wahhābī Doctrines

Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb 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 *Muallafāt al-shaykh al-Imām Muhammad Abd al-Wahhāb* by the Islamic University of Imām Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud.

In his works Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahha–b denounces a number of beliefs and practices prevailing in Muslim society. He begins his discourse by stressing the unity of God. He underlines the doctrine of *tawhīd*, God's uniqueness as omnipotent Lord of creation. He stresses the unity of God in deserving worship and the absolute devotion of the servants. He regards the association of persons or things with the Lord as a violation of the doctrine of God's Oneness. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb condemns intercession, *tawassul*, which was applied and practiced by a large number of Muslims during their prayers. He warns the believers against showing excessive devotion to saints and against the use of saints' graves as places of worship for *tawassul*. He considers these external elements 'polytheism', *shirk*. He seeks to purify the Muslim community from any 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, pp. 271-272) Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb states that the true Islam is that of the first generations (*al-Salaf al-Sālih*) and protests against all those later innovations as superstitious creations which brought what he calls 'new gods' into Islam (Hourani, 1983, p. 37) As a result of this attitude to sufi tradition, the Wahhābīs 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 Wahhābīs plundered Karbala, a Shi'i holy city, and destroyed Husayn's tomb. (Yassini, 1982, p. 6; Troeller 1976, p. 14)

Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb rejected all kinds of innovation, defined by

him as any doctrine or action not based on the Qur'ān, Sunna or on the authority of Companions. Among the innovations are practices such as celebrating the Prophet's birth, the use of a rosary, adding minarets and ornaments to mosques etc. The following practices may lead the believer to *shirk* in Wahhābī understanding:

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

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

He distinguishes between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, extending the scope of *Dar al-Harb* to some other Muslim countries which he believed 'unlawful'. Therefore those who live in *Dar al-Harb*, where there is no freedom, have to perform *hijra*, emigrating from every country in which *shirk* and *kufr* are apparent. Another usage of *hijra* appears in Wahhābī 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 *Umma* and civil war were 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-Wahhāb had been indoctrinated to believe that the opponents of the Wahhābī cause were enemies of Islam who should be fought against. (Yassini, 1982, p. 64)

Involvement of Wahhābīs in Politics: Religion and State

The modern history of Sa'udi Arabia began in the eighteenth century with

the alliance between Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb, the founder of the Wahhābī movement, and Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud, Amir of Dariyya, son of the Founder of the Sa'udi dynasty. When Muhanmad b. Abd al-Wahhāb was forced to leave Uyayna he went to Dariyya where he was received by the chieftain, Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud, in 1745. Muhammad Ibn al-Sa'ud accepted Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb's doctrine and undertook its defence and propagation after having agreed that political sovereignity should rest with Ibn al-Sa'ud, whereas religious authority should belong to Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhāb. The Sa'udi-Wahhābī alliance was further cemented by intermarriage between the two families. (Troeller, 1976, p. 13)

The Sa'udi-Wahhābī alliance seems to be a turning point through which the Wahhābī movement gained an official acceptance and confirmation from a strong dynasty which used the religious authority of Wahhābī 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 facilitated Sa'udi-Wahhābī 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 Wahhābī doctrines and socio-political teachings of religion enabled the al-Sa'ud dynasty to hold their political authority firmly over the nomad tribes.

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

It was principally through the Wahhābī 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 Wahhābī 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 relating to temporal power such as *amir*, *hakim* and *malik*, king.

