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Wahhabism as Ideology of Radical Religious Extremism

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Annotation: the article is devoted to expose the history of origin of wahhabism – radical religious extremist ideology which is increasingly globalized all over the world, its evolution, dispersing and hazardous aspects. Similarly, the article includes information about unique features of wahhabism extremist movement, its movement tendencies, the resources of activity, social roots and bases; it has been pointed out in the article about how dangerous movement it is that negatively impacts on the youth.

It has been tradition in Islamic societies that the religion and the state policy synchronize with each other since the very first days of origination of the Islam. The impact of Islamic religion to the political attitudes and ideological views on its radicalization are of great importance in the religious jurisprudential teachings of Hanbali madhab which was formed in approximately mid IX century. It gave way to the development of current radical religious extremist ideologies (wahhabism and others) based on the traditional Islamic teachings.

We consider that exploring unique features of one of the four madhabs – Hanbalism in the Sunni school of teaching and radical wahhabism may help to form a model of their peculiar characteristics as a religious-political system. This way, there arises a chance to study the historical roots, its evolution from the Middle Ages to the present day, and other characteristics.

Indeed, Hanbalism came to existence in the scene of history as a result of intense struggles with mu'tazilits (mutazilits). The reason here is that the Mutazilits appeared as a movement that tried to understand the meaning and interpretation of theology of Islam from a new point of view. As the Mu'tazilits were active in organizing various kinds of debates to truly understand pure aspects of Islam as a religion, they developed the practice of forming a single viewpoint towards controversial issues of bases of Islam.

The Mu'tazilits looked at the human intellect as the subject of study that they lifted the word and the opinion to the degree of object of study. Achieving prosperous points were of great importance in this process: the heave of seeing the point basing on the science and fair scientific talks; providing clear evidences throughout the debate, basing on the new methods while finding a solution to controversial issues. It can also be noted that some traditions as loving the science, respecting the word that is the weapon of the science and polishing the word so as to peak the maturity formed that all of them were placed in the worships to the owner of every humanly words – The Almighty. Indeed, such kind of renewed viewpoints in Islam society caused the protest of many people that it was responsible for the development of new radical viewpoints and movements in Islamic religion. The factors mentioned above were the initial

demand for the creation of Hanbali School of teaching then, latterly caused the emergence of the movement of Wahhabism.

Standardized traditions of Sunni school had been surviving as a strict lifestyle and the principles of the shar'ia (Islamic jurisprudence) in the end of IX century. However, the changes in the social life of that period seemed to require the need to the alteration of traditions and customs, and the renewal of customs in harmony with the development of social-philosophical opinions. The adjustment of Islam to the changing life events of the world required the exposure of new traditions from the religious point of view and to have the proof of agreement between them and sunnah. These processes led the religious scholars to adopt new kinds of methods such as ij'mo the term used for the general agreement between highly qualified religious leaders and or the method of comparing which is used to compare the events with the ones that formerly occurred.

Since the exemplary of "news" or "new customs" were not included in the Traditions or more commonly known as Hadiths, these "news" were latterly began to be called as "bid'a". If the "news" is not interpreted through ij'mo, it would be defined as the opposite of the Sunna. It is certain that the "news" that had emerged at that time used to be in the form of opinions, objects, or the activities that had not been encountered in real life before.

This way, the interpretation of bid'a and expressing it in accordance with the Hadiths started to be a task that modified the social-economical way of life in Islamic religion that it would mean the reaction of religion towards the surrounding environment, and the requirement of agreement of time and space.

However, staying in such ruthless points of views, rejecting the adjustment of Islam to the changing events of the world as a consequence of life requirements also meant to stay in a very complex position. Wahhabism (Fairly destructed and extremely radical form of Hanbalism) latterly had to accept the inevitable introduction of Codes about airplane, train, radio, telephone, television, labor, and to acknowledge social insurance no matter how much it struggled. However, its negative attitude towards bid'a made it the most ruthless madhab, and was also the cause of its not being able to expand in terms of geography. The Wahhabi people, who are used to lead a life as tough as soldiers, started to live as a relatively smaller movement compared to the other orthodox Islamic movement.

The contribution of Sufis is great when it comes to the development of respect towards the burial sites and the viewpoints of saints. They have carried messages about the saints and their ability which is considered to be performing magic that is only peculiar for these kinds of people that they have been able to attract pious men to their own way of life. Sufis think that the divine truth is gained through the internal feelings. They have created various religious ceremonies which peculiar for their own way of ecstatic enjoyment in the way of "divine harmony", loved ascetics very much, their attitude towards honored Muslim ceremonies lessened.

