

A COMPARATIVE GUIDE

Wahhabism



Qutbism

Overview

Established in the 18th Century AD by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Al Wahhab in Saudi Arabia. The theological movement is a result of Muslims straying away from foundational aspects of the Quran. It is a conservative movement that rejects all non-Islamic influences.

Established through the writings of Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) as a religious and political movement in Egypt. This movement was built upon the political Muslim brotherhood movement. It is considered anti-western and is theologically against anything not aligned with Islamic fundamentalism.

Similarities

Both movements have a great many similarities in thinking and outcomes. Wahhabism and Qutbism are followers of Sunni Islam and consider Shiites either not true Muslims or *Jahiliyya*. The two movements both narrow the definitions of what is a Muslim in order to justify violence against Muslims without violating *fitna* (the killing of fellow Muslims). The movements abhor secular influence and the presence of Israel on a holy site and the presence of western militaries like the United States is an affront to Islam. Both advocate for the establishment (or re-establishment) of Sharia Law, the rejection of polytheism or any Sufi influences, and they both have elements that believe in the proper use of Jihad and the establishment of true Islamic practices. Once the Muslim Brotherhood was pushed out of Egypt fundamental Wahhabis and Qutbists found common ground leading to a combination of the movements into a theological ideology that inevitability helped with the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq.

Views on Political Involvement

Wahhabism was grown in Saudi Arabia and has had close historical ties to the royal Saudi family. The establishment of the 3rd Saudi State in 1902 allowed the theological ideology to step back from offensive Jihad and let the "legitimate" Saudi government worry about politics and conflicts. An element of Wahhabism views politics as important which led to the creation of Al-Qaeda. However, generally, Wahhabism has forsaken political involvement forbidding *fitna*.

Qutbism spawned from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt which was an inherently political and anti-colonial movement. However, it deviated from the movement by diving into the fundamentalist theology and rejecting any non-Islamic State. It views Islam and politics as the same and advocates for violence against un-Islamic governments.

Views on Jihad

Wahhabism traditionally views jihad as primarily defensive. However, the movement recognizes offensive jihad as legitimate it should be conducted for expanding Islamic rule under legitimate (Wahhabist) state authority. The definition of defensive Jihad is where many Wahhabists can disagree. Jihad against Israel is seen as defensive but the Wahhabist element of Al-Qaeda viewed it's attacks on the United States as defensive.

Qutbism promotes offensive, revolutionary jihad. This meant that all modern secular states and all modern "Islamic" nations were in a state of *Jahiliyah*. Thus, offensive jihad against secular and "Islamic" nations is a necessary step to return to fundamental Islam. This justifies both offensive and defensive Jihad on non-Muslims (like the United States and Israel) but also on any Muslims deemed to not follow the strict elements of Islamic fundamentalism.

View on an Islamic State

Wahhabism's roots in Saudi Arabia and the royal family influence the traditional Wahhabist views on what consists of an Islamic State. They view it as a monarchical or authoritarian system allied with Wahhabist religious scholars. They emphasize loyalty to the ruler as long as they uphold basic Islamic practice but typically view all other non-Wahhabists with disdain. Extremists within the Wahhabist movement take influence from Qutbism and align with political movements.

Qutbism radically declares modern societies, including most Muslim ones, as in *Jahiliyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance) due to submission to man-made laws over God's sole sovereignty. The true Islamic State must be established through a revolutionary conflict waging offensive jihad to overthrow *Jahiliyah* regimes and impose pure divine rule via comprehensive Sharia. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria then is a manifestation of many elements found in traditional Qutbism (though there are differences).

Views on the Muslim Brotherhood

Wahhabism from the start was at odds with the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim brotherhood views Jihad as only defensive and never to be conducted against states that allow the freedom to follow Islam. Since Wahhabism strictly interprets who actually is Islamic this is in direct odds to the Muslim Brotherhood's aversion to domestic terrorism. Additionally, Wahhabists believe modern political concepts are too westernized and are incompatible to true Islamists

Qutbism started within the Muslim Brotherhood organization and many Qutbists split from the Muslim Brotherhood to follow the more fundamentalist views. The Muslim Brotherhood is a modern Muslim movement that incorporates many different sects of Islam by blending Islamic principles with modern political concepts. The Qutbists view any secular philosophies and many sects of Islam as incompatible and in *Jahiliyah*.