



A Critical Analysis of the Wahhabi Doctrine and Its Rejection in the Indonesian Context

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Abstract

This article aims to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of Wahhabism by examining its historical roots, theological foundations, and social implications, particularly in the context of Indonesia. Wahhabism, founded by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab in the 18th century, promotes a strict, literal interpretation of Islamic texts and emphasizes purifying Islam from practices it considers as innovations (*bid'ah*). This study adopts a qualitative methodology based on library research, utilizing a range of scholarly sources including books, peer-reviewed articles, and historical documents. The findings suggest that Wahhabism tends to be exclusivist and frequently engages in *takfir*, or the practice of declaring other Muslims as unbelievers. Although it has spread to Indonesia through transnational educational and financial networks backed by Saudi Arabia, its rigid doctrines have been strongly rejected by the majority of Indonesian Muslims. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), in particular, opposes Wahhabi ideology and offers Islam Nusantara as a culturally rooted and inclusive alternative. The study concludes that Wahhabism is incompatible with Indonesia's pluralistic and multicultural religious landscape and recommends reinforcing moderate and contextual Islamic narratives in public and scholarly discourse.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memberikan analisis komprehensif dan kritis terhadap Wahabisme dengan menelaah akar sejarah, landasan teologis, serta implikasi sosialnya, khususnya dalam konteks Indonesia. Wahabisme, yang didirikan oleh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab pada abad ke-18, mengusung pemahaman Islam yang ketat dan literal serta berupaya memurnikan ajaran Islam dari praktik-praktik yang dianggap sebagai bid'ah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, dengan mengandalkan sumber-sumber ilmiah seperti buku, jurnal, dan dokumen sejarah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Wahabisme cenderung bersifat eksklusif dan sering melakukan takfir, yaitu mengkafirkan sesama Muslim yang berbeda pandangan. Meski disebarkan ke Indonesia melalui jaringan pendidikan dan dana yang didukung Arab Saudi, ajaran ini mendapat penolakan kuat dari mayoritas Muslim Indonesia. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) secara khusus menolak ideologi Wahabi dan menawarkan Islam Nusantara sebagai alternatif yang inklusif dan berakar pada budaya lokal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Wahabisme tidak sesuai dengan kondisi keberagaman di Indonesia yang plural dan multikultural, serta merekomendasikan penguatan narasi Islam moderat dan kontekstual dalam wacana publik dan akademik.

Kata Kunci: Wahabi; Islam Nusantara; Puritanisme; Takfir; Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

Introduction

The Wahabi movement, also known as Salafi, is often associated with a harsh form of Islam. Epistemologically and dialectically, this movement is traditional, puritanical, and interprets texts literally with a mystical textual approach and does not consider the values of reality that exist in society (Esposito, 2003; Haykel, 2005). Over time, this teaching has caused much controversy and even social conflict because the values it adheres to often conflict with cultural norms, moderate modern humanitarian values, and the development of Islamic civilization and thought that is increasingly advanced today (Kepel, 2002; Mamdani, 2004).

In light of these problems, the Wahhabi movement, backed by Saudi Arabia, has transitioned to a more diplomatic approach in disseminating its doctrines to facilitate broader acceptance among the community (Voll, 1994; Tibi, 1998). This is what renders this school of thinking more prominent, despite its status as a minority among Sunni factions in Indonesia.

In terms of thought, this school of thought adopts the views of Ibn Taimiyah who was enthusiastic about carrying out reforms with the aim of purifying Islamic faith (Saeed, 2006). However, methodologically, Wahabis often make mistakes in drawing conclusions, such as considering branch issues (*furū'*) as basic issues (*ushul*). As a result, they often label groups with different opinions on issues that are actually branch differences or *khilafiyah* (Haykel, 2005; Kepel, 2002). According to the author, Wahhabism is an extremist group that not only endangers fellow Muslims who have

different schools of thought, but also poses a risk to the harmony of the community as a whole.

