Religious Extremism: Research on the Ideology of the Wahhabi Islamic Movement

Wakhi, Hadi Ismail

IAI Uluwiyah Mojokerto

Abstract

This article is motivated by the existence of the Wahhabi Islamic Movement which has a long and influential history in the Islamic world. However, it is important to remember that the term "Wahhabi" is often used loosely and sometimes refers to various groups that hold conservative or ultra-conservative Islamic views. Apart from that, there are several facts that explain Wahhabism as an ideology which is now clearly emphasized by thinkers on fundamentalism, radicalism and extremism. Wahhabism is an ideology that inspires today's terrorist movements, especially "bridesmaids" who have been brainwashed and are ready to set off "suicide bombs" in several countries.

This article tries to analyze the works of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab to find out to what extent Wahhabism has inspired contemporary radical Muslim movements and how Wahhabism experienced an ideological journey to Indonesia. To answer this question, researchers used library research with a qualitative descriptive research type.

The findings of this article show four things about Wahhabism: First, Wahhabism is an ideology that states monotheism al-uluhiyyah as the foundation of its religious understanding. This understanding was inspired by Ibn Taimiyah. Second, Wahhabism was relatively successful in spreading it, because it was fully supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism have the same interests, which has caused Wahhabism to have a strong influence, both within Saudi Arabia and internationally. Third, Wahhabism has a doctrine of jihad which is interpreted as war against the enemy. Historically, jihad as understood by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab was not used against infidels, but was only used against the Ottoman Dynasty, which was essentially an Islamic dynasty. Fourth, along the way Wahhabism metamorphosed into Neo-Wahhabism which has a Salafi-jihadi ideology, namely an ideology that combines Wahhabism, Salafism and Jihad. The combination of these three ideologies has given birth to "brides" who are ready to commit suicide in a number of countries, both the Western and Islamic worlds. Lastly, Wahhabism as an ideology of hatred can only be overcome with a similar ideology of hatred, not with a militaristic approach.

Keywords: Ideology, Islamic movement, Wahhabism, radicalism, and extremism

Introduction

The Wahhabi Islam movement is a religious movement with a long history and influence in the Muslim world. However, it is important to remember that the term "Wahhabi" is often used loosely and sometimes refers to a variety of groups with conservative or extremely conservative views towards Islam. Additionally, several facts explaining that Wahhabism is an ideology are now clearly put forward by thinkers interested in fundamentalism, radicalism, and extremism. Wahhabism is an ideology that inspires

contemporary terrorist movements, especially the brainwashing of "brides" willing to spread "suicide bombs" in some countries.[1]

Osama bin Laden said in a 1998 propaganda statement: *Al-Jabhah al-Isla>miyyah li al-Jiha>d 'ala> al-Yahu>d wa al-Shalibiyyi>n*. Apparently, the edict contained a decree obliging every Muslim to fight Jews and Christians wherever they lived. For Bin Laden, the backwardness of Muslims in developing countries was due to Jewish and Christian colonialists. Bin Laden specifically described the United States and its allies as enemies of Muslims. This executive order succeeded in launching attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. At its peak, Bin Laden's decree succeeded in destroying the WTC Twin Towers in New York on September 11, 2001.[2]

Some Saudi Arabian clerics have also issued similar edicts, especially in support of the Taliban's resistance in Afghanistan against the United States and its allies. Hammoud bin Aqla al-Shu'aybi issued a "jihad" decree against the United States and its allies, which generally control the Middle East. In addition, the fatwa contains a war against Muslims who support the interests of "infidels."[3]

In fact, ironically, Abu al-Barra al-Najdi wrote a book *al-Kawashif al-Jaliyya fi> Kufr al-Dawla> al-Su'u>diyya>*. This book contains the skepticism of the Saudi kingdom, his family and those who follow the king's orders. Al-Barra al-Najdi is known as a Wahhabi cleric who is harshly critical of the Saudi government because, according to him, his country is currently ruled by infidels. He clearly emphasized that Saudi Arabia should be excluded from the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). He especially expressed gratitude to Saudis who participated in the war in Afghanistan and returned home to criticize Saudi Arabia's leaders for allegedly deviating from their mission of seeking truth and justice.[4]

As an ideology, Wahhabism has gone through many journeys, as it has a socio-political and socio-economic context that has allowed the ideology to spread from one country to another, especially if it has the same political problems. Edward W. Said came up with "traveling theory", which can explain that a theory or understanding can travel and wander depending on the sociopolitical context of society.[5] However, not everyone sees Wahhabism as an ideology that inspires extremism. Natana J. Delong-Bas in Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform, it is pointed out that Wahhabism is actually a religious ideology that raises questions about Islamic reform, because it invites Muslims to return to the Quran and Sunnah.[6] There is no connection between Wahhabism and Al-Qaeda as the contemporary terrorist leader.

