

# Wahhabis in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq

Maryam Pooya<sup>1</sup> and Zahra Siahsar<sup>2\*</sup>

1- Faculty member of velayat university

2- Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Department of Political Science, Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Iran

**Corresponding author:** Zahra Siahsar

**ABSTRACT:** The history of political thoughts have always had ups and downs and is full of transformations and diversity of perceptions and theories. In such vicissitudinous history various religions and sects with different motives and principles have emerged. Among these sects the Wahhabi sect has got a different origin and course of evolution. Because, although this sect does not have any firm ideology among Islamic scholars, it is up to impose its firm and ossified thoughts on other Muslims and talk others into accepting it as the sole leader of Islamic thought. Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab promoted the Wahhabi sect. Wahhabi sect exists in several Middle East countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, and has had strong impact on the security, politics and culture of these countries.

**Keywords:** Wahhabism, movement, sect, ideology.

## INTRODUCTION

During the history, the promotion of Muhammadan pure culture and religion has encountered wrong-headednesses and unwise decisions among which the ideas of Wahhabism and Salafism are the clear examples. Based on these ideas, all Muslims of the world are out of and deviated from Islam, and only they themselves are (real) Muslims. The architect of this ideology is **Ibn Taymiya** whose thoughts were abandoned from the fourteen century to the nineteen AD century but it is less than a century that his thoughts have been raised again by some people in Islamic community.

### **The history and the background of Wahhabism**

#### **1 - Ahmad Ibn Hanbal**

Ahmad Ibn Hanbal Ibn Shaybani is the leader of Hanbali religion, and one of the great leaders of Ahl al-Hadith (The people of hadith). He was born in Baghdad in the year 782 AD. The way of thinking that he has created is extremism. His most important book contains thirty thousand hadiths. He was against any interpretation and explication for Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet (pbuh). (Habibi, 2009).

#### **2- Barbahari**

Abu Muhammad Hassan Ibn Ali Ibn Khalaf Barbahari lived in the ninth and the tenth century AD. He was the head of Baghdad's Hanbali people and had specific opinions. One of his most important beliefs was prohibition of pilgrimage of Imam Hussein (pbuh). (Ibid. 2009)

#### **3- Ibn Taymiya**

Ahmad Taqi al-Din Abu-al-Abbas Ibn Abdullah was born in Harran city in 1263 and died in the year in 1328 in Damascus. He was raised in a family whose members were pioneers of Hanbali religion. After six years he went from his town to Damascus with other members of his family. (Rezvani, 2006).

His most important book is *Menhaj Al-Sunna* in which he has discussed the similarities between Jews and the Shiites as well as invalidity of Quranic verses and hadiths about the impeccability of Shiite Imams. (Khosravi, 2001)

#### **Ibn Taymiya's beliefs:**

- 1 - Prohibition of visiting the tomb of the Prophet (pbuh)
- 2-religiously forbidding travel to visit graves.
- 3- Oath to anything but Allah is polytheism and deadly sin
- 4- graves should be demolished (Ibid: 78).

#### **4- Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi sect**

The founder of Wahhabism is Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab. He was born in 1700 and died in 1793. He was known as the renovator of Salafi thoughts. At first he showed interest in the history and accounts of those who had claimed to be prophet, and severely and greedily he was seeking them. He had four children. At first he studied under the education of the scholars of Mecca and Medina. The signs of perversity was conspicuously seen from his behavior and words. (Hemmati, 1988)

#### **Some of the writings of Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab**

Kashf al-Shubuhah, the interpretation of Kalamah al-Tawhid (Tafsir Kalamah al-Tawhid), Adallah-ha (the evidences), Talqin Usul al-Aqidah al-Aammah, Nasihat al-Muslimeen, Tafsir Ba'ze Suvar al-Qur'an (the interpretation of some Qur'an's Surahs), et cetera. His most important book is Al-Tawhid about which it has been written that this book has played an important role in the history of reform and innovation. (Ibid, 1988)

#### **Based on some of his beliefs Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab severely contended against some issues as the branches of polytheism:**

- 1 - Appealing to the Prophets, saints and the righteous and implore and ask them to solve problems.
- 2 - Seeking intercession from other than Allah
- 3 - Visiting the graves of prophets, saints and the righteous
- 4- Making buildings on the graves and so on. (Habibi, 2010)