article aims to examine and academically test various arguments related to the history of the emergence of the Wahabi movement, the main ideas of its founder Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab, the definition of kufr that he set, the similarities and differences of his thoughts with Ibn Taimiyyah, the criticism and support directed at him, the development of the spread of the Wahabi ideology today to the rejection that occurred in Indonesia, and the classification of Wahabi groups based on their movements. The type of research used is a literature study, which involves a series of data collection activities from written sources. The data is then analyzed systematically and dialectically with the aim of building a theoretical basis, framework of thought, and research hypothesis. This approach allows researchers to deeply understand the problems to be studied through grouping, associating, and organizing data.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach using the method of library research (literature review) to critically examine the doctrines of Wahhabism and their reception in the Indonesian context. The choice of this method is grounded in the nature of the research problem, which necessitates a comprehensive and critical analysis of textual sources related to the historical, theological, and sociopolitical dimensions of Wahhabism. Data for this research were collected from a wide range of written sources, including classical and contemporary books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and verified historical documents that discuss the emergence, development, and influence of Wahhabi thought. The collected data were not merely summarized but analyzed through a dialectical and systematic process that seeks to identify patterns, contradictions, and socio-religious implications of Wahhabi ideology.

The dialectical method employed in this study involves the synthesis of opposing arguments to achieve a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the subject matter. By engaging with both primary and secondary sources, the researchers were able to critically examine the theological premises of Wahhabism, such as its interpretation of *tawhīd* (monotheism), *takfīr* (excommunication), and rejection of traditional jurisprudence (*madhhab*) and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*). Additionally, the study investigates the social and political mechanisms by which Wahhabism has been disseminated, particularly through alliances with state powers like the Saudi regime and transnational religious institutions. These contextual considerations were essential for understanding how Wahhabism has been localized, contested, and resisted within Indonesian Islamic discourse.

The analytical process also incorporated elements of thematic categorization, in which key concepts and patterns—such as doctrinal rigidity, puritanism, rejection of local traditions, and the reaction of moderate Islamic organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama—were identified and organized. This allowed for a comprehensive portrayal of the dynamics surrounding Wahhabism's reception in Indonesia. The methodology

thus bridges textual and contextual analysis to provide an academically rigorous account of Wahhabi doctrine and its sociocultural implications. Ultimately, this approach aims not only to describe but also to evaluate critically the epistemological and practical challenges posed by Wahhabism to pluralistic and culturally grounded interpretations of Islam in Indonesia..

Results and Discussion

Genesis of the Emergence of Wahhabism

Wahabi or Salafi is known as a sect in Islam which has puritanical, exclusive, fundamentalist, revivalist, textualist and traditionalist characteristics. This sect was founded by Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rasyid al-Tamimi, better known as Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab (Al-Jundul, 1979: 20). He was born in the hamlet of Uyainah, Nejd in 1703 and died in 1787 in the same place. At the beginning of his education, he learned to memorize the Koran and studied various religious knowledge from his own father. Then, he traveled to study in several places, from Hijaz, Basrah, to Baghdad. In Baghdad, he married a rich woman who died five years later. Next, he continued his search for knowledge in Kurdistan, Hamdan, and Isfahan before finally returning to his hometown (Nasution, 1975: 23).

Ibn Sayf was Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab's teacher in the study of Sahih Bukhari who is believed to have had a major influence in shaping his theological and jurisprudential thinking. Through intellectual pathways that can be traced, Ibn Sayf's thinking has its roots all the way back to Ibn Taymiyyah. This chain of transmission involved figures such as Abdul Qadir bin Umar al-Taghlubi al-Hanbali, Abdul Baqi ibn Abdul Baqi al-Dimashqi, Ahmad al-Wafa'i al-Muflihi al-Hanbali, Musa ibn Ahmad al-Hajjawi al-Hanbali, al-Shihab al-Askari, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and finally arrived to Ibn Taymiyyah (al-Ghamidi, 2007: 92). One concrete proof of the strong influence of Ibn Sayf on Ibn Abdul Wahab is his tough stance on smoking and several other fiqh issues which are also reflected in the views of his students (Al-Tuwaym, 2002: 69).

After completing his intellectual journey to various regions, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab returned to his hometown in Najd to reflect on the experiences and knowledge he had gained. From this process of reflection, he began to spread his teachings, especially the concept of pure monotheism, which then attracted attention and was followed by many people, both from within and outside the Najd region. However, a number of his views were rejected, including from his own family who did not agree with some of his religious ideas (Hanafi, 1980: 149).

The teachings of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab, which initially spread slowly, gradually caused unrest among the Muslim community, triggering quite serious unrest. As a result of this tension, he was finally expelled by the local authorities. Together with his family, he then moved to Dar'iyah—an area where Muhammad ibn Saud lived, a local leader who had previously accepted the teachings of Wahhabism and was willing to provide protection and support for his missionary movement (Gibb & Kramers, 1953: 618).