---

[1] This view is shared by most observers of contemporary extremist movements, both in the West and the Islamic world. Among them, Khaled Abou el Fadl in *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from The Extremists,* Zubair Qamar dalam *Wahhabism: Understanding the Roots and Role Models of Islamic Extremism,* Bin Abdul Wahab Sulaeiman, *Fasl al-Khitab fi Radd 'ala Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab,* and others.

[2] Ahmad Moussalli, *Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy,* A Conflict Forum Monograph, (Januari 2009): 10.

[3] What is interesting about this fatwa is that the jihad fatwa originally only beat the drum of resistance against the West, but also spread to Muslims who had friendships with the West. This fatwa looks very strange, because it not only targets Westerners, but also Muslims. See, "As-Safir Daily," October 15, 2001.

[4] Abu Barra al-Najdi, *Al-Kawashif al-Jaliyya fi Kufr al-Dawla al-Su'udiyya* (London: Dar al-Shafa, 1994). See also the views of Muhammad Assem al-Makdessi in Democracy as a Religion, who considers the democratic system that is being implemented on a limited basis in Saudi Arabia as a system that is *kufr* and *shirk*

[5] Moustafa Bayoumi, *The Edward W. Said Reader* (New York: Vintage, 2000)

[6] If it is called Islamic reform, the figures referred to include Rafa'a Tahthawi, Muhammad 'Abduh, and Rasyid Rida. Hadi Ismail. (2012). Teologi Muhammad 'Abduh: Kajian Kitab Risâlat al-Tawhîd. Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam, 2(2), 292–313.

Al-Qaeda, especially Bin Laden, actually drew inspiration from Ibn Taymiyyah and Sayyid Qutb, not from the thinking of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab.[7]

These differences in opinion are normal, because in reality, ideology is only one of the factors that give rise to radicalism, extremism and terrorism. There are other factors that also cause the emergence of radicalism, such as economic and political injustice. However, it must be acknowledged that ideology plays a central role in generating enthusiasm for radical movements, especially in influencing the public and seeking theological justification. Amartya Sen has an interesting perspective to consider, according to which violence stems from the emergence of beliefs about solitary identity.[8] Muslims have many different identity affiliations, depending on the sociopolitical context, but radicals have chosen a single identity to justify violent actions, e.g. by Osama bin Laden and his followers.

Purification of Tawhid and Takfir: A theological vision

According to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, tawhid was the foundation of his thinking. Contrary to the views of other kalam scholars, Wahhabism has a unique understanding of tawhid.

Kalam scholars interpret the words "Allah" and "al-Ila>h" as "al-Kha>liq". Specifically, God, who created the heavens, the earth and everything in them.[9] This refers to a verse in the Quran, *If he had a good god, as it is said, he would pray to the god who created the throne*.[10] In another verse, *if there are many gods in both, all will perish except Allah*.[11] This view is prevalent in Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah as a form of devotion (worship) to Allah believing in Him as "Kha>liq" is the pinnacle of faith, expressed through obedience in fulfilling the pillars of Faith and the pillars of Islam.

However, Wahhabism has a unique and special model regarding tawhid. According to Wahhabis, it is not enough for Muslims to simply believe in Allah like "Kha>liq", but rather purifying his worship. Worship Allah SWT only completely must not go through an intermediary (*tawassul*). Anyone who worships through an intermediary would be classified as a "polytheist".[12] In fact, they are considered to have left Islam (apostatized).

Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab's views were influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah. According to Ahmad al-Katib, he read the works of Ibn Taymiyyah at the age of 25 while studying in Basra. At that time, he saw the tradition of Basra people making pilgrimages to the graves of the Prophet's companions and *ahl al-*

---

[7]Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Cairo: The American University Press, 2005), 246-279.

[8]Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 15.

[9]Ahmad al-Katib, *Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Wahhabi: Qiraah Tahliliyyah* (London: Dar al-Syura li al-Dirasat wa al-I'lam, 2004), 15.

[10]Qs. Al-Isra': 42.

[11] Qs. Al-Anbiya: 22.

