

البرهان

AL-BURHAAN

(The Proof)

"Say: Bring your *proof* if you are truthful" [Al-Baqarah (2):111]

Islamic Educational Newsletter

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Issue 4

Editorial

In the Name of Allaah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the worlds. And peace and blessings of Allaah are upon His slave and messenger, our Prophet Muhammad.

This is now the fourth issue of Al-Burhaan newsletter which I am pleased to offer our readers and which follows the third issue that has received support and approval from many of our brothers and sisters, some of whom have contacted me personally to express their support and encouragement, as well as to offer help, assistance and useful advice, may Allaah reward all of them. All this would never be possible without the assistance and guidance of Allaah the Most High, so I praise Him and humbly request Him to continue guiding and assisting us all until we meet Him, and even after that until we hopefully enter Paradise, aameen.

In this issue I continue the theme that I started in the previous one, and that is exposing and refuting some of the misconceptions about the Salafees (see issue 3 for who the Salafees are). It is a part of our religion to know the falsehood and evil in order to stay away from it, as well as to know the truth and goodness in order to follow it and stay upon it. Suffice for us to know that the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) said in a hadeeth collected by Imams Ahmad (no 15915), Muslim (no 23) and others: **"Whoever says laa ilaaha illa Allaah (there is none worthy of worship except Allaah) and disbelieves in everything worshipped besides Allaah, then his blood and his wealth**

become sacred, and his account is with Allaah." The part of this hadeeth which is of interest to us is the underlined one, because in order to disbelieve in everything worshipped besides Allaah the person must know exactly what is worshipped besides Allaah, and not like some people claim: "It is enough for us to know the good, why do we need to bother with all this evil and groups and parties? Don't split the Ummah (the nation, meaning the Muslims)!" As if the Muslims are all united! It is amazing how some people prefer to live in an imaginary world rather than the real one. Or maybe they want us to live in that world so that we will not know the difference between good and evil and can easily be fooled. But, alhamdulillah, that is not our religion. That is why in this issue I deal with the misconception of "Wahhaabism" in relation to the Salafees and prove, inshaa Allaah, beyond any doubt that it is a misnomer invented by the enemies of the Sunnah, to accuse them of being something they are not, to excuse their own ignorance, to hide behind it when convenient to do so and, most importantly, to try and misguide people away from the Tauheed (Islamic Monotheism, the concept of the Oneness of Allaah) and the authentic Sunnah. Someone might say: "Why would they do a thing like that? They look like good Muslims and they say all the right things too!" To them I say: firstly, I do not think there is a person in the world who says: "I am pure evil, follow me!" Everyone claims to be the good guy, even though very few of them are. Secondly, there are many things they say that an ordinary Muslim without proper

Islamic education would not see as bad, but in reality they are. Thirdly, look at the world around us: there are wars, indiscriminate killing, pillaging, as well as torture, assassinations and all sorts of other crimes committed at all levels, and all that in the name of "good"! There can never be two or more versions of good or two or more versions of evil, or two or more versions of the truth. Anyone who believes that is deluding himself.

Finally, before I get to the main part of the issue, I would like to say that I, like anyone else, am in constant need of constructive advice, comments and support. For that and anything else my mobile number is **07792 323244**, and my e-mail address is sharkasi@maktoob.com. There are a few addresses in the UK where I mail copies of Al-Burhaan at my own expense. Anyone who would like to be added to my mailing list should either e-mail or text me with their name and address details and I will send them as many copies of Al-Burhaan as I can, inshaa Allaah. I also request everyone who can to give out as many issues of Al-Burhaan to other people as possible so more people can benefit. Anyone who would like to support this or any other of my projects (like publishing Al-Burhaan in Arabic) financially should contact me for more details.

Abu Imran Abdurrahman Al-Sharkasi,
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“Wahhabism”: What Is Behind the Label?

