

**THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE OTTOMAN PERCEPTION OF THE WAHHABI MOVEMENT:  
FROM NEGOTIATION TO CONFRONTATION (1745-1818)**

by

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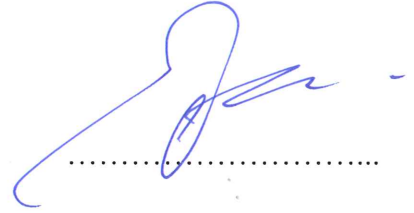
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE OTTOMAN PERCEPTION OF THE WAHHABI  
MOVEMENT: FROM NEGOTIATION TO CONFRONTATION (1745-1818)

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## ABSTRACT

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE OTTOMAN PERCEPTION OF THE WAHHABI MOVEMENT: FROM NEGOTIATION TO CONFRONTATION (1745-1818)

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Thesis supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Selçuk Akşin Somel

**Key Words:** Wahhabi Movement, Mecca, Medina, Caliphate, Arabia

This study examines the transformation of the Ottoman perception of the Wahhabi movement by problematizing how the Ottoman empire politically and religiously reacted against the Wahhabi movement, how it perceived the Wahhabis and what policies were implemented against them. By this means, it aims to explain the implications of the Wahhabi movement over the Ottoman Empire and how the Ottoman official perception towards the Wahhabis transformed over time in regard to internal and external problems from the beginning of the movement in 1745 to its temporary end in 1818. In order to provide answers for these questions, this study considers the general political conditions of the 18th century within the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world as well as attempting to discuss the characteristic features of the Wahhabi movement by utilizing primary and secondary sources. Therefore, this thesis argues that between 1745 and 1802, the Ottoman Empire considered the Wahhabi movement as a regional problem, while between 1803 and 1818 as an existential problem for its presence in the region.

## ÖZET

### OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDAKİ VEHHABİ ALGISININ DÖNÜŞÜMÜ: MÜZAKEREDEN ÇATIŞMAYA (1745-1818)

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**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Vehhabi Hareketi, Mekke, Medine, Hilafet, Arabistan

Bu çalışma Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Vehhabi hareketine karşı politik ve dini olarak nasıl reaksiyon gösterdiğini, Vehhabileri nasıl algıladığını ve onlara karşı hangi politikaları uyguladığını sorunsallaştırarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki Vehhabi algısının dönüşümünü incelemektir. Bu sayede bu çalışma Vehhabi hareketinin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu üzerinde oluşturduğu etkileri ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun resmi Vehhabi algısının zaman içerisinde iç ve dış problemlere bağlı olarak nasıl değiştiğini hareketin başlangıcı sayılan 1745 tarihinden, hareketin geçici olarak sona erdiği 1818 tarihine kadar olan dönem içerisinde açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu sorulara cevap sağlayabilmek için bu çalışma 18. yy. da Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki ve İslam dünyasındaki genel politik koşulları göz önünde bulundurmaktadır, aynı zamanda Vehhabi hareketinin karakteristik özelliklerini birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan faydalanarak tartışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu tezin argumanı ise Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun 1745 ve 1802 yılları arasında Vehhabi hareketini bölgesel bir problem olarak gördüğü ve 1803 ve 1818 yılları arasında ise bölgedeki varlığına karşı varlıksal bir tehdit olarak gördüğü yönündedir.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BOA      Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (The Ottoman Archives of the  
Prime Ministry Office)





## INTRODUCTION

The Wahhabi Movement as a religious movement emerged in the central Arabia in the first half of the 18th century. It developed into a political movement in a short time, and changed the political, economic and social structure of the region profoundly. It aimed to bring Islam to its original shape by cleaning it from *bid'at*<sup>1</sup>, and this led Wahhabism to become a new *madhab*<sup>2</sup>. Also, it led the Wahhabis to repudiate existing legacy of Islam, other *madhabs* and the traditions of Muslims by labeling them as *bid'at*. By this means, not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who did not abide by the Wahhabi doctrine became the objects of Wahhabi jihad, and it enabled the Wahhabis to annex substantial areas in Arabia until its temporary end in 1818. Additionally, political conditions and fragmented political structure of the region caused by the presence of Bedouin tribes helped Wahhabis expand in the region. Furthermore, the political upheavals, economic inefficiency and military wars of the Ottoman Empire in other parts of the imperial domains hindered the Ottomans to tackle with them in an efficient manner. Therefore, these factors also promoted their expansion in the region as well as leading to the shaping of the Ottoman policy and their perception of the Wahhabis.

There is number of studies which have been carried out particularly on the Wahhabi movement. Yet, the majority of the literature on the Wahhabi movement focuses on the Wahhabism and Saudi Arabia in the modern period with only a few of the studies concentrating on the early period of the movement. These studies mostly take account of the life and the teaching of the founder of the movement, the discourse and the sources of the Wahhabi doctrine and its religious dimensions. Additionally, they explain its emergence, influence, expansion processes and its implications over the Middle East

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<sup>1</sup> Bid'a (plural form is *bid'at*) is defined as "innovation, a belief or practice for which there is no precedent in the time of the Prophet. It is the opposite of sunna and is a synonym of muhdath or hadath." For this, see J. Robson, "Bid'a," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. I. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 1199.

<sup>2</sup> Madhab means religious sects in Islam.

mostly using the Wahhabi sources which omit its reflection on the Ottoman Empire on a large extent.

To illustrate, Natana J. Delong-Bas in her book, *“Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad,”* focuses on the emergence of the Wahhabi movement, and explains the teaching and worldview of the Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Also, she displays the approach of Wahhabism towards women. Besides, she tries to provide answers to the questions about what the true nature of the Wahhabism is, and whether the teaching of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab are the source of terrorism. In addition, she tries to answer whether the Wahhabism is responsible from ongoing threat to the U.S and it is against Western values and civilization. Yet, her statements in her book shows that she thinks otherwise. She claims that the teaching of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab do not promote terrorism. In fact, it did not allow such violence, and had very different approach towards other religions contrary to contemporary militant extremism. Therefore, her statements show that she takes a pro-Wahhabi stand in her book.

David Commins in his book, *“the Wahhabi Mission and the Saudi Arabia”* covers the history of the Wahhabi movement in the 19th century and 20th century. He focuses on the development of the Wahhabi thought and its effects over the region. Therefore, he analyzes the debate on the nature of Wahhabism, and explains how the Wahhabi movement spread and challenged the Ottoman authority in the region. Also, he delineates the emergence of Saudi Arabia and ascendance of Wahhabism in the Saudi state with his findings. Apart from that, he indicates the places to in which the Wahhabism spread such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, and its links with the Arab and the South Asian revivalist movements in the 19th century and the modern Islamic revivalism like Muslim Brothers in the twentieth-century. Moreover, he explains the challenges against the legitimacy of the Saudis posed by Ikhwan, Juhayman and Osama bin Laden in the twentieth-century.

Abd Allah al-Salih Uthaymin’s book, *“Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works”* is about the life and the doctrine of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi movement. In his book, he analyzes the works of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab to explain his religious perspective. Besides, he indicates the historical

background of Central Arabia before the emergence of the Wahhabi movement as well as explicates Abd al-Wahhab's political alliance with Al Saud family.

Michael Cook is another scholar who studied on the Wahhabi movement. In his article, "*On the Origins of the Wahhabi Movement*," he aims to find answer to the source of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab's doctrine, so he examines and compares the contradictory travel accounts of Abd al-Wahhab with each other. Then, he examines the scholars mostly cited by Abd al-Wahhab. By this means, he tries to see whether these travel accounts and scholars could be the source of his doctrine. Therefore, he argues that these travel accounts do not indicate the source of Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine, and he claims that the most influential scholars on his thoughts were two Hanbelite scholars, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, from 14th century.

Besides, Hamid Algar also specifically focuses on the Wahhabi doctrine. In his book, "*Wahhabism: A critical Essay*," he analyzes the writings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab to see the source of Wahhabism, and he explains how it spread in Arabia. He argues that the Wahhabi movement does not have any roots from the past, and does not share any similarities with any movements emerging before itself throughout the history of Islam. Likewise, he compares the Wahhabi movement with its contemporary Islamic revivalist movement, and he argues that the nature of the Wahhabism is different from its contemporaries as well. Yet, he also demonstrates the link between Taliban and Saudi authorities created in 1995, and how both sides benefited from each other by supporting one another. In addition, he explains how the Wahhabism drew attention with September 11 because of the Wahhabi background of the attackers. Therefore, Algar takes anti-Wahhabi stands in his book, and criticizes the movement because of creating chaos and problems by distorting fundamental teachings of Islam in the past and in the present day.

Like Michael Cook and Hamid Algar, Ahmet Vehbi Ecer also discusses the sources of Wahhabi doctrine in his book, "*Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*" (the Wahhabi Movement and Its Effects in History). He explains parallel Islamic thoughts to Wahhabism. Then, he argues that Kharjites, Hanbalites, Zahiris and Ibn Taymiyyah were the ideological fuels of Wahhabism because the Wahhabism shared important similarities with them about understanding of Qur'an and Islam. Besides, he explains the emergence of the Wahhabi

movement, how it gained its political aspect, and how it challenged the Ottoman authority in the region. Furthermore, he also indicates the situation after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the region in the beginning of 20th century, and shows the places and people who were influenced by the ideology of Wahhabi movement.

Zekeriya Kurşun is another important scholar studying the Wahhabi movement. In his book, “*Necid ve Ahsa ’da Osmanlı Hâkimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti’nin Ortaya Çıkışı*” (the Ottoman Domination in Najd and Ahsa: the Wahhabi Movement and the Emergence of the Saudi State) enucleates the birth and the development of Wahhabi movement, also its role in the process which prepared the path to the establishment of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, he indicates how the Wahhabi movement emerged, spread and challenged the Ottoman authority in the region. Also, he explicates how the Ottomans reacted the Wahhabi movement and tried to solve this problem in the region during this process.

Selda Güner also studies on the Wahhabi movement. In her book, “Wahhabi-Saudis (1744-1819) Mutiny and Banishment in the Ottoman Arabia (*Vehhabi-Suudiler (1744-1819) Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil*)”, she studies on the first phase of the Wahhabi movement which is from 1744/5 to 1819. She analyzes the movement in terms of religion and sociology of the Ottoman Arabian Peninsula. Yet, she is doing this analysis underlining the Ottoman presence in the region in that century. Therefore, she explains the history of the Wahhabism and the Saudi family, and their political alliance with Muhammad ibn Abd-al Wahhab. She compares the Wahhabi movement with other Salafi movements. Moreover, she points out the Ottoman reaction against the Wahhabi movement, and their perception about the Wahhabis.

Apart from the studies listed above and differently from them, Fatih M. Şeker focuses on the different side of the movement in his book, “*Osmanlılar ve Vehhabilik*” (The Ottomans and the Wahhabism). The studies mentioned before is mostly explaining and analyzing the movement itself. Yet, Şeker focus on the Wahhabi movement from the Ottoman Empire’s point of view. This is why he compares and indicates the Wahhabi perceptions of the two Ottoman intellectuals who are Ahmet Cevdet Pasha from the 19th century and Hüseyin Kazım Kadri from the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th

century. He discusses the reflections of the Wahhabism on the Ottoman intellectuals, and whether there was an Ottoman *Salafism* or not. Also, he analyzes the Wahhabi movement, and evaluates it as a state subversive movement.

Like Şeker, Emine Ö. Evered in her article, “*Reading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement*” also analyzes the movement from the Ottoman Empire’s point of view. This is why she uses the accounts of the Ottoman bureaucrat, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, to explain the birth and spread of Wahhabi movement in the region.

Betül Ayaz in her Ph.D. dissertation, “*Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti’nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)*” (Caliphate and Politics: Hajj services of the Ottoman State (1798-1876)) also focuses on the Ottoman side of the story. She argues that French occupation of Egypt, and Wahhabi revolt in Hijaz interrupted the pilgrim service of the Ottoman Empire, and it caused the Ottoman Empire to lose its prestige as the representative of the caliphate. Therefore, she explains the efforts of the Sublime Porte to create a unified force with its governors to topple the Wahhabis from Hijaz, and to restore its prestige in the Islamic world.

Therefore, most of these studies focus on the movement itself, and only a few of them argue the movement from the Ottoman side, and reflect the Ottoman perception of the Wahhabis. Yet, even these few ones only show the discussions among the Ottomans to generate solutions against the Wahhabi incident. They do not pay attention specifically whether the Sublime Porte tried to negotiate with the Wahhabis to solve the crisis in the region. This is why, different from other studies; the main focus of this research is to construe the negotiations between the Ottomans and the Wahhabis, and the transformation of Ottoman perception towards the Wahhabis. By this way, this study aims to contribute to our understanding of both the history of the movement, and its implications over the Ottoman empire. To achieve this goal, this study examines the political and religious reaction of the Ottoman Empire, and its policies towards the Wahhabi movement in order to understand how the Ottoman official perception of the Wahhabi movement transformed over time in regard to internal and external problems from the beginning of the movement in 1745 to the temporary end in 1818.

Therefore, this study argues that the Ottoman perception towards the Wahhabi movement transformed over time. From the beginning of the movement in 1745 to the Wahhabi invasion of Al-Ahsa in 1795, the Ottoman Empire did not consider the movement a serious political problem. Rather, it evaluated it as a minor local problem between the Wahhabis and the Meccan Sharif. Yet, since the Wahhabis became a regional problem with the invasion of Al-Ahsa, the Sublime Porte realized the gravity of the Wahhabi threat, and started to play mediator role to palliate the animosity between the Wahhabis and the Sharif of Mecca. In 1802, with the Karbala incident, the Wahhabi movement became much more serious political issue turning into an international problem since it caused a political crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Iran. After that incident, the Sublime Porte left its mediator role as a third party, and became the side of the negotiations by sending an alim, Adem Efendi, to negotiate with the Wahhabis on its behalf. When it comes to 1803 and 1805, the invasion of Mecca and Medina dramatically changed once again the Ottoman perception towards the Wahhabis. The reason behind this was the fact that they challenged the Ottoman domination by invading these regions with the claim of Sultanate and Caliphate as well as forestalling the pilgrim routes. Yet, the Ottoman Empire continued its negotiation policy until 1809 since it had to deal with other political problems. In 1810, its policy shifted from negotiation to confrontation with the Wahhabis by ordering the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, to go to Haramayn against the Wahhabis.

In order to understand the Ottoman presence in this region, the first chapter explains the Ottoman rule in the Arab provinces. Also, it draws the general picture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century within the Islamic world and the Ottoman Empire to understand the political environment which the Wahhabi movement was born into.

In the second chapter, the Wahhabi movement is examined in detail in order to comprehend how it emerged, what its sources and discourse were and how it spread in the region.

The last chapter analyzes how the Ottoman Empire politically reacted to the Wahhabi movement to understand how the Ottomans perceived the Wahhabis. To do this, studies concentrating on the early period of the movement are used as secondary sources, and they are combined with the primary sources, which are the archival documents of the

Ottoman Empire. Yet, since there are a lot of archival documents about the Wahhabi movement, only the documents that reflect the negotiations and peace agreements between the Ottoman Empire and the Wahhabis are selected and used in this study.



## CHAPTER I

### THE OTTOMAN RULE OVER THE ARAB LANDS

#### 1.1. The Ottoman Conquests of the Arab Lands:

The Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands started with the reign of Selim I in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Putting an end to the Mamluks in 1517, Selim I took control of Egypt, Syria and some parts of South Anatolia.<sup>4</sup> Also, the conquest of the Mamluk lands enabled the Ottoman Empire to control Jerusalem, Mecca and Medina, and brought the responsibility of the pilgrimage to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Ottoman Empire became the sole representative of Sunni Islam, and the title of ‘servitor of Mecca and Medina’ (*Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn*) used by Selim I enhanced the new role of the Ottoman empire as protector of Sunni Islam.<sup>6</sup> Since then, these holy cities provided legitimacy for the claim of the Ottoman sultans on caliphate.<sup>7</sup> After Selim I, Suleiman the Magnificent maintained the Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands. During his reign, he conquered Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Yemen in the 16th century. Yet, he could control Morocco only for a short period in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup>

The results of these conquests were that they firstly enabled the Ottomans to control almost all of the Arab lands in the 16th century. Secondly, the Muslim population outnumbered the Christian population within the Empire, and these conquests generated a

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<sup>3</sup> André Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, trans. Ali Berktaş (İstanbul: Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı Yayını, 1995), 1.

<sup>4</sup> William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2009), 40.

<sup>5</sup> Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 44.; Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20.

<sup>6</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 44.

<sup>7</sup> M. Şükrü Hanoğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11,12.

<sup>8</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 40.



synthesis of the Arab and the Ottoman Islamic culture.<sup>9</sup> Last but not least, “the conquest of the Arab lands marked, however, a significant geopolitical shift in the empire’s territorial expansion from the European periphery of the Dar al-Islam (“The House of Islam,” i.e., the lands under Muslim rule) into its historic heartland.”<sup>10</sup> For this reason, “it was no longer a predominantly Balkan empire with a largely Christian population.”<sup>11</sup>

Apart from the conquests of the Arab lands, how the Ottoman Empire governed these lands is a very important question to answer to be able to see how much the Ottoman authority was efficient, and how the Ottomans consolidated their rule in these regions. To explain, the Ottoman Empire was already divided into provinces within itself, and these lands became the new Ottoman provinces, so the Ottoman Empire consisted of 36 provinces, and 12 of them were the Arab provinces. After the conquests, the Ottoman Empire established similar governmental systems in these regions which contained 3 important components. These were the governors, the qadis, and law enforcement authorities such as the Janissaries. The governors of the provinces who were high ranked pashas like viziers were directly appointed by the central government, Istanbul, to these provinces.<sup>12</sup> Yet, although the Ottomans established their own governmental system, they needed the cooperation of the local Sunni Arab speaking elites to adjust its rule over the existed system.<sup>13</sup> By this means, local leaders of these regions could also become very influential over the governmental system. In addition, to be able to incorporate these conquered Arab lands into the Ottoman system, the Ottomans also sustained the old land tenure and taxation systems of these regions.<sup>14</sup>

However, Andre Raymond states that the level of the involvement of the center within the periphery was changing from region to region. For instance, Algeria and Tunisia were more autonomous regions compared to the others because there was a big distance between the Ottoman center and these provinces. On the other hand, because of its strategic significance and its proximity to the center, the power of the central government was felt

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<sup>9</sup> Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918*, 20.; Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 41.

<sup>10</sup> Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918*, 48.

<sup>14</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 9.

more strongly in Aleppo.<sup>15</sup> Besides Raymond, Şükrü Hanioglu states that “Ottoman control of the Arabian Peninsula was no better. Despite claims to the entire peninsula, based on pledges of allegiance made by tribal leaders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, central rule was limited to the coastal areas along the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and to the Hijāz.”<sup>16</sup> Yet, Raymond also states that although the level of interference changed from region to region, the authority of the sultan was always felt even within the furthest provinces.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, this situation shows that the relation between the center and periphery was strong even though the Ottomans had to give some concessions to the local leaders to be able to control these regions.

Besides, it is important to note that to be able to explain the longevity of the Ottoman rule in its all provinces, the system the Ottomans established in these regions should be taken into consideration. William Cleveland puts forward that even though the Ottoman Empire established its governmental system, it sustained many features of the old systems of the conquered lands, too. They changed only the things they saw necessary to provide efficiency for governing in these regions, and they maintained the diversities, local traditions and practices to provide peace and stability in these conquered regions. Thus, the Ottomans could maintain its authority in the regions for a long time.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the system the Ottomans established in the Arab lands and their cooperation with the Arab speaking elites, Islam also played a very crucial role in consolidation of the Ottoman rule in these lands. To explain, the Ottoman Empire was the representative of the Sunni Islam as the Mamluks were. However, differently from the Mamluks, the Ottomans recognized Hanafism as the official sect of the state, and Hanafism was more widespread in Anatolia and the Balkans. On the other hand, the considerable portion of the population in the Arab lands “that is, Syria, Egypt, the western Arabian Peninsula, and the coastal regions of Yemen”<sup>19</sup> were not Hanafi, although they were Sunni Muslims. Additionally, Syria mostly consisted of Shafiis, but also had several Hanafis and Hanbalis as well. In Lower Egypt and northern Iraq, there were mostly Shafiis, as well. In

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<sup>15</sup> André Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, 8,9.

<sup>16</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, 8,9,14.

<sup>18</sup> Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 42,44.

<sup>19</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 46.

Upper Egypt, there were mostly Malikis. Yet, Yemen was different with its mixed sects. There were Shafiis, Zaydis, and the Twelve Imams.<sup>20</sup> In the central Arabia, the common *madhab* was Hanbalism<sup>21</sup>, so the majority of the Ottoman subjects were Muslims, especially Sunni Muslims. Yet, there were also some groups of religious minorities like Christians, Jews, Shiites which were Zaydi Shiites, Twelve Imams and Ismaili's. There were also heterodox minorities like Alevites, Druze and Yazidis.<sup>22</sup> This is why, to be able to accommodate its rule within these religiously diversified regions, and establish itself as their ruler, the Ottoman Empire put emphasis on Islam to forge a solid bound with them. By this way, the Ottoman presence could be embraced by its Sunni Arab subjects.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Ottoman Empire granted some concessions to non-Muslims, and non-Sunni Muslims as well so as to keep them obedient in return of whose taxes they enjoyed having religious autonomy granted by the Ottoman Empire.<sup>24</sup>

The question of the geographic term used by Ottoman Empire to name these lands is also significant to answer. The Ottomans did not use the term the Middle East because it is a modern term and a Eurocentric notion which represented the British and the American interests over the region.<sup>25</sup> They used the term of Maghrib to define the western part of the region which covered today's North African countries like Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and used Mashriq to define the eastern part of the region which covered Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Lebanon Israel and Palestine, Jordan and Iraq. On the other hand, Western Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century used the term Near East for Eastern Mediterranean, the largest part of the Anatolian peninsula and present-time Southeast Europe because these lands were near to Europe and had the closest relations with Europe.<sup>26</sup> Yet, the term of Middle East was invented by an American admiral, Alfred

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 46,47.

<sup>21</sup> Selda Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012), 91.

<sup>22</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 4,5,29-34.

<sup>23</sup> Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918*, 48,49.

<sup>24</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Osamah F. Khalil, "The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construct of the Middle East, 1902-2007," *Diplomatic History* 38, no.2. (2014), 302,303.

<sup>26</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 23.; Roderic Davison, "Where is the Middle East?," *Foreign Affairs* 38 (1960): 667. In his article, Davison indicates the scope of the Near East defined by D.G Hogarth in 1902, and he states that "his Near East included Albania, Montenegro, southern Serbia and Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, all the Ottoman lands of Asia with the entire Arabian peninsula, and two-thirds of Iran, up to its "waist," s stretch of sterile desert and mountain between the Caspian and Indian Ocean. Not everyone agreed with these exact limits for the Near East, but its approximate scope there was little quarrel."

Thayer Mahan, in 1902 to define the lands between Mediterranean and India, and this term prevailed over the term of Near East. Yet, Mahan did not specify the boundaries of the region, and the term of Middle East covered larger areas than the term of Near East. Moreover, the scope of lands which go under the term of the Middle East has been changed times to times due to the interests of the Britain and the United states over the region. Yet, the term is still in use today.<sup>27</sup>

## 1.2. The Ottoman Rule over Mecca and Medina:

As it was mentioned before, the defeat of the Mamluks not only enabled the Ottomans to dominate Egypt and Syria, but also brought the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Hijaz under the Ottoman authority.<sup>28</sup> Thus, it enabled the Ottomans to control the pilgrim routes, and the cities like Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad were used by pilgrim caravans for provisioning. Most importantly, controlling pilgrim routes enabled the Ottomans to urge their supremacy over the holy cities of Islam.<sup>29</sup> And it provided a solid ground for the Ottoman sultans to lean their claim on caliphate. This claim was important for the domination of Ottoman sultans over Hijaz because the Ottoman control was limited there.<sup>30</sup>

However, before the Ottoman control over Mecca, the Ottoman sultans had already established relationship with the Sharifs of Mecca, and they were keeping in touch with them to address them their sympathy, so starting from Beyazıd I onwards, the Ottoman Sultans; Mehmed I, Murad II, Mehmed II and Bayezid II delivered prominent notables of Mecca and Medina money as a gift which was called *sürre*.<sup>31</sup> After defeating the Mamluks, Selim I and other Ottoman Sultans also continued sending gifts, and they even increased the quantity of the gifts they sent. Moreover, with Selim I, sending *sürre* became a tradition

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<sup>27</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 23.; Khalil, "The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construct of the Middle East", 300,301,306.

<sup>28</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 254.; Zekeriya Kurşun, "Hicaz," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 17. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1998), 437.

<sup>29</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 268.; Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2002), 222.

<sup>30</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 11,12.

<sup>31</sup> Münir Atalar, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Surre-i Hümayûn ve Surre Alayları* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1991), 2, 9-15.

within the Ottoman Empire, and every year, the Ottoman sultans sent gifts to the people of Mecca and Medina.<sup>32</sup> These gifts were generally sent with a regiment, known as *sürre alayı*, before pilgrim period, and they were sent with a special ceremony from Istanbul to the holy cities. In addition to money, valuable clothes and food were sent as well. Yet, these gifts were not only sent for prominent people of Mecca and Medina, but also poor people of Mecca and Medina as well.<sup>33</sup>

Besides, after Selim I defeated the Mamluks, he planned to capture Mecca as well. Yet, he did not carry out his plan because the Meccan Sharif, Barakat ibn Muhammad, sent the keys of Mecca through his son, Abu Numay, to Egypt to offer them to Selim I. Thus, the Sharif showed his subordination to his rule.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the submission of the Sharif of Mecca also brought Medina under the Ottoman control because the Sharif of Medina was under the rule of the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, in return for his subordination, Selim I appointed him as the Sharif of Mecca, and he sent gifts with his son to Mecca.<sup>36</sup> Also, the Ottomans did not change the status of Medina, and the privileged status of the ruling family of the Sharif of Medina as well. This is because the Ottomans were respecting to the ruling family of the Sharifs of Mecca and Medina who were descendants of the prophet Muhammad.<sup>37</sup>

After the Sharif's son returned to Mecca with the gifts in July of 1517 (923 Recep), the name of the Ottoman sultan started to be mentioned during the sermons in mosques in Mecca and Medina.<sup>38</sup> Also, "the sultan was honored with the title of Servant of the Haramayn (the two mosques), while the Grand Sharif earned money and prestige as the head of the entire hajj. His power depended partly on his ability to maneuver vis-à-vis the Ottoman government..."<sup>39</sup> The reason behind this was the fact that, from then on, the Ottoman sultans continued to appoint the Sharif of Mecca, and the opinions of the Sharifs in Mecca, the qadi of Mecca, governors of Egypt, Damascus and Jeddah were very

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<sup>32</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerrreme Emirleri*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2013), 14.

<sup>33</sup> Atalar, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Surre-i Hümayûn ve Surre Alayları*, 2,3.

<sup>34</sup> Mustafa Sabri Küçükbaşçı, *Abbasiler'den Osmanlılar'a Mekke-Medine Tarihi* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2007), 160.

<sup>35</sup> Mustafa Sabri Küçükbaşçı, "Medine," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 28. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003), 311,312.

<sup>36</sup> Küçükbaşçı, *Abbasiler'den Osmanlılar'a Mekke-Medine Tarihi*, 160.

<sup>37</sup> Küçükbaşçı, "Medine," 311,312.; Atalar, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Surre-i Hümayûn ve Surre Alayları*, 9.

<sup>38</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerrreme Emirleri*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2013), 18.

<sup>39</sup> Mai Yamani, *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and The Quest for an Arab Identity*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 3.

influential in the appointment of the new Sharif as the Amir of Mecca.<sup>40</sup> However, “throughout most of their rule, the Ottomans allowed the Sharif a free hand in the management of Mecca and Medina, while the residents of the Hijaz received subsidies from the Sultan and were exempt from taxation and military conscription”.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, the Sharif protected the importance of his status in the Islamic world thanks to the connection of his lineage to the prophet Muhammad, which enabled him to receive the high respect of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>42</sup>

This is why, unlike the other provinces in the Ottoman Empire, Hijaz enjoyed an exclusive status. Although Hijaz came under the rule of the Ottoman sultans, it actually stayed autonomous. This situation even continued after the Tanzimat period which brought Hijaz under direct Ottoman rule in 1840, and resulted in two-headed governorship in Hijaz administration. Therefore, the efforts of the Ottoman Empire to decrease the authority of the Meccan Sharif failed vis-à-vis the efforts of the Sharif to protect its autonomous status in the region.<sup>43</sup> In fact, “it was impossible for İstanbul to bypass the Meccan Sharif completely because they needed him to tackle with the straggling Bedouin tribes who recognized only the Sharif as the authority”<sup>44</sup> This is why Akşin Somel states that in such a case, the Ottoman Empire would jeopardize the safety of the pilgrim routes which could negatively influence the Ottoman claim for the caliphate.<sup>45</sup> Also, Selda Güner puts forward the argument that after the Ottoman domination in the region, the Ottomans did not try to control these nomadic Bedouins unless there was no necessity. The superiority of the Bedouin Arabs in the deserts can provide an explanation for it. The Bedouin Arabs were taking tribute from the trade caravans and the passengers, or they plundered their goods. This is why the Ottomans left the control to big tribes like Bani Khalids in Ahsa and Sharifs in Mecca, but it tried to establish its authority and control over them by appointing Ottoman officers like qadis and governors to the central places like Jeddah, Mecca and Medina.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerreme Emirleri*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Yamani, *Cradle of Islam: The Hijaz and The Quest for an Arab Identity*, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Osman Nuri Paşa’nın 17 Temmuz 1885 Tarihli Hicaz Raporu,” *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* XVIII, no.29 (1997), 2

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. (I translated this sentence)

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 6.

Therefore, it can be understood that the Ottoman Empire had to negotiate with the local leaders of the conquered regions. In the case of Mecca, it was the Sharif of Mecca whose subordination was needed for the Ottoman Empire. However, it seems that even though the Ottoman Empire had to negotiate and incorporate the local elites into the administration at other imperial regions, they were less autonomous in comparison to the Sharif of Mecca. The Sharif of Mecca seems to have been one of the most autonomous local leaders among other provincial notables, enjoying semi-independence.

### 1.3. The Islamic Revivalist Movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century of Islamic World:

The 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a wave of the Islamic revivalist movements in various places which aimed renewal and reform of Islam,<sup>47</sup> and these movements were also called as Salafi movements whose definition came to existence within the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> To explain, “the term “*salafi*” is used to denote those who follow the example of the companions (*salaf*) of the Prophet Mohammed. *Salafis* believe that because the companions learned about Islam directly from the Prophet, they commanded a pure understanding of the faith.”<sup>49</sup> However, after Islam was filled with *bid’at* over time, these *bid’at* caused to the deterioration of Islam. This is why *Salafis* aimed to return Islam to its original shape by taking *bid’at* out of it, and to cleanse Islam, they prescribed to consider only the Qur’an, the Sunna and the consensus of the companions.<sup>50</sup>

*Salafism* took its current shape, and turned into a movement with the efforts of Ibn Taymiyya and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah in the second half of thirteenth century.<sup>51</sup> Yet, there are different ideas arguing whether there is a continuation and homogeneity among the *salafi* movements, and Selda Güner criticizes the argument which sees the all *salafi* movements one and same. According to her, all of the *Salafi* movements

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<sup>47</sup> John O. Voll., “Linking Groups in the Networks of Eighteenth-Century Revivalist Scholars: The Mizjaji Family in Yemen,” in *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. Nemeiah Levtzion and John O. Voll (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1987), 69.

<sup>48</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler*, 29.; Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918*, 122,123.

<sup>49</sup> Quintan Victorowicz, “A Genealogy of Radical Islam,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (2006), 75.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 75.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 31,32.

<sup>51</sup> M. Sait Özervarlı, “Selefiyye,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 400.

had same (*salafi*) rhetoric about renewal of Islam, but its application changed from one *Salafi* movement to another because their organizations and their ways in using this rhetoric were differing among each other.<sup>52</sup> That's because they were born within different local conditions.<sup>53</sup>

The emergence of revivalist movements is explained by the conditions which the Islamic states were experiencing. To explain, revivalist movements rose in connection with the stability and prosperity of individual Muslim countries. In addition, internal and external problems of each country affected people to regard *tajdid*, renewal, as necessary. When these problems occurred, they weakened the Muslim states economically and politically against Europe, and these problems mostly resulted in the emergence of revivalist movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> To illustrate, the revivalist movements, in other words *Salafi* movements which came up within the Islamic world during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were the movements of Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawi in India, Wahhabi movement of Muhammad Ibn Abd-al Wahhab in the Arabian Peninsula, Muhammad Ali al-Sanussi-Senussi movement( 1787-1859) in North Africa and Egypt, Idrisi movement in the East Africa, Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817) in northern Nigeria in West Africa, and Muhammad Ahmad al Mahdi ( 1881-1898) in Sudan.<sup>55</sup> In addition, Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdallah Hasan (1864-1920) in Somalia, Hajji Shari'at Allah ( 1781-1840) in Bengal, al-Hajj 'Umar Tal( 1794-1865) in Guinea, Senegal and Mali in West Africa were other examples of the revivalist movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>56</sup> The common point of almost all of these movements was their emergence as a reaction to the weakening of the Muslim states which resulted from the commercial penetration of the European states over the Islamic world.<sup>57</sup>

However, different from other revivalist movements, Wahhabi movement and the movement of Uthman don Fodio did not occur following European involvement in their

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<sup>52</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 27-59.

<sup>53</sup> Voll., "Linking Groups in the Networks of Eighteenth-Century Revivalist Scholars: The Mizjaji Family in Yemen", 69.

<sup>54</sup> Tahsin Görgün, "Teedid," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 40. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2011), 233.; Ira M. Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Paradigms," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 4 (1997), 450,451.; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter, 1997), 7,8.

<sup>55</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 30,31.

<sup>56</sup> Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 8-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-11.; Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Paradigms," 450.



regions.<sup>58</sup> Besides, Wahhabism has a unique place among other revivalist movements because Wahhabism did not appear to resist infidel (Christian) domination, but a Muslim authority, namely the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it was different from other movements because of its purist attitude. To explain, Selda Güner puts forward that Wahhabism was a different kind of a Salafi movement because it completely rejected the whole legacy of Islam which existed throughout history. Salafism, on the other hand, doesn't necessarily imply a complete rejection of the whole legacy of Islam and traditions. It rather aims to fix, restore the distorted parts of Islam by taking only *bid'at* out of it. Because of this, Güner claims that Wahhabism has a distinct kind of interpretation of Islam compared to the other *Salafi* movements.<sup>59</sup>

Besides Güner, Ahmad Dallal who compares in his article the works of the Arabian Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1787), the Indian Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762), the west African Uthman Ibn Fudi (1754-1817), and the north African Muhammad Ali al-Sanusi (1787- 1859) with each other<sup>60</sup> develops his analysis and claims that "Characterizing and comparing different strains of Islamic thought instead of quoting isolated ideas out of their general ideological context yields markedly different objects and objectives of revival in each of the examined cases. Contrary to accepted paradigms, neither the emphasis on *ijtihad* nor the new conceptions of Sufism were common features of the thought of the period in question. No unifying themes can be identified that warrant grouping these ideologies, and by extension the movements they initiated, under one rubric ..."<sup>61</sup> Dallal also criticizes the idea of giving these scholars' educational background as an example to provide them a common base. This is why he states that although these scholars who were from different parts of the world were educated by the same hadith teachers in Mecca and Medina, it did not mean that this generalization is always compatible with the characteristic features of all revivalist movements. To buttress his claim, Dallal conveys the anti-Wahhabi stance of the scholars like Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Kurdi and

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<sup>58</sup> Lapidus, "Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Paradigms," 450.

<sup>59</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 27-59.; Fatih M. Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016), 45,49,50

<sup>60</sup> Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750-1850," *Journal of the American oriental Society* 113, no. 3 (1993): 343.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 358,359.

Muhammad Haya al-Sindi, and their advice to their students to be cautious about the inordinateness of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, it seems that the classification of the revivalist movements under a common roof is rather controversial among the scholars. Yet, one thing seems certain about them. Even though the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century generated many important revivalist movements in the Islamic world, Wahhabism demonstrated a *sui generis* place among them due to its distinct features.

#### **1.4. The Ottoman Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century:**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman empire achieved to survive from the economic crisis of 17<sup>th</sup> century, and could reach relatively better economic conditions in this century, which also helped Ottoman society have more social stability as well. Yet, even though the Ottoman empire managed to overcome social unrest within society like the major challenge of the *Jalali* revolts and excessive attempts of *Kadızadeli* movement to cleanse Islam in the 17<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>63</sup> it still had to pass through very hard times in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well because of loss of huge territories to the European states like Russia, Habsburg and France. Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the European states began to improve their military technologies and accumulated wealth thanks to the New World resources. These developments eventually caused the Ottomans to lose their military superiority over Europe over time, and enabled Europe to increase its power, which resulted in the Ottoman military defeats. This is why Donald Quataert defines the 18<sup>th</sup> century of the Ottoman Empire as the century of military defeats and territorial loss. However, Quataert also states that even though this militarily failed century actually started with the Siege of Vienna in 1683 and continued until the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, the Empire in fact experienced a transformation period rather than decline. As a result of this situation, the political structure of the Empire took new shapes and evolved during that process.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 342.

<sup>63</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 213.

<sup>64</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 37-41.

To illustrate the military and political failures of the Ottoman Empire, first, the Treaty of *Karlowitz* can be an example. The treaty of *Karlowitz* in 1699 which resulted from the failure of the Ottoman army in the Siege of Vienna is very important for the Ottoman history. With this treaty, the Ottoman Empire experienced losing its huge territories, and for the first time it recognized a treaty whereby abandoning its territories permanently to the European states like the Habsburg Empire, Venice and even Russia.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, after *Karlowitz*, the Ottomans experienced another territorial loss with the Treaty of *Passarowitz* in Europe in 1718, and substantial territories were ceded by the Habsburgs.<sup>66</sup> Besides Europe, in the east, the Ottomans lost Azerbaijan and some border territories to Iran during the series of wars between 1723-1736.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from that, like the *Karlowitz* treaty, the treaty of *Küçük Kaynarca* in 1774 resulting from the war with Russia between 1768-1774 had profound impacts on the Ottoman empire. To explain, like the *Karlowitz* treaty, the treaty of *Küçük Kaynarca* also cost major territorial losses for the Ottomans. In addition, the Ottomans had to pay a considerable amount of money a war compensation to Russia. Yet, most importantly the relation between the Ottoman Empire and Crimea was cut by Russia, which made Crimea politically independent although it religiously remained connected to the Ottoman caliphate. This situation negatively affected the Ottoman army because it prevented the Ottomans to receive the support of Crimean army in battles. Also, the Ottomans lost their domination over the Black Sea, and this treaty provided Russia a passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean by using the Ottoman straits. The importance of the treaty for the Ottomans lies in the fact that the Ottoman sultan was recognized as a caliph in an international treaty for the first time which enabled the Ottoman sultans to sustain its religious leadership among the Muslims of Crimea. However, Russia gained the right to be the spiritual leader of the Orthodox within the Ottoman Empire as well.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to the *Karlowitz* and *Küçük Kaynarca* treaties, another important treaty signed by the Ottomans was the Treaty of *Jassy* in 1792 resulting from the war with the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 39,40.

<sup>66</sup> Virginia Aksan, *The Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 102.

<sup>67</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 40.

<sup>68</sup> Virginia Aksan, *The Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged*, 157-159.; Kemal Beydilli, "Küçük Kaynarca Antlaşması," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 26. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002), 526.

Russians between 1787-1792. With this treaty, Russia annexed Crimea, and it became a Russian territory. Besides the wars with Russia, at the end of the century, the Ottomans had to witness the temporary invasion of Egypt by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 as well.<sup>69</sup>

The reason for these catastrophic warfares and territorial losses appeared to be the lack of a standing army similar to its European adversaries. In this century, the Ottoman army increasingly remained backward in comparison to European military forces. Because of this, Selim III (r.1789-1807) whose reign witnessed serious political upheavals and further military losses ordered the establishment of a professional standing army.<sup>70</sup>

Apart from the wars in this century, the Ottoman Empire also experienced notable changes in its political structure as well. Hanioglu states that “the most salient characteristic of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the eighteenth century was its decentralization.”<sup>71</sup> In this century, *ayans*, in other words local notables, gained power in the Ottoman periphery thanks to the “*Malikane* system” which started to be used in 1695 and became widespread in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>72</sup> With this system, the government aimed to close the budget deficit resulting from the intensive wars at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is why, the government started to give over the lands to tax-farmers for life term.<sup>73</sup> These *ayans* were sending soldiers as well whenever requested by the Sublime Porte. As a result of this situation, the Ottoman center over time became dependent on local notables in financial, administrative and military issues. During times of international confrontations, the Ottoman state needed their military and economic support to be able to fight in the battles.<sup>74</sup>

This dependency of the Ottoman center on the *ayans* did increase particularly during the Russian wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92, which signified the growing political power of them.<sup>75</sup> However, this dependency was in fact mutual. As the central government needed them, they in turn needed the Sublime Porte; local notables could not act

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<sup>69</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 40.; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 219,220;

<sup>70</sup> Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 219,220.

<sup>71</sup> Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 79.; Şerif Mardin, “Adem-i Merkeziyet,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 364.; Mehmet Genç, “Mâlikâne,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003): 516,517.

<sup>73</sup> Genç, “Mâlikâne,” 516.

<sup>74</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 48,49.

<sup>75</sup> Şerif Mardin, “Adem-i Merkeziyet,” 364.

completely independent from the center or they could not revolt against it even though they sometimes showed disobedience to Istanbul. Yet, in the end, they had to compromise and comply with the orders of the government. They had to have good relations with the Sublime Porte; to be able to hold the control of the lands in their hands, they needed the confirmation of the sultanic authority to acquire legitimacy. Therefore, the *Malikane* system rendered local notables dependent on the Ottoman government as it also did Istanbul to local notables.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from rise of local notables resulting in the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there was another important change in the political structure of the Empire. In this century, unlike its European counterparts, the Ottoman Empire displayed a different kind of a transformation of ruling system. To explain, while European rulers were concentrating all the power in their hands, the Ottoman sultans were losing direct control over the empire. This is why Quataert states that “during the eighteenth century, the sultan most often possessed symbolic power only, confirming changes or actions initiated by others in political life”<sup>77</sup>. Like Quataert, Carter Vaughn Findley in his article indicates similar ideas. He also states that although the Sultans’ powers were not decreased in principle, starting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the power shifted from the sultans to households of viziers and pashas. Yet, it started to change with the centralization reforms in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In that situation, the support of palace women played an important role because although their rule over harem was over, they continued to keep their power by marrying their daughters to dignitaries to be able to establish alliance and sustain their power.<sup>78</sup> The unsuccessful coup attempt of the Sultan Mustafa II in 1703, called “First Edirne Event”, to take the power in his hand again promoted this situation. The reason behind this was “thereafter the sultan’s powers and stature were so reduced that he was required to seek the advice of “interested parties” and

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<sup>76</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 48,49.; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 82.

<sup>77</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 42,43.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 42,43.; Carter Vaughn Findley, “The Political Culture and the Great Households,” in *the Cambridge History of Turkey* Volume 3 *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65,66.

heed their counsel,” and his failure strengthened the hands of vizier and pashas’ households including their allies, Ulama. Thus, they shaped the politics at the center in 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>79</sup>

However, Quataert also states that after the sultans lost their supremacy within the local politics in İstanbul, they tried to find solutions to increase their power and sustain their legitimacy. For this reason, they concentrated their efforts on reorganizing the pilgrim routes to Mecca and Medina. Also, their claim as caliph required them to attend the security issues of pilgrims and pilgrim routes in this century more than before.<sup>80</sup>

In fact, the Ottoman sultans had to protect their prestige against the Wahhabi movement, which is the main subject of this study. As will be discussed in greater detail below, Wahhabis started an insurrection under the leadership of al-Saud family to destroy the Ottoman authority by attacking pilgrim routes during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and capturing Mecca and Medina in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> Also, they removed the citation of the name of the Sultan from Friday prayers after invading the two holy cities. By this means, they challenged and undermined the Ottoman authority in the region.<sup>82</sup> During that process, they benefited from the political upheavals and series of wars which shattered the Ottoman center during the reign of Selim III. Additionally, unlike most of the local leaders in the periphery, Saudi leaders did not recognize the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire in the region, and aimed to base their authority and legitimacy on the holy cities by expelling the Ottomans from the region. By this way, Saudis aimed to establish a state which was compatible with the teachings of the Wahhabi movement.<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, we can argue that the Wahhabi movement was born into a period which was full of political upheavals and military defeats for the Ottoman Empire. These drawbacks shaped the Ottoman policy towards the Wahhabi movement which will be explained in detail in the next chapters.

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<sup>79</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 42,43.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, 151,152.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 151,152.; Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 12.

<sup>82</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 12.

<sup>83</sup> Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, 51.; Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800*, 219.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EMERGENCE OF THE WAHHABI MOVEMENT

#### 2.1. The Founder of the Wahhabi Movement:

The founder of Wahhabi movement, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, was born in al-Uyayna in Najd region of Saudi Arabia in 1703. His family known as Al Mushrraf was the member of the tribe of Banu Tamim and a part of the religious class in the region. His mufti grandfather in Najd and his qadi father in al-Uyayna were among the representatives of Hanbalism, so Abd al-Wahhab received his first education in accordance with Hanbali teaching from his father.<sup>84</sup> Later, he left his home town and went to Mecca, Medina, Basra and Aleppo to study with religious scholars. Before the death of his father, Abd al-Wahhab came to Huraymila in 1738 where his father had to settle after he was dismissed from his duty because of his disagreement with the new ruler of al-Uyayna.<sup>85</sup> After his arrival to Huraymila, he wrote his first book about tawhid which means unity of God, and tried to spread his ideas. Yet, he received criticism from some people and even from his father and brother because of the ideas promoted in his book.<sup>86</sup> This is why, Abd al-Wahhab could actively start to spread his ideas only after the death of his father in 1740, and he moved to al-Uyayna again in 1743 as a result of assassination attempts against him.<sup>87</sup> After his arrival to al-Uyayna, he convinced the ruler of al-Uyayna, Uthman ibn Mu‘ammar, to support his ideas by suggesting him taking control of the whole Najd. Thus, he could start to disseminate his religious views among local tribes. Yet, he confronted significant

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<sup>84</sup> Abd Allah al-Salih Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 27-29.; H. Laoust, "Ibn Abd Al Wahhab," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. III. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 677.

<sup>85</sup> Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998), 17.

<sup>86</sup> H. Laoust, "Ibn Abd Al Wahhab," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. III. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 678.

<sup>87</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 18.; Michael Cook, "Muhammed b. Abdülvehhab," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005), 491.

opposition because of his ideas about destroying graveyards.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, he had to leave al-Uyayna, and came to al-Dir'iyya in 1744 which was under the control of Muhammad ibn Saud. This situation marked the beginning of a political alliance with the Saudi family, and this alliance continued from 1744 to the death of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1792.<sup>89</sup>

## **2.2. The Sources and Discourse of the Wahhabi Doctrine:**

### **2.2.1. The Sources of Wahhabi Doctrine:**

Apart from his life and political alliance, the sources of the Wahhabi doctrine are crucial to be addressed in order to understand the discourse and nature of the Wahhabi movement. Yet, the studies indicate that there are various outlooks about it.

In Ahmet Vehbi Ecer's book, the author argues that the roots of the Wahhabi ideology are based on Kharijites, Hanbalites, Zahiris and Ibn Taymiyya. These are the fuels of the Wahhabi movement, and Wahhabi doctrine was influenced by their way of thinking when Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab developed his doctrine. Therefore, the author draws the picture of similarities among Kharijites, Hanbalites, Zahiris, Ibn Taymiyya and Wahhabism. To support his claim, the author explains how they view the Qur'an, and how they understand Islam. Firstly, the author indicates that the only sources they accept are the Qur'an and the Sunnah and Hadith. Secondly, he demonstrates that they rejected Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and analogy (*qiyas*). That's because, according to them, the Qur'an should be taken into consideration with its direct or apparent meaning. In other words, there is no metaphoric or allegoric meaning in the Qur'an. Also, they think that human reasoning should not be applied because it would distort the meaning of the Qur'an which is the word of God. For this reason, they are against the use of human reasoning. Thirdly, the author puts forward that they are very strict about their views, and they tend to use violence to people who do not share the same religious ideas while being fellow Muslims. Fourthly, the author underlines that although there are some differences among fundamentalists (for

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<sup>88</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 18.

<sup>89</sup> David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (Newyork: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 19.



instance, Kharijites only accept the Qur'an as a source and reject all other traditions, whereas the Hanbelites do not reject the *qiyas* completely, they are mainly sharing a similar strict understanding of Islam.<sup>90</sup> To illustrate, according to Abd al-Wahhab, if a person would abandon or deny one of the religious obligations, the person ought to be killed because this person becomes an infidel.<sup>91</sup> Lastly, the author states that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab shared same ideas with Ibn Taymiyya about *bid'at*, i.e. being innovations which never existed in original Islam and violated the notion of the oneness of God. For instance, graveyards, the practice of visiting graveyards, mosque minarets and interior decorations within a mosque were considered as *bid'at*. This is why he commanded his followers to destroy graveyards, even the graveyards of the Prophet's companions. He justified the destruction of graveyards by arguing that graveyards were used as temples in the past, and it could be used again in the same way. To prevent such a possibility, they should be destroyed.<sup>92</sup>

Like Vehbi Ecer, Zekeriya Kurşun argues that Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was heavily influenced by Ibn Taymiyya as well as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. Moreover, he points out that due to the fact that Wahhabism shared some similarities with the Kharijites and Zahiris about the idea of going back to the origin of Islam by only referring to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, it led some scholars to make analogies between them.<sup>93</sup>

Apart from Ahmet Vehbi Ecer and Zekeriya Kurşun, Michael Cook examines the sources of the Wahhabi movement in his article. He firstly indicates and compares the contradictory travel accounts of Abd al-Wahhab with each other to see whether these travel accounts show anything about the sources of his doctrine. Then, he examines the writers who had impacts on his thoughts. By this way, he tries to see whether these writers could be the sources of Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, Cook argues that his travel accounts do not indicate the sources of his doctrine.<sup>95</sup> Yet, the references he used in his works show where he got inspiration for his doctrine. He states that Abd al-Wahhab did not

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<sup>90</sup> Ahmet Vehbi Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri* (Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001), 7-50.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-86.

<sup>93</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 19-20.

<sup>94</sup> Michael Cook, "On the Origins of Wahhābism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series 2, no.2 (1992): 191.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 197,198.

use the founder of Hanbalism, Ibn Hanbal, in his doctrine because the author states that “despite their common heritage, the older Hanbalite authorities had doctrinal concerns very different from those of Wahhabis”. He adds that “his attitude may owe more to his youthful flirtation with Mu’tazilism than to his lifelong allegiance to Hanbalism.” However, the most influential scholars on Abd al-Wahhab appear to be two Hanbelite scholars, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, from 14th century.<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, although the studies above point out the influence of Ibn Taymiyya on Abd al-Wahhab’s thought, Fatih M. Şeker proposes that although he was based his ideas on Ibn Taymiyya, he exceeded the limits which were determined in the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya about *bid’at*, infidels, intercession (*shafa’ah*; *şefa’at*) and Islamic mysticism or Sufism. For instance, although Ibn Taymiyya did not completely ban graveyards and was not categorically against Sufism, Abd al-Wahhab was completely against all these things.<sup>97</sup>

Likewise Şeker, Hamid Algar claims that although Abd al-Wahhab’s ideas are associated with Ibn Taymiyya, there are fundamental distinctions among them. To illustrate, Abd al-Wahhab was completely against Sufism. Yet, Ibn Taymiyya demonstrated a critical approach only to the particular elements of Sufism.<sup>98</sup> The author even puts forward that “Wahhabism is essentially a movement without pedigree; it came out of nowhere in the sense not only of emerging from the wastelands of Najd, but also its lack of substantial precedent in Islamic history”.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, it can be concluded that although Ibn Taymiyya is commonly regarded as a person whom Abd al-Wahhab was mostly interested in, the studies indicate that there are actually diverging ideas among scholars about the sources of the Wahhabi doctrine. In my opinion, Wahhabism seems to have been influenced by other *madhabs* mentioned above in addition to people like Ibn Taymiyya. Yet, although it shares some similarities with them, it doesn’t appear to be their continuation. It developed its own structure, and produced its own discourse by integrating some of their elements into itself. This is why I

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 199,200.

<sup>97</sup> Fatih M. Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016), 39-55.

<sup>98</sup> Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 9,10.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 10.

do not think that it represents a phenomenon without substantial precedent in Islamic history, as Algar states in his book. Otherwise it would mean the rejection of the whole legacy of Islam which shaped and affected the region throughout history, like the Wahhabis are doing with their discourse, which will be explained in the following pages.

### 2.2.2. Discourse of the Wahhabi Doctrine:

Apart from the sources of the doctrine, the discourse of the Wahhabi doctrine which was generated by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab is important to be analyzed. Firstly, it is important to underline that Wahhabis did not call themselves “Wahhabi”. The term of “Wahhabi” was coined by the opponents of the Wahhabis to reprove the ideology of the movement.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, “Wahhabis themselves prefer the titles *al-Muwahhidun* or *Ahl al-Tawhid*, “the asserters of the divine unity”. But precisely this self-awarded title springs from a desire to lay exclusive claim to the principle of *tawhid* that is the foundation of Islam itself; it implies a dismissal of all other Muslims as tainted by *shirk*.”<sup>101</sup> In addition to these titles, they also used the titles of *Ahl al-Hadith* or *Salafi* which reflects their traditional religious method. The reason why they chose these titles was that by restoring Islam, they aimed to turn Islam to its original version which was called as *Ahl al-Sunna*<sup>102</sup>, so they had a purist approach towards Islam.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, they named their doctrine as *Da‘watu’-Tawhid*, *Da‘watu al-Muhammadiya*, *al-Da‘watu al-Salafiya* or just *Al-Da‘wah*.<sup>104</sup>

Besides, Abd al-Wahhab based his ideas on the conviction that Islam was started to be spread by Prophet Muhammad when the idea of the oneness of God was hitherto unknown to people. Also, Abd al-Wahhab attached much importance on a *hadith* reporting that Prophet Muhammad mentioned a future time period in which people would become unfamiliar with Islam again. Therefore, Abd al-Wahhab associated this *hadith* with his own lifetime, drawing an analogy between the people of pre-Islamic times and people in his

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<sup>100</sup> Abd Allah al-Salih Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 110.; W. Ende, “Wahhabiyya,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. vol. XI. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 39.

<sup>101</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, 1.

<sup>102</sup> Büyükkara, “Vehhâbilik,” 611.

<sup>103</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016), 45.

<sup>104</sup> Abd Allah al-Salih Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 110,111.

period by defining them as “the ignorant” (*jahil*). By this means, he constructed the core of his discourse which can be defined as a revival of Islam after its degeneration as having been told in the *hadith*.<sup>105</sup>

Moreover, Abd al-Wahhab categorically opposed Sufism and Shiism, and his discourse led them to be exposed to the attacks of the Wahhabis.<sup>106</sup> His religious position generated Wahhabism as a new *madhab*, which rejected the whole legacy of Islam, other *madhabs* and the traditions of Muslims by labelling them as *bid'at*.<sup>107</sup> By this way, Wahhabis claim that they aim to restore Islam by fighting *bid'at* in it. This is why, they consider other Muslims as superstitious too because in their eyes they are not practicing the true Islam.<sup>108</sup> They even labelled non-Wahhabis as infidels, and this even included Muslims.<sup>109</sup> Thus, not only non-Muslims, but also Muslims who did not accept the Wahhabi doctrine became the targets of their jihad.<sup>110</sup>

### 2.3. The Spread of the Wahhabi Movement:

The arrival of Muhammad ibn Abd al -Wahhab to al-Dir'iyya in 1745 marked the beginning of a political alliance between him and the Saudi family, and it gave a significant impetus for the spread of the Wahhabi movement.<sup>111</sup> Since then, in a similar way he convinced the ruler of al-Uyayna, Uthman ibn Mu'ammara, he also convinced Muhammad ibn Saud to support his ideas by suggesting him to take control of the whole Najd.<sup>112</sup> With this political alliance, the nature of the movement and its leadership structure changed. The movement was not only a religious movement anymore, but also became a political movement.<sup>113</sup> This is why Abd al-Wahhab started to share the leadership of the movement with the Saudi family. While he stayed as a religious leader, the Saudi family assumed the

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<sup>105</sup> Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, 2,3.

<sup>106</sup> Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 83.

<sup>107</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik*, 45,49,50.; Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), 104.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

<sup>109</sup> Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), 105.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 105; Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18.

<sup>111</sup> Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, 19.

<sup>112</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 18.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

political leadership of the movement.<sup>114</sup> After his death in 1792, Saudi family monopolized both political and religious leadership of Wahhabism.<sup>115</sup>

After the formation of the alliance, these two leaders cooperated with each other to circulate the movement in the region which provided territorial expansions for the Saudi family,<sup>116</sup> and the studies indicate that various factors paved the way for the spread of Wahhabi movement in the region. To illustrate, Selda Güner proposes that Hanbalism and the idea of jihad played a crucial role in the spread of Wahhabism in the region.<sup>117</sup> Since Hanbalism was widespread among the people of Najd and the members of the Saudi family were Hanbalites as well, the teachings of Abd al-Wahhab could easily diffuse among them. In addition to the Hanbali *madhab*, the epistles and letters of Abd-al Wahhab were also influential in the spread of movement in the region. Besides, Wahhabism fitted very well to the local Arab mentality because before the birth of Islam in the region, the most significant two components of the means of living were plundering, *ghazw*, and raiding among the Bedouins.<sup>118</sup> After the spread of Islam, these pre-Islamic features continued to exist among the Arab tribes. Moreover, Islam turned raids into the ideal of jihad. Thus, Islam brought raids under the cloak of Islam, and it gave legitimacy for the conquests of the Arabs in the region. Therefore, by asserting the idea of extension and by turning the raids into big conquests, Islam enlarged the scope of raids and brought a religious obligation to its nature.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, when Wahhabis tried to spread their ideas about religion, first they invited the Arab tribes to their movement by sending epistles written by Abd al-Wahhab. If they did not accept the invitation, then Wahhabis attacked and took their lands and goods as booty for themselves, which motivated the followers of Wahhabis for the next attacks. This is why the author states that they used the idea of jihad to justify their attacks against the others.<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, Vehbi Ecer thinks that Wahhabism promoted their violent local traditions by giving permission to plunder and killing under the clock of jihad because according to

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<sup>114</sup> DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, 34-35.

<sup>115</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 109.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 91, 107, 108, 112.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 47.