[12]*Tawassul* with saints, ulama, and pious people can be considered idolatrous. Likewise, pilgrimages to graves are also considered idolatrous behavior. See, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Kitab al-Tawhid: Haqq Allah 'ala al-'Abid* (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, n.t.), 60. Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab quoted a hadith of the Prophet narrated by Siti Aisyah from Umm Salmah when she saw the church in Habsyah and some of the decorations inside. Then the Messenger of Allah said, "If there is a pious person or a pious servant, then builds a mosque over his grave and decorates it as beautifully as possible, then indeed he is the most despicable creature in the sight of God." According to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, a Muslim who does this has committed a major sin, namely a mistake in building a grave and a mistake in building a statue.

bayt, both Sunnis and Shiites. Then, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab opposed this tradition, saying, "grave pilgrimage cannot be justified, because in fact worship is only to Allah".[13]

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, there are three models of *tawhi>d*, namely *tawhi>d ulu>hiyyah*, *tawhi>d rubu>biyyah*, and *tawhi>d al-asma>' wa al-s}ifa>t*.[14] According to Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, *tawhi>d ulu>hiyyah* is a very important fundamental in Islam, because it is where a Muslim can anchor his faith in a puritanical way. At the time of the Prophet Muhammad so many people believe in *tawhi>d rubu>biyyah*, but very few people believe in *tawhi>d ulu>hiyyah*.[15]

Furthermore, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab stated that it was the infidels who were fought by the Prophet Muhammad has performed a number of virtues, such as almsgiving, hajj, umrah, worship, and abandoning God's prohibitions. However, they did not apply *tawhi>d ulu>hiyyah*. They believe in God as "*al-Kha>liq*", but they do not believe in God as the only support and goal. Therefore, whoever asks other than Allah for help, such as asking for help from the Prophet Muhammad, the saints and pious people, then that person has committed a major sin (*shirk*). [16] This view is in line with Ibn Taymiyyah's expression, "Whoever asks Muhammad SAW for help, it is the same as asking a statue for help." [17]

Sociologically, this view is contrary to the beliefs and traditions that have developed in the Islamic world in general, because in essence these religious traditions are deeply rooted. Not only that, traditional Muslims or *Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama>'ah*, have strong reasons for the traditions they follow. Therefore, one of the breakthroughs taken by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhāb was to carry out affirmation (*al-takfir*) of these developing traditions. He wrote, "Most of humanity has been manipulated by Satan and decorated with acts of shirk, which makes them lulled with pious people, while glorifying them. In fact, polytheists in our time are more misguided than the infidels who lived during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. So, it is no longer a secret that world life is filled with idolatry." [18] Likewise, the traditions used by the Bedouin people are more heretical than those of the Jews. [19]

Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab really hated Western traditions. He forbade every Muslim to eat bread and meat. If a Muslim does this, then he is an infidel, and therefore must be killed. [20] According to him, a Muslim must have loyalty and disassociation (*al-wala wa al-bara*) towards things that cause a Muslim to be trapped in disbelief. Apart from that, the groups that were disbelieved, namely the Sufis, Shiites, followers of the Ottomon dynasty, even Imam Fakhruddin al-Razi were also among the interpretive scholars who were disbelieved, because they did not follow strictly literal interpretations, as adhered to by

---

[13]Ahmad al-Katib, *Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Wahhabi: Qiraah Tahliliyyah* (London: Dar al-Syura li al-Dirasat wa al-I'lam, 2004), 15.

[14]Ibnu Taymiyyah and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Majmu'at al-Tawhid* (Kairo: Dar Ihya al-Turath), 7.

[15]Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, *al-Mufid al-Mustafid fi Kufr Tarikh al-Tawhid*, in *Muallafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad ibd 'Abd al-Wahhab* (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud a-Islamiyyah, 1398 H).

[16]Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Kasyf al-Shubhat*, in *Muallafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad ibd 'Abd al-Wahhab* (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bi Sa'ud a-Islamiyyah, 1398 H). Also see in *Risalah fi Ma'na la Ilaha illa Allah*, and *Kitab al-Tawhid*.

[17] Ibn Taymiyyah, *Rasail fi al-Fiqh*, Jilid 28, 16. See also, *Kitab Iqtida al-Shirath al-Mustaqim*, 457.

[18] Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Kasyf al-Syubhat*, in *Muallafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad ibd 'Abd al-Wahhab* (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud a-Islamiyyah, 1398 H)

[19] Husayn Bin Ghannam, *Tarikh Najd* (Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1994), I: 164.

[20]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 48. According to Muh}ammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab in *Majmu'ah al-Tawhid*, For a Muslim there are only two choices, to be a "Muslim" or a "polytheist". If he becomes a "polytheist", then he must be killed.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. From 1802-1806, approximately 40,000 people were sentenced to death and 350,000 people were amputated. [21]

In this context, there is an odyssey of religious understanding from Ibn Taymiyyah to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab. [22] However, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab was more puritanical, elaborative and aggressive in expressing his ideology. In fact, he made this understanding into an understanding that was disseminated to various corners of the world and became a political document for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the early days of the founding of the state of Saudi Arabia until now, although with several modifications.

According to Ahmad Mousalli, the Wahabi consider themselves to be the most Salafi group among other Salafi groups. This is based on an assumption, because they have carried out theological reform by formulating a plenary paradigm of tawh}id while deconstructing the views of Sunnis about kalam, school of thought jurisprudence, and grave pilgrimage rituals, which developed throughout most of the Islamic world, including pilgrimages to graves. Rasulullah SAW. Wahhabi circles consider what Muslims outside their group do as polytheistic, infidel and apostate and heretical. [23]

Ironically, Wahhabis not only affirm a number of religious beliefs and practices that are growing among Muslims, but also affirm a number of Muslim habits such as listening to music, watching television, painting, photographing, and so on. They consider these practices to reduce *tawhid*, because they preserve traditions among non-Muslims. [24] Other groups that are also disbelieved by Wahabi circles are the Shiites and Rafidas. This attitude is based on the view that they do not have complete and pure faith. Especially for the Rafidas, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab wrote a special book, namely *al-Radd 'ala al-Rafidha*, which broke the theological views of the Rafidas.

During the time of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, the doctrine of *takfir* was used politically to fight the Ottoman Dynasty. Based on the "heretical" and "infidel" fatwa against them, the Wahhabis built political power to carry out resistance. This attitude was fully supported politically by the Sa'ud bin Abd al-'Aziz Dynasty as a political attitude towards the Ottoman Dynasty. Not only that, Wahabi circles declared war with those who were considered *jahiliyyah* circles. This means that the choice to return to *tawhid uluhiyyah* is a fixed price that must be followed by all Muslims. If not, then they deserve to be disbelieved and if they do not follow the Wahhabi understanding they must be fought.

The stance taken by the Wahhabis is actually not purely a theological stance, but can be called a theological stance with political overtones. The doctrine of *tawhid uluhiyyah* was originally an attempt to respond to Muslim traditions which were considered to deviate from pure Islamic teachings. However, along the way, this doctrine gave birth to the doctrine of *takfir*, which is actually an unpopular tradition. [25]

---

[21]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 48-64.

[22]According to Ahmad Moussalli, there are at least several things that unite Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, namely that Allah's words are literal, they cannot be replaced; opposing the ulama on divorce issues; opposing the traditions of Sunni clerics in *tawassul*; Allah is the only One who knows, He sits in His chair and beside Him there is the space occupied by Muhammad Saw; and there are two models of tawhid that Muslims must believe in, namely *tawhid al-rububiyyah* and *tawhid al-uluhiyyah*.

[23]Ahmad Mousalli, *Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy, A Conflict Forum Monogr*aph (Januari, 2009): 4.

[24]This view is usually based on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. which reads, "Whoever follows the traditions of a (non-Muslim) people, then that person is part of that people."

[25]The doctrine of *takfir* is a doctrine that is absent in Sunni religious diskettes, because this term is not known in da'wah. In the Koran [6]: 125 it is stated that a Muslim should preach using wisdom, polite advice and constructive debate. The only person

However, Wahhabism have popularized the doctrine of *takfir* throughout the Islamic world, so that its reverberations are widespread and have a serious impact in responding to differences and pluralism of views among Muslims. This is where the problem lies, because da'wah to build a pure and complete paradigm of faith is not just a concept of da'wah, but also a political concept accompanied by a paradigm of *takfir*.

In fact, in the course of its history, the concept of *takfir* has not only caused strong reactions in a number of Islamic worlds, but also in Saudi Arabia. A number of Wahhabi clerics have affirmed Saudi Arabian clerics, giving rise to serious debate among them. Despite this, the Wahhabi community was still accommodated by the Palace, because they were able to expel the Wahhabi-Ikhwan faction which was more tolerant towards Muslims, especially Shiites and other Sunnis. The position of the Wahhabis is becoming stronger within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. [26]

In Saudi Arabia, Wahhabis have a very powerful position. They have full control over religious affairs, especially in mosques. In fact, they can control legislation and education. They show very high loyalty to the ruling regime. This has been proven during the Wahhabi-Ikhwan revolution, the Gulf War, including the war against Afghanistan and the Taliban in 2001. [27]

In contemporary times, a popular Wahhabi figure is Muhammad bin Baz, the mufti of Saudi Arabia who is fully responsible for religious fatwas in Saudi Arabia. Like Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, Baz continues the thoughts of the founder of Wahhabism in a taken-for-granted manner. Thoughts about *tawhid* and *takfir* are at the core of his thinking. [28] The basic idea, bin Baz believes that Islamic thought will be considered valid if it follows the teachings of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab. If not, then Muslims are considered to have committed a major sin (*al-kabair*).

Doctrine of Jihad

Wahhabi thinking about jihad is a continuation of previous thinking, namely *tawhid* and *takfir*. Even the idea of jihad is a unity that cannot be separated from the core of previous thinking. If both are the theological bases that underlie every Wahhabi thought in history, then jihad is a form of implementation. The importance of jihad for Wahabi circles can be seen when Muhammad wrote a special book about jihad, namely *Kitab al-Jihad*.

