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Wahhabi Islam

It is claimed that the Boston bombers were of Chechen origin and that they belonged to the **Salafist-Wahhabi Islamic sect**. Whether that is true or not, this is a suitable opportunity to inform MaozNews readers of the meaning of this strange term, "Wahhabi."



Islam is comprised of **two major denominations, Sunni and Shi'ite**. Shi'ite Islam is represented by Iran and Hezbollah, the latter in Lebanon. Sunni Islam represents by far the larger of the two.

Sunni Islam is itself divided into different streams, some moderate. Jihad, the promotion of Islam by the sword, is a basic tenet of all versions of the Moslem faith. Some Moslems have, however, modified the meaning of this concept. Influenced by the West, they now view jihad as the promotion of Islam by non-violent means.

Even among the more fundamentalist Moslems, not all are supportive of violence, although the concept is incipient in every stream of Islam and often finds practical expression even among the "moderates". The more fundamentalist a Moslem tends to be, the closer he is to the roots of Islam and therefore the more inclined to support violent jihad. It is sufficient to read something like Albert Hourani's *A HISTORY OF THE ARAB PEOPLES* (The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MASS. 1991) to note the extent to which **violence is inherent in and essential to Islamic culture**.

One major stream of fundamentalist Islam is the **Salafist Movement**. *Salaf* is an Arabic word meaning patriarchs, or ancestors. The Salafists represent a call back to the first three generations of Islam. They represent a strictly puritanical, literalistic version of Islam, described by the German Domestic Intelligence Service as the fastest growing version of Islam in the world. A large portion of those who ascribe to Salafist Islam openly calls for violent Jihad.

Salafism is **more of an ideology than a sect**, the most prominent branch of which is Wahhabism, represented and actively promoted by Saudi Arabia. Non-Wahhabi Salafists prefer to describe themselves merely as Salafists. There are sections of Salafism that are non-violent. In the nature of the case, they are less visible than their violent counterparts.

Wahhabistic Islam is primarily informed by the writings of Moslem jurist, Ahman ibn Hanbal (780-855) and by his professed interpreter, Moslem theologian, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328). It coalesced into a distinct stream of Islam under Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). Al-Wahhab's disciples gave his teachings a decidedly violent Jihadist bent.

Wahhabism began as a peaceful, revivalist movement, calling for **the purge of Islam from what were considered to be impurities**. Among other things, Al-Wahhab eschewed speculative philosophy, magic and the cult of saints and shrines. Some have charged the Wahhabi Saudi Government with destroying the Grand Mosque of Mecca.

Al-Wahhab lived in Nadj (now in Saudi Arabia), where the local Amir accorded him financial and political support. The alliance he forged with the House of Muhammad ibn-Saud transformed the Movement, ultimately according it unquestioned prominence in the Arab world. **Salafi-Wahhabism is now most actively represented by the royal House of Saud**, present rulers of Saudi Arabia.

In the course of the 18th century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the ibn Saudis engaged in **repeated military efforts to gain control of Arabia**, until defeated by the Turks in 1818, although they managed to gain and retain control of Mecca and Medina.

Saudi Arabia was founded following the First World War explicitly as a **Salafist-Wahhabi State**. One of the first actions of the Government was to establish the *Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice*, authorized to impose strict observance of conservative (Wahhabi) Islamic cultural and moral norms.

Since then Saudi Arabia has used its extensive financial resources in the promotion of Salafist-Wahhabistic Islam. It is estimated that **over 87 billion US Dollars have been invested so far** in the promotion of Islamic studies in Universities, the construction of mosques and madrasa's (schools of Islamic religious learning), the support of sympathetic Imams, the production and distribution of promotional publications and the defense of Moslems in Western courts. So, while the US courts Saudi support, Saudi Arabia is busy undermining those very values that made America what it once was and, to an extent, still is.



In the 1990s, the Movement supported Chechnya's struggle for independence, resulting in many embracing Salafi-Wahhabism. Radicalized mosques, madrasa's and military programs training for "jihad against the infidel" functioned openly. Resistance to Salafi-Wahhabism in Chechnya has proven ineffective because its **simplicistic, aggressive radicalism attracts many of the youth, eager to change the world**. Many Chechnyan men are now engaged in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, as they were in Libya. Others immigrated to the West, particularly to the USA, with the intention of swelling the number of committed Moslems in the West as a step toward its final take-over.