My mother who lives in Russia once said to me: “I hope you are not a Wahhaabi.” I said: “Mother, do you know what that word means?” She said: “No.” I knew that she did not know almost anything about that word, but because it was, and still is, being used in the Russian (and might I add here: the world) media to mean “evil, ugly, blood-thirsty monsters with bushy beards who call themselves Muslims” and any other negative label one can associate with a word, she drew the conclusion that all that was being said to her was true. After all, the main newspaper of the old USSR was called Pravda, i.e. the Truth! It is still in existence, by the way. That is how people are conditioned not to think, not to analyse, not to criticise, just to blindly accept what they are told without any proof or justification or with some questionable (that is why you should not question!) “proofs”. Just to be a sheep, not a human being gifted with the enormous power and ability of his intellect. Our religion does not accept that kind of conditioning and that kind of twisting of reality. We are obliged to follow the facts and proofs alone, not conjecture, not our wishes or our desires, however good they may seem to us. And we are not allowed to wrong anyone by saying about them what is not true or even accurate. So what is behind this label, “wahhabi”, because that is what it has become: a label, a brand to brand anyone who is out of line, who does not agree, who dares to even criticise or ask for proof!

The word itself originates from the name of an Islamic scholar, Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhaab Al-Tameemi, who lived and preached in an area known as Najd then and in present-day Saudi Arabia from 1115 year after Hijrah, which corresponds to the year 1703, to around 1206H, which is year 1792 in the Gregorian calendar. He used to call the people of

the area to Tauheed and the Sunnah and reject the practise of Shirk (associating or ascribing partners to Allaah), which was prevalent in that area at the time, and innovations in the religion. You might ask: “That’s it?” In a nutshell, yes. So what’s all the fuss about this man and his name? (It is actually his father’s name, but never mind: people who are hell-bent on abusing someone and besmirching his good name would not really care about that “small” detail). The answer to this question is shockingly simple: at the time of his call and preaching, same as now and in the past, when our Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) was preaching, there were many people who were not at all impressed with what the Sheikh was doing. In actual fact, they despised the Sheikh and his call. Why? Many reasons, but none that are religious: if people could abandon the false gods they were told to worship and worship their Creator alone and communicate with Him directly, those critics would lose followers, and hence, money, positions of influence and anything else that comes as a perk when you are the chief brain-washer of the community. Why else anyone who calls himself a Muslim would so vehemently oppose someone who calls to what our Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) used to call to: directing all acts of worship to Allaah and only following the path of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)? Only a hypocrite, an innovator or someone who stands to lose some worldly standing or position, not to mention material possessions, would object to that call. If you do not believe me, check the true biography of the Sheikh, may Allaah have mercy on him, and compare his call and what he wrote in his books to the Qur’aan and the Sunnah. And do not listen to those in the Muslim community who say: “You should not read and understand the Qur’aan and hadeeth on your own, because you are not at that level yet. You must have an Imam to do that.

You must take everything that Imam says, because you do not know.” While it is true that one needs a teacher to guide him through the learning process, the ultimate objective is to know and follow the texts of Islam, applying them to our life, not end up just knowing what so and so said. Our aim is to follow the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) in everything he told us, not to follow someone else in everything he told us. So we can safely conclude that the label “wahhaabi” was first coined by the enemies of the da’wah (call) of Tauheed and the Sunnah, and later on passed down through generations of Sunnah-haters to our time. The same way as the lovers of the Sunnah inherit their love and respect for it from those who followed and preached the Sunnah before them, the enemies and haters of it inherit their hatred and enmity from those who used to oppose and hate the Sunnah and the people of the Sunnah before them.