According to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, jihad is *fardhu kifayah*. [29] What is meant by jihad in this case is war. Unlike scholars who generally interpret jihad in a broad context, both war and non-war,

---

who has the right to declare "deviant" and "infidel" is Allah SWT. In the hadith it is also stated that a Muslim should be careful in disbelieving other people, because if the accusation is not true, then those who accuse other people of being infidels will become infidels. See Zuhairi Misrawi, *Al-Quran Kitab Toleransi: Inklusivisme, Pluralisme, dan Multikulturalisme* (Jakarta: Fitrah, 2007), 258-266.

[26] Ahmad al-Katib, *Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Wahhabi: Qiraah Tahliliyyah* (London: Dar al-Syura li al-Dirasat wa al-I'lam, 2004), 121-122.

[27] Ahmad Mousalli, *Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy, A Conflict Forum Monograph* (Januari, 2009): 8.

[28] In order to preserve the thoughts of Muh}ammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, he wrote a number of small books (*kutaybat*), the contents of which emphasized the importance of the doctrine of *tawhid uluhiyyah* and *takfir*. In these books, Muh}ammad bin Baz is seen using the Koran and Sunnah as the main sources for his thinking, but in fact he only quotes and continues the thoughts of Muh}ammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab.

[29] What is meant by *fardhu kifayah* is that if a Muslim fulfills an order stipulated in the religion, then other Muslims are not obliged to carry out that order. Obligations in this category are more collective than personal. In the Islamic legal tradition, it is also known as *fardhu 'ayn*, namely that every Muslim is obliged to fulfill an order stipulated in the religion. Obligations in this category are binding on every individual.

Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab from the start led readers to connote jihad with war. Every Muslim carries out jihad at least once a year, and is permitted not to carry out jihad, especially when performing the Hajj. [30]

In this case, jihad in the view of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab has a "special color", namely war (*al-qital*). This kind of meaning is indeed different from other scholars, who tend to understand jihad within a broader scope of struggle. [31]

What is interesting to note is that the obligation to fight jihad according to Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab is more collective, not personal. This actually refers to the tradition of war that developed before Islam, namely when war was used as a tool to build clan solidarity. If a clan member is attacked by an enemy, then each member of the clan must defend themselves from the enemy's threat. [32]

Unlike the views of other scholars, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab's jihad was an implementation of *hijrah*. A Muslim must make a *hijrah* to improve his faith. Because the struggle in jihad is related to faith, every Muslim must participate in the practice of jihad. [33]

Jihad is essentially an effort to defend oneself, as per pre-Islamic traditions. Therefore, in jihad it must be ensured that there are no greater victims. However, jihad can have theological meaning, if ordered by a leader. On the other hand, if there is no order from a leader, then jihad cannot be carried out. [34]

Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab's views opened up space for a leader to use his power to decide that jihad should be used as a tool of resistance. In the context of the Wahabi's struggle with politics in Saudi Arabia, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab once issued an infidel fatwa against the Ottoman Dynasty. This fatwa was then used by Ibn Sa'ud to issue jihad orders against the Ottoman Dynasty. So, the political bias in the jihad doctrine constructed by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab is very obvious. At any time, a leader can use a religious fatwa as justification to advance his political interests.

This fact is increasingly visible, because the relationship between the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Wahhabi circles is getting closer. In fact, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has a very large dependence on maintaining political stability and building ideological solidarity by using Wahhabism as its binding chain.

Therefore, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab is of the view that jihad is obligatory for every man who is old enough. Whoever does not want to take part in jihad, then that person can be labeled as having left Islam. Things that can be permitted for a Muslim not to participate in carrying out jihad, namely being sick, weak, and not old enough. [35]

---

[30] Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, "Kitab al-Jihad," in *Mu'allafat al-Syaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab: al-Fiqh,* vo. 2 (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, 129 H), 359.

[31] According to the ulama, true jihad must be separated from war (*qital*). Jihad is a serious effort to achieve a noble goal. Jihad can be interpreted as war, but its meaning is much broader than just war. Moreover, from jihad it then metamorphosed into *ijtihad*, which means thought practice or *mujahadah*, which means spiritual practice. So, jihad can be physical, thought and dhikr. Ironically, Wahhabis only narrow jihad to the meaning of "war".

[32] Reaven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-34.

[33] Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, "*Kitab al-Jihad,*" in *Mu'allafat al-Syaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab: al-Fiqh,* vo. 2 (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, 129 H), 362.

[34] Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, 202-203. See also Richard Bonney, *Jihad from Qur'an to bin Laden* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 160.

[35] This view was also adopted by the Khawarij in the 7th century AD, as a manifestation of the importance of the doctrine of jihad in their teachings. See, Natana J. Delong-Bas, Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad, 203. This view is also what causes Wahhabism to be called neo-khawarij, because its views are similar to those of the khawarij, especially in the doctrine of jihad.