#### **Some Wahhabi teachings**

- 1- Intercession: The Wahhabis are of the opinion that we have no right to ask them (the Saints of Allah) to intercede for us in this world. And this is polytheism. They believe that intercession from the saints of Allah is just like the polytheism of Hijaz's idolaters, and Allah calls Hijaz's idolaters as polytheists because they sought the intercession of the idols, and whined and moaned before the idols and made requests for mediation. (Sobhani, 2008)
- 2- Appealing to the Prophets and the Saints of Allah was denied for the first time by **Ibn** Taymiya in the fifteenth century AD, and after a few centuries, this issue was intensified by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab. Therefore appealing to them (Prophets and the Saints of Allah) was introduced as a sign of polytheism and probably a form of worshipping the Saints of Allah. (Habibi, 2010)

#### **There are kinds of appealing to the Saints of Allah some of which are as follows:**

- 1- Appealing to their essence (self); as if to say: O Lord! I take recourse to Your Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) so as You satisfy my need.
- 2- Appealing to their status in the opinion of Allah and to their closeness to Almighty God and to their rights; as if to say: O Lord! I appeal to the status and the honor that they have in the opinion of You so as You satisfy my need. Wahhabism has forbidden all types of invocation and appeal, and has declared them as characteristics and signs of polytheism. They hold that appealing to the Saints of Allah is religiously prohibited and innovative, and is one of the instances of polytheism. (Ibid: 185)
- 3- The Wahhabis severely rejected getting blessing from the righteous people and the pious selected people of followers, from holy places and sacred places of martyrdom, and from the works associated with them, and they declared it as one of the instances of polytheism. Saleh Ibn Fawzan, one of the Wahhabi Muftis, says: if the purpose of casting oneself down prostrate on earth (or a grave) is to get blessing from that grave and to gain favor of the saint inside that grave, this is polytheism, and if one, while believing that that grave and earth are of the same virtue and excellence as the virtue and excellence of the holy land of Masjid al-Haram and the holy land of Prophetic Mosque (Masjid al-Nabil) and Masjid al-Aqsa, wishes to become close to God, this is religiously innovative. **Ibn** al-Uthaymeen says: getting blessing from Kaaba's fabric and touching it is a religiously innovation, because the Prophet (pbuh) has not mentioned anything about it. (Rezvani, 2006)

- 4- Repairing the tombs of the Saints of God: the issue of repairing the tombs and making buildings on the tombs of the Prophets, the saints of God, and the righteous people, is among the issues to which Wahhabis have particular sensitivity. The Wahhabis believe that any use of gold and silver and ornaments in holy places of martyrdom and things like this are religiously forbidden and must be abandoned. (Mousavi Qazwini, 1995)

- 5- Visiting the holy places of martyrdom

The Wahhabis say: visiting the graves of religious leaders and traveling from very far places with the intention of visiting the immaculate grave of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is something wrong and inadmissible and is one of the instances of polytheism. (Ibid: 175)

### ***Wahhabism in Afghanistan***

#### ***1 - Outline of the religious condition in Afghanistan***

The religion of 99% of the Afghan population is Islam. Among these, about 70 to 74 percent are Sunni who are mostly followers of Hanafi School and about 25 percent are Shiites. Hazara People constitute the majority of the Shiites. Hazara People live in the central areas of Afghanistan, and their center is the historic city of Bamyan. There is a small minority who are the followers of Ismaili sect. They are listed as 2 percent of the population.

#### ***The Taliban in Afghanistan***

The Taliban was founded by Mullah Muhammad Omar in Kandahar city in Afghanistan in 1994. They were mostly Pashtun. Taliban carried out the rigid religious laws of extremist Wahhabis. Taliban denied women and girls to get an education. They were opposed to every aspect of life, and they promoted the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan. (Makarem Shirazi, 2009)

#### ***The leaning of Afghan Sunni people toward the clerics in Pakistan***

Naturally with the lack of accredited seminaries and also prominent clerics, Afghan Sunni Muslims would plan to communicate with the closest Sunni religious schools. There are some options for the Afghans: 1- Pakistani madrassas 2- Religious schools in Egypt, especially Al-Azhar University as one of the oldest academic centers of the Islamic world 3- Saudi religious schools.