Political support from Muhammad ibn Saud provided significant strength for the spread of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab's teachings, so that his movement grew rapidly and widely. The relationship between the two can be understood as a form of mutual symbiosis: on the one hand, Abdul Wahab received protection and political legitimacy from the Saud family in spreading his reformist teachings, while on the other hand, the Saud family utilized the spirit of Wahabi religious revivalism to strengthen their power in order to conquer the Arabian Peninsula. This collaboration then gave birth to the first Saudi Kingdom in the last quarter of the 18th century (Waskito, 2011: 189).

The rise of the Saudi Kingdom was marked by an important agreement between Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab and the Saud family, in which the Wahhabi followers, including Abdul Wahab himself, focused on managing religious affairs, while political affairs became the exclusive domain of the Saud family. This division of roles has persisted until today (Waskito, 2011: 189). Answering the question of why the Wahabi ideology still survives and spreads widely until now, it can be explained through this relationship pattern: the combination of religious ideology and support from political power creates a strong foundation for the sustainability of a school of thought. This phenomenon can also be found in the history of other thoughts such as the Mu'tazilah, Shia, and various other contemporary ideologies that gain legitimacy from political power (Atthahara, 2020: 85–100).

The Historical Context of the Wahhabi Revival in Indonesia

The emergence of a fairly extreme religious ideology in Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order regime was Wahhabism. In an activity organized by one of the GP Ansor Regional Administrators in the Sumatra region, the General Chairperson of PBNU at that time, KH. Said Aqil Siradj, emphasized that Wahhabism was a serious threat to the sustainability of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). Although Wahabi followers cannot be directly categorized as terrorists, the teachings of Wahhabism provide a strong theological basis for the birth of various acts of violence and terrorism (Shidqi, 2013).

The Wahabi movement began to grow rapidly after an agreement between Ibn Abdul Wahab and Ibn Saud, in which Ibn Saud agreed to support the spread of the teachings. In 1746, the Wahabi-Saud alliance officially declared jihad against anyone who held a monotheistic view that was not in line with theirs. As a result, accusations of polytheism, apostasy, and infidelity began to be launched massively, accompanied by acts of violence. About fifteen years after the declaration, almost the entire Arabian Peninsula was under the control of the Wahabi group. The influence of this movement also spread, not only becoming the main ideology of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but also spreading to various parts of the world, including Indonesia, through financial support and systematic dissemination strategies, even using violence in the form of terrorism (Wahid, 2009).

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Syafi'i Mufid, as the Head of the Jakarta Province Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB), identified eight indicators that reflect the level of radicalism in Indonesia. First, hatred towards the Indonesian government because it is considered not to implement Islamic law. Second, rejection of state symbols such as the National Anthem Indonesia Raya and respect for the flag. Third, emotional ties within the group are more dominant compared to ties to family, educational institutions, or the workplace. Fourth, religious study activities and the cadre formation process are carried out behind closed doors in hidden places that reflect an attitude of self-isolation. Fifth, the obligation to pay for atonement. Sixth, the use of certain clothing that is claimed to be in accordance with Islamic teachings. Seventh, the view that Muslims outside their group are considered wicked or infidels before joining (migrating) with the group. Eighth, reluctance to listen to lectures from outside the group even though their understanding of Islamic teachings is still very limited. (Wahid, 2009) .

If we trace its historical roots, the penetration of Wahabi teachings in Indonesia began to be seen since the end of the 18th century, when the Wahabi puritanism began to spread. The first group to be influenced was the Padri in the Sumatra region. This began in 1803, when three hajj pilgrims — Hadji Miskin from Pandai Sikat (Luhak Agam), Hadji Sumanik from Luhak Tanah Datar, and Hadji Piabang — departed for Mecca. There, they came into contact with the political and religious dynamics that were in turmoil due to the attacks and strong influence of the Wahabis who at that time were suspected of having taken significant control of Mecca. The three figures were then impressed by the Wahabi teachings that offered absolute religious purity. Because of this, they are often seen as spreaders or agents of Wahabis in Indonesia. This kind of pattern continues to repeat itself until today, namely through sending young people to study in Saudi Arabia — facilitated by the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (DDII) among others — who after returning home, are thought to have brought with them the influence of Wahabi thought (Andreas, nd, p. 273).

