

مفهوم الرجوع في الإسلام السياسي والسلفية

الدكتور أحمد مريزفاني

أستاذ مساعد في الإسلام السياسي ، جامعة أصفهان ، إيران

a.azizkhani@itr.ui.ac.ir

Conceptual Analysis of Return and Reactionism in Political Islam and Salafism

Ahmad Azizkhani

Assistant Professor in Political Islam , University of Isfahan , Iran

Abstract

Referring to the fundamentals, once being threatened by alien factors is a usual and normal reaction of any human society. In Islamic world, such a reaction has happened for any alien invasion to the territories. Did all Islamic movements refer to their fundamentals in a same way (Question)? This paper has assumed that Islamic movements, especially the contemporary ones, have taken "refer" concept into consideration from two prospects, Reactive and Innovative, which Salafism is the representative of the first and Political Islam represents the second (hypothesis). Focusing on "referring to the first days", "opposing with interpretation of Devine text", "externalism", "cropping the history", Salafism has referred to fundamentals reactively, whereas; Political Islam has referred innovatively to the fundamentals by considering factors such as "emphasizing on interpretation of Devin text", "referring to others", "referring to ordinary life."

Key words : Refer , Reaction , Salafism , Political Islam , Fundamentalism .

المستخلص

الرجوع الي الاساسيات امر عادي و طبيعي بمجرد أن المجتمع البشري يواجه التهديد من قبل عوامل غريبه. و في العالم الاسلامي وقع هكذا الرجوع بعد مواجهه لتهديد الاجنبي في كل منطقه من مناطقه. لكن هل هذا الرجوع كان علي طريقه واحده في كل المناطق (السؤال). المفروض في مقاله ان هذا الرجوع، خاصه المعاصره منه، وقع بطريقتين، تفاعلي و مبتكر حيث تمثل السلفيه الاولى و يمثل الاسلام السياسي الثاني (الفرضيه). السلفيه بالتركيز علي "الرجوع الي القرون الأولى"، و "المعارضه لتفسير النصوص الديني"، "التحول" و "اقتصاص التاريخ" رجع الي الاساسيات بشكل تفاعلي و بينما لقد رجع الاسلام السياسي الي الاساسيات من خلال النظر في عوامل مثل "التأكيد علي تفسير النصوص الديني"، "الرجوع الي الاخرين و الحياه العاديه"

الكلمات المفتاحية : مرجعية ، رد الفعل ، السلفية ، الاسلام السياسي ، الاصولية

Introduction

Finding shelter in foundations, sometimes in the form of rushing to the footholds, is a natural reaction of human societies (cf. Fromm, 2020). This reaction in Islamic world whether in past and in the time of the invasion of the Mongols and Crusaders of Islamic borders or in contemporary world and the invasion of west onto Islamic geography have taken place in the form of the concept of “return to past”. This a reality that Akbar Ahmad describes as follows:

“The obsessive need for finding solace and comfort in the soft context of ancient thoughts ... is the result of the collapse of the background and past. Psychology tells us that in mother’s womb prevails complete comfort and peace. The search for finding the rise of the phenomena, then, is unavoidable” (Ahmad, 2001: 43).

The process of returning to the resource at least for part of the Muslims, of course, has been something beyond a simple sense of nostalgia and is considered to be a solution for the revival of the past glory of Muslims against the interest of westerners in taking advantage of human and material resources of the Muslim countries (Tayyebi, 2010: 68-69). This problem particularly when it is added to the inefficiency of western and nationalist pattern of development becomes more important. In such conditions, “returning to religion in search of certitude is a natural movement” (Heikal, 1984: 213). Therefore, Muslims pursue two main goals in their return to the resource: firstly, finding peace versus modern fury, and secondly, struggle for sublimation of Islamic societies; but these goals are pursued in Islamic societies in different ways among which one can identify two major branches: advocates of “authenticity” one of the chief representatives of whom is the so called current of Salafism, and the followers of “contemporariness” who identify political Islam as the main current in among themselves.¹

The advocates of authenticity in general and the Salafists in particular, in their encounter with the existing crises in Islamic society devote themselves to the return to past and struggle to reconstruct the early Islamic age (majorly three opening centuries). In other words, this group struggle to find the answer of the present problems in the early Islamic era. In line with this approach, Salafism ignores the history of Islamic societies and their experiences and through a “historical shortcut” seeks to find all answers in early Islamic age. Thus, relying on such doctrines as “denial of interpretation of scriptural texts”, “authority of the

Sacred Text” and “purity of the early pious Muslim”, Salafists struggle to exactly make their environment compatible with the early Islam. This is an impossible task that requires a reactionary method. Said differently, this is a reactionary return. It is the method that Salafism seeks to impose in the contemporary world and this does not have any reward but ineffectiveness.

The followers of contemporariness in general, and the current of political Islam in particular, believes that “finding” