108084 - Critique of the book Fadaa’il al-A‘maal by Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi

the question

Is it true that the book Fadaa’il al-A‘maal by Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi contains a number of things that imply shirk?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The book Fadaa’il al-A‘maal – the original title of which was Tableeghi Nisaab – by Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi is a collection of chapters about various virtuous deeds. It was written by the author to be a reference for the group Jamaa‘at al-Tableegh. This book became of great importance for them, which they read in their gatherings and study in their schools and mosques. It is written in Urdu, which is why it did not become widespread in the Arab countries; rather it is widely known in the countries in which Jamaa‘at al-Tableegh is widespread, such as India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Shaykh Hammood at-Tuwaijri said in al-Qawl al-Baleegh (p. 11):

The most important book among the Tableeghis is Tableeghi Nisaab (also known as Fadaa’il al-A‘maal), which was written by one of their leaders whose name is Muhammad Zakariyya al-Kandahlawi. They pay a great deal of attention to this book, which they respect as Ahl as-Sunnah respect as-Saheehayn and other books of hadeeth.

The Tableeghis have made this book the most important reference work for the Indians and other non-Arabs who follow them. It contains a great deal of matters of shirk, innovation (bid‘ah), myths, and fabricated (mawdoo‘) and weak (da‘eef) hadeeths. In fact it is a book of evil, misguidance and confusion (fitnah). End quote.

Shaykh Shams ad-Deen al-Afghaani said in his book Juhood ‘Ulama’ al-Hanafiyyah fi Ibtaal ‘Aqaa’id al-Qubooriyyah (2/776):

The leading imams of the Deobandis have books which are venerated by the Deobandis, but they are filled with the myths of grave-worshippers and Sufi idolatry, such as – and he mentioned a number of books, including Tableeghi Nisaab, i.e., Nisaab at-Tableegh, and Manhaj at-Tableegh. These Deobandis did not openly disavow these books or warn against them, and they did not put a stop to the printing and sale of these books. The markets of India and Pakistan and elsewhere are full of them. End quote.

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa’imah (vol 2, 2/97):

Question: I am a Muslim man living in Britain, and I want to follow the path of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah in all aspects of my life. On that basis I am trying to read religious books in Urdu. Whilst reading some religious books written by the famous and prominent Indian scholar who belongs to the Deobandi Jamaa‘at at-Tableegh, whose name is Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya Kandahlawi, the shaykh of hadeeth, I found in his book Tableeghi Nisaab (p. 113), in Chapter 5, a story quoted by the author from a book entitled Rawnaq al-Majaalis. This is the story of a merchant who died and his estate was shared between his two sons. In addition to a great deal of wealth, the deceased had left behind a hair from the head of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). The younger son kept the hair from the head of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and gave up the wealth to which he was entitled from his father’s estate, giving it to his older brother. What happened was that the one who took the wealth soon became bankrupt, whilst the one who took the hair became rich. After the death of the younger brother, in whose possession was the hair from the head of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), one of the righteous saw the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in his dream, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to him: “Whoever has any need should go to the grave of this younger brother and call upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, at his graveside so that He might answer his prayer.” This is quoted from the book Tableeghi Nisaab.

I also read another book called Tareekh Mashaayikh Juththat by the same author, Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyya Kandahlawi. On p. 232, he mentions Shaykh Haji Imdaadullah Muhaajir Makki, when he was in his final illness and was visited by one of his followers who was grieved by his state. The shaykh realised that he was feeling sad for him and he said: “Do not grieve, for the ascetic (zaahid) worshipper does not die; rather he moves from one place to another, and he meets people’s needs when he is in his grave as he used to meet their needs when he was alive.” This is quoted from the book Tareekh Mashaayikh Juththat.

I would like to hear your wise opinions about the above and also about the following matters:

(a)Is he – the author – and the one who narrated this story still a Muslim in the light of this belief which is reflected in his books and his words? Please explain to us with evidence from the Qur’an and Sunnah.

(b)If he is no longer a Muslim, what is the evidence from the Qur’an and Sunnah that he is beyond the pale of Islam?

The answer was:

What is quoted in these books, such as the example mentioned in the question, comes under the heading of reprehensible innovation and myths that are not based on any sound Islamic principle and have no basis in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). No one says or believes this except one who is confused and blinded to the truth, and has gone astray from the straight path.

The claim that a hair of the Prophet still exists, and brings riches to the one who keeps it, and the claim to have seen the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in a dream telling people to offer supplication at the grave of this man – all of that is lies and fabrications for which there is no evidence. It is narrated in a saheeh report that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The Shaytaan cannot appear in my form.” Agreed upon. So how could the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instruct people to call upon Allah at gravesides when he forbade such actions during his lifetime and warned against it in the strongest

terms, and he forbade exaggerating about the Prophets and righteous people and seeking to draw close to Allah (tawassul) by virtue of them after their death? He (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not die until Allah had perfected His religion by means of him (the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) and completed His favour or blessings. So nothing can be added to or taken away from what He prescribed. The belief that supplications offered at gravesides will be answered is an innovation for which there is no basis in Islam, and it may lead a person to major shirk if he calls upon the occupant of the grave instead of Allah or alongside Him, or if he believes that the occupant of the grave has the power to bring benefit or cause harm, because the only One Who can bring benefit or cause harm is Allah, may He be glorified.

Similarly, the belief that the ascetic (zaahid) worshipper does not die, rather he moves from one place to another, and that he can meet people's needs from his grave as he used to meet their needs when he was alive, is also a false belief; it is one of the beliefs of the deviant Sufis. There is no basis for that; rather what is indicated by the verses and saheeh hadeeths is that every person in this world will die. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, you (O Muhammad SAW) will die and verily, they (too) will die"

[az-Zumar 39:30]

"And We granted not to any human being immortality before you (O Muhammad SAW), then if you die, would they live forever?"

[al-Anbiya' 21:34]

"Everyone is going to taste death, and We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good, and to Us you will be returned."

[al-Anbiya' 21:35].

The saheeh hadeeths also indicate that when a person dies, all his deeds come to an end except three: beneficial knowledge, a righteous son who will pray for him, or ongoing charity (sadaqah jaariyah). The deceased in his grave has no power to harm or benefit himself, and it is more apt to

say that one who is in this state has no power to do that for anyone else. It is not permissible to seek to have one’s needs met by anyone except Allah alone with regard to that over which no one has any control except Allah; seeking such needs from the dead is major shirk. Anyone who believes anything other than that has disbelieved in the sense of major kufr and has gone beyond the pale of Islam – Allah forbid – because of his rejecting the proven evidence to that effect from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He has to repent sincerely from that, resolve not to go back to that evil deed, and to follow the path of the righteous early generations of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah in order to attain the pleasure of Allah and His Paradise, and to be safe from His punishment. End quote.

It says in al-Mawsoo‘ah al-Muyassarah fi’l-Adyaan wa’l-Madhaahib wa’l-Ahzaab al-Mu‘aasirah (1/322):

In their gatherings in Arab countries they – i.e., Jamaa‘at at-Tableegh – focus on reading from Riyadh as-Saaliheen, but in non-Arab countries they focus on reading from Hayat as-Sahaabah and Tableeghi Nisaab; the latter book is full of myths and da‘eef (weak) hadeeths. End quote.

To sum up, the scholars continue to warn against the book Tableeghi Nisaab, otherwise known as Fadaa’il al-A‘maal. It is not permissible for any Muslim to read it; rather they should focus on the books of the saheeh Sunnah, books whose authors follow the path of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah. As for books that contain myths and lies, they should not have any place in the heart or mind of the Muslim.

And Allah knows best.