<sup>119</sup> W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 14-19

<sup>120</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 47, 112, 116.

him, throughout history, geographical conditions nurtured heroic features and fighting skills of Bedouins which turned them into raiders. Therefore, the already existing plunderer character of Bedouins led them to embrace and join the Wahhabi movement easily, and their warrior character helped the movement expand rapidly in the region.<sup>121</sup>

Like Güner and Ecer, Algar shares comparable ideas about jihad. He states that “Muhammad b. Sa‘ud pledged his aid to Muhammad b.‘Abd al-Wahhab in waging jihad against all who deviated from his understanding of tauhid”, and in return, Abd al-Wahhab ensured him about gaining more economic profit than collecting taxes via jihad.<sup>122</sup> Thus, “the stage was thus set for a campaign of killing and plunder all across Arabia”, and “In 1159/1746, the Wahhabi-Saudi state made a formal proclamation of jihad against all who did not share their understanding of tauhid, for they counted as non-believers, guilty of shirk and apostasy.”<sup>123</sup>

Furthermore, Emine Ö. Evered analyzes in her article the narrative of Wahhabi movement through the account of the Ottoman statesman and historian Ahmet Cevdet Pasha.<sup>124</sup> She states that Abd al-Wahhab used religion to legitimize plunder because plunder was part of a Bedouin culture, and it provided a solid base to spread the movement easily among them. By this way, they were motivated and even entitled to attack other Muslims.<sup>125</sup>

On the other hand, Madawi Al-Rasheed criticizes most of the accounts pointing only the economic benefit behind the success of expansion. He claims that although the idea of economic benefit from the raids and coercion helped Saudis take the support of the tribes, these were not enough to provide such level of expansion. According to him, this view neglects the spiritual importance of the Wahhabi doctrine which also played a significant role in convincing people to join the movement by offering salvation as a spiritual award.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 180-185.

<sup>122</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, 20.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>124</sup> Emine Ö. Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 623.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 626.

<sup>126</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 19,20.

Apart from the abovementioned factors, the overall presence of Bedouin tribes and political conditions in Najd seem to have helped Wahhabis to expand in the region as well. To explain, with the aim of taking tribes under their control, their army needed resources like men and camels which would provide their army the ability to move in the desert. Bedouins provided them all these required logistical resources.<sup>127</sup> Besides, there was no political unity among the tribes in Najd; although some of them fought against the Wahhabis, while others supported them. Therefore, the tribes could not form a united front to stand against the Wahhabis in the region, and some of them stood with Wahhabis willingly or by fear.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, the Ottoman control was limited in Najd, and this facilitated the spread of the Wahhabi movement in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>129</sup>

It can be deduced from the abovementioned views that there were various factors helping the spread of Wahhabism and Saudi expansion in the region. Yet, although Madawi al-Rasheed points out a different side of the story, all authors seem to agree on the role of jihad in the spread of Wahhabi movement and consolidation of Saudi power with the territorial acquisitions in the region. As Wahhabis deployed jihad as a means to achieve their cause, their different envision of Islam provided a solid base to separate themselves from other Muslims, and to justify their actions against them. Thus, they could easily spread their movement in the region, and the discourse of Wahhabi doctrine played crucial role under such circumstances.

The spread of the Wahhabi movement could be explained in terms of three phases. In the first phase of their expansion, Wahhabism firstly influenced the Arab city-dwellers, but then took the support of Bedouin Arabs too.<sup>130</sup> Yet, to be able to achieve this goal, they followed two ways. Firstly, they trained numerous Wahhabi sympathizers and sent letters written by Abd-al Wahhab to regional tribes to invite them to accept their version of Islam. By this way, they aimed to earn new followers and tried to integrate them into their movement by taking their allegiances during the early years of Wahhabism. Secondly, they attacked and invaded the regions who did not pledge their allegiances by accepting Wahhabi invitation to their religion after accumulating some power. Also, they used

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<sup>127</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 109.

<sup>128</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 19.

<sup>129</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhâbi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 4,11-16.

<sup>130</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 108,109.

religion as a tool to justify their attacks.<sup>131</sup> Thus, starting from 1744, Wahhabis gradually took the allegiance of the tribes in Najd first to spread their movement,<sup>132</sup> and Najd became territorialized by gathering all tribes under the roof of Wahhabi domination.<sup>133</sup> After Najd, Wahhabis brought the tribes in Central Arabia, ‘Asir and some areas in Yemen under their control. As a result, fifteen years after their official declaration of jihad in 1746, they annexed major territories in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>134</sup> Eventually, “approximately after a thirty years of slow and disorganized period of spread, Wahhabi movement gained momentum with the control of whole Najd by Saudi family.”<sup>135</sup> During these territorial expansions, Saudi family benefited from the Wahhabi doctrine thanks to the epistles written and sent by Abd al-Wahhab to the tribes to convince them to join the Wahhabi movement.<sup>136</sup> Thus, “Wahhabism impregnated the Sa‘udi leadership with a new force, which proved to be crucial for the consolidation and expansion of the Sa‘udi rule.”<sup>137</sup> Moreover, it opened the way for the formation of a politically centralized region.<sup>138</sup>

After the control of Najd, the second and the most critical stage of Wahhabi expansion started in the 1770s, when many tribes were put under the firm grip of Abd al-Wahhab-Saudi leadership. By this means, the movement evolved into a regional power, and it began to expand over neighboring regions during the last quarter of 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>139</sup> This critical stage of the Wahhabi expansion occurred when Abd-al Aziz came to power after the death of his father in 1765, Muhammad ibn Saud. As a leader, he was more dedicated to the Wahhabi cause than his father was.<sup>140</sup> Also, unlike his father, he was more aggressive, and did not care not to draw the attention of the Ottoman Empire during his reign.<sup>141</sup> From the date he came to power to the end of his reign in 1803, he conducted military campaigns to the neighboring regions of Najd.<sup>142</sup> To illustrate, “in 1187/1773, he conquered Riyadh, and

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 116., and Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa’da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti’nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 24,25.

<sup>132</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 118,119.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>134</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, 20,22.

<sup>135</sup> Cook, “Muhammed b. Abdülvehhab,” 491. (I translated this sentence)

<sup>136</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 116.

<sup>137</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 19.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>139</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 114,116.

<sup>140</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” 626.

<sup>141</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa’da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti’nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 26.

<sup>142</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 114,115.



some seventeen years later began a more significant expansion of his realm by setting his sights on the Hijaz.”<sup>143</sup> Thus, he prevailed over the most powerful tribe of Najd, the Bani Khalid.<sup>144</sup> Besides Riyadh, he carried out attacks on Al-Ahsa between 1784 and 1793, Iraq between 1784 and 1798 and other coastal regions of the Persian Gulf like Qatar between 1787 and 1788 and Kuwait between 1793 and 1795. He also attacked regions of Bilad al-Sham and the Hijaz during the same period.<sup>145</sup> In 1795, he was able to take full control of Al-Ahsa<sup>146</sup>, and it enabled him to expand outside Najd towards the regions in the Persian Gulf<sup>147</sup> like Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman.<sup>148</sup> These conquests provided significant resources to afford the economic needs of a newly emerging state.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, like Al-Ahsa, by taking Bahrain, Oman and Muscat under the influence of Wahhabis in 1800-1803, he aimed to benefit from the trade in the Persian Gulf in East Arabia as well as increasing his revenue by taking *zakat*<sup>150</sup> from these regions.<sup>151</sup>

While Abd al-Wahhab sent epistles to the tribes in the region, he also tried to start negotiations by offering money to the Sharif of Mecca around the 1730s to take his permission for pilgrimage to Mecca with his companions. Yet, his offer was refused, and the Sharifian authorities put Wahhabi Ulama into prison, who were accused of heresy by the qadi and the Sharif of Mecca. As a retaliation, Wahhabis attacked pilgrimage routes which generated obstacles for pilgrims and resulted in significant economic losses for the Hijaz, because Mecca was benefiting from pilgrimage every year. This is why, the Sharif of Mecca, Sharif Surur, took a step in 1770 to authorize their entrance to Mecca to provide safety for pilgrimage routes. In return, he asked them to pay a tax like the Shiites were doing. However, Wahhabis found this proposal deeply insulting because of their comparison with the Shiites, so they kept attacking to pilgrimage routes. From 1794

<sup>143</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, 23.

<sup>144</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 116.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-119,126.

<sup>146</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 29.

<sup>147</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 116.

<sup>148</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 32.

<sup>149</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 116.

<sup>150</sup> Zakat is defined as “the obligatory payment by Muslims of a determinate portion of specified categories of their lawful property for the benefit of the poor and other enumerated classes or, as generally in Kur'anic usage, the portion of property so paid” see A. Zysow, “Zakat,” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. XI. (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 406,407.

<sup>151</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 32.

onwards, Abd al-Aziz carried out direct attacks on the Hijaz<sup>152</sup> because “...one of the driving forces behind Wahhabi expansion was control of access to Mecca and Medina. Afraid of Ottoman retaliations, the Wahhabis did not attack Mecca and Medina at first but expanded toward the Gulf. Once they were strong enough economically and militarily, they turned to Hijaz.”<sup>153</sup> The death of Abd al-Wahhab in 1792 did not affect their expansion, and they continued to spread over Syria, Iraq and Hijaz after him.<sup>154</sup>

In 1802, under the leadership of Abd al-Aziz, Wahhabis sacked Karbala, the holy city of Shiites in Iraq.<sup>155</sup> After Karbala, Wahhabis directed their attacks to Hijaz.<sup>156</sup> Yet, Abd al-Aziz was assassinated by the Ottomans in 1803<sup>157</sup>, and he was succeeded by his son, Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz whose reign lasted between 1803 and 1814.<sup>158</sup> Thus, we come to the third phase of the expansion of Wahhabi movement started. He was the most prominent figure who enabled Saudis to expand over the Arabia. During his reign, the Ottoman Empire tried to prevent Wahhabi expansion via governors of Baghdad and Damascus because the Saudi influence reached to Baghdad, Ahsa and Hijaz.<sup>159</sup>

He invaded Taif in 1802, then Mecca in 1803 and Medina in 1804.<sup>160</sup> But the Sharif of Mecca, Sharif Ghalib, took Mecca back within the same year. However, Wahhabis reoccupied Mecca in 1806, and both holy city, Mecca and Medina, stayed under their domination until 1812.<sup>161</sup> Finally, under the command of the Ottoman Empire, the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha sent his army led by his son against the Wahhabis in 1811 to retake these two holy cities, and remove them from the region. Tosun Pasha, the son of Muhammad Ali Pasha, took Medina in 1812, Mecca and Taif in 1813. Yet, after the death of Saudi leader, Saud ibn Abd- al Aziz in 1814, his son, Abd Allah ibn Saud, succeeded

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<sup>152</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” 626.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 118.

<sup>153</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” 626.

<sup>154</sup> Cook, “Muhammed b. Abdülvehhab,” 492.

<sup>155</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay (New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002)*, 24.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>157</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 137.

<sup>158</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 21.

<sup>159</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 115.

<sup>160</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 21. Different dates are indicated for the invasions of mentioned cities in different sources. For instance, in Kurşun’s book, like Al-Rasheed he states the Saudis invaded Taif in 1802, See p.39 On the other hand, Algar indicates the date of the invasion of Taif as 1803, see p. 25 Also, although al-Rasheed states the date of the invasion of Medina as 1804, Algar gives the date of invasion as 1805. See p.26

<sup>161</sup> Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, 26, 27.

him. When he came to power, he also he had an intention to attack to Medina again. To terminate the Wahhabis once and for all, Muhammad Ali Pasha appointed his other son, Ibrahim Pasha to organize another campaign against them in 1816. He took control of their capital, al-Dir'iyya, in 1818, imprisoned Abd Allah ibn Saud and his entourage and sent them to Istanbul where they were executed. Thus, at this point the Wahhabi movement ended in favor of the Ottoman Empire<sup>162</sup>, and first Saudi-Wahhabi emirate became dissolved after the Ottomans took control over al-Dir'iyya.<sup>163</sup>

Yet, in 1824, Wahhabis gained power again. "After the withdrawal of Egyptian forces there was an attempt to reestablish Sa'udi-Wahhabi authority in 1824 when Turki ibn Abd Allah, the son of the beheaded Sa'udi ruler, returned to Riyadh, the south of Dir'iyyah."<sup>164</sup> This time, Riyadh became their center instead of al-Dir'iyya, and the second Wahhabi-Saudi rule lasted from 1824 to 1891.<sup>165</sup> In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Saudis gained power again, and their third emirate got in the way of being a fully developed state between 1902 and 1932,<sup>166</sup> and finally, they established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 49-53.

<sup>163</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 23.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>165</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 165.

<sup>166</sup> Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 38,39.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

## CHAPTER III

### POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS REACTION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AGAINST THE WAHHABI MOVEMENT

#### 3.1. The Political Reaction of the Ottoman Empire Against the Wahhabi Movement:

As mentioned before, with the arrival of Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab to al-Dir'iyya in 1745, a political alliance was sealed between Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad ibn Saud, and this alliance initiated the spread of the Wahhabi movement.<sup>168</sup> Thus, the Wahhabis started to annex substantial areas in Arabia,<sup>169</sup> and they drew the Ottoman Empire's attention toward their movement over time. During this process, the Meccan Sharif played an important role, since for the first time; the Ottoman Empire was apprised by the Sharif of Mecca, Masud, about the activities of the Wahhabis in Najd in 1749. Thus, İstanbul learned that the Wahhabis were spreading their ideas among the Arab tribes, which were contrary to the teachings of the four *madhabs* in Sunni Islam.<sup>170</sup> Even, in order to make his voice heard by the Ottoman center and receive its support, the Sharif obtained a fatwa from the high Ulama of Mecca when he sent the letter to inform Istanbul about the Wahhabi expansion in the region.<sup>171</sup>

Yet, Kurşun states that although the first reaction to the Wahhabis came from the Ulama of Basra, Mecca and Medina, the Wahhabi incident did not raise the same reaction among the Ulama of İstanbul. They thought that it was similar to any other movement

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<sup>168</sup> David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (Newyork: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 19.

<sup>169</sup> Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay* (New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002), 20-22.

<sup>170</sup> Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998), 26.; Selda Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012), 227. In Güner's book, the date which the Ottoman sultan was informed about the Wahhabis is 1752. Yet, Kurşun indicates the date differently which is 1749.

<sup>171</sup> Emine Ö. Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32, no. 3 (2012): 625.

around the empire, and since it did not pose any immediate threat, they believed that this situation would be resolved through political channels instead of religious solutions. This is why, Kurşun argues that the Ottoman state did not attach the same importance as other Ulama in the region and did not engage in considerable efforts against them<sup>172</sup>. Also, Güner draws the attention to the shaykh al-Islams of the empire. For her, what is interesting is that shaykh al-Islams did not try to produce any counter arguments on the basis of religion to combat Wahhabism even though they attended the meetings and proposed some ideas to prevent the Wahhabi threat. According to Güner, the reason why the shaykh al-Islams did not argue in religious terms on the movement is that the discourses of the Ottoman Ulama could not contradict the politics of the Sublime Porte because the religion and politics were closely intertwined in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>173</sup>

The question of how the central government of the Ottoman Empire reacted politically to the Wahhabi incident is worth analyzing so as to understand how the Ottoman official perception of the Wahhabi movement evolved from its beginning to the temporary end in 1818. It also provides significant information about how the Wahhabi movement managed to expand and spread in the region.

### **3.1.1. The Wahhabi Movement as a Regional Problem:**

On the Ottoman side, the news of Wahhabi as a phenomenon reached İstanbul during the reign of Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754) with the letter of the Sharif Masud in 1749, and the central government started to pay attention to the Wahhabi movement. Meanwhile, the Wahhabis launched their first military campaigns to spread Wahhabism and to plunder neighboring tribes around al-Dir'iyya in Najd in 1745. As an answer to Sharif Masud in 1750, Sultan Mahmud I ordered him to persuade Abd al-Wahhab to alter his ideas, but in the case that he did not change his views, the Sharif was ordered to put an end to the Wahhabis and remove their leader. In addition to the Meccan Sharif, the Sultan also advised and ordered the governors of Basra, Bagdad and Jeddah to cooperate with the

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<sup>172</sup> Zekeriyâ Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998), 61,62.

<sup>173</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 226.

Meccan Sharif to tackle with the Wahhabi movement.<sup>174</sup> However, Evered puts forward that “these orders were never conveyed, as correspondence with the Ottoman state was unreliable and the Ottoman administration was too preoccupied with other wars and rebellions to follow up on the Wahhabi movement.”<sup>175</sup>

But in contrast to Evered’s claim, those times were relatively peaceful times for the Ottoman empire compared to the European countries. This is because during the reign of Osman III (1754-1757) and the reign of Mustafa III (1757-1774), the Ottoman empire had already acquired peaceful conditions thanks to the treaty of Belgrad in 1739 in Europe. In addition, Seven Years’ War occurred in Europe in 1756, and the European countries were fighting with each other. During this process, the Ottoman government conducted neutral policy towards them, and considered their fights beneficial for its interests. Likewise, during the reign of Mustafa III, these peaceful conditions continued, and this situation even enabled the Ottoman economy to reach an adequate level, as well. However, this situation continued until the war with Russia broke out in 1768, because the war (1768-1774) deteriorated the existed conditions.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, when the political conditions of the Ottoman Empire are taken into consideration, it can be said that the Ottoman Empire did not consider Wahhabi movement as a serious problem. It underestimated the movement even though the Empire had the capability to halt the spread of the Wahhabis.

Additionally, Güner’s statement provides an explanation for how the Wahhabi movement spread in the region. She states that “according to the common view, Ottomans did not attach importance to the situation because they thought that it was just a usual Bedouin plunder which was occurring in the region all the time.”<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, Şeker puts forward another reason explaining how the Wahhabism spread in the region. He states that the Ottomans did not give sufficient weight to the Wahhabi agitation because they drew parallels between Wahhabi and *Kadızedeli* movements. He also underlines that it was

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 121,122.; Emine Ö. Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement, 625,626., Eyüb Sabri Paşa, *Tarih- i Vehhâbiyan* (History of Wahhabis) (Istanbul: Kırk Anbar Matbaası, 1877), 34, 35., and İzzî Süleyman Efendi, *Tarih- i İzzî* (İzzî’s History) (Istanbul: n.p., 1199), 208a; cited in Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 119.

<sup>175</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” 626.

<sup>176</sup> Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, “Osman III,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 33. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007), 456-459.; Kemal Beydilli, “Mustafa III,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 31. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), 280-283.

<sup>177</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı’nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 121. (I translated this sentence)

only during the reign of Abdulhamid I (r.1774-1789) that the Sultan realized the gravity of the Wahhabi threat. However, unlike the Sultan, other state officials underrated the movement because they did not consider it as a political movement in the first place.<sup>178</sup> In line with Şeker's statement, Kurşun puts forward that like the Wahhabis, their opponents did not anticipate that the movement would spread rapidly over time. By keeping the movement inside Najd for a considerable time, the Wahhabis did not get the attention of other political authorities bordering around them. Also, they were not thinking radically different from mainstream Sunni Islam about the conditions of founding a state or being a state ruler. This is why, Kurşun claims, that in the beginning at least, the movement did not possess any major political aims, and did not appear to have posed any serious threats to the Islamic world.<sup>179</sup>

Overall, when the political conditions of the Ottoman Empire, and the statements of Güner, Şeker, and Kurşun are taken into consideration together, it can be said that all these claims go along with one another. They demonstrate a common result about the Ottoman perception on the Wahhabi movement that the Ottoman Empire did not evaluate the Wahhabi movement as a serious political problem. Rather, it considered the movement a minor and usually local problem, and due to this, the Ottoman Empire did not pay a serious attention to it.

Moreover, the negative response of the Sublime Porte to Sharif Surur's call for aid against the Wahhabi threat in 1776, and the statements of the local governors also prove that the Ottoman administration in general did not evaluate the Wahhabis as a serious political problem for the empire unlike Sharif Surur. To explain, in the 1770s the Wahhabis' attacks on pilgrim routes increased, and this situation brought out an urgent necessity for providing the security of the pilgrim routes for Sharif Surur. The reason why he became alarmed was that the Wahhabis launched attacks on the pilgrims, and this situation engendered economic losses for Hijaz since Mecca was economically utilizing pilgrims every year. This is why the Sharif Surur had to take a step to ensure the security of the pilgrimage routes in 1770. He gave his permission to their entrance in Mecca, if they paid tax for pilgrimage like the Shiites did for the pilgrimage. However, his proposal could

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<sup>178</sup> Fatih M. Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2016), 65.