Relations Between Ottoman rule and the Sa'udi -Wahhābī Dynasty

Muhammad b. Ibn al-Wahhāb declared that the Islam protected by the Ottoman Sultan was not the true Islam, implying that the Sultan was not the

legitimate leader of the *Umma*. The Wahhābīs held that the Arabs were worthier than the Turks with regard to the *Imamate* or leadership. Thus the authority of Ottoman rule was rejected and challenged. (Hourani, 1983, p. 38) When the rapid expansion of Wahhābī movement was reported to Istanbul, the Ottoman Caliph Sultan Mahmud II urged Muhammad Ali Pasha, the governor of Egypt, to drive the Wahhābīs out of the holy cities. Under the Caliphal instruction, Muhammad Ali Pasha launched a series of military attacks on Wahhābī-controlled territories. In 1818 he reached Dariyya and captured the capital of the Wahhābī-Sa'udi alliance. (Troeller, 1976, p. 14)

Although the Wahhābīya 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, Hijāz, Makka, Madina and Jeddah, were all occupied. After an international recognition of hereditary authority or kingship of the Sa'udi family, new developments in the political arena facilitated the consolidation of the Sa'udi-Wahhābī alliance as a nation-state.

Later Developments in the Wahhābī World

The Wahhābī 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 Wahhābī 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 Wahhābī-Sa'udi alliance. The Mufti and the chief Qadi come from the House of Shaykhs. The Courts are largely Wahhābī in character. The spread of education and the improvement of communication systems have made it easier to transmit Wahhābī doctrines to different segments of population.

Under the influence of new developments and the toleration of less strict rulers the Wahhābīs of Sa'udi Arabia have shown a growing openness towards non-Wahhābī 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 Wahhābī ruler 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 of U.S.A.

Until recently illustrations showing the human face or form were taboo among the Wahhābīs, though the Qur'ān 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 the 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 the introduction of secular education fearing that it might damage the fabric of Wahhābī 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 the curriculum. Girls were allowed to have access to public education in 1959. None of these elements could have been accepted during the early period of the Wahhābī movement.

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

II. The Sanūsīya Movement [1]

The founder of the Sanūsīya Order was an Algerian scholar whose full name is al-Sayyid Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanūsī al-Khattabi al-Hasani al-Idrisi. He was born at Tursh, near Mostaganem (Algeria) in about 1787. He lost his father while still a small child. His first teacher was his aunt Sayyidah Fatimah. Muhammad b. Ali al-Sanūsī learnt the Qur'ān by heart at a tender age and proceeded to the study of traditional religious sciences.

He went to Fes in 1821, where he studied Qur'ānic exegesis, tradition, the principles of law and jurisprudence. In Morocco he developed an interest and tendency towards mysticism, after having come under the influence of the Tijaniya Order. He then performed the pilgrimage to Makka, where he lived from 1830-1843. Al-Sanūsī wanted to study at al-Azhar, but *shaykhs* 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 Makka. He stayed in the Hijaz for about six years studying under the supervision of a number of *shaykhs* in Makka and Madina. During his studies al-Sanūsī was influenced by Ahmad b. Idris, Head of the Moroccan Order of Qadiriya or Idrisiya.

1 This section owes much to the works of Evans-Pritchard and Ziadeh listed in the references.

When Ahmad b. Idris died in Yaman, his two chief disciples organized his followers into two new sub-Orders, the *Mirghaniya* and the *Sanūsīya*, Al-Sanūsī organized and established his first *zawiya* and the first headquarter of the Order at Abu Qubays, near Makka, in 1837. This year is regarded as the official date of the foundation of the Sanūsīya Order. Because of 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 *zawiya* (lodge) of the Order, *al-Zawiya al-Baida* on the central Cyrenaican plateau. From his headquarters he 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. He always tried to keep away from the Turkish authorities by putting the desert between himself and the Ottoman rulers. He therefore moved the seat of the Order to Jaghbub, and this city became an important centre for the Sanūsīya Order. It was not only out of the reach of Turkish, French and Egyptian administrations, but also it was on the main pilgrimage route from Northwest Africa. Jaghbub was the most central point at that time, in equal touch with the lodges of Sanūsīya Order located in different regions. In Jaghub al-Sanūsī introduced an intense educational programme. He died there in 1859.

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

Al-Mahdi was born at al-Baida in 1844 and he received his early education in Makka. He 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-Mahdi was associated by his followers with al-Mahdi. He often denied such ideas categorically and emphatically. Although the Sudanese Mahdi sent him a special messenger who carried a letter asking for his support, Muhammad al-Mahdi declined his request.