The Substance of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab's Thought

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab in his view associated himself with the Hanbali school, but more specifically he was considered to have revived the teachings of Ibn Taimiyyah (Shihabuddin, 2007, p. 18) . This assessment is based on a number of similarities found between the two, both in the method of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an which tend to be textual and literal, as well as in their puritanical mindset. In addition, both also showed the same spirit in carrying out reforms to religious practices (Shihabuddin, 2007, pp. 12–14) . In addition, this is also supported by evidence that Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab intensively wrote and quoted the works of Ibn Taimiyyah, where some of these manuscripts are still stored in a museum in London, England (Basit, nd, p. 55) .

In the context of Islamic Jurisprudence, the thoughts of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab contain their own problems. On the one hand, there seems to be encouragement from him so that Muslims do not get trapped in the practice of blind

taqlid, and direct them to switch from *taqlid lil-madzhah* to *taqlid lil-manhaj* . However, on the other hand, there is the fact that he himself often issued verdicts of heresy, even infidelity, to fuqaha who have different views from him, both in the matter of branches (*furu'*) within the Hanbali school of thought, and even more so to scholars outside the school of thought (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 59) .

In relation to this, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab believed that the schools of jurisprudence were the result of human thought that was relative in nature. Because of its non-absolute nature, he considered that the formulators of the schools of thought also had the potential to make mistakes in their *ijtihad*. This view then gave rise to a tendency to reject all established schools of jurisprudence in religious practice, with the assumption that each individual in his group was considered to have the capacity to carry out *ijtihad* independently. (Shah, 2002, p. 40) .

In the realm of Sufism, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab's rejection seems more firm compared to his attitude towards the science of Islamic jurisprudence. One example is seen in his response to the thoughts of Ibn Arabi, who is known to be of the nature of philosophical Sufism. He not only considered Ibn Arabi's teachings as heretical, but also explicitly declared him an infidel. In fact, in his view, anyone who is reluctant to declare Ibn Arabi an infidel is also included in the group of infidels. (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 25) .

The attitude of blasphemy taken by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab was apparently not limited to certain figures. In his various statements, he also blasphemed a number of communities, including the people of Mecca, Ihsa', Anzah, and Dhufair (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 123) , Uyainah, Dar'iyah (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 57) , Wasym and Sudair (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 77) . The most controversial attitude of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab was when he equated the majority of Muslims at that time - who had different views from him - with the polytheists of Quraysh who opposed the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. He considered that the deviation of the people's faith at that time was equivalent to the form of polytheism carried out by the infidels of Quraysh during the time of the prophethood (Al-Najdi, 1989, p. 170) .

Of course, in the context of these takfir verdicts, this cannot be separated from the wrong premise in understanding the concept of monotheism which Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab believed in and used as a basis. The understanding of monotheism that he adheres to tends to be narrow and rigid, thus denying the diversity of interpretations in the Islamic tradition, and becomes the basis for the disbelief of those who differ in his views. (Shihabuddin, 2007, pp. 15–57) .

A. *Rububiyah*

Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab interpreted that both Muslims and non-Muslims truly acknowledge the existence of Allah. He assumed that even the infidels do not reject the existence of Allah as the creator, provider, and organizer of the universe. However, this assumption is terminologically incorrect, because in the history of thought, there have been a number of

philosophers who completely rejected the existence of God and instead argued that the universe is eternal and uncreated.

B. The Great

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C. Asma' wa Sifat

In the division of the concept of monotheism, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab has a similar view to Ibn Taimiyyah, especially in terms of rejecting the interpretation of verses related to the attributes of Allah. For example, when the Qur'an mentions that Allah "sits on the Throne", they understand the text in a literal sense without interpretation. This kind of literal interpretation has an impact on violating a number of theological rules in determining the attributes of Allah. As a result, Wahabi thinking tends to fall into the mujassimah style, namely a view that equates the attributes of Allah with the attributes of creatures, such as the belief that Allah has a direction or is physically above.

Determining the Limits of Infidelity According to Wahhabism

The debate on the limits of worship is one of the main points of contention between the Wahabi movement and other groups such as Ahlus Sunnah. This difference requires an in-depth study of the definition of worship itself, as well as determining its limits according to the Wahabi perspective, considering that this view has significant implications both theoretically and practically.