<sup>179</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 63.

not solve the problem because the Wahhabis felt insulted due to their comparison with the Shiites. As a result, they maintained their attacks to the caravans of pilgrims around Hijaz, and the Sharif Surur needed to ask help from Istanbul in 1776. He was probably worried of a possible Wahhabi invasion of Mecca and Medina.<sup>180</sup> Yet, İstanbul did not send any military help to Sharif Surur. Instead, “after some deliberation, Ottoman authorities decided to ask the governors of Baghdad, Mosul, Damascus, and Jeddah to investigate the threat and report their findings to the state.” In return, the governors of Jeddah and Damascus briefed the central government by reporting that the Wahhabis were not a serious threat because Abd al-Wahhab was just a teacher, and he was not a tribal leader, so he did not have the power to gather an army to start an uprising against the Ottoman Empire. As a result, the Sublime Porte did not send any military contingent to support the Sharif.<sup>181</sup>

Therefore, with allowing its local governors to carry on their own investigation and acting in accordance with their intelligence, Istanbul trusted its local governors more than the Sharif himself. Secondly, it proves once again that Istanbul did not consider the Wahhabis as a serious problem, and continued to evaluate the problem as an ordinary and minor local dispute between the Sharif and the Wahhabis. Besides, another additional reason why the central government did not send military help to the Sharif might be the war with Russia between 1768-1774. Since the war costed major territorial losses and considerable amount of money for the Ottoman empire<sup>182</sup>, it might not have had enough resources to send military support to the Sharif.

Yet, when it came to 1795, the Wahhabi invasion of Al-Ahsa seems the first turning point for the Ottoman perception toward the Wahhabi movement since the movement not only became a serious political and local problem, but also a regional problem as well by expanding its territories into Al-Ahsa. To explain, in 1784, the Wahhabis initiated military campaigns towards Al-Ahsa to gain economic profit from its harbor,<sup>183</sup> and took the control of the region in 1795.<sup>184</sup> The Sharifs of Mecca and Medina informed the central government, fearing that Mecca and Medina would be the next after the invasion of Al-

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<sup>180</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* (Cevdet's History), 2nd ed., vols. 7 (Dersaadet, İstanbul: Matbaa-yı, 1893), 192.

<sup>181</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement,” 626,627.

<sup>182</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 40

<sup>183</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 116.

<sup>184</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhâbi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 29.



Ahsa in 1795, and increasing the risks for cities like Damascus, Baghdad and Basra as well. Likewise, Al-Ahsa which was ruled by a powerful tribe, Bani Khalid, in the name of the Ottoman empire, was an important region for the Ottomans due to its strategic location and high trading volume<sup>185</sup>. As a result, the invasion of Al-Ahsa led the Ottomans to take concrete measures to fight against the Wahhabis by engaging other tribes in the region.<sup>186</sup> Yet, the first direct confrontation of the Ottoman army with the Wahhabis took place in 1798<sup>187</sup>, and the central government did not send any military unit to help the Sharifs immediately. Therefore, it took some time for the interference of the central government.<sup>188</sup> In the meantime, Sharif Ghalib failed in military strikes carried out without the approval of İstanbul to prevent an imminent invasion of the Hijaz by the Wahhabis. Because of this, he wrote a letter to request the central government to send the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, to take hold of the Wahhabis and notified the government about Wahhabis' increasing power and their blockade on food supplies.

However, it seems that the central government did not pay attention to the Sharif letter although it heeded its governor's requests. It was only after After Cezzar Ahmet Pasha, governor of Damascus, and Sidon, informed the central government about the Wahhabis' intention to attack Mecca, and apprised about the gravity of the Wahhabi threat much bigger than what the Sharif told did the central government decide to hold a critical meeting to discuss specifically about the Wahhabi incident.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, it seems that one of the reasons why the Ottoman government did not send necessary help on time was again due to its high reliance on his governors unlike the Meccan Sharif, which also indicates its distrust towards him<sup>190</sup> Secondly, the other reason might be the proposition of diverging ideas by the Sublime Porte functionaries on handling the Wahhabi problem during this critical meeting.

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<sup>185</sup> Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement," 627.

<sup>186</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 120.

<sup>187</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhâbi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 31.

<sup>188</sup> Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement," 627.; Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhâbi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 29.

<sup>189</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhâbi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 29., Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 195, 96.

<sup>190</sup> Evered also puts forward the same idea about Ottomans' high reliance on their governors. For this, see Evered, p.627. Kurşun also states that the central government thought that due to the wrong policies of the Sharif, the Wahhabi problem escalated. See Kurşun, p.27

In the meeting, one group of dignitaries agreed on eliminating the Wahhabi threat by military means, defining the Wahhabis as Kharijites because of their intention to invade Mecca. Another group proposed that Abd al-Wahhab was just informing people in accordance with the rules in Islam, and actually posed no threat. The last group evaluated the issue as a conflict between the Sharif and the Wahhabis, i.e. as a local problem to be solved, and suggested the investigation of the governor of Baghdad.<sup>191</sup> As a result, it can be said that the Ottoman empire started to consider the Wahhabi movement as a serious political problem since it held a critical meeting to specifically discuss about the Wahhabi incident. Also, the central government acted in accordance with the views of the third group, and asked the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, to send a report on this issue.

When Suleiman Pasha informed the central government about the unexpectedly dangerous nature of the Wahhabi threat, Istanbul ordered him to attack the heartland of the Wahhabis, al-Dir'iyya, to wipe them out.<sup>192</sup> At first, Suleiman Pasha did not carry out the order pointing out the inadequacy of his army against the Wahhabis in the desert alone, and the necessity to protect his region from them. Yet, after almost three years' correspondences, he had to comply with the order because of the Wahhabi presence near Hille in 1798.<sup>193</sup> Despite this threat assessment, the Ottoman Empire at the same time played the mediator role to provide a reconciliation ground between the Sharif and the Wahhabis.<sup>194</sup> It seems that by acting as a mediator, the Ottoman Empire actually tried to gain time to take care of the Wahhabi problem because a few years ago it had already lost another battle against Russia (1787-1792). The failure of the Ottoman army resulted in major territorial losses leading to Selim's Nizam-ı Cedid reforms in 1792. These reforms also caused heavy costs for the Ottoman Empire.<sup>195</sup> Additionally, since the Ottoman empire were going through a decentralization process, *Ayans* (local elites) increased their power vis a vis the central government. Since the central government needed their cooperation in

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<sup>191</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 30.; Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement," 627.

<sup>192</sup> Evered, "Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's Historical Survey of the Movement," 627, 628.

<sup>193</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 31.

<sup>194</sup> BOA, HH. 179 8091, 1211.Za. (24<sup>th</sup> of May 1797); BOA, HH. 221 12324, 1212.L 11. (29<sup>th</sup> of March 1798)

<sup>195</sup> Kemal Beydilli, "Selim III," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 421,422.; Kemal Beydilli, "Yaş Antlaşması," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 43. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013), 347.

military and financial matters, it became dependent on *ayans* over time to conduct its battles against its enemies. Especially its dependency increased during the Russian wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, around those times, Selim III was also trying to reinforce his central authority against powerful *Ayans*, and to suppress the rebellious acts of some of the local powers as well.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, due to these internal and external problems and lack of resources, the central government had to act as a mediator to resolve the problem between the Sharif and the Saud until 1798, by advising both, and using its other regional governors as intermediators.

To explain, the document dated on 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1797, indicates that Sharif informed Istanbul about the conditions to settle the conflict with the Wahhabi leader. Accordingly, the Sharif should not prevent the movement of the pilgrims coming from the Saud side anymore, nor would Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud intervene with the tribes affiliated with the Sharif. As an answer, the central government sent letters and advised both sides to resolve the problem in this proposed manner. Moreover, the central government ordered the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha, to communicate with the Sharif, and reconcile him with the Wahhabi leader, Abd al-Aziz, to end the military conflict and the quarrel between them. The effort of the Sublime Porte to reconcile one another by giving advice, and using Suleiman Pasha as intermediary to solve the problem between them<sup>198</sup> affirms the idea that the central government regarded the situation both as a serious political as well as local problem.

Also, another document dated on 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1798 indicates the same approach. The central government once again tried to mediate by advising both the Sharif and Abd al-Aziz, and by giving orders to its local governors to resolve the problem among them. When

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<sup>196</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 48,49.; Şerif Mardin, "Adem-i Merkeziyet," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 364

<sup>197</sup> Kemal Beydilli, "Selim III," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 421,422.

<sup>198</sup> BOA, HH. 179 8091, 1211.Za. (24th of May 1797), *Emûr-i Mekke-i Mükerrreme şerif dâileriyle urban derûnunda kâin Vehhabi Abdulaziz bin Suud beyninde şerraregîr-i işgal olan namede harb ve kıtalin indifa ve itgası hususu Abdul Aziz tarafından hacca gidenlere şerif-i müşarünileyh mümanaat itmek ve fevt olanların emval ve eşyalarını ve irsallerine i'ta eylemek şerif-i müşarünileyh müteallik kabail-i urbandan dahi merkum Abdül Aziz kef-i yed eylemek maddelerinin husulüne menut idüğü bundan akdem canib-i Hicazdan Der-i Aliyye'ye inhâ olunmuş olduğuna mebnî hususat-ı mezkûre Dersadetten tarafeyne tavsiye ve iş'ar olunarak islah-ı zatül beyne ibtidar olunmuş olduğundan Bağdat valisi Süleyman Paşa kulları dahi şerif-i müşarünileyh ile muhabere iderek iş bu cidal ve münakaşanın def ve izalesine ikdam eylemesi taraf-ı çâkeranemden Bağdat valisi müşarünileyh kullarına tahrir olunmuş olduğuna binaen...*

the Sharif wrote a letter to the central government about Abd al-Aziz after their conflict resulted in a war between them, it responded him by stating that it was inappropriate to fight in the holy lands. Also, to put an end to the problem between them, the central government advised the Sharif to permit the entrance of Saud's pilgrims to Mecca to avoid offending him. Likewise, when Abd al-Aziz wrote a letter to the central government, it recommended him to respect the Sharif by saying that he was descended from the prophet Muhammad, and he was still the governor of Mecca. Apart from giving advice to them, the Sublime Porte also commanded the governor of Jeddah, Yusuf Pasha, and the governor of Damascus, Abdullah Pasha, to reach a common solution to the contention between the Sharif and Abd-al-Aziz with an aim to providing order and safety in the Haramayn. Yet, in the end, the reconciliation attempts of the central government failed.<sup>199</sup>

However, at the end of almost three years' correspondence, when it became plain that efforts of mediation failed, finally Suleiman Pasha had to comply with the order of the central government due to the Wahhabi presence near Hille in 1798.<sup>200</sup> Therefore, Suleiman Pasha initiated military attacks, and had the help of the tribes such as the Muntafiq, Shammar and Zafir in 1798 to regain Al-Ahsa and Qatif from the Wahhabis.<sup>201</sup> to compel the Saudi leader for negotiations with the ultimate aim to conclude peace.<sup>202</sup> However, his army which was under the command of his steward (*kethüda*), Ali Bey, could not be successful. As a consequence, Ali Bey had to retreat and signed a truce with the Wahhabis for six years in 1799 to provide security for pilgrim caravans. To be able to provide this

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<sup>199</sup> BOA, HH. 221 12324, 1212.L 11. (29th of March 1798), ...*bir taraftan halen Cidde valisi olub Medine-i Münevverede ikamete memur olan Yusuf Paşa'ya canibi âcizanemden buyuruldu bu husus zımnında tahrirat gönderilerek şerif-i müşarünileyhe bu taraftan yazıldığına muvafık tabirat-ı münasibe ile iktiza iden nush ve pendi ifade ve şeyhi merküme dahi tenbihat-ı lazıme tahrir ve irae iderek ıslah-ı zatülbeyn esbabını istihsale sa'y-i bihemal eylemesi bi'd-defeat terkim ve hala Şam valisi ve Mîr Hacı Abdullah Paşa kullarına dahi gecen sene ve bu sene madde-i mezkûre tahriren etrafiyla tebyin olunarak müşarünileyh Yusuf Paşa ile bilittifak şerif-i müşarünileyhe ve şeyh-i merkur miyanelerinden ber vech-i suhulet def-i şikak birle istikmal-i levazım-ı asayiş-i Haremeyn-i Muhteremeyn ve Arazi-i Mübarekeye sarf-ı be-kudret eylemeleri tefhim olunduğundan başka...*

<sup>200</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 31.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 31.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suudiler (1744-1819)*, 120.

<sup>202</sup> BOA, HH. 228 12752, 1212.Z 29. (14<sup>th</sup> of June 1798), *Bağdad valisi vezir Süleyman Paşa kulları bundan akdem Müntefik Şeyhi Suveynü nam kimesneyi on bine karib asker ile Lahsa tarafına tesyir ve bu vechile mahud harici Abdulaziz bin Suuda bir taraftan irâe-i kuvvet ve bir taraftan dahi musalahaya ilcaya mübaderet itmek üzere itâ-yı ruhsat itmîş olduğunu...*

temporary security, Ali Bey paid a rather heavy price; the entire Al-Ahsa was left to the Wahhabis.<sup>203</sup>

To sum up, this process reveals that until Suleiman Pasha complied with the order of the central government to attack the Wahhabis in 1798, the central government did nothing but endeavor to mediate the dispute as well as the military conflict between them since it was unable to intervene the Wahhabis due to its bad political and economic conditions mentioned before. Meanwhile, it used a recommendatory language toward both sides, and gave them counsel to settle the problem among themselves. Also, it ordered its regional governors to communicate and convince Wahhabis to compromise since it aimed to establish order in Mecca and Medina, which ultimately indicates that to be able to achieve its goals, the Ottoman empire assumed the mediator role as a third party to assuage the animosity between them. It may also indicate the efforts of the Ottoman government to incorporate the Wahhabis into the Ottoman system.

Yet, although İstanbul adopted this policy, it did not stay completely neutral since the Wahhabis became powerful and expanded into large areas. The order for Suleiman Pasha to attack the Wahhabis and compel the Wahhabi leader, Abd al-Aziz, to conclude peace implies that the Ottoman Empire was not completely neutral.

Last but not least, the Wahhabi invasion of Al-Ahsa dramatically changed the perception of the Ottoman Empire towards the Wahhabi movement. Because of their expansion towards Al-Ahsa, they became a serious political and regional problem for the Empire. Suleiman Pasha's attack to regain Al-Ahsa, and involvement of the other tribes into this confrontation prove that the Wahhabi movement was not only a local problem between the Sharif and the Wahhabis anymore, but also a regional one. The Wahhabi movement could spread in the region and became serious regional threat since the central government did not evaluate the movement as a serious political problem in the beginning, and did not take necessary precautions against it on time.

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<sup>203</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 32.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 131,132.

### 3.1.2. The Wahhabi Movement as an International and Existential Problem:

Three years after the truce with the Wahhabis, another crucial incident occurred in 1802, and like the invasion of Al-Ahsa, this also seems to have been another turning point for the Ottomans; it seems that it influenced the Ottoman perception about the Wahhabi threat in a profound manner. To explain, there was already an ongoing hostility between the Wahhabis and the Shiites given that the Wahhabis accused the Shiites with blasphemy as they did for the mainstream Sunni Islam, too. As a result, they were attacking the Shiites who would participate in the pilgrimage.<sup>204</sup> Apart from the already existed intricacy between them, a conflict occurred between the Wahhabis and the Shiites when a group of Wahhabi merchants went to Najaf, a Shiite-majority town in Iraq, to make trade. As a result of a disagreement, numerous Wahhabis were killed by the Shiites. When the Wahhabi leadership could not reach a common ground with Suleiman Pasha about the punishment of the Shiite perpetrators, they used this as an excuse to break the truce with the governor of Baghdad and exploited this situation to retaliate against the Shiites. Namely, the Wahhabis attacked Karbala in 1802, damaged the graveyard of Imam Hussain, and plundered this holy city of the Shiites, while massacring the Shiite population.<sup>205</sup> These events gave rise to a harsh reaction of Iran, and baffled Istanbul as well. In other words, both the Sunnis and the Shiites showed major reaction to the Karbala incident; at the same time, however, the Wahhabi problem turned into an international issue too.<sup>206</sup>

The Karbala incident caused a serious crisis between Iran and the Ottoman Empire; Suleiman Pasha was warned by Iran about a possible declaration of war if he did not attack the Wahhabis and make them pay the price for what they inflicted in Karbala. Because of the Iranian threat, Suleiman Pasha first secured the holy relics of Shiites from a possible attack of Wahhabis on Najaf, and informed the central government about the situation and deliberated on the need to send an emissary to Iran to solve the crisis.<sup>207</sup> Even though the Porte ordered Suleiman Pasha to open a military campaign against the Wahhabis, he could

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<sup>204</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 33.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 33; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 136,137.

<sup>206</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 34,35.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 34.

not prevail over them. After the death of Suleiman Pasha in the same year, his steward and son-in-law Ali Bey assumed the office, and the central government expected him to continue the struggle with the Wahhabis as well.<sup>208</sup> While the Ottomans were taking precautions against the Wahhabi threat in Iraq, Mecca was targeted by the Wahhabi leader, Abd al-Aziz<sup>209</sup>, besides; he invaded Taif in 1802.<sup>210</sup>

As a result of all these problems, the central government held a meeting in 1802, and decided to send around 800 hundred selected soldiers to protect Medina temporarily, and chose a new governor for Jeddah. Since it lacked the resources to send a big army and had to protect the borders, the central government tried to gain time and to produce temporary solutions. Additionally, in the meeting, the central government decided to send an alim who knew Islamic sects and Arabic well to negotiate with the Wahhabis.<sup>211</sup> For this mission, Adem Efendi, from Jerusalem Qadiship was suggested to Istanbul in the 18th of November, 1802 to admonish the Wahhabis<sup>212</sup>, take back the holy relics seized by the Wahhabis during the Karbala attack<sup>213</sup> and discuss their creeds.<sup>214</sup> The reason why he was chosen was that he was competent in eloquence, and was a quick-witted person.<sup>215</sup>

Moreover, Kurşun underlines the importance of sending Adem Efendi as emissary since it was the first attempt of the Ottomans to negotiate directly with the Wahhabis.<sup>216</sup> Also, it seems that the central government had to reach such a decision because it was also informed by Ali Pasha about not having enough resources to mobilize an army against the Wahhabis.<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, Evered puts forward that “the

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>209</sup> Ahmet Vehbi Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri* (Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001), 132,133.

<sup>210</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 39.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 35,36.

<sup>212</sup> BOA, HH. 123 5086, 1217.B 22. (18<sup>th</sup> of November 1802)

<sup>213</sup> BOA, HH. 94 3823, 1218. Z 29. (10<sup>th</sup> of April 1804), *...ihtiyattan hulul itmek lazıme-i dûrendîşi ve revîyyet olduğunu ve Suud oğlunun istikşafı zamiri ve nehb etiği emvalin istirdadı için tayin buyurulan mevali-i izamdan faziletli Adem Efendi dâileri bir kıta fermanname-i aliyeleriyle irsal buyurulmuş olub hal ve reftarları istikşaf olunduktan sonra müktezayı vakt ü hal hangi sureti icab ider ise tarafı Devleti Seniyyeden icrasına tevcih çehrei iğtina buyurulacağı ve vesayayı saireyi havi...*

<sup>214</sup> BOA, HH. 92 3784 L, 1218. Ra 25. (15<sup>th</sup> of July 1803)

<sup>215</sup> BOA, HH. 123 5086, 1217.B 22. (18<sup>th</sup> of November 1802), *Âsitane-i Saadet ulemasından suhen-şinas ve fatin bir dâilerinin intihab semahatlı Şeyhülislam Efendi dâileriyle muhabere olunduktan bu hususa müderrisin-i kirandan Adem Efendi dâilerinden gayrı tayine çesban âharı mevcut olmamağla Efendi-i mümaileyhin is'âf emeliyle tayin kılınmasını ihbar eylediğine binaen...*

<sup>216</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 132,133.; Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 36.