One of the representatives of radical tendency of Hanbalism was a Syrian man lived in XIV called Taki ad-Din ibn Taymiya. This person was a controversial religious scholar who was distinctively different from other scholars due to his Islamic philosophic viewpoint history and the characteristics peculiar to him only. He called to change the orthodox Islamic forms of his

time in his lectures and works; he intensely put forward sunna against bid'a. He fought against all the "new" introductions. Ibn Taymiya was against the introduction of philosophic conceptions ash'oris, fought hard against the Sufis, and criticized the people who worshiped or asked for help from prophets and saints. He announced the long living tradition of visiting the mausoleum of our prophet as a holy place in Medina which was attached to the Hajj pilgrimage to the Mecca to be not suitable to the Islam.

Similarly, he rejected the teachings of other madhabs towards such ceremonies which were being formed as a law through ij'mo, he called to follow only the way of sunna. The followers of Ibn Taymiya – "new" Hanbalis started an attack against orthodox Islamic interpretations by Gazzali (al-Gazali). However, opinions against Hanbali School of teaching can also be encountered towards some issues in the works of Ibn Taymiya. Ibn Taymiya was not officially recognized in his lifetime. He passed away in 1328 in a jail due to the continuous drags to the courts. Ibn Taymiya left nearly five hundred works behind himself. Ibn Kayyum (Ibn al-Kayim) was distinctive among the small circle of people who followed Ibn Taymiya. His influence was notable during the four centuries. His works have still been living as strong means against bid'a up to the present time.

Muhammad ibn al-Wahhob (Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab), the founder of social-political religious movement "Wahhabism", was born in 1703 in the city of Ayayn of Saudi Arabia. His father – Abd al-Wahhob ibn Sulaymon worked as a religious court judge that he is considered to be his son's first teacher. When he dies in 1740, his position is handed down to his son Muhammad ibn al-Wahhob. During this period the land he was living named Huraymala occupied the two territory of a tribe that they were living independently to each other. According to the writings of Ibn Bishr, "Abdis live in Huraymala. They are famous for their own spoilt characteristics. Muhammad ibn al-Wahhob called them to the true religion. Then, these people had decided to execute this sheikh". Muhammad ibn al-Wahhob was lucky to escape from abides by chance and he flees to the city of Ayayn.

Most of the parts of Arabia were under the reign of Uthmanid Empire at that time that the official madhab of the land was announced to be the madhab royal family of Caliphate from XV century. The Lord of the Empire of Uthmani –the Sultan was given the title of "Caliph" according to the tradition, and he would be considered as the religious leader of all Muslims. However, the Central Arabia used to be far more developed region of Near East under the influence of certain conditions. However, a primitive community was leading their lives in Hejaz.

The other regions of the Arabic peninsula – In Amman, most of the population belonged to the subgroup of ibadits. Continental Shia was prior in Yemen. The Arab that occupied the lands neighboring Southern Iraq and Iran used to be in Shia. Jews were also inhabiting in Yemen and Najron. Abu Tolib, Maymun bin al-Harris and Khadija (the wife of our prophet) and others were situated in Mecca. Thousands of men and women visited these mausoleums seeking for help in order to achieve their various goals. A similar case was also occurring in Toif around the mausoleum of Abdulloh ibn Abbos. The Jidda was considered to be the burial site of Momo Havo (Eve). The mosque of Eve was built in there. Such cases were completely not suitable for the principals of the initial form of Islam.

A renowned scholar Sheikh Abdul-Latif Fuda has mentioned his own attitude towards Wahhabism as follows: “A new group of people has appeared who are newly organized, yet possesses the archaic basic rules. The members of this group do not recognize any kind of scholar except Ibn Taymiya. They also do not confess any of four honorable madhabs (i.e. Hanafi, Shofei, Moliki, Hanbali), they neither take after any of the scholars who are well known for their pure creed and righteousness, yet claim to be an independent clan. They do not follow any renowned scholar in practice, yet are against to these people. They claim the words that have never been spoken by great scholars. They see themselves to be a separate madhab. They even surpass the goat they are eating when it comes to stupidity. They do not rely on their brain. Since they have not the ability to observe even marginal affairs that have no any kind of complexity, they cannot comprehend the quiddity of these minor issues. They consider themselves to be righteous, consider anyone who is against their point of view as the people who have gone out of the line of Ahli Sunna. But, in fact, they have gone out of Ahli Sunna themselves. You see some of them claiming the correctness of religious affair to be only through evidence. If you ask them the methods (laws) of observing evidences, you witness how they have been rocked as stones, and understand how cruel they are. Furthermore, they misinterpret the original meanings of Arabic words, and do not respect the scholars. This is not anything besides the proof of their stupidity. In addition, you may also encounter some of them being so proud although they do not have any kind of knowledge.