Afghans prefer education in Pakistani madrassas for some reasons: 1- Geographically being adjacent to Pakistan 2- Closeness of the two in terms of their Pashto language 3- The nearness of tribal regions of the two countries 4- Finding proper jobs 5- The low standard of living and low level of traffic in Pakistan. (Entezari. 2000)

#### ***Beliefs and activities wahhabism in Afghanistan***

Excommunication and killing of defenseless civilians who are brought to destruction for being accused of being Shiite. In areas where there was resistance against their aggression, they set fire to the farms, gardens and houses of the area. Wahhabis have started extensive activities in Afghanistan. Their cultural activities include teaching culture and beliefs of Wahhabism as well as books and articles on beliefs of Wahhabism in schools. And they create in those from whom they want to do suicidal activities an enthusiasm for going to heaven. (Rajai, 2009)

#### ***Wahhabism in Pakistan***

Wahhabism was established in Pakistan in the name of Islam and as a country particular to the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. Islam is the official religion of the country and 98 percent of Pakistan's population are followers of the religion. Majority of Muslims in Pakistan (77 percent) are Sunni Hanafi and 20 percent of the population are Shia. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).

Wahhabism is of the effective factors that has prevented the formation of an alliance between the Islamic countries. Wahhabi establishments were formally made since 1950, and they started to build mosques and large religious schools.

#### ***The main activities of this cult are as follows:***

- 1- Pakistan must be a completely Sunni country
- 2- Since the Shiites are not Muslim, they should be considered a minority
- 3- Pakistan must break up all its political and economic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran

In this regard, the initial conditions of recruitment and the entry into Sepah-e-Sahaba (the military arm of Wahhabism in Pakistan) is to assassinate one to three Shiites (Pishgahi Fard, 2008).

#### ***Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan***

Taliban movement, is a movement of scholars and seminarians of Afghan religious schools most of whom have studied in Pakistan. The number of these seminarians of religious sciences who have been studying Quranic Sciences and Hadith in Pakistan's cities and refugee camps in the two provinces (Baluchistan) and (Sarhad) in the past two decades reaches thousands. After the 1978 in communist coup in Afghanistan and then the occupation of this country by the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Afghan people moved to Pakistan from their towns and villages, and most of these people were settled in the camps which were founded by the Pakistani government and the United Nations with extensive financial support from Western and Arabic countries (Muhammad Sharifi, 2009).

#### ***akistan's role in the spread of terrorism***

Pakistan is one of the important countries that has had a significant impact on the growth of terrorism in the Middle East. This country has supported religious extremists at different levels. Pakistan's support of the religious extremists reached its peak during the occupation of Afghanistan. At this period, Pakistan by founding religious schools and supporting and organizing radical Islamist groups provided fertile ground for growth and spread of terrorism (Nik pey, 2010).

#### ***Wahhabism in Iraq***

Iraq is a country with a population of 34 million people, 62 percent of it is Shia and 34 percent is Sunni and the rest are the followers of other religions; this country belongs to the Middle East security complex and is a subset of Persian Gulf security complex. Iraq has never in its history, has decided for itself. In fact, throughout history, Iraqis have never been able to independently bring to power a government of their own, and even they have not been able to topple any government, and this has been always done by foreign intervention. (Pour Saeed, 2010)

#### ***Religious Challenges in Iraq***

Iraq is a country where different ethnic and religious groups are present in the community. Religious diversity, particularly Shia and Sunni, has made a special context of power and social changes in this country. The presence of Sunni minority at the top of the pyramid of power of Iraq's past history and extreme pressure on the Shiites of this country has caused many disputes. The triple nature of Iraqi population's identity (Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish), and the presence of citizens in independent parts, the geopolitical issue of Iraq, and the matter of how to deal with it, is a difficulty and a challenging problem. During the years following Iraq's independence, the presence of independent identities such as Kurdish, Sunni and Shiite and the extremist groups in the northern, middle and southern areas of the country and the matter of how to balance between them have constantly caused tensions at the local and regional level (Darvishi, 2011).