I am also sick and tired, as I said in the previous issue, of the so-called “experts”, from the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, who come on TV and radio and write in the press and use this label “wahhaabi” as they please, especially when there is a terrorist attack of some kind somewhere in the world. One of them might say with a clever look on his/her face: “Oh, yes, this is precisely what the wahhaabis believe and advocate” or “The wahhaabi branch of Islam says...” or even “Al-Qaeda is mainly staffed and supported by the wahhaabis”! Don’t get me started on Al-Qaeda, or CIAedah, as some call it. I challenge you to bring one Muslim in front of me who knew of a terrorist organisation called Al-Qaeda before 9/11 happened, just one. This is the same conditioning: we are given certain words which we are supposed to associate with certain ideas and notions. We are not to question it or challenge it, we are to accept it. Why? Because, we are told, that is the truth. The truth is that, for centuries and

centuries, certain people always tried, and very often successfully, to manipulate public opinion one way or another, especially in times of conflicts and wars. Not because they care about what the general public think, oh no, but to silence the critics through their own friends, family and peers and to get as many candidates for cannon fodder as possible from their own population. Clever, isn't it? Not clever enough. Because there will always remain those who will retain the ability to think and analyse, the ability to sift the truth from falsehood and show it to others, as is the case with the religion of Islam in general and with the issue of wahhaabism in particular. They may not be great in number, they may not be rich and powerful, but they will always remain until just before the Day of Judgement. If numbers meant that the greater the number of people the more they are right and upon the truth, then China would emerge as the likely candidate for that, and I do not think anyone would say that. If, on the other hand, wealth and power determined one's closeness to the truth and guidance, then people like Bill Gates, Warren Buffet and George Bush would be deemed to be right and guided in what they do. Far from it, as you will agree. So the criterion for guidance and misguidance is not any of that. The criterion is knowing the truth and following it, i.e. the Qur'aan and the Sunnah by the understanding of the Pious Predecessors, as was discussed in the previous issue of A-Burhaan.

So, to conclude, wahhaabism is just like terrorism or any other swear word: a label that can be stuck to anyone who is undesirable or unliked in certain circles or to certain people. I do not accept it. No one I know accepts it. But it keeps being used all the time, just like a swear word. But, unlike most swear words, its meaning is not very clear or apparent, and it is allowed to be used on the BBC! What is the world coming to..?!

Manners of Seeking Islamic Knowledge.

The main reason I have decided to dedicate the remainder of this issue, and maybe even some of the future issues as well, to the very important topic of how to seek knowledge correctly is because I have been travelling quite extensively around the UK for a good few years now and have seen appalling examples of how not to seek it. More than that, I have been on the receiving end of most of the pitiful demonstrations of ill manners in that regard, as well as some of my close friends. That is precisely why the scholars of Islam used to pay so much attention to teaching their students the manners of seeking the knowledge they wanted to seek before actually embarking on the journey. That is why they authored many books on the topic. As far as I know, they are not available in English. But I would encourage my brothers and sisters to learn Arabic so they would be able to swim in the vast ocean of knowledge available in Arabic and not be content with little pools of it available in English or any other language. The scholars of Islam divided the topic of the manners of seeking knowledge into three main sub-topics: the manners of the student, the manners of the teacher and how to deal with the tools of the trade: the books. In this issue we are going to look at the first one: what should the student of knowledge do in order to please Allaah with his quest for knowledge and achieve his objective?

Imam Ibn Jamaa'ah, may Allaah have mercy on him, said in his excellent book on the subject the title of which translates as "A Reminder for the Listener and Speaker of the Manners of the Scholar and Student": **Chapter Three – The Manners of the Learner. Part One – His Manners In Relation to Himself:**

1 – He must purify his heart from

everything involving deception, evil, impurity and envy, as well wrong beliefs and manners so the heart becomes suitable to accept the knowledge and preserve it and understand its hidden meanings...And when the heart becomes ready to accept the knowledge, it grows and its barakah (blessing) becomes apparent, the same way as a good patch of earth brings forth and grows what was planted in it. As the hadeeth says: **“Indeed, there is a piece of flesh in the (human) body. If it is sound and healthy, the whole body is sound and healthy, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.”** [Bukharee & Muslim] And Sahl (one of the scholars of the Salaf) said: “It is not permissible or possible for a heart to receive the light (of pure faith and knowledge) while it contains something that Allaah detests.”