There are three things that cause jihad to be carried out by Muslims: First, if Muslims are facing an enemy, they are no longer allowed to retreat. In this situation, it is impossible to take other options, except to fight against the enemy. Second, when the enemy has left the territorial limits of his power, which explicitly poses a threat to Muslims. Third, when a leader who is trusted by Muslims has issued an order to carry out jihad, then there is no choice for Muslims except to carry out that order. [36]

The issue of getting a mandate from the leader is actually debatable. When Ibn Sa'ud ordered his citizens to carry out jihad against the Ottoman Dynasty based on the fatwa of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, at that time Ibnu Sa'ud was actually carrying out defiance against the Ottoman Dynasty which was legitimately the official leader of the Muslims in the world. This is where the logic of political interests actually comes into play, because Ibn Sa'ud had the desire to declare the independence of Saudi Arabia by separating itself from the rule of the Ottoman Dynasty.

One thing that needs to be underlined from the motive behind the jihad doctrine, namely piety and religious glory. Before carrying out jihad, Muslims should give the enemy the opportunity to embrace Islam. If they are not willing to convert, then they can be fought. [37]

This view also has its own uniqueness, because it is outside the rules of the game outlined in Islam. As outlined by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, the jihad carried out by Muslims is defensive, not offensive. However, in fact the jihad described by Wahhabis has a motive that cannot be separated from the doctrine of purification. The defensive dimension of jihad turns into an offensive one, because it contains an element of forcing the party being fought to convert to Islam. [38]

Thus, the paradigm described by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab raises a number of question marks, especially when compared with the doctrine of jihad that developed in other Sunni traditions. The connotation of jihad in the sense of war raises a very complicated problem, because in the end jihad is not only used for non-Muslims, but is also applied to Muslims who are considered to carry out religious practices that are classified as polytheistic, infidels, apostates and heretics. Wahhabis not only use jihad as a defensive force, but also as an offensive force to promote their ideology.

Neo-Wahhabism: The Transmission of Wahhabism

In fact, paradigmatically, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab's religious understanding has no argumentative power. However, in 1975, oil-rich Saudi Arabia had enormous ammunition to transmit Wahhabism to all corners of the world. They used the method of building mosques and publishing books written by Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab, and his followers, such as Muhammad bin Baz, the mufti of Saudi Arabia. [39]

---

[36] Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, "Kitab al-Jihad," in *Mu'allafat al-Syaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab: al-Fiqh,* vo. 2, 360.

[37] Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, "Kitab al-Jihad," in *Mu'allafat al-Syaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab: al-Fiqh,* vo. 2, 360. According to Elizabeth Sirriyeh in, "Wahhabis, Unbelievers and the Problems of Exclusivism," Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 16 (1989): 162, Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab also spread hatred towards Christians and Jews.

[38] Michael Cook, "On the Origins of Wahhabism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 2 (July, 1992): 191.

[39] Khaled Abou el Fadl, The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 72. See also, Ahmad Mousalli, Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy, A Conflict Forum Monograph (January, 2009): 8. According to Mousalli, Muhammad bin Baz was an ideologue among the Wahhabis at the vanguard, who at all times provided religious advice and fatwas to the authorities. A number of fatwas that have been issued, namely the Palestinian

The group identified with Neo-Wahhabi has distinctive characteristics, namely establishing the views of Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab. They sometimes describe themselves explicitly as Wahhabis, but generally wear the cloak of "Salafism".

In nationalizing their ideology, the Wahhabis formed an organization known as the World Muslim League (*Ra>bit}ah al-'Alam al-Isla>mi>*). Through this institution, they provide scholarships to the Islamic world to study in Saudi Arabia or they establish educational institutions whose curriculum and lecturers are imported directly from Saudi Arabia. [40] In addition, they built a number of mosques, provided funds for the translation and publication of the Koran, and distributed books and magazines written by Wahhabi scholars. [41]

It must be admitted that the programs launched by the Wahhabis were relatively successful, because they not only spread ideas, but also created ulama and even politicians who conveyed da'wah to Muslims all the time. In fact, some of them occupy important positions in fatwa institutions, so it is not surprising that religious fatwas are also inspired by Wahhabi reasoning. [42]

However, the image of Wahhabism is not always good, because in reality there is still a lot of opposition, both by Wahhabis and non-Wahhabis. Some Wahhabi groups refuse to be associated with followers of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, because what they believe in is the "truest Islam", not the understanding of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab. [43] In non-Wahhabi circles, there is definitely serious rejection and resistance, because the majority of Muslims believe in Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah who maintain the tradition of visiting graves, adhere to Sufism, and adapt to local culture. Therefore, in almost every Islamic world, Wahhabism has almost become a common enemy.[44]