Al-Qaida and its many offshoots are Salafist-Wahhabi with a vengeance, organized and cooperating for the purpose of world jihad. Al-Qaida's founder, **Osama bin-Laden** was himself a Saudi, disenchanted with what he deemed to be the ruling Saudi family's tendency to compromise with the corrupt and decadent West, enraged by infidel presence on the holy soil of Saudi Arabia. The **Taliban** are likewise Salafist-Wahhabi, whose radical version of Islam sucks at the breasts of a defensive conservatism, frustrated by the successes of the West and the continued backwardness of the Islamic world.

I am grateful to Albrecht Hauser for advice in preparing this article. He is not responsible for any errors, if existent .

Orthodox Insist on Promoting Ignorance

The Orthodox community in Israel runs its own school system, significantly funded by the Government. Israel's core curriculum consists of minimal levels of Hebrew language competency, math, English, geography, history, science, civics and life skills, including computer literacy. Efforts to impose the core curriculum on Orthodox schools have so far failed. An overwhelming majority of Orthodox high schools **teach no secular subjects whatsoever**, and a limited number of them do so at the elementary level.

The new Minister of Finance, Yair Lapid, caused waves in the government even before joining the coalition. Having based his electoral campaign on the platform of justice for all; the abolition of special concessions to the ultra orthodox, presently exempt from military service as long as they study in a yeshiva (seminary); and reducing government expenditure – he made his party's participation in the governmental coalition conditional on a reduction of the size of government from 31 ministers to 21-- saving millions of tax payers shekels every month. Lapid also insisted on his party receiving the Education Portfolio.

Now, as Minister of Finance, Lapid has formulated a draft of the Economic Arrangements Law that includes **projected cutbacks in funds earmarked** for Orthodox yeshivas that decline to prepare students for matriculation or teach the core curriculum. These clauses have yet to pass the approval of the Knesset, but many concerned for Israel's economic future share the hope that they will lead to a greater integration of the Orthodox community into the workforce. If passed, these clauses will also secure the right of education to those who at present live on the fringes of the society.

At present, Orthodox schools operate with minimal or no governmental supervision, despite state funding. They receive between 55 and 75 percent of the budget allotted to non - Orthodox schools, depending on the number of students they have, and are expected to teach a corresponding proportion of the state core curriculum. In practice, this is extremely rare – the overwhelming majority of Orthodox schools do not teach secular subjects.

The Israeli High Court has ruled on the matter of core curriculum, and laws were enacted over the past 15 years, but were not implemented: few inspectors were employed, sanctions were not applied to schools that ignored the law and whose reports showed unrealistic student numbers. Lapid proposes a law that conditions public funding on teaching a core curriculum and participating in national placement exams to ensure students' progress. This is, in effect, a law enacted by David Ben Gurion in the first years of Israel's statehood, which was never enforced.

So why now? This is **the first time in years that Orthodox parties are not in Government**. Lapid's new party won a landslide in the recent elections, unexpectedly rising to become the second largest party in the Knesset. Without Lapid, the elected party (Likud, under Netanyahu) could not form a government. The stranglehold exercised by the Orthodox on the government was broken, clearing the way for long overdue reforms clamored for by the Israel public.

The Israeli educational system is divided into: 1. State schools, which correspond to the European or North American public school system; 2. State Religious Schools, for the

Modern Orthodox/Religious Zionist community that offer intensive Jewish studies, emphasizing tradition and observance, while teaching core subjects; 3. Arab schools, where Hebrew is taught as a second language; 4. and the so-called 'independent' schools for the Orthodox population, which teach only religious subjects.

The latter benefit from significant state funding while **opposing values cherished by the rest of the Jewish population**. Holocaust Memorial Day, for instance, is not observed. Israeli Independence Day is regarded as a fabrication of Zionists who had the temerity to create a Jewish state before the days of Messiah. In the few Orthodox schools that ostensibly teach the core curriculum, such studies are given low priority and are sub-standard. Young people who graduate from these schools are incapable of entering the workforce and becoming independent or entering the mainstream of society.