<sup>217</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suudiler (1744-1819)*, 142.

authorities sent a scholar instead of a state official for this job, indicating that they viewed the Wahhabi movement as a temporary threat, not as a lasting political entity that would require state officials for recognition or negotiations.”<sup>218</sup>

Yet, when the circumstances are taken into consideration, the Ottomans tried to prevent the expansion of the Wahhabis within the limits of their power; because although they were unable to send a big army because of deficient resources, they at least decided to send around 800 hundred selected soldiers to protect Medina, and chose a new governor for Jeddah in the meeting. Also, it seems that the decision of sending an alim to Wahhabis points out that the Karbala incident tremendously changed the Ottoman perception towards the Wahhabis. Since the Karbala incident caused a crisis with Iran, it became a much more serious political issue turning to an international problem for the Ottoman Empire as well. Besides its political aspects, with the Karbala incident, the movement was not only a political problem for the Ottomans anymore, but also became a religious problem. For instance, in order to convince them on a religious basis, they decided to send an Ulama as emissary instead of a state official. This was also another impact of the Karbala incident in the perception of the Ottoman Empire towards the Wahhabis since it was the central government’s first attempt to negotiate with the Wahhabis directly. It can be deduced that if the central government considered it as a temporary threat as Evered stated, it would not have sent an alim as emissary to negotiate with them. Yet, although the Wahhabi problem was a major threat for the Sublime Porte, it considered the movement a less dangerous threat in relation to the aggression originating from its European neighbors. This is why, until it had enough power to crush them, it tried to prevent their expansion in the region.

The general political conditions of the Ottoman Empire should be taken into consideration as well in order to understand why the Ottomans could not send a full-fledged army to defeat the Wahhabis. The crisis with the Wahhabis after 1798 coincided with a period when the Ottomans were engaged in a series of wars with the Russians, Austrians, and France. Also, there was significant internal unrest in the Balkans because of the nationalist uprisings during the reign of Selim III. So, at these times, the Ottoman Empire was experiencing major political and economic challenges and going through very

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<sup>218</sup> Evered, “Rereading Ottoman Accounts of Wahhabism as Alternative Narratives: Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s Historical Survey of the Movement,” 629.



hard times politically and economically. This is why Güner also agrees that the central government could not resolve the Wahhabi problem in the region immediately.<sup>219</sup>

Apart from Adem Efendi, another alim, Hibetullah Efendi, was proposed to be sent to the Wahhabis according to a document dated on 22nd of April 1803. He was the qadi of Baghdad, and the reasons why he was chosen for this mission were similar to the case of Adem Efendi. He was proposed because of his profound knowledge in religious matters. Secondly, he was competent in Arabic and oratory skills as well as being the most reputable alim among the other Ulama of Baghdad. Lastly, he had witnessed the sack of Karbala by the Wahhabis, knew their rhetoric and what they did in that place. This is why he was asked to inquire into their superstitious belief, and try to understand their intentions.<sup>220</sup>

Yet, although other documents do not indicate whether Hibetullah Efendi went and talked with the Wahhabis, it is certainly known from the documents that Adem Efendi went and talked to the Saudi leader. The document dated on 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1803 indicates that Adem Efendi went to talk with Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz.<sup>221</sup>

When Adem Efendi went to negotiate with Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz in 1803, they first came together near Taif, and further meetings were held in Mecca.<sup>222</sup> During the meetings, mostly religious topics were discussed like the Wahhabi hostility towards the Shiites and especially their attack on Karbala. Yet, at the end of thirteen days, Adem Efendi failed to convince him about the principal contradiction of Wahhabism to Sunni Islam.<sup>223</sup> On the other hand, the Wahhabi leader put forward that they were trying to show the true path to the Muslims who diverged from the true principle of Islam. Also, as an answer for the Karbala attack, he defended himself by saying that the Shiites were not true Muslims

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<sup>219</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler*, 166,167,169,171.

<sup>220</sup> BOA, HH. 93 3793 B, 1217. Z 29. (22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1803), ... *mesfûrun vücudı küfrâlûdunu vech-i arzdan izaleye teşmir-i said ihtimam eylemesi emir buyurulmak ve tedbirati mezkûre ile maan ulemadan usul ve fîrûda mahir ba husus ilmi kelim ve hadiste fazlı zahir sahibi cerbeze ve arabi tekellüme kadir bir kulları irsal olunup ibtida etvarı mübted'iasından sual ve tavrının neticesi vahim olduğunu kendüye tefhim ve itikadi batlımı istiksa iderek merami ne olduğunu idrake sa'y eylemesi için halen Bağdat kadısı Hibetullah Efendi dâileri evsafı ilmiye-i mezkûre ile mevsuf ve bahusus Bağdat uleması beyinde şöhreti kâmile olduğu başka vaka-i Kerbelayı aynen müşahede etmiş gibi harici-i melunun cümle akval ve ef'aline vakıf olup ve Bağdat valisi tarafından masarîfine vafı ikdar olursa derhal hareket eder zira canibi Bağdattan...*

<sup>221</sup> BOA, HH 94 3812, 1218 S 26 (17<sup>th</sup> of June 1803)

<sup>222</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 36.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 145.

anymore since they diverged from Islam with their wrong worship practices. Also, he pointed the harassment of the governor of Baghdad as an excuse.<sup>224</sup> Besides, when Adem Efendi was still in the region for negotiations, the Wahhabi leader invaded Mecca on 30<sup>th</sup> of April 1803. After that, Adem Efendi left Mecca, and he informed the central government about the situation.<sup>225</sup>

We can get additional information about these negotiations from an Ahmed Agha, who was together with Adem Efendi. Ahmet Agha was assigned by the governor of Damascus to accompany Adem Efendi for the meeting sent a letter from Damascus to Istanbul to inform about their meeting with the Wahhabi leader. Even though the letter did not include too much information about their conversation with the Wahhabi leader, he conveyed information about the letter of the central government delivered by Adem Efendi to Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz. Also, he wrote about Sharif Ghalib's escape from Mecca to Jeddah, and the appointment of his brother as the Meccan Sharif by the Wahhabis. In addition, he reported the Wahhabi takeover of Mecca, the destruction of holy places, his observation about the quality and quantity of the Wahhabi army, and urgent need for military backing to defend Medina and Jeddah.<sup>226</sup> However, the central government once again had to order the governor of Baghdad and other local governors to deal with the Wahhabis because it could not deploy an army directly to send over Wahhabis due to the adverse political events at the time as mentioned before.

Apart from the importance of sending an alim for negotiation with the Wahhabis, the Wahhabis' takeover of Mecca on 30<sup>th</sup> of April in 1803<sup>227</sup> was also another important incident since it caused a further change in the perception of the Ottoman Empire towards the Wahhabis. To explain, in one of the documents sent to Istanbul, it was indicated how Abd al-Aziz increased his prestige by subordinating the rebel tribes previously attached to the Sharif and by attacking the graveyard of Imam Hussain in Karbala. Besides, it was also stated that Abd al-Aziz attacked the tribes all around the Haramayn while manifesting his claim on the sultanate, the caliphate, and his bid for being a prophet, and occupied the

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<sup>224</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 36,37., Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih- i Cevdet*, 210-12.

<sup>225</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 134,35.

<sup>226</sup> BOA, HH. 94 3812, 1218. S 26. (17<sup>th</sup> of June 1803)

<sup>227</sup> Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 134., Sabri Paşa, *Tarih- i Vehhâbiyan*, 112.

region around Mecca and Taif. Also, he had the intention to attack Medina as well, and to destroy the graveyard of Prophet Muhammad and His Companions.<sup>228</sup>

These documents demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire regarded the Wahhabi movement more than being a local problem and regional problem. It saw them now direct threat to its very existence in the region. The reason for this is that, with the claim of sultanate, caliphate and a bid for being prophet, the Wahhabi leader explicitly challenged, and revolted against the Ottoman rule and domination. What is more, with these claims and the control of Mecca, he undermined the legitimacy and prestige of the Ottoman Empire politically and religiously. As a result, the Ottoman Empire continued to deem the Wahhabi movement as a very strong religious problem who enjoys a much more dangerous rhetoric now: “the caliphate and possible claim of a being prophet”.

Yet, this religious rhetoric about being a prophet should be considered as part of the Ottoman government’s anti-propaganda against the Wahhabis. This is because the Wahhabis emerged with the claim to purify Islam and turn it to its original shape by taking *bid’at* out of it. Also, they considered other Muslims as the target of their jihad due to not practicing the true Islam in their perspective.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, it can be said that since the Ottomans were also the target of their jihad, and their authority was challenged by them, the Ottoman government produced this claim to undermine the Wahhabi power and legitimacy in the eyes of their followers.

After a short period of time of the invasion of Mecca on 30th of April 1803, Sharif Ghalib retook the city from the Wahhabis on 12th of July 1803, and the Wahhabis had to

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<sup>228</sup> BOA, HH 93 3796, 1218. M 06. (28<sup>th</sup> of April 1803), “...sene-i maziyyeden berü hariç-i merkûm mugayir-i sulh şerif-i müşarüileyhin hükümetinden olan bekaya-yı urbanı habs-i hafif darb ..... kendü .....itdirerek İmam Hüseyin radiyallahu teala anhu hazretlerinin makam-I enverlerini ne hale giriftar ve ahalisine külli ihanet ve hasar eylediği bedidar iken harbü dava bir güne hareketi meşhuda olması melun-ı merkûme sermaye-i gurur ve istidrac olarak merkûz-ı zamiri olan nübevvat ve saltanat davasını tamamıyla zahire ihrac ile eşhür-i sene-i mübareke-i muharreminden berü Haremeyn-i Muhteremeynin cevanib-i erbasında olan urbanın üzerine hücum ile nice nice ülûfu taife-i urban ve nisa ve sıbyan ziri şemşiri telef ve helak olmuş...”

In another part of the same document, it is stated that “Hazret-i İmam Hüseyin radiyallahu anh meşhed-i şeriflerini basup merkad-i müniplerini hedm ve ahalisini katl ve emvallerini garet eylediğinden ma’ada Mekke-i Mükerrreme ve Taif etrafını zabt idüp gündün güne taaddisi ziyade ve hilafet ve belki nübüvvet iddiasında olduğuna binaen aktar-ı Hicaziye’nin hıfz ve hiraseti emrinde şerif hazretleri tarafından her ne kadar bezl-i vücud olunmakda ise dahi merkum Belde-i Tayyibenin turuk ve etrafını kat’ ve akvat celb iden urbanı men iderek...”

<sup>229</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18.; Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, “Vehhabilik,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 42. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2012), 611.

return to al-Dir'iyya.<sup>230</sup> Yet, the Sublime Porte continued its effort to bring up solutions for the Wahhabi problem. For instance, it discussed the appointment of suitable people to the region, ordered its governors to cooperate each other against the Wahhabis as well as asked the Sharif to ensure the security of pilgrims by taking necessary precautions for it.<sup>231</sup> Moreover, it sent orders to tribal leaders and sheikhs. In those letters, Porte stated that since the Wahhabis created *bid'at*, it was their religious obligation to fight against them, so it warned the tribal leaders not to be part of Wahhabis' sinful acts. In addition, the Sublime Porte used Qur'anic verses in those letters stating the exigency of obeying the ruler and his orders. By this means, it tried to convince them to leave the Wahhabi side.<sup>232</sup>

Besides, the document dated on 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1803 indicates the tension in the Ottoman Empire resulting from the Wahhabi insurgence and activities in Taif and Hijaz. In his letter, Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar informs the central government about the spread of Wahhabi insurrection and their corruption. He states that since the Saudi leader increased his power by subordinating the tribes, and used them to incite anarchy, he unveiled his true intention. Even though, he seemed to leave Mecca, it was actually his deception. If the necessary preparations were not carried out and he invaded the holy lands again, it would be very hard to save and take the control of the region from him. Additionally, he puts forward that since his predecessor, Yusuf Pasha, did not make necessary preparations and no time left to make these preparations, he asks Sublime Porte to send urgent help to him.<sup>233</sup> Therefore, even though the Wahhabis left Mecca, they may have become stronger developing into a serious threat against the Ottoman domination in the region by taking control of the tribes.

Yet, although the Wahhabis were expelled from Mecca, they started to make provision to besiege Medina. By taking control of the port of Yenbu which is near to Medina, they blockaded the food circulation. Since the governors of Egypt, Damascus and Baghdad did not take necessary precautions to help Medina on time, this situation resulted in occurrence of famine in Medina. This is why the central government held a meeting to

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<sup>230</sup> Betül Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2014), 85.; Ecer, *Tarihte Vehhabi Hareketi ve Etkileri*, 134.

<sup>231</sup> Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 85-87.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 78,80,81.

<sup>233</sup> BOA, HH 92 3785 A, 1218. B 01. (17th of October 1803)

evaluate the situation, and it decided to take control of Yenbu urgently. Besides, it held further meetings to discuss the appointment of suitable people to the governor positions to the region so as to solve the Wahhabi problem.<sup>234</sup> While the central government was trying to come up with solutions, the Wahhabis invaded Medina in 1805. Yet, the Sublime Porte could not send any aid to Medina since it was occupied with other military campaigns at those times. After Medina, the Wahhabis reoccupied Mecca on January 1806, and it resulted in the submission of Sharif Ghalib to the Saudi leader.<sup>235</sup>

Therefore, the invasion of Medina and second invasion of Mecca showed once again the gravity of the Wahhabi threat for not only the existence of the Ottoman Empire in the region, but also for the Islamic world. In the document dated on 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1807, the chief qadi of Damascus informs the central government about the activities of the Wahhabis in his letter. He states that since the Saudi leader was in the claim of Caliphate and Sultanate, he invaded Medina and Mecca. He did not allow the entrance of governor of Damascus, Abdullah Pasha, to Medina with pilgrims by stating a Qur'anic verse prohibiting the entrance of polytheists to holy lands, so he distorted the verse by labeling pilgrims as polytheists(*mushriks*). Furthermore, he dismissed the qadis of Mecca and Medina, appointed his men to these duties, removed the name of the Ottoman sultan from Friday sermons as well as deflected pilgrims of Jeddah from the true path by subordinating them into his *madhab* and caliphate. Moreover, in order to subordinate people living in Rumelia and Anatolia into his *madhab* and caliphate, he gave some letters to pilgrims, and sent them to Damascus to deliver these letters. Yet, when governor of Damascus, Yusuf Pasha, learned about the letters he took them from pilgrims and sent them to Istanbul. The reason why the Saudi leader did all of these was that he tried to prove himself as the servitor of the two holy sanctuaries in other words, the owner of caliphate. With this way, he did not allow people to enter Mecca for pilgrimage; if they did not follow his *madhab* and obey his caliphate. The Qadi of Damascus also states the solution for this problem. According to him, since it was stated many times to Istanbul, the solution for this problem was to send well equipped army from Baghdad, Egypt and Damascus. Otherwise, as long

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<sup>234</sup> Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 87-89.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 93,94.

as Haramayn was under the occupation of the Wahhabis, it would not be possible for pilgrims to go to Haramayn.<sup>236</sup>

As a result, it can be seen that the Wahhabi uprising undermined not only the political legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire, but also its religious legitimacy. With the claim of sultanate, and removing the name of the sultan from Friday sermons, the Wahhabis openly challenged against the Ottoman domination in the region. With the invasion of Medina and Mecca and preventing the pilgrims to enter the holy lands, they weakened the religious legitimacy of the Ottoman Sultan, Selim III, as the servitor of holy lands within the Islamic world. This is because being the protector of Haramayn, and controlling pilgrimage routes were the sources of the Ottoman claim on the caliphate. Besides, since the qadi of Damascus suggested the creation of a common army with the cooperation of Baghdad, Egypt and Damascus, this suggestion once again proves how much it became hard for the Ottoman empire to overcome the Wahhabi threat.

After the invasion of Medina and Mecca, the central government held several meetings to discuss and to solve the pilgrimage problem. In those meetings, the central government also considered the hearings from its governors to produce solutions for it and stressed on hiding the pilgrimage problem from people. Also, it ordered the governors of Damascus, Baghdad and Egypt to cooperate with each other to solve the pilgrimage problem in 1807.<sup>237</sup> Yet, this cooperation could not take place since they had different reasons preventing them to take action together.<sup>238</sup> As a result, although the central government tried to find solution for pilgrimage problem, it could not decide how to act on this issue. In other words, it could not decide on whether to send pilgrims or delay the

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<sup>236</sup> BOA, HH. 94 3839 B, 1222. B 06. (9th of September 1807), *Der-i devlet-mekîne arz-ı dai-i kemîne oldur ki bir müddetten berü Hicaz tarafında hurûc iden ve Vehhabi-i Suûd-ı na-mes'ûdun zu'm-ı fâsîd ile da'vâ-i hilâfet ve saltanatta olduğunu izhâr birle sene-i mâziyede Haremeyn-i Şerîfeyn olan Mekke-i Mükerrreme ve Medîne-i Münevvereyi zabt ve istilâ'sı ve külliyyetlü ecnadı nühus-nihâdlarını Medîne-i Münevverenin derûn ve bîrûnuna vaz' ve tahşid ve âzimi tavâf-ı beytullahu'l-haram ve ziyâret-i Ravzai Mutahhara-i hazreti seyyid-ül enam olan hüccâc-ı müslimin sâbıkan Şam valisi atüfettü elhac Abdullah Paşa hazretleriyle bi'l-küllîye Medîne-i Münevvereye duhuldan men innemâl müşriküne necesun fe lâ yakrabül mescidel harâme ba'de âmihim hâzâ ayet-i şerîfeyi tahsifince hüccâc-ı müslimini müşrikin deyu ceref nâm menzilesinden kerhen redd ve ircâ' ettirdikten sonra hâricî mezkûr kendü bi'n-nefs yüz elli bin nefer asker-i eşkıyâsıyla 'Ârafata gelüb Mekke-i Mükerrreme kadısını hutbeden men' ve pâdişah-ı 'âlem-penah efendimizin ismi şeriflerini külliyyen Cuma hutbesinden ref' ile tarik-i deryadan Cidde üzerine gelen hüccâc bendelerini idlâl ve dini mübinden zeyğ ve tahrif şurût-ı mekrûheleri'ni} üzere kendi mezhep ve hilâfetine tabi'yyet ettirüp ve maîyetlerinde olan mahmil ve sancak-ı şerifleri alenen kesr ve ihrak-ı bi'n-nar ve Rum ili ve Anadoluda kâin Memâlik-i islâmiyyeyi kendüsüne celb...*

<sup>237</sup> Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 95-99.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 111.

pilgrimage, so it delayed its decision until it learned how the governor of Egypt would act for this situation.<sup>239</sup> As a result, the efforts of the central government could not ensure removal of the Wahhabis from region, and pilgrims could not carry out their pilgrimage between 1807 and 1809.<sup>240</sup>

The reason why the central government considered Egypt very important in solving the Wahhabi problem was that Egypt was one of the richest provinces of the Ottoman Empire as well as being influential over Syria and Hijaz. Additionally, Jeddah's import duties and Egypt were providing the budget for the expenses of Hijaz, and Hijaz and Jeddah were administratively connected to Egypt. By this means, the central government was controlling the Sharifs of Mecca. Due to this, the central government needed the cooperation of Egypt against the Wahhabis, and asked governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, to go over them. However, although the central government asked him to go to Haramayn for the first time in 1805, he delayed this request until 1811. This is because he had internal problems within Egypt and was trying to establish his authority by eliminating Mamluk elites in the government. Additionally, he had to deal with England at those times, and he did not have enough military power to go against the Wahhabis.<sup>241</sup> Therefore, in order to gain time and to provide answer for the suppression of central government, he promised the central government that when he solved his problems in Egypt, he would go to Haramayn. Therefore, when the Sublime Porte learnt that Muhammad Ali Pasha consolidated his power in Egypt in 1808, it expected him to keep his promise. In 1809, he informed the central government, and stated that since he solved his problems, he would go to Haramayn.<sup>242</sup>

Yet, the document dated on 30th of January 1809 indicates that while waiting for the response of Muhammad Ali Pasha to agree on carrying out a military expedition against the Wahhabis, the central government continued its efforts to solve the Wahhabi problem. The document shows the peace agreement concluded between the Wahhabis and the

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 98,99.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 102; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 180. In Ayaz's thesis, she states that pilgrims could not enter Haramayn between 1807 and 1808. Yet, Güner indicates the date differently which is between 1807-1809.