The emergence of such strong opposition caused Wahhabism to wear a "new face" by using the term "Salafism" as new clothes. The two most prominent figures of Salafism are Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb.[45] The doctrine of returning to the golden age of Islam, the concept of "*Jahiliyyah*", and Islamic puritanism became the most prominent themes in their movement. In the 70s, there were several "Wahabi-Salafi" figures, such as Salih Saraya (d. 1975), Syukri Mustafa (d. 1978) and Muhammad Abd Salam Faraj (d. 1982). [46]

What about the spread of contemporary extremist movements, which are spreading terrorism in a number of countries? Do they have direct links to Wahhabism? According to Ahmad Moussalli, Neo-Wahhabism is divided into three factions: First, the Sa'ad al-Faqih faction, namely the Wahhabi-Ikhwan faction. Second, the Muhammad al-Mas'ari faction, which is based in London. Third, Osama bin Laden's faction

---

resistance movement, cannot be categorized as Islamic. In the 1960s, he also emphasized that collaborating with infidels, especially the Soviet Union, was prohibited in Islam.

[40] In Indonesia, they founded the Institute for Islamic and Arab Sciences (LIPIA). They recruit Islamic boarding school alumni to continue their education at this institution. The response from Islamic boarding schools was quite large, because each student was free of charge, in fact they received monthly money.

[41]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 73.

[42]One of the most prominent fatwas and is identical to the Wahhabi fatwa, namely the fatwa that it is haram to wish Christians a Merry Christmas. This fatwa refers to the fatwa issued by the Mufti of Saudi Arabia.

[43]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 74.

[44]In Egypt, al-Azhar clerics strongly opposed Wahhabism. Among them: Grand Shaikh al-Bahi, Shaikh Muhammad al-Ghazali, Muhammad Yusuf al-Qaradlawi, and others. In Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama is a socio-religious organization that strongly opposes Wahhabism, because explicitly the ideology developed by Wahhabism is contrary to a number of religious traditions adhered to by Nahdlatul Ulama, such as grave pilgrimage, *istighathah*, *mauludan*, and others.

[45]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2005), 74.

[46]Khaled Abou el Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists,* 85.

sang resistance to the West and its symbols.[47] This last Neo-Wahhabi faction is the most violent faction, because it uses the ideology of Islamic-based radicalism as a basis for fighting against the West or those affiliated with Western interests. In the end, Osama bin Laden formed al-Qaeda as an underground group that was ready to fight against the United States and its allied countries. Even bin Laden beat the drum of resistance against the Saudi Arabian regime.[48]

Osama bin Laden's faction is a serious threat to humanity, because it is building a new ideology, namely *Salafi-Jihadi*. This ideology is a combination of Wahhabism, Salafism and Jihad. This is an understanding that justifies committing suicide in the hope of being rewarded by heaven in the afterlife. This ideology is slowly becoming a trend among some Muslims, especially young people who do not have a comprehensive understanding of Islam.

Currently, Saudi Arabia itself has carried out major reforms to amputate and neutralize Wahhabism, because they view Wahhabism as not only dangerous for the international world, but also for Saudi Arabia itself. Now, Wahhabism is like a weapon, because it considers the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be infidel. They planned several times to carry out a coup, although they always failed, because their power was very limited.

Saudi Arabia is slowly making efforts to de-radicalize young people and clerics so that they are not easily trapped in the Salafi-jihadi ideology, as idealized by Osama bin Laden. However, one thing is difficult to ignore, that Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Wahhabism, which is actually the forerunner of Ibn Taymiyyah's ideology, which emphasizes the purification of creeds, unbelief, apostasy and heresy. All of this is the ideology of radicals, because it has legalized violence in the name of religion.

Conclusion

Wahhabism has become a global ideology. His influence is not only in Saudi Arabia, his birthplace, but also almost exists in the Islamic world. One thing that needs to be noted is that Wahhabism is not an Islamic reform movement, as is the thesis of Natana J. Delong-Bas in Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad. In my opinion, Wahhabism is a religious movement that promotes Islamic puritanism and spreads extremism, because it makes blood lawful, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. In fact, Talibanism and Jemaah Islamiyyah, which are now actors in contemporary radical movements, are heavily influenced by Wahhabism. They used Wahhabism as a source of inspiration to strengthen their actions. On the other hand, there is nothing to prove that Wahhabism was a source of inspiration for Islamic reform. If it is called Islamic reform, the figures referred to include Rafa'a Tahthawi, Muhammad 'Abduh, and Rasyid Rida. Not a single thinker declared Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab to be a Muslim reformer, except for Natana J. Delong-Bas.

There are four things that should be concluded about Wahhabism: First, Wahhabism is an ideology that emphasizes tawhid al-uluhiyyah as the foundation of its religious understanding. This understanding was inspired by Ibn Taymiyyah.