In 1895 Muhammad al-Mahdi 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 he left for Qiru in the central Sudan where he died in 1902. His brother al-Sharif had died six years before him, in 1896. After the death of al-Mahdi his cousin took over the leadership of the Order. Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif who was born in Jaghbub, in 1873, where he

received his early education under al-Mahdi's and his father's supervision. His leadership falls into three periods:

1. 1902-1912, resisting the French in the Sahara.
2. 1912-1918, directing the Bedouin against the Italians and the British.
3. 1918-1926, living in Turkey.

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

Relations Between the Ottomans and the Sanūsīya Order

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

The Turkish authorities left the Sanūsīya to perform many of the functions of government in the interior since their administration was centred in the towns. 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. In 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 officials who were generally Arabs of the country. Turkish Authorities and local *shaykhs* of the tribal sections co-operated to collect taxes and to maintain security. It was in the common interest of the Turkish Administration and of the Sanūsīya that three should be order, security, justice and trade in the country. In addition the tribes should not get out of hand. The Sanūsīya gave support to the Turkish administration in collecting taxes. This assistance and the Islamic nature of the Ottoman Empire enabled the Turkish authorities to collect taxes without constant resistance and disturbance.

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

themselves subject to oppression.

The Ottoman Government and the Sanūsīya 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 Sanūsīya Movement

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

The first war was 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 into the war on the Ottoman side. As the war went on, the Bedouins launched guerrilla activity around the Italian forces. From then onwards the leadership, organisation and maintenance of the war was mainly undertaken by the Sanūsīya Order and its adherents.

Between 1916 and 1923 Sayyid Idris experienced an intense diplomatic war against England and Italy. During this second period the Sanūsīya Order achieved diplomatic status, putting primary emphasis on political activity. Accordingly the Order began to lose its religious character, gradually transforming into a more 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. After the final defeat, members of the Sanūsīya Order were driven into exile and its organization was entirely disrupted in 1932. Not until the declaration of the 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 Sanūsīya Organization

The development and achievements of the Sanūsīya Order seem to have been bound up with a set of social relations in Cyrenaica, where the Sanūsīya Order established itself firmly only because there existed appropriate conditions which permitted the Organization to take root strongly. In Bedouin society there was a tribal solidarity emanating from harsh and austere environmental conditions. Their surroundings united them against the forces of nature, although there was tribal competition in the past. The Sanūsīya Order became widely accepted since it was founded on the prevailing Bedouin brotherhood.

As far as the Bedouins of Cyrenaica are concerned they were, to a great extent, ignorant of the 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 the prescribed manner. At any rate, al-Sanūsī 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 so doing al-Sanūsī exercised a persistent and transformative influence on their morality.

The Bedouin al-Sanūsī 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 *shaykh* or *shaykhs* whom they respected. The precarious authority of the *shaykhs* rested, not on force, but on the renown and esteem they enjoyed in the tribe. Al-Sanūsī was in the long tradition of these respected *shaykhs* and *marabouts*. The attachment to the Sanūsīya Order sprang from the personal devotion of the Bedouins to the personality of al-Sanūsī and his family, which represented large tribal divisions vis-à-vis the Turkish authorities. Al-Sanūsī derived his sanctity from the fact that he was considered a holy man. The Bedouins' respect for him 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 the tradition of founding *zawiyas* as means of their cause and its propagation.

A tribal *zawiya*, as Evans-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 *shaykh* 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 *shaykh* chosen among the learned and pious men who surrounded him at Jaghbub. The *shaykh* probably took with him one or two companions, Brothers of the Order, to help him start and organize the new *zawiya*. The *shaykh* of a new *zawiya* would point out to the local tribesmen that he and his companions had no means of supporting themselves or of maintaining the new *zawiya*. At the *shaykh's* request they were given a part of land around the *zawiya* to cultivate it and become a self-supporting organization. Apart from land they received donations and collected tithes from the Bedouin tribes. Properties of the *zawiya* were administered by the *shaykh* 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 a large number of people became adherents of the Order.