The Emir of Naj Muhammad ibn Saud who conquered the neighboring lands to his own realized that Wahhamism could assist him to achieve his military and other goals, so he completely joined this movement. Emir and his successors accepted the Wahhabism as their own political ideology which led them to be a powerful authoritative. When Muhammad ibn Saud passed away in 1765, he was succeeded by Abdul Aziz and he was announced to be “the Imam of the Wahhabi”. The reign of Saudi clan had covered the whole Arabia peninsula by 1810. The country underwent a number of unique, complex and controversial challenges during the period up to the XX century. However, the Wahhabi movement has been surviving as the official religious madhab of the State so far. The king of Saudi Arabia established political institution in the 30s of XX century that it has been still ruled by a member of Saud family so far. The religious life of the country has been ruled by the descendants of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhob who is the founder of the Wahhabi movement that they are given the title of “Al ash-sheikh”.

An Egyptian man named Said Kutb (1906-1966) announced his own calls to further intensification of the Wahhabi movement in the middle of XX century. According to the opinions of the researchers, “The important aspect of the theory of Kutb is given in his following theoretical viewpoints: The period defined as Cruelty in the history of Islam, the cruelty that continued up to the period before the “divine words” through the emergence of prophet sent by Allah to Arabs (in Arabic johilia – cruelty) have reappeared in the current lifetime of humanity. Current atheism is the strong evidence of infinitive evil. In fact, accepting the faith is the evidence of creed”. This important evidence leads to the following important conclusions: in other words, no matter how much moral characteristics or generosity of the cruel is present, strict and ruthless wars must be declared towards them, because cruelty is evil. Furthermore,

Kutb declared that the current world is under the reign of atheism. Those viewpoints of his have become the general ideological conception bases of current religious extremist movements.

Kutb carried on explaining his thought, and announced the followings as well: “the whole world of Muslims and non-Muslims, all the people that have been living in the Earth ranging from Muslims in the East to the atheists in the West have returned back to the period of Jahliah. The evil and atheism that have covered the whole world is even more intolerable than of the pre-Islamic jahliah. Jahliah does not have any kind of connection to the Islam”. Such kind of radical points of views put forward by Said Kutb earned him the title of “at-takfir va-l’ hidjra (blaming on atheism and escaping from society) which means the founder of the mentioned theory. Kutb put forward the idea of escaping from the world with a small numbered group of people (avoiding the destruction of this group in the initial phase and establishing the pure Islamic society in a relatively small area), losing touch with the current sinful world, and not recognizing the reign of atheists. According to his opinion, the main task of Islam is to remove jahliah, gaining the throne, and to build a life that can meet the demands of Islamic akoids(teachings). Any kind of social systems, institutions, and traditions have to be completely removed that is against to this theory.

It is clear from the analysis that, although reflected in many forms throughout over two and a half century lifetime, it has been reserving its characteristics as a radical ideology. If it was emerged in the second half of the XX century in India as a radical national organization, it has been living as a serious warrior ideology of religious extremist movement in the XX century. The Wahhabism has not only lived a long life, but it also has expanded its geography, and gained members in many placing ranging from Far East, Oceania, Africa, Front Asia, and Central Asia. The main reasons for this trend is that it is extremely radical, it has been appeared to be a non-human ideology teaching that puts end to the poverty, unemployment, moral poverty, spiritual researches and psychological pains a human undergoes, they have developed an “attractive” way of proving their ideology through divine “evidences”.

Over one hundred and fifty religious terroristic organizations in Near East and other regions of the world have adapted the Wahhabi movement as their ideology. Although all of them perform independently from each other, they are united under a single idea of the Wahhabi movement. This movement has been handy for various radical extremist groups to fight for the reign. The ideology of Iraq and Sham Islam State (ISIS) is also the Wahhabism. ISIS has occupied most of the lands of Iraq and Syria in a short period of time, announced their own Caliphate. The population is treated as if they are ruled as the laws of shari’a. The terroristic acts and cruel mass massacres done by ISIS have applied the fear of terror.

The Wahhabism has been reflecting itself in various places of the world this way. Especially, their ideology is considered to be a terrifying one since they can easily impact on the outlook of the youth negatively. The developed states of the world and the states which are member of Islam Cooperation Organization have united to fight against the disease of extremist movement. The UN has adopted international legal normative documents which are against religious extremist movement and terrorism. Especially, the President of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev made a speech standing at the tribune of the UN facing all nations and countries of the world on September 20, 2017 to fight against extremists and terrorists that his following words are of

great importance: “The increasing trend of terrorism threats all over the world prove the idea that military fight against them is of no use and all in vain. The fights in this way are usually too concentrated only with the results of the threats instead of fighting against the real reasons of these threats. The root of the international terrorism and extremist movement is built upon the cruelty and ruthlessness along with many more factors, to my mind. That is why; the most important task here is to broaden the horizon of people, most importantly, of the youth through spirituality. ...Our main objective is to create the atmosphere for the young to show off themselves, to avoid the distribution of “virus” of aggression”. This constructive call was welcomed by the members of the session of the Main Assembly of the UN. The ideas that were put forward have been reflected in the normative documents of the UN to fight against terrorism and extremist movements.

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