Second, Wahhabism was relatively successful in spreading its views, because it was fully supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Wahhabism have the same interests, which has caused Wahhabism to have a strong influence, both within Saudi Arabia and internationally.

---

[47]Ahmad Mousalli,*Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy? ,* 9.

[48]Solahuddin, *NII sampai JI Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011), 38-40.

Third, Wahhabism has a doctrine of jihad which is interpreted as warfare against the enemy. Historically, jihad as understood by Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab was not used against infidels, but instead was used against the Ottoman Dynasty, which was essentially an Islamic dynasty.

Fourth, along the way Wahhabism metamorphosed into Neo-Wahhabism which has a Salafi-jihadi ideology, namely an ideology that combines Wahhabism, Salafism and Jihad. The combination of these three ideologies has given birth to "brides" who are ready to commit suicide in a number of countries, both the Western world and the Islamic world.

Lastly, Wahhabism as a religious ideology can only be overcome with similar religious understandings, not with a militaristic approach. Therefore, the steps used by Egypt, for example, in carrying out deradicalization are very effective so that religious understanding is responded to with a more contextual and humanist religious understanding. After the death of Osama bin Laden, the world again has high hopes that radicalism can be prevented by killing the roots of thought which are the source of violent ideologies with religious nuances. The misunderstanding that can arouse this passion for violence is Wahhabism.

Bibliography

1. Abou el Fadl, Khaled. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists.* New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2005.

2. 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad bin. *al-Mufid al-Mustafid fi Kufr Tarikh al-Tawhid,* dalam *Muallafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad ibd 'Abd al-Wahhab.* Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bi Sa'ud a-Islamiyyah, 1398 H.

3. 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad bin. *Kashf al-Shubhat,* dalam *Muallafat al-Shaykh al-Imam Muhammad ibd 'Abd al-Wahhab.* Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud a-Islamiyyah, 1398 H.

4. 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad bin. *Kitab al-Tawhid: Haqq Allah 'ala al-'Abid* (Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, t.t)

5. 'Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad bin. "Kitab al-Jihab," ini *Mu'allafat al-Syaykh al-Imam Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab: al-Fiqh,* vo. 2. Riyadh: Jami'at al-Imam Muhammad bin Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, 129 H.

6. Bayoumi, Moustafa. *The Edward W. Said Reader.* New York: Vintage, 2000.

7. Bishr bin, Uthman. *'Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd,* ed. Abd al-Rahman bin 'Abd al-Latif bin 'Abd Allah al-Shaykh. Riyadh: Mathba'at Dar al-Malik 'Abd 'Aziz, 1982.

8. Bonney, Richard, *Jihad from Qur'an to bin Laden.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

9. Cook, Michael. "On the Origins of Wahhabism." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 2 (July, 1992): 191.

10. Delong-Bas, Natana J. *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad.* Cairo: The American University Press, 2005.

11. Ghannam bin, Husayn. *Tarikh Najd.* Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1994.

12. Ismail, Hadi. *Teologi Muhammad 'Abduh: Kajian Kitab Risâlat al-Tawhîd.* Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam, 2(2), 292–313. 2012. https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2012.2.2.292-313

13. Katib (al), Ahmad. *Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Wahhabi: Qiraah Tahliliyyah.* London: Dar al-Syura li al-Dirasat wa al-I'lam, 2004.

14. Misrawi, Zuhairi, *Al-Quran Kitab Toleransi: Inklusivisme, Pluralisme, dan Multikulturalisme* (Jakarta: Fitrah, 2007), 258-266

15. Moussalli, Ahmad. *Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy.* A Conflict Forum Monograph, Januari, 2009.

16. Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab, Ibnu Taymiyyah. *Majmu'at al-Tawhid.* Kairo: Dar Ihya al-Turats.

17. Najdi (al), Muhammad bin 'Abd 'Allah bin Humaydi. *Al-Suhub al-Wabilah 'ala Daraih al-Hanabila.* Beirut: Maktabat al-Imam Ah}mad, 1989.

18. Najdi (al), Abu Barra. *Al-Kawasif al-Jaliyya fi Kufr al-Dawla al-Sa'udiyya.* London: Dar al-Shafa, 1994.

19. Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

20. Sirriyeh, Elizabeth. "Wahhabis, Unbelievers and the Problems of Exclusivism." *Bulletin British Society for Middle Eastern Studies,* 16 (1989): 162

21. Solahuddin, *NII sampai JI Salafy Jihadisme di Indonesia.* Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011.

22. Traboulsi, Samer. "An Early Refutation of Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Wahhab's Reformist Views." Die Welt des Islams, 42 (2002): 375.

23. Zaini Dahlan, Al-Sayyid Ah}mad bin. *Khulashat al-Kalam fi Bayan 'Umara ' al-Balad al-Haram.* Kairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyat al-Azhariyya, 1977.