<sup>241</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 176-178.; Madawi Al Rasheed, *Politics In An Arabian Oasis* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 36.

<sup>242</sup> Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 106-108,111.

Ottoman Empire, and the correspondences between them. To explain, in the document, the Guardian of Mecca, Hasan Pasha, informs Muhammad Ali Pasha about the situation in Mecca. He states that although a peace agreement was made with the Wahhabis for now, Abd Allah ibn Saud,<sup>243</sup> exploited the agreement and abused it as an opportunity for further instigations. He subordinated the tribes in Bişe, Asir and Şiran within the Hijaz, the main tribe in Taif and all the tribes in Yemen. He forcibly collected taxes from them, openly declared himself as their possessor, and by this means, he enhanced his strength. This is why Hasan Pasha underlines the urgent need for soldiers to protect the tribes from the Wahhabis. Also, he warns about the situation that the tribes were far from being used for necessary services. Even, they were taking sides with the Wahhabis because the Wahhabis gave them a sum from the *zakat* he collected. Therefore, Hasan Pasha states that there were clear evidences about the infection of Wahhabi corruption to tribes in these places, and he even sent a letter to the Saudi leader to protest this situation. He also told him that he removed the qadis appointed by him. As a response, the Saudi leader rejected the allegations and stated that the subordinations of the Bişe and Asir were realized even before the peace agreement. In return, Hasan Pasha advised him to stay away from Bişe and Asir. Then, Hasan Pasha states that he received another response which was sent to Istanbul, and he informed Muhammad Ali Pasha about the disloyalty of the tribes in the region.<sup>244</sup>

Therefore, although the Ottoman empire considered the Wahhabis as existential threat for its presence since 1803, it continued its negotiation policy by making a peace agreement with them. By this means, it might have aimed to stop their expansion, to restore its authority in the region and probably secure the pilgrim routes as well by binding them to a peace agreement. The reason why the Ottoman Empire could not confront with them until

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<sup>243</sup> Abd Allah ibn Saud came to power in 1814 after the death of his father, Saud ibn abd al-Aziz, and stayed in power until 1818. Therefore, at those times, Saud ibn abd al-Aziz (1803-1814) was the leader of the Wahhabi movement. See Kurşun, Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: *Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 49-53.

<sup>244</sup> BOA, HH. 344 19648 A, 1223. Z 13. (30th of January 1809), ...ve raiyyet maddesi şimdilik musâlaha birle bertaraf olduğu ve Hicaz-ı yemene necibü'l-iktizâ intibâh kavilleri hususu ve bu defa irâde-i umûr-ı Hicaziyye zımında yine Mekke-i Mükerrerede ikamet-i bendeleri lüzumu karin zihn-i 'abidanem olub ber-muceb-i emr-i âlileri ifâyı hidemât-ı âliyyelerinde abd-ı memlûk irâdat-ı seniyyeleri olduğundan nâşi ifa-yı emr-i şerife bezl-i vücudum sermaye-i iftihar olarak bu hususda inşallahüteâlâ zerre nema kusur olunmayacağı ancak iş bu Vehhabi ile olunan müsâlaha maddesi efendimin bildikleri gibi olmağla hâricî-i menhus bend eylediği muşalahayı mahz-küşad bab-ı fesâda niamü'l-vesile ittihaz idüb Bişe? ve İsalı? ve Şiran? ve bilcümle Hicaz-ı yemen Zehran'a kadar kendüsüne tâbiyyet ettirüb ahz-ı zekat be iktisâb-ı kuvvete kastı hatta Taif civarında olan atıyye? urbanından ahz-ı zekat etmede durı tenessüb ihtimamı ve kâffe-i urban benimsiniz deyu izhâr kelâmı cevelân ve iş bu hususlardan men' ve redd-i teveccühle olacağı siz efendimizin mâlûmı olub...



Muhammad Ali Pasha accepted Haramayn mission might be that although the central government ordered its local governors to cooperate with each other against the Wahhabis, they could not carry out this order. The Ottoman Empire tried to solve the Wahhabi problem through his local governors because during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ottoman Empire experienced the decentralization process which transformed its governmental and economic system.<sup>245</sup> As a result of this situation, the local elites in the Ottoman provinces increased their power vis a vis the central government.<sup>246</sup> The Ottoman Empire became depended on the military and economic aids of its local governors when it fought with its enemies since it did not have enough economic and military resources to carry out its wars.<sup>247</sup> Therefore, the central government had to seek their help to be able to conduct a military campaign to eliminate the Wahhabi threat.

Besides, during the reign of Selim III (1789-1807), particular events occurred in international and domestic politics. After the failure of the Ottoman army against Russia during the war between 1787-1792, Selim III needed to carry out Nizam-ı Cedit reforms in 1792. These reforms brought about financial burden to the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, he needed to strengthen the central authority against the local elites, and had to deal with the revolts of some of the local powers in 1790s. Furthermore, he faced with the threat of the national uprising of the Serbians in 1804, and in 1805, he tried to bring compulsory military service in Anatolia and Rumelia. Yet, it caused serious reactions of the local elites and military confrontation of Nizam-ı Cedit army with them, which weakened the Selim's authority profoundly. Apart from domestic politics, Selim III experienced dangerous times in international politics as well. In 1798, France invaded Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire could end this invasion in 1803. Afterwards Selim III felt obliged to recognize Napoleon as the Emperor of France like Prussia due to his military victories against his opponents in Europe. Yet, this situation cost a war with Russia and England in 1806. When it comes to

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<sup>245</sup> M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 6.; Mehmet Genç, "Mâlikâne," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003): 516,517.

<sup>246</sup>Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands Under the Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 79; Şerif Mardin, "Adem-i Merkeziyet," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 364

<sup>247</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire: 1700-1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 48,49.

1807, Selim III was overthrown by a coup d'état,<sup>248</sup> and Mahmud II succeeded him in 1808. Yet, political problems continued when Mahmud II came to power as well. The war with England and Russia lasted until 1809 and 1812.<sup>249</sup> As a result, it can be seen that the Ottoman Empire went through a turbulent and painful period due to the political upheavals in foreign and internal politics during the reigns of Selim III and Mahmud II. These political and economic problems as well as dependence on the military and economic aids of local elites forestalled the Ottoman Empire to deal with the Wahhabi insurgency efficiently. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire carried out a negotiation policy towards the Wahhabis instead of confronting them.

However, when it comes to 1810, the Ottoman policy shifted from negotiation to confrontation towards the Wahhabis since the Wahhabis did not comply with the conditions of the agreement, and violated it by subordinating the tribes. Besides, the central government found out that Muhammad Ali Pasha was ready to carry out a military campaign against the Wahhabis since he solved his problems in Egypt. Therefore, Mahmud II sent his order Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1810 to advance towards Wahhabis, and he started to make necessary preparation for his military campaign to Hijaz. On 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1811, he appointed his son, Tosun Pasha as the head of the army and Tosun pasha started his expedition in September 1811.<sup>250</sup> His army first took the control of Yenbu. Then, he conquered Medina with the assistance of Sharif Ghalib, and the name of the Ottoman sultan was again mentioned in the mosque in Medina on 16<sup>th</sup> of November, 1812<sup>251</sup>

Yet, in spite of the success of Tosun Pasha in Medina, the Sharif was still worried about the Wahhabi threat. The document dated on 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1813 shows that the Sharif of Mecca shares his serious concerns about the Wahhabi threat with Muhammad Ali Pasha and wants to exchange views on the Wahhabi problem. According to the Sharif, even though the Ottoman army would prevail over the Wahhabis in the battle, the Wahhabis

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<sup>248</sup> Virginia Aksan, *the Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 180-252.; Kemal Beydilli, "Selim III," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 421-424.

<sup>249</sup>; Kemal Beydilli, "Mahmud II," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 27. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003), 352,353.

<sup>250</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 181.; Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 117.

<sup>251</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 184.; Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)", 130.

would continue to create unrest and kill people like they did before. In order to protect the whole region and Haramayn from the disturbance of the Wahhabis, to ensure a safe passage for pilgrims and the protection of the tribes, he suggested Muhammad Ali Pasha to assign the *sürre* of the tribes to the Wahhabis this time to make peace with them and stop their sedition. Therefore, he asks Muhammad Ali Pasha's opinion about coming to an agreement with the Wahhabis and told him that if his suggestion was approved by the Sublime Porte, he would start working on it. Otherwise, he asked Muhammad Ali Pasha to keep it as a secret since he was also keeping this idea as a secret.<sup>252</sup>

Yet, another document dated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1813 demonstrates how Muhammad Ali Pasha responds to Sharif's offer through his son, Tosun Ahmed Pasha. In his response, he harshly criticizes and opposes the idea to conclude peace with the Wahhabis. He maintains that according to the Ottoman Law, *sürre* would be assigned to the tribes who bent to the Ottoman sultan, and giving *sürre* to the Wahhabis, a branch of Kharijites, would be unfair to the tribes who were already bent to the Ottoman sultan. Therefore, the Ottoman sultan did not give his consent for the idea of giving *sürre* to them. Moreover, he underlines that he did not want to be criticized and remembered in historical records as a person who gave *sürre* to the Wahhabis. This is because he thinks that peace would be made between two states, and concluding peace with a branch of Kharijites would be very shameful for himself. Therefore, he orders his son not to conclude peace with the Wahhabis, and even not to give quarter (*aman*) to them.<sup>253</sup>

Therefore, it seems that there was a disagreement between the Muhammad Ali Pasha and the Sharif of Mecca about handling the Wahhabi threat. Since Muhammad Ali Pasha considered the Wahhabis very dangerous, he wanted to continue confronting them to remove this threat from the region. On the other hand, although the Sharif considered them in the same way, he instead offered to make negotiations through a peace agreement instead of confronting them. Even though they thought differently, either plan of theirs shows how much the Wahhabis became perilous and serious threat for the existence and domination of the Ottoman Empire in the region. Furthermore, this situation proves the importance of supervising the tribes to take the control of the region from the Wahhabis, and to restore the

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<sup>252</sup> BOA, HH. 95 3842 A, 1227. Z 29. (3th of January 1813)

<sup>253</sup> BOA, HH. 343 19585 B, 1227. Z 29. (3th of January 1813)

central authority. Besides, the statement of Muhammad Ali Pasha indicates how much he was confident in himself, and he considered this mission as a matter of prestige for himself.

Since Tosun Pasha did not make a peace agreement with the Wahhabis, he went to the expedition on Jeddah, Mecca on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1813 and Taif, and cleaned these regions from the Wahhabis like he did in Medina. By this means, the Wahhabis were removed from Haramayn, and Mahmud II received the title of Ghazi after this achievement. Besides, Mahmud II sent gifts Muhammad Ali pasha and his son, Tosun Pasha, for their success. This success helped Muhammad Ali Pasha wax his prestige in the eyes of central government as well as promoting his power in Egypt.<sup>254</sup>

The Sublime Porte was very delighted with the removal of the Wahhabis from Haramayn since this achievement ameliorated Ottoman domination in the region, and prestige of the Ottoman sultan as the caliph.<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, it enabled the Ottomans to carry out pilgrimage service again. Yet, after Haramayn defeat, the Wahhabis retreated to al-Dir'iyya, and they were still posing serious threat to the pilgrims, so there were some hesitations about the safety of pilgrimage. Even though possible threat of the Wahhabis and apprehensions about their threat, pilgrims could make a pilgrimage in 1813 with the implemented precautions, and in 1814, pilgrimage service could be provided as usual in the past.<sup>256</sup>

Yet, after taking control of Haramayn, Tosun Pasha continued to fight with the Wahhabis, and the Wahhabis wanted to make a peace agreement with him to end the war. In the document dated on 4th of August 1815, Muhammad Ali Pasha explains the situation in Haramayn to the Ottoman sultan, and why Tosun Pasha accepted the Wahhabis' plea for mercy and their conditions to end the war. He states that Tosun Pasha prevailed over the son of Saud, Abd Allah ibn Saud, in the battle near Medina. Therefore, the sons of the Saud fell in despair in every aspect, and they did not have a choice, but beg for forgiveness. Yet, they also laid down some conditions to end the war. Muhammad Ali Pasha states that the reason why Tosun Pasha accepted their plea for mercy was that his armies were not near al-

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<sup>254</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 185,186.

<sup>255</sup> Madawi Al Rasheed, *Politics In An Arabian Oasis* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 37.; Betül Ayaz, "Hilafet ve Siyaset: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Hac Hizmetleri (1798-1876)" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2014), 131.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 133,134, 143.

Dir'iyya and they were facing with the problem of food shortage within the armies. Tosun Pasha consulted Ahmed Ağa, the treasurer of Muhammad Ali Pasha, and they found sustaining the war inconvenient within these conditions. This is why they ended the war with the Wahhabis and returned Medina. By this means, Tosun Pasha aimed to complete the food supply for his armies. Therefore, Muhammad Ali Pasha states that the issue of al-Dir'iyya became easier and whenever the Wahhabis caused a problem, he would handle the problem and eradicate them.<sup>257</sup>

Yet, the document on 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1815 shows that this peace agreement did not turn out to be beneficial for the Ottoman Empire. On 27 August 1815, The Sharif informs Muhammad Ali Pasha about the result of peace agreement with the Wahhabis. He states that this peace agreement was concluded while the son of Saud, Abd Allah ibn Saud, had lack of money and were trying to solve this problem. Thus, he sent letters and his men to Asir, Bişe, Türbe and Hijaz, and declared openly to all the tribes that they belonged to him. He took their *zakat*, and gave more than the quarter of money to the tribe sheiks. By this means, some of them secretly and some of them openly started acts of sedition. This is why the Meccan Sharif asks Muhammad Ali Pasha to open a new campaign to bring order by convincing some of tribes kindly and some of them forcibly to stop their disturbances.<sup>258</sup>

This situation was confirmed by Mehmed Necib, the representative (kapu kethüdası) of Muhammad Ali Pasha at the Sublime Porte, on December 2, 1815. Mehmed Necib states that letters were sent from the guardian of Mecca, Muhafız Hasan Pasha and from the Sharif of Mecca to Muhammad Ali Pasha about continuing disturbance of the

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<sup>257</sup> BOA, HH. 341 19533, 1230. § 27. (4th of August 1815), The document does not indicate the terms for reconciliation demanded by the Wahhabis. -... *Suûdun oğulları merkumun her cihetle mukavemetden me'yûs ile devlet-ı aliyye-i ibdel kıyâma tav' ve .... ve teslimden gayrı çare bulamadıklarından dâmen-i affu ve iğtizara teşebbüs ve af ve itlâkları hususunda her müşârünileyh vâsita ittihaz idüb bâ'zı şürût ve iman ile iki nefer mu'teber ve mu'temed rehinler irsâl ve her bir iki rehin mısırda nezdi bendegide birer sene ikamet ve sene teknilinde bir seneye her aharı vürüd eyledikte seleflerine ruhsat verilme husûslarını te'kid ve izah iderek iltimas etmiş oldukları ve müşârünileyh'in olduğu kabim nâm mahal Deriyye'ye ba'id mesafe olub ordularında zehâire dahi killet-i tari olduğundan zahîre tedârikiyle meşgul olunsa vakit ve fırsat kuvvet olacağı müsadelerini müşârünileyh taakkul ve teferrüş eylediğinden...*

<sup>258</sup> BOA, HH. 344 19648 C, 1230. N 21. (27th of August 1815), *...bu defa Vehhabi ile niyet olunan müsâlaha maddesi Suûdun oğlu Abdullahı müzâyakadan halâs ve tabiat-ı hâriciyelerinde mevdû' olan fesad ve hıyâneti icrâda fırsat arar iken bu müsâlaha zuhûr ve etraf Asir ve Bişe? ve Türbe? ve Hicaza bir taraftan mektuplar ve bir taraftan mübâşirleri tesrib ve cümle urban benimsünüz deyu ızhar-ı kelâm ve urban şeyhlerine urbana zekâtının rub'undan ziyâdesini meşâyihle î'tâ ve bu vesile ile kimi mahfi ve kimi zâhir fesada şuruu derkâr olmağla bu maddeleri mücerred sultanım teşrifıyla kimini kahren ve kimini iltifâtı inâyet ile çend gün zarfında nizam ve illa siz olmadıkça bir madde vech-i lâyük üzere icrâ olunmaz ve eğer siz sultanımız bu sene-i mübârekede teşrifiniz mevkuf olur ise umûr-ı kahri düşmana tasdi eder...*

Wahhabis in the region. He states that the peace agreement did not prevent the Wahhabi leader, Abd Allah ibn Saud, from continuing his seditious activity. He never quit his instigation and continued to subordinate the tribes by forcing and tricking them. It was obvious from his actions that he urged the tribes to revolt in Hijaz as before, and exploited the peace agreement to wax his strength. This is why Mehmet Necip informs Istanbul that a few the troops sent by Muhammad Ali Pasha were not enough to control Hijaz. To completely purify Hijaz and to eradicate the Wahhabis from there, a mass number of well-equipped soldiers were needed.<sup>259</sup>

Therefore, this situation shows that although Muhammad Ali Pasha declined the peace offer of the Sharif by criticizing him before, he had to change his view since the army under the command of his son could not prevail over them completely due to logistical issues. Additionally, this situation indicates that although the Wahhabis were thrown out from Haramayn, it did not profoundly affect their power, and they continued to pose a serious threat to the Ottoman Empire by subordinating the tribes in the region. Furthermore, it once again proves how much the role of tribes was significant to control the region, and the tribes reflect the fragmented structure of power dynamics in this area. Therefore, to restore its authority in the region, the Ottoman Empire also aimed to control the tribes like the Wahhabis did.

Moreover, the document dated on 22th of March 1816 shows the continuing threat of the Wahhabis to Haramayn, and the complaints of the Sharif of Mecca about Muhammad Ali Pasha. In the document, the Sharif explains to Istanbul about his situation and the situation in Hijaz. He states that Muhammad Ali Pasha rescued Hijaz from the Wahhabis, and cleaned them from the region, and afterwards he returned Egypt by taking his son Tosun Pasha with himself last year. He only left 800.000 soldiers in Mecca and he did not pay attention to carry out the necessary measures. That explains why the tribes which were both kindly and forcibly subordinated came together with the Wahhabis as it was before. Therefore, he warned Istanbul about that if the necessary supplies were not provided immediately, it was certain that the Wahhabis would invade Haramayn like in the past. Besides, another topic the Sharif complains about is the control of his income by of

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<sup>259</sup> BOA, HH. 344 19648, 1230. Z 29. (2nd of December 1815)

Muhammad Ali Pasha. The Sharif states that Muhammad Ali Pasha was controlling all his income and did not allow him to be involved in any matters. Due to this, he did not receive enough money, his influence was decreasing and eventually would vanish, and he was not able to draw the tribes on his side, anymore. Moreover, he mentions some of the people's name, and states that these people started to interfere his duties, and made alliances with the tribes which plundered Taif since Muhammad Ali Pasha left limited number of soldiers in the region. This would clarify on why he complains about his concern that he has nothing but the title of the Sharif, and states that this situation also led to a decrease in his influence. As a result, the Sharif asks Istanbul to receive the income belonged to Mecca as it was, and warns Istanbul to handle this situation before the pilgrim season by taking necessary precautions. Otherwise, it would be too late.<sup>260</sup>

Therefore, this document reflects the disagreement and rivalry between two regional powers, the Sharif and Muhammad Ali Pasha, as well as reflecting the efforts of Muhammad Ali Pasha to control the Sharif. Besides, it indicates how easy for tribes to change their allegiances in accordance with their economic interests. It also shows that in order to protect Haramayn from the Wahhabis, the Ottoman Empire needed the influence of the Sharif as well as needed to provide him necessary amount of money to keep the tribes under his control.