Essence of the Sanūsīya Doctrines

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

The founder of the Sanūsīya Order accepted only the Qur'ān and the Sunna as primary and authentic bases of Muslim life in all its aspects. although he associated himself with the Malikite rite, he differed from the traditional interpretation of his school in certain matters. Al-Sanūsī rejected blind imitation and acceptance of the past. He thought that imitation (*taqlid*) is contrary to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunna. He argued that no one is bound to accept any of the four traditional rites as a definite starting point. He concluded his argument on this matter by saying that adherence to the rite of any particular Imam without a support for it in the Qur'ān or in the Sunna is gross ignorance and blindness. He rejected both *ijma* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogy), insisting on going back to the Qur'ān and the Sunna.

As for "unity" with God, the Sanūsīya Order differs from traditional Islamic Orders in that the former renounces the idea of unity with God. Al-Sanūsī said that perfection should be sought through spiritual identification with the Prophet Muhammad rather than with God. Those who desired to attain such perfection must imitate the Prophet's actions and practices and contemplate the essence of the Prophet himself.

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

Conclusion

In this paper an attempt has been made to shed light on different aspects of the Wahhābīya and the Sanūsīya 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 Wahhābīya and the Sanūsīya 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 puritan movements unveiled the similarities and discrepancies between them.

The Wahhābīya and the Sanūsīya emerged as revivalist and puritan movements in the Muslim World, claiming that they would re-establish real Islam and purify it from external elements. Having been launched historically later, the Sanūsīya movement was influenced by the Wahhābīya. Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab and al-Sanūsī were inspired by Ibn Taymiyya whose doctrines were accepted and adopted by both leaders. Like Ibn Taymiyya, both leaders insisted on turning back to the fundamental sources of Islamic belief, the Qur'an and the authentic Sunna. In so doing they intended to eliminate the innovations of later developments and to restore the pristine form of Islam, as performed by the Prophet and his Companions.

There is no doubt the the Wahhābīs and the Sanūsīs denounced a number of beliefs and practices prevalent among Muslim societies such as intercession, saint veneration, visiting the shrines of saints, the smoking of tobacco and other external elements regarded as innovations. Concerning Sufi doctrines, both rejected the idea of unity with God. The Wahhābīs and the Sanūsīs differed in that while the former rejected 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 policy extending it to the other Islamic Orders.

While Muhammad Ibn al-Wahhab claimed that he was a follower of the Hanbalite rite and al-Sanūsī asserted that he was an adherent of the Malikate rite, both are said to have 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 grounds that Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and al-Sanūsī endangered the unity of the Umma by asserting false doctrines.

The Wahhābīya and the Sanūsīya appear to have been involved in politics in different degrees and manners, the former allied itself with the Sa'udi family while the latter was led by the Sanūsīya family itself in the political arena. In the case of the Wahhābī-Sa'udi alliance, the religious authority and temporal power seems to have been separated. Regarding the Sanūsīya

movement both elements of power were held by the members of the Sanūsīya family and by the top chiefs of tribes who obeyed the central authority of the Sanūsīya Order. The Wahhābīya movement was expanded under the protection of the Sa'udi family as an official form of Islam and has continued its existence until today. Diffusion of the Sanūsīya doctrines was carried out by the *zawiyas* which had been established to serve a wide range of activities.

The Central authority of the Ottoman Caliphate was challenged by the Wahhābīs. 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. On this issue the Sanūsīs took a different stance; although they did not approve Ottoman rule completely, there was no military confrontation. Instead the leaders of the Sanūsīya 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. The notion of religious brotherhood was used as a tool for political unity and obedience to central authority. It happened that the Sa'udi dynasty strengthened its temporal power by utilizing the religious doctrines of the Wahhābīya, which stressed the necessity of a untied *Umma* and the legality of the Sa'udi leadership. Likewise religious aspects of the Sanūsīya's preaching added a new dimension to tribal solidarity which motivated the elimination of inter-tribal disputes.

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

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