The Orthodox, **a fast growing sector of society**, currently 10 percent of the population, and 21 percent of primary school children, seek to live as an isolated, religiously observant Jewish community. This state of affairs has long rankled with the rest of the population.

The country is now waiting to see if Lapid will succeed in pushing through the reforms he has promised. It is to be expected that each of these will be fiercely opposed by the Orthodox leaders, who fear that their authority and hold on their own community will be **undermined by exposure to the Israeli secular society**. It remains to be seen whether they can be brought into the 22nd century and become profitable citizens of the Jewish state.

Shai Piron, the new Minister of Education, himself a Rabbi and an observant, religious Jew, has declared his intention to succeed. He supports **making State funding contingent on the inclusion of the core curriculum** into the schools' program.

In response, senior Orthodox leaders convened a conference on April 22nd to discuss ways in which Piron's plans may be overturned. Some have described Piron as "**the most dangerous man in Israel** for the Orthodox community."



The Council of Torah Sages of the Agudat Yisrael movement, which represents the Hassidic strain of Israel's Orthodox population, called on the government not to interfere in Orthodox education: "We are **commanded to stand firm against** attempts by the authorities to force changes, God forbid, through the temptation of [state] funds or threats to cut off such funding," the Council declared.

The notice **forbids any changes in the content of studies at Orthodox elementary and high schools**, prohibits the teaching of core curriculum subjects, and forbids students from working towards the state high-school diploma or academic degrees not approved by Agudat Yisrael's Committee of Rabbis for Education.

The Council further required school administrators to **ensure that teachers do not participate in (secular) academic studies**, and that Orthodox young women should not study in universities or colleges where the state high-school diploma or academic degrees are earned.

The Orthodox spiritual leadership views its version of education the bedrock of its community and the means by which Orthodox identity is defined. For this reason, Orthodox leadership has fiercely guarded the independence of their educational system. Their concern is that exposure to non-religious subjects will **create irresistible temptations**, opening the door to more extensive contact with the secular world. They prefer to create a cultural and educational ghetto, enclosing their young people and securing them from the world.

Israeli Navy Deploys Unmanned Vessel

The Protector, **an Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV)**, developed by Israeli Rafael Advanced Defense Systems in collaboration with the Israeli naval forces and put into highly successful operation about a year ago, has recently been unveiled. The Protector has already **proven its mettle** in protecting Israel's coastline, details of which events have not been disclosed.



The vessel is 9.1 meters long and 3.2 meters wide. It can reach a speed of 30 knots (almost 55 kilometers per hour) and has high maneuverability, including a 90 degree turn on the spot.

Operated remotely from an on-land control room, the USV is equipped with a GPS system, electrical compasses, a loudspeaker system for announcements to apprehended vessels, day and night 360 degree surveillance capabilities, and an effective weapons system, stabilized against the motion of the waves so that it is able to lock onto a target and keep it in its sights. The USV **is capable of continuous operation for days**, and has so low a profile it is nearly invisible to radar.

The Navy intends to purchase and deploy more such vessels in the near future.

To view a short video of the Protector (English subtitles), [click on this link](#).

Syria

We live in a time when conflicts in obscure parts of the world no longer stay where they began. With modern transportation, the worldwide web and communication, the world is now a global community. What happens at the other end of the world involves us more intimately than we may realize. For Europeans, the war in Syria may seem far. Apart from shaking our heads at statistics of yet another atrocity committed by a besieged government or rebels, most of us remain complacent in the knowledge that the fighting is far. We assume our home is safe.

According to Soeren Kern of the New York-based Gatestone Institute, a longtime observer of Islam in Europe, **this attitude is dangerously naive**. The war is in fact on our doorsteps. In

March, Kern published an article titled “European Jihadists: the Latest Export” in which he wrote that Syria “has replaced Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia as the main destination for militant Islamists seeking to obtain immediate combat experience with little or no official scrutiny.”