Similarly, Tosun Pasha thought that removal of the Wahhabis from Haramayn was not sufficient to eliminate the Wahhabi threat. According to him, in order to eradicate the Wahhabis from the region completely, he needed to carry out further military campaign towards al-Dir'iyya, the heartland of the Wahhabis, and he informed his father, Muhammad Ali Pasha, about his ideas.<sup>261</sup> As a result, after pilgrims returned, the central government decided for the military campaign for al-Dir'iyya in Najd. Yet, for this military campaign, Muhammad Ali Pasha appointed his other son, Ibrahim Pasha in 1816. In 1817, Ibrahim

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<sup>260</sup> BOA, HH. 345 19690 D, 1231. R 22. (22nd of March 1816), ...*Haremeyn-i Muhteremeynin levfi vücûd muhâlifinden tathîr ve tanzîfiyle hidemât-ı meşkûre ve mesai-i makhbuleye muvaffak olmuş ise de geçen sene badel hac mahdumu Tosun paşayı bil istishab Mısır'a avdet ve muhâfız nâmıyla Mekke-i Mükerrerede [sekiz yüz-bin] neferden ibaret asker tevkifiyle istihkâmât-ı lâzime ve tedâbiri münkaziyeyi icrâya î'tina ve dikkat itmemiş olduğundan tav'an ve kahren gerden bendi itâat olan kabaili mütefferika kemâkân cânibi hâricî ile zünnar bendi vifâk olarak mutarassıt vakit fırsat olduklarından şimdiden tedârikât-ı lâzimeye mübâşeret olunmaz ise mazallahu teâlâ yine eski halde netice vereceği derkâr olub...*

<sup>261</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 187.

pasha went over the Wahhabis with a mass number of soldiers, and prevailed over them. He also killed some of their commanders, and took all their goods. Thus, he conquered Najd, and he was very close to al-Dir'iyya. This is why the Saud sent his man to Ibrahim Pasha, and told him that if the Pasha did not touch al-Dir'iyya, he would give whatever he wants. Ibrahim Pasha declined his offer.<sup>262</sup> In 1818, Ibrahim Pasha besieged the town, took its control within the same year and sent the Wahhabi leader, Abd Allah ibn Saud, to Istanbul where he was executed. By this means, almost seventy years later of its spread, the Ottoman Empire eliminated the Wahhabi threat by ending the first Saudi-Wahhabi dynasty.<sup>263</sup>

Yet, the document dated on September/October 1818 shows that although the Ottomans captured the heartland of the Wahhabis, al-Dir'iyya, they still feared the strength of the Wahhabis. This document was written by the governor of Sidon, Ibrahim Pasha, to Muhammad Ali Pasha to explain why he needed to stay for three or four more months in al-Dir'iyya although he was ordered by Istanbul to return Medina after the conquest of al-Dir'iyya. Ibrahim Pasha states that ninety-two years passed over the emergence of the Wahhabis, and their leaders were called as Amirs among the Arabs. In addition, these leaders used to create unrest, and even their subjects learned the art of war entirely due to the wars occurring in last couple of years. This would explain why he puts forward that since their community was wretched and advancement of their governments was ended after his military campaign, the seeds of their sedition must be completely eliminated as required. Otherwise, they would not be destroyed completely, and they would emerge again after his return. Within that situation, even though a mass number of soldiers were sent over them, it was obvious that it would be impossible to bring them under control again. Therefore, Ibrahim Pasha states that to provide solid order of the region, he would stay for three or four more months, and it was his duty to inform Istanbul about the situation in the region. He also states that he was expecting from Muhammad Ali Pasha to inform him immediately about how they should act on and take precautions for this matter.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> BOA, HH. 345 19674, 1232. Ş 03. (18th of June 1817)

<sup>263</sup> Madawi Al Rasheed, *Politics In An Arabian Oasis* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), 37.

<sup>264</sup> BOA, HH. 344 19650 A, 1233. Za (September/October 1818), ...*bu tâife-i bâğiyyenin ibtidâ-yı zuhurundan bu ana değin doksan iki sene mürur idüb müddet-i vâfireden berü reisleri bulunan beyne'l-Arab emirlik namıyla şehrengiz olmuş olduklarından başka, taraf taraf ümerâsı tasallhuta alışmış tebası dahi birkaç senedürder-miyan olan muhârebeler*



Therefore, this situation proves once again the gravity of the Wahhabi threat in the region, and continuing threat of the Wahhabis even though their heartland, Al-Dir'iyya, was destroyed by the Ottomans. Furthermore, it shows how deep-rooted their influence was in the region. Last but not least, this document also demonstrates and proves that the Arab perception of the Ottoman Empire dramatically changed because the Arabs did not know how to fight before as stated in the document above. Yet, with the emergence of the Wahhabis, this situation changed and they learnt the art of war, which explains why the Ottoman Empire worried about a possible threat of the Wahhabis for the following days. This is why it can be said that the Wahhabis did not only change the Arab perception of the Ottoman Empire, but also profoundly transformed the structure of the society in the region.

### 3.2. Religious Reaction of the Ottoman Empire Against the Wahhabi Movement:

Another important point to emphasize is how the Ottoman State perceived the Wahhabis from the religious aspect. Şeker indicates that the Ottoman authorities used the same weapon which was used by Wahhabis towards other Muslims. To explain, the Ottomans defined the Wahhabis as superstitious and blamed them for creating new *bid'at* because they claimed to remove *bid'at* from Islam. Therefore, the Ottomans categorized them as superstitious because of their beliefs like the Wahhabis considered the Ottomans.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, the document dated on 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1803 also indicates that the Ottomans used the word '*mülhid*' (unbeliever) to define the Wahhabis<sup>266</sup> like the Wahhabis labelled the Ottoman pilgrims as '*müşrik*' (polytheist).<sup>267</sup> Besides, the Ottoman government used the term of "Kharijites" to define Wahhabis since it saw itself as the main representative of

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*münâsebetiyle fenn-i harbi kemaliyle öğrenmiş olmalarıyla kuvvet-i tâli-i padişahî ile cemiyetleri bu kadarca perişân ve hükümetleri resîde-i pâyan olmuş iken etraf ve eknaftan uruk-ı mefsedetleri gereği gibi kat' olunmaz ise gaileleri bütün bütün bertaraf olamayub bendelerinin avdetimden sonra ümerâsından nice nice gümrahın taraf-be-taraf zuhurıyla bu havâilileri mal-a-mal şerr ü şûr idecekleri ve tekrar bir bu kadar mal ve asker telef ile üzerlerine gelinsede nizâm-ı halleri mümkün olamayacağı bedihî olmaktan nâşî bu çöl ve beyâbânda meşakkat-i sefer ile meslubu'r-raha olduğum her ne kadar...*

<sup>265</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik*, 58.

<sup>266</sup> BOA, HH 93 3796, 1218. M 06. (28th of April 1803)

<sup>267</sup> BOA, HH. 94 3839 B, 1222. B 06. (9th of September 1807)

Islam, so the attack of the Wahhabis meant for the Ottomans as a direct attack on Islam, since they regarded their Islamic practices as proper Islam.<sup>268</sup>

Like Şeker, Commins and Güner also agree that by 1802, the Ottomans had been mounting a doctrinal campaign, sending official tracts refuting Wahhabi positions and likening them to the Kharijites of early Islamic times.<sup>269</sup> This is because the Wahhabis rejected all Sunni *madhabs* by ascribing them unbelief (*takfir*).<sup>270</sup> In addition to this term, Güner indicates that additional terms like *İbâdi*<sup>271</sup>, *Rafîzî*<sup>272</sup>, *Hâricî-i Suûd*, *Hâricî-i menhus*, *Hâricî-i Abdülvehhab* were used in the Ottoman official correspondences to name the Wahhabis.<sup>273</sup> As noted in previous parts of the thesis, both Wahhabis and the Kharijites shared similar understanding of the Qur'an. Yet, Güner puts forward that although there were parallelisms among them, this does not mean that Wahhabis were the continuation of the Kharijites. But, according to her, although religion was in the center of all these criticizing discourses and fights, the Ottomans saw the Wahhabi threat primarily as a security problem. The threat they posed towards the Ottoman authorities in the region influenced the discourse of the Ottoman State towards them.<sup>274</sup> However, although the Wahhabi threat shaped the discourse of the Ottomans, it does not mean that political implications of the Wahhabi movement were more important than its religious implications for the Ottoman Empire. That is to say, even though the primary concern of the Sublime Porte was to provide security and order in Haramayn, it gave equal weight to understand their creeds, and to negate their religious doctrine. The decision of sending alim, Adem Efendi, as its emissary to the Wahhabis to understand their creeds,<sup>275</sup> and to convince them about the principal contradiction of Wahhabism to Sunni Islam<sup>276</sup> proves that Ottomans did not merely consider the Wahhabi movement as a political problem, but also a religious

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<sup>268</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhabilik*, 60.

<sup>269</sup> Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (Newyork: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 30.; Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 224, 225.

<sup>270</sup> Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), 104.

<sup>271</sup> Ibadis were the followers of the sect al-ibadiyya which was one of the main branches of the Kharijites. See, T. Lewicki, "Al-Ibadiyya," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. vol. III. (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 648.

<sup>272</sup> Rafidis were the members of the sect Al-Rafida which was one of the Shi'i sects. See, E. Kohlberg, "Al-Rafida," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. vol. VIII. (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 386,87.

<sup>273</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 224.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

<sup>275</sup> BOA, HH. 92 3784 L, 1218. Ra 25. (15th of July 1803)

<sup>276</sup> Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, 36,37.

problem. Also, it seems that the efforts of the Sublime Porte to convince the Wahhabis to change their views continued until 1813.

The document dated on 3th of January 1813 shows that the Saudi leader not only sent some epistles and statements of Ulama beside his letters to the governor of Damascus, Suleiman Pasha, but also declared the true believers (*Ahl al-tawhid*) as unbelievers. These documents were translated and sent to Istanbul with their original copy. In the document, it is stated that although response letters were written in conformity with Sharia and logic to convince him, these letters were far from convincing him because he maintained his stubbornness. This is why, it is stated that there was no need to send response from Istanbul; the response of Suleiman Pasha was enough. This was notified by Istanbul and the center found it appropriate for Suleiman Pasha to send a response letter.<sup>277</sup> Therefore, this situation also proves that the Ottomans considered the Wahhabis not only a political problem but also a serious religious problem, as well.

Apart from the official documentation, we know that the Ottoman chronicles also discussed Wahhabism in their accounts. Güner states that in the Ottoman historiography, the first Ottoman chronicle talking about the Wahhabis was the chronicle of İzzi Süleyman Efendi in 1752. According to her, almost all the Ottoman chronicles shared similar ideas about the Wahhabis. To illustrate, they saw the Wahhabi problem both as a religious and a security problem. Yet, they considered this security problem like other security problems which occurred in the other parts of the Empire.<sup>278</sup> Also, the author states that chroniclers like İzzi Süleyman Efendi, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, Eyüp Sabri Pasha mostly reflected the official discourse of the government which evaluated the Wahhabism as a superstitious belief.<sup>279</sup>

However, the late Ottoman author Hüseyin Kazım appears to be noteworthy since he indicated a separate attitude from the official discourse. Both Güner and Şeker show that

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<sup>277</sup> BOA, HH. 343 19599, 1229 Z 29. (3<sup>rd</sup> of January 1813), The document does not indicate the name of the Saudi leader. Yet, it coincided with the reign Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz(1803-1814), ...*merkum Suud'un mukaddimeleri dahi iş bu defa olan tahriri vechle ba'zı risale ve evrakı vürud idüib tercümelerinde müfsidîn ve ulema-ı müteahhîrinin beyanlarından haric olarak bi edebane ehli tevhidi tekfir eylediği muharrer olduğundan her ne kadar senedat-ı şeriyye ve edile-i nakliye ve akliye ile ilzam ve ikna'ına dair cevabnameler yazılmış ise de inadında ısrar birle mücab olmamakla bu defa merkum Suud'a dersadetlerinden cevap yazılmak iktiza etmeyüb Şam valisinin mektubuna cevap tahririyle iktifa olunmak menasib mülahaza olunduğu...*

<sup>278</sup> Güner, *Osmanlı Arabistanı'nda Kıyam ve Tenkil: Vehhâbi-Suûdiler (1744-1819)*, 227-229.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 227,228,230,234.

unlike the abovementioned authors, he did not reprove the movement because he saw its discourse within the boundaries of *ahl al-sunnah*.<sup>280</sup> In fact, he supported their aim about removing the *bid'a* and turning back to the original Islam.<sup>281</sup>

Yet, Şeker points to the fact that Cevdet Pasha's account is crucial in terms of analyzing the Wahhabis because those works compiled after Cevdet Pasha did little but repeating the stance and rhetoric of his account. According to Cevdet Pasha, the reasons of the spread of Wahhabism were based on blood relations (*asabiyyah*), and geographical condition of the region, Najd which was a closed region to outside world, and always witnessed the different belief systems throughout history. Also, he states other reasons which explain the spread of the Wahhabi movement. According to him, the Ottomans did not interfere with the movement on time since they did not evaluate the Wahhabis as a political threat, and likened them to *Kadızedelis*. Therefore, he asserts that, if the Ottomans intervened them in the beginning, they could have prevented Wahhabism to become a political threat to the Ottoman Empire in the first place. Şeker provides names such as Eyüp Sabri Pasha, Midhat Pasha and Ahmet Midhat Efendi as Cevdet Pasha's contemporary colleagues who shared similar ideas with him. As the followers of Cevdet Pasha, he states names like Abdurrahman Şeref, Haydari-zade, Hüseyin Hüsni, Şehbenderzade Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi, Yusuf Akçura, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Said Nursi, Ömer Rıza and Zakir Kadiri.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 235.; Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik*, 164.

<sup>281</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik*, 164.

<sup>282</sup> Şeker, *Osmanlılar ve Vehhâbilik*

## CONCLUSION

The Ottoman conquest of the Arab lands started with the reign of Selim I in the 16th century, and continued during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. With the conquests of these lands, the Ottoman sultans acquired the title of ‘servitor of Mecca and Medina’, and started to control the pilgrim routes. Also, these conquests enabled the Ottoman Empire to become the sole representative and protector of Sunni Islam. By this means, the Ottoman sultans provided a legitimate base for their claim on caliphate.

Yet, the Wahhabi Movement challenged the Ottoman domination in the Arabian Peninsula, and undermined its legitimacy and prestige by invading Mecca and Medina with the claim of sultanate and caliphate, and blockading the pilgrimage routes in the beginning of the 19th century. The political upheavals, military defeats and economic drawbacks within Ottoman lands created internal weakness which enabled the expansion of the Wahhabi movement in the region, and these factors shaped the Ottoman policy and the perception towards the Wahhabis.

To recapitulate, from 1749 onwards, when the Sublime Porte for the first time received the intelligence about Abd al-Wahhab’s activities until the Wahhabi invasion of Al-Ahsa in 1795, the Ottoman center seems to have been unable to comprehend the gravity of the Wahhabi threat, which prevented them to take effective precautions to hinder its spread in the beginning. Due to this failure in evaluation, the Wahhabi movement added to a growing power vacuum in the region and managed to fill it easily, and once they expanded, it became more difficult for the Ottomans to tackle with the movement. The invasion of Al-Ahsa in 1795 and the result of the first direct confrontation of the Ottomans with the Wahhabis in 1798 to retake this region are among the proofs for this situation. They showed the center that the Wahhabis were not an easy target to remove from the region anymore. This is why the invasion of Al-Ahsa can be defined as the first turning

point which changed the perception of the Ottoman State about the Wahhabis. The Empire started to consider them a serious political and regional problem rather than a minor local dispute, and this situation pushed it to take more concrete steps. Therefore, until the governor of Baghdad, Suleiman Pasha complied with the order of the Sublime Porte to attack and to force the Wahhabis to conclude peace, the central government played the mediator role to palliate the animosity between the Sharif and the Saudi leader. By this means, it aimed to solve the Wahhabi problem and halt their expansion. Yet, the center could not achieve to solve the disagreement between them. Also, Suleiman Pasha could not overcome the Wahhabis during the military operations, which created obstacle for his peace efforts. He had to make truce with them for six years at the end of these military operations, and it showed the Ottomans the extent of the incremental increase in Wahhabis' power over time. Besides, even though the Ottomans carried out military campaigns against the Wahhabis after realizing the severity of their threat, the political and economic conditions of the Ottoman Empire because of its involvement in the Napoleonic wars, and its internal problems seemed to have blocked their capability to prevent the Wahhabi threat in an efficient manner.

Following the loss of Al-Ahsa, it seems that the second turning for the Ottoman Empire was the Karbala incident in 1802. It created a political crisis with Iran, and it also proved the Ottomans once again how powerful the Wahhabis became by daring to attack and plunder a holy place for both the Shiites and the Sunnis. Thus, it became a much more serious political issue turning to an international problem for the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, after the Karbala incident, the Sublime Porte continued its negotiation policy towards the Wahhabis. Yet, it left its mediator role as a third party, and became the side of the negotiations since it sent an alim, Adem Efendi, to negotiate with the Wahhabis directly on its behalf. By this means, the center aimed to convince them to alter their religious discourse and to pacify the movement by learning their religious rhetoric. Therefore, the decision of appointing an alim shows that the Wahhabi movement was not only a serious political problem, but also a religious problem for the Ottoman Empire. The central government wanted to generate solutions within the religious basis as well.

The invasion of Mecca and Medina became the last, but most powerful turning point in regard to the Ottoman perception about the Wahhabis. The Wahhabi invasion of the Two Holy Cities which were providing a religious legitimacy for the claim of the Ottoman sultans as the protector of the Islamic world, forced the Ottomans to change their perception about the Wahhabis one more time. Since the Wahhabis invaded these holy cities with the claim of Sultanate and Caliphate, and prevented pilgrims to enter Haramayn, they challenged the Ottoman domination. By this means, they became an existential threat for its presence in the region. Yet, until the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, accepted to open a military campaign to regain the Haramayn from the Wahhabis, the Ottoman Empire continued its negotiation policy until 1809 even by making a peace agreement with them. This is because it was busy with other political problems at those times, including the Napoleonic Wars, and these problems occluded it to send military aid to Haramayn. Yet, this situation changed after Muhammad Ali Pasha complying with the order of Mahmud II order and the Wahhabis violating the conditions of the agreement by subordinating the tribes under their rule. As a result, the Ottoman Empire shifted its policy from negotiation to confrontation in 1810, and resorted to military solution to eradicate the Wahhabi presence from the region, and achieved this aim in 1818 temporarily.

Last but most important, the Wahhabi movement made another significant change in the perception of the Ottoman Empire about the Arabs. Even though the Ottomans removed the Wahhabis from Haramayn, and conquered their capital al-Dir'iyya, they continued to be cautious about their possible threat. This is because they realized that with the Wahhabi movement, the Arabs learned the art of war. Therefore, the Ottomans planned to take precautions to prevent their revival in the future.

Therefore, it can be said that the Ottoman perception about the Wahhabi movement changed over time. From the beginning of the Wahhabi threat in 1745 to the invasion of Al-Ahsa in 1795, the Ottoman policy towards the Wahhabis remained passive since it did not consider them a serious political issue. Yet, with the loss of Al-Ahsa in 1795, the movement became a regional problem as well as a serious political problem for the Ottomans. In 1802, with the Karbala incident, it became an international problem. Furthermore, with the invasion of Mecca in 1803 and Medina in 1805, it became an

existential threat for the Ottoman Empire as an Islamic power. Since its negotiation policy did not work to solve the Wahhabi problem, the Sublime Porte could not find another way but conduct an offensive policy towards them by ordering the mobilization of a major army in 1810, i.e. the Egyptian army, against the Wahhabis. Thus, it transformed its policy from negotiation to confrontation.





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