In a number of his works, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab views that all forms of respect, humility, or efforts to seek blessings fall into the category of worship. According to him, the act of paying respect to a prophet, saint, sheikh, or even to certain objects, is understood as a form of servitude to someone other than Allah. Therefore, the perpetrator is considered to have committed an act of shirk. This view is rooted in the concept of uluhiyyah which he formulated, although this concept is considered to have weaknesses in terms of coherence. This inconsistency is reflected in one of his documented personal letters, where he explicitly states: *Whoever desires something from graves, trees, stars, angels or Messengers, with the aim of obtaining benefits or eliminating harm, then he has made them a God other than Allah. This means that he lied when he said, 'There is no other God Allah'. He must be asked to repent. If he repents, he is released; but if no, then he must be killed* (Ridho, 1983, p. 26) .

The view of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab, which is considered to have fundamental weaknesses, has given rise to a number of serious theoretical consequences. *First*, for example, if the limits of worship that he formulated are applied analogously, then indirectly it will lead to the disbelief of all angels—except

Satan—because they are ordered to prostrate as a form of respect for the Prophet Adam AS. The act of prostration, which in this context is not worship, is actually understood by Wahhabism as a form of servitude, thus giving rise to significant theological contradictions (QS Al-Baqoroh: 34) (Unggul Purnomo Aji & Kerwanto, 2023, p. 52) .

Second, if this premise is applied consistently, then logically Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab would also consider all of the brothers of the Prophet Yusuf AS to have committed disbelief when they prostrated themselves to Yusuf as a form of respect. In fact, in the context of this story, the prostration referred to is not a form of worship, but rather an expression of respect that is sharia-sanctioned in the previous sharia (*syar' man qablana*), so it cannot necessarily be categorized as shirk (QS Yusuf: 100).

Third, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab also implicitly sentenced religious practices that involve an element of respect for certain objects, such as respect for the Haram Land, the holy months, or the act of kissing the Black Stone. *Fourth*, he also disbelieves anyone who performs tawasul or tabarruk to other than Allah (Unggul Purnomo Aji & Kerwanto, 2023, p. 52) . In fact, there is authentic history showing that the Prophet Muhammad SAW himself once performed tabarruk through his companions, such as when he used the water left over from the Muslim ablutions to purify himself and drank it in the hope of receiving blessings. This is as narrated in al-Haitsami's *Majma' al -Zawā'id*, Juz 1, Hadith No. 1071.

From the description above, it can be concluded that Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab and his militant followers do not seem to have a complete and definitive understanding of the meaning of worship, especially regarding its limitations and essence. They tend to get caught up in literal interpretations based solely on external observations. As a result, they generalize and justify without going through a methodological argumentation process. This then leads to the labeling of individuals or groups who carry out worship practices that are not in line with their views as heretical, polytheistic, and even infidel (Shihabuddin, 2007, p. 30).

Indonesian-Muslim Communities Who Reject Wahhabism

In the last decade, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) began to reorient itself towards national politics, after previously being involved in practical politics (Robin, 2009, p. 45) . In this context, NU expressed its rejection of radical Wahhabi movements (Syafiq, 2011, p. 3) . The concept of “ *Islam Nusantara* ” was then raised as a distinctive Indonesian Islamic identity rooted in local traditions and the legacy of the Walisongo preaching.

The term Nusantara refers to the unity of the Indonesian territory in the past, as understood since the Majapahit era. This idea emerged especially after the 33rd NU Congress in 2015, which was motivated by concerns about the increasing radicalism labeled as religion and the rampant acts of terror (van Bruinessen, 2013, pp. 21–22). The emergence of public questions about the teachings of Wahhabism and the tendency to accuse fellow Muslims of being infidels also strengthened the urgency of

mainstreaming Islam Nusantara (Einar, nd, pp. 20–21) . In his interview, KH. Musthofa Bisri or Gus Mus explained that Islam Nusantara is Islam inherited from the Walisongo—a religion that is peaceful, harmonious, and brings blessings to the entire universe (NU Online, nd).

If previously the idea of indigenization of Islam only echoed as discourse, now Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) has raised it to a more systematic stage, namely as a methodology of preaching. This idea is rooted in the thoughts of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as Gus Dur, emphasized that the indigenization of Islam is a process of internalizing Islamic values into local cultural forms. (Wahid, 2006, p. 71) . Syaiful Arif strengthens this view by stating that the indigenization of Islam is a way of representing Islam through the cultural expression of the local community (Arif, 2016).