This report, which quotes EU anti-terror chief Gilles de Kerchove, hundreds of Muslims from Europe have joined the fighting in Syria. A Dutch television report claims that about 100 Dutch Muslims are active in Syria, with most having joined the al-Qaida linked *Nusra Front*. Many more come from Belgium, Ireland and the UK. It seems increasingly evident that al-Qaida is linked with the rebels, the implications being that **European Muslims are firming contact with that organization** and gaining practical fighting experience and know-how. The likelihood that they will return to Europe – and from there to the rest of the West - to carry out terrorist attacks is very real.

Over the past years, Europeans have shown **increasing concern with growing Islamization** due to immigrants pouring in from Arab and African countries. Unlike immigrants in the past, these resist assimilation and are increasingly radicalizing in reaction to what they consider to be the licentiousness of western society. Once at the forefront of Christian reform, countries such as Holland, France and Sweden are now increasingly pagan, denying the truth of Christianity. Radical Islam is stepping in to the vacuum. What does this new development say about the future of Europe?

Ministry and Family News

Progress on **Micah** has been well beyond my expectations. I have completed the first and second drafts of this book. Final draft should not take up much time, following which I intend to translate the material into English, for use in the expository seminars I expect to teach in the course of our oncoming visit to the US and for possible publication.

Work on the limited vocabulary **Hebrew Bible (NT)** is also progressing well – I’m nearing the end of the first draft of the Gospel of Matthew. On the whole, there have not been insurmountable difficulties, but decisions need to be made.

The Hebrew New Testament produced by the United Bible Societies was informed by a loose, at times almost paraphrastic approach to translation. In order to render the translation more obviously Jewish, it omitted various phrases and consistently used the common version of the Old Testament (known as the Masoretic text), as if Jesus and the apostles used that text, which was non-extant at the time. The fact that the New Testament quotes from the Septuagint and from other unknown sources, at times providing the sense of the text rather than a quote, was completely ignored.

Although directed at youth, our translation does not follow that course but seeks to render the Greek text as faithfully as our linguistic limitations allow. We believe in the power of the word of God to do its own work, and refuse to modify it to meet our potential readers’ expectations.

This creates challenges. For example, when Matthew presents Jesus’ genealogy, he speaks of Asaph when he means Asa and of Amos when he means Amon. What do we do? Do we render Matthew according to what we believe he should have said, or do we render the text as faithfully as we know how? To ask the question is to answer it. We dare not edit the word of God. We dare not alter it in the slightest bit.

Another issue has to do with how we relate to our translation of the Old Testament in the same series. Do we quote that translation when the New Testament seems to be nuancing rather than merely quoting from it? For example, speaking of the birth of Emmanuel in Isaiah

7:14, the prophet uses a Hebrew word (*Almah*) that means “young woman.” This *could* refer to a virgin, but not necessarily so. On the other hand, Matthew uses a Greek word (*parthenos*) which can only mean a virgin. Do we render the Hebrew by the Greek, the Greek by the Hebrew, or do we remain true to each language in its context?

By the time I’ve completed this project, I will come to know God’s word in a more intimate way than ever before. For this I am thankful.

Members of our family are all well. **Eran** visited Israel to see his ailing mother, who could definitely be helped by our prayers. **Rose’s** mother is also poorly and needs our prayers. It is moving to see how tenderly and how intelligently they both cared for their parents.

Avishai, just about two years old, has developed an uncanny ability to work at what we wants. One night he woke his father up crying, “My blanket! My blanket! Where my blanket?” Bleary-eyed, Marcus got up and began looking for Avishai’s blanket. After some time he gave up and said to Avishai: “I don’t know where your blanket is. Where is your blanket?” “Here!” pronounced Avishai, and proceeded to pull the blanket out from where he had hidden it. Frustrated and tired, Marcus put the child to bed and went back to sleep.

Some time later, Avishai was at his parents’ bed again, this time at Tamar’s side of the bed. “My blanket! My blanket! Where my blanket?” Tamar had slept through the earlier episode, of which she knew nothing. She got up and proceeded to search for the blanket. Failing to find it, she turned to Avishai: “I can’t find your blanket, Avishai. Go to bed.” The little chap proffered: “Abba get it.” Assuming he meant that Marcus had for some reason taken the blanket, she woke him up to ask for the blanket, only to be informed of Avishai’s mischievous ideas ...



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