#### ***Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Qa'adah al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidain)***

Qa'adah al-Jihad Organization in the Land of Mesopotamia (in Arabic: Qa'adah al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidain) known as Iraq's Al-Qaeda is one of the most important insurgent fundamentalist groups present in Iraq which is known in most of the world as a terrorist group. Since the occupation of Iraq, this group has been doing sporadic terrorist operations and bombings. But more than attacking U.S. forces, they have been killing Iraqi forces and civilians of the country. Iraq's Al Qaeda was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in the past. After al-Zarqawi was killed in 2006, Abu Ayyub al-Masri was appointed as the leader of the organization. But Masri together with Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, another senior leader of the Organization, was killed in the attack of U.S. and Iraqi forces. This Organization was previously operating with the name of Jama'at al-Tawhid wa AL-Jihad and in October in 2004 an official statement announced its alliance with al-Qaeda. Al Qaeda claims that it is responsible for the leadership of more than 12000 armed intruders. (Wikipedia website)

#### ***The Council of Mujahedeen of Iraq***

The Council of mujahedeen of Iraq is led by Abu Omar al-Baghdadi; this Council was established in mid-2006 by foreign jihadist groups most of whose origin was non-Iraqi. Every organization whose main core is formed by al-Qaeda, is a terrorist organization. They claim the caliphate in Iraq. They have strong anti-Shia and anti-Iranian ideology in a way that in one of their audio tapes, they had given the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran two months in order to cut his relations with Iraq otherwise he would face a tough battle. Abu Omar al-Baghdadi was born in Baghdad in 1947 AD and at the age of eleven he became familiar with Wahhabi thoughts, and in 1985 officially joined the Wahhabi Extremist groups in Iraq. In 1987, influenced by the thoughts of Osama bin Laden he traveled to Afghanistan, And after three years of training in the camps of this organization he returned back to Iraq and was appointed as the commander of al-Qaeda in wars. Iraqi Army's was able to arrest him in fourth Persian date may 2009. (Delavarpoor, 2009)

### ***Ansar al-Sunna group***

Ansar al-Sunna is a strictly terrorist group and the founder of beheadings, mass executions and suicide bombings in Iraq which is extremely active in Provinces of Al-Anbar, Baghdad, and Mosul. The members of Ansar al-Sunna are Some Kurdish extremist groups and Arab Mujahedeen.

### ***Hizb ut-Tahrir***

The Socio-political situation of the Islamic world especially in the Middle East in the mid-twentieth century created the conditions to shape a movement in the name of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The party, led by Sheikh Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani was founded in Jerusalem in 1952 AD. One of the causes of the emergence of this idea was that they believed that the solution to all problems is to return back to the beginning circumstances of Islam and to follow the commandments of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). Hizb ut-Tahrir at the beginning of their activities announced that their ultimate goal is establishing an Islamic state, restoring the caliphate and restoring Islamic life, and also the goal of Iraq's Hizb ut-Tahrir is to create a Caliphate and expel the infidels from Iraq. This group is associated with (Qa'adah **al-Jihad** fi Bilad al-Rafidain) Organization and the areas where they operate are Diyala and some parts of Baghdad. And Hizb ut-Tahrir was also associated with Akhawan Al-Muslimeen, and the reason of this association was that Binhany studied in Al-Zahar when Akhawan Al-Muslimeen was under the leadership of Morshed Hassan al-Banna. (Hazrati, 2010)

## **CONCLUSION**

The more we go forward and experience more political and social changes, the more we will notice that we have been unaware of the role and position of the Wahhabism in today's world. Wahhabism is more than a normal sect and religion since they believe that all Muslims of the world are out of and deviated from Islam, and only they themselves are real Muslims. And with such thoughts they present a rough face of Islam. Wahhabi sect exists in various countries in the Middle East, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. The chaotic political, economic, and security conditions, the presence of Western forces, and failure to improve the security and livelihood of people living in these three countries have been very good excuses for the presence of extremist forces such as Taliban, Al Qaeda, Sepah-e-Sahaba, and etc., all of which have Wahhabi thinking. Pakistan's religious schools are the places for teaching Wahhabi thoughts and terrorism, and the suicidal issues have their roots in these schools. Terrorist attacks of Al-Qaeda in the September 11 caused the American occupation of Iraq. Most of terroristic operations are done in Iraq since the majority of the population and even the government of this country are Shia, and one of Wahhabi thoughts is to fight with and eradicate the Shiites.

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