

The Wahhabi and the Ghulat (Extremists)

The *Ghulat* or extremist are those who went to extremes in exalting a person or persons to the extent of raising him or them above the ranks of ordinary human beings.

At the same time of the rise of Wahhabia in Najid, another person was preaching a new doctrine which renewed much of what has disappeared of the beliefs of the first *Ghulats* who deified Imam Ali and other members of the Prophet Household. His teachings were similar to those of Ibn Abdul Wahab in labeling his opponents as heretics. He actually went further than the Wahhabia founder by attacking most of the Prophet's Companions and calling them heretics. [1](#)

The name of that man was Shaikh Ahmed al-Ihsaie (died 1241 AH.) His followers were thus known as al-Shaikhia. He was succeeded by Khathim al-Rashti who established his headquarters at Kerbala in southern Iraq.

The Wahhabi's attitudes toward this movement is interesting. As history report, the Wahhabis attacked Karbala where al-Rashti and his followers resided. As their custom in all their military campaigns, the Wahhabis sacked the city, slaughtering thousands of innocent men, women and children and looting and destroying houses and shops.

But they guaranteed al-Rashti's personal safety and declared that anyone entering his house shall be safe. This special treatment of this group and their leader unveils the true nature of the Wahhabi and exposes the falsehood of their claim of opposing idolatry and defending divine unity.

At this point, it may be useful to compare this position with a similar one by Ibn Taimia, whom the Wahhabis claim to follow, toward another extremist group, namely the Yazidis. The Yazidis exalted Yazid ibn Muawiya whose un-Islamic deeds were enumerated earlier. A branch of this sect was named al-Adawia after Udai ibn Musafir whom they exalted along with Yazid.

Ibn Taimia who was a contemporary of this sect maintained an inexplicably untypical attitude toward this group. Famed for his extreme opinions and fierce attacks on Islamic sects swiftly judging them to be deviant and heretic, he wrote a letter to this group addressing them as faithful Muslims. In this civil and

well-wishing letter we find none of his offending style and usual labels which he used in communicating with or writing on other Islamic groups such as the Asharia, the Imamiya Shia, the Zaidis, Mutazila, Murajia and others.

His letter to this group begins as follows:[2](#)

From Ahmed ibn Tairnia to whoever receives this letter of the Muslims who belong to the Sunna and follow the exemplary, blessed, and learned shaikh Udai ibn Musafir al-Umawi. Allah has mercy on him and all those who follow his path.. May Allah lead them to His path and obey Him and His Prophet.

This shows that Ibn Taimia considered this deviant group as Sunni Muslim in variance with the consensus identifying them as extremists, heretics and idolaters who did not worship only Allah.

[1.](#) Hamaion Hima'yati, Al-Wahhabia: Nakd wa Tahleel, p. 24.

[2.](#) Ibn Taimia, Al-Was'ia al-Kubra, p. 5.

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