The author also emphasizes that the concept of indigenization of Islam should not be misinterpreted as a form of syncretism, as alleged by the Wahhabi group. In a historical context, Islam entered the Nusantara region around the 13th century and experienced rapid spread until the 15th century. The spread took place peacefully, through a polite, inclusive, and non-violent approach. This approach allowed Islam to be widely accepted by society and slowly replace previous major religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Along the way, Islam also acculturated with local cultures, especially Javanese culture, without losing the substance of its teachings (Azra, 2002, pp. 45–47) .

Ultimately, Islam in the archipelago accommodates various local traditions as part of the contextualization process of Islamic teachings, one of which is through the practice of grave pilgrimage. This tradition is not seen as a form of polytheism or syncretism, but rather as an expression of respect for ancestors and religious figures who have contributed to the spiritual and social life of Muslim society. This practice reflects the inclusive nature of Islam in the archipelago and respects local cultural values as long as they do not conflict with the basic principles of monotheism (Arif, 2016, p. 53).

The author argues that Wahhabism reflects a rigid and conservative form of religiosity, which rejects change and is not in line with the character of Indonesian society, which is rich in local values and cultural wisdom inherited from ancestors. In the reality of the world, which is now continuously driven by the flow of globalization, global society has developed into a multicultural and multi-religious community, where interconnectedness between humans is inevitable. Therefore, the existence of a rigid doctrine such as Wahhabism is irrelevant and indicates a decline in the face of Indonesian Islam, which has been known to be inclusive and adaptive to local values (Arif, 2016, p. 64) .

Wahhabism has been the target of sharp criticism from traditional Sunni circles. Many scholars and intellectuals from the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah environment have criticized it because it is considered to deviate from the main teachings of Sunni Islam, promotes extreme attitudes, and encourages violence in the name of religion. Religious institutions such as Al-Azhar in Cairo firmly reject Wahhabism, even some

of its members call this teaching "the teaching of Satan ". Likewise, Nahdlatul Ulama as the largest Sunni Islamic organization in the world considers Wahhabism to be a fanatical and misleading movement within the framework of the Sunni tradition (DeLong-Bas, 2004, p. 115).

Criticism of Wahabi preaching has emerged from various Muslim circles who consider that this movement tends to be extreme and not in line with the inclusive values of Islam. First, Wahhabism is considered to have developed into a very rigid, unaccommodating ideology, and rejects the diversity of understandings in Islam. They set narrow boundaries of monotheism and often accuse other groups of being polytheists or infidels simply because of differences in worship practices. (El Fadl, 2005, pp. 49–53) . Second, the collaboration between Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and the Saud family, which was manifested in the form of jihad, is considered by some to be not only motivated by da'wah, but also closely related to the tradition of raids in the Najd region, as well as the drive to maintain dominance and political interests (Lacey, 1981, pp. 39–45) . Third, compared to other Islamic reformers such as Jamaluddin al-Afghani or Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab showed limited intellectual capacity; he rarely wrote scientific works and contributed minimally in the form of essays or in-depth scientific ideas (Algar, 2002, pp. 21–23).

Conclusion

This article has examined in depth the history, thought, and development of the Wahabi movement, as well as its impact on Muslim society, especially in Indonesia. Through academic analysis, it is seen that Wahhabism has puritanical, textual, and exclusive characteristics, which often cause controversy and social conflict. In Indonesia, this teaching has been rejected by various groups, including Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which emphasizes the concept of inclusive Islam Nusantara rooted in local wisdom. While, Wahabi was founded by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab with thoughts influenced by Ibn Taimiyyah. This school emphasizes the purification of literal monotheism and often accuses groups with different opinions of being infidels. The method of the Spread of Wahhabism grew rapidly thanks to political support from the Saud family in Saudi Arabia, and its spread in Indonesia was carried out through a systematic network of education and preaching.

Controversy and Criticism: Wahabis are considered extreme because of their rigid attitude, easy to accuse infidels, and rejection of the diversity of religious practices. This is contrary to the moderate and multicultural values embraced by the majority of Indonesian Muslims. **Rejection in Indonesia:** The concept of Islam Nusantara promoted by NU is an alternative that emphasizes harmony between religion and local culture, as well as a form of resistance to Wahhabi doctrine, which is considered irrelevant to the Indonesian context.

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