2 - The correct intention in seeking knowledge, so that he only intends by his search for knowledge seeing the Face of Allaah the Most High (in the Hereafter), as well as acting upon that knowledge, reviving the Islamic Shari'ah, enlightening his heart and improving himself, being close to Allaah when he meets Him and making himself eligible for the great favours and enormous reward prepared for the people of knowledge on the Day of Judgement. Sufyan Ath-Thawri (one of the great scholars of the Salaf) said: “I have never found it difficult to correct anything more than my intention.” And he must not intend by his quest for knowledge any worldly reward, like leadership [like some “students of leadership”, I mean, “knowledge”, do], wealth [some people do not understand the difference between only intending to gain wealth or money through one's knowledge, which is not allowed, and charging a fee, especially when in need, for teaching it], boasting in front of one's friends and peers [like those who go around saying: “I sat with Sheikh so.

and so, I am very close to Sheikh so and so...”, not benefitting much from their “sitting” and “closeness” in the way of understanding the religion and having some manners as an essential part of implementing it, like those Sheikhs do], people showing respect to him, speaking at gatherings and meetings and the like.

One of the great scholars of Islam and foremost students of Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Abu Yusuf, may Allaah have mercy on both of them, said: “O people! Seek (to please) Allaah the Most High with your knowledge, because I have never attended a gathering in which I intended to be humble, except that I left it having been honoured, and I have never attended a gathering in which I intended to gain the upper hand except that I left it having been put to shame. Knowledge is an act of worship and a way to get close to Allaah” [meaning one cannot do that with an incorrect intention]. (End of quote from the book of Ibn Jamaa’ah).

A quick comment:

The fact that our Pious Predecessors paid so much attention to these two issues (purifying one’s heart and having the correct intention in seeking knowledge) shows that anyone who wants to be successful in his or her quest for knowledge must start off correctly. We are sick and tired of some brothers and even sisters who behave as if we owe them something as soon as they make a little bit of progress in their path of seeking knowledge. They love doing khutbahs (sermons) on Friday, delivering lectures and teaching lessons, as well as telling everyone how important it is to follow the Sunnah, but when it comes to understanding that knowledge and implementing it, like helping someone or being generous to your guest [we might have to dedicate a whole issue to this topic], they are nowhere to be seen! In their place we

find many of those who do not shout at street corners about the Sunnah coming and helping their brothers and sisters. It is a very serious and infectious disease and it must be treated as such: not tolerated, just like the Salaf used to do. And before I forget:

Good News!:

Al-Burhaan Institute for Arabic/Islamic Studies, Research, Propagation and much more is now open in Leicester, UK, alhamdulillah.

Arabic Language and Islamic courses for all ages are on offer, as well as English and various other services, like arranging marriages, helping resolve marital issues and problems, doing Ruqyah (Islamic treatment and exorcism), new Muslims’ activities and more. Ring or e-mail me for more info. The Institute is not a charity and not supported except by the money it makes and donations. So do not be surprised to find a charge for a particular service. Also, don’t feel too shy to send us your donations. After all, most (if not all) schools, colleges and universities in the world, religious or otherwise, were sponsored by governments or wealthy individuals or both, and in many cases still are today.

Quiz

Al-Burhaan Issue 3 answer:

Abdurrahman bin Sakhr, year 7 AH, more than 5000 ahaadeeth.

Issue 4 question:

Who collected the Qur’aan into one book for the first time?

“We are obliged to follow the facts and proofs alone, not conjecture, not our wishes or our desires, however good they may seem to us.”

“I would encourage my brothers and sisters to learn Arabic so they would be able to swim in the vast ocean of knowledge available in Arabic and not be content with little pools of it available in English or any other language.”

“Sahl (one of the scholars of the Salaf) said: “It is not permissible or possible for a heart to receive the light (of pure faith and knowledge) while it contains something that Allaah detests.”

Imam Abu Yusuf: “O people! Seek (to please) Allaah the Most High with your knowledge, because I have never attended a gathering in which I intended to be humble, except that I left it having been honoured, and I have never attended a gathering in which I intended to gain the upper hand except that I left it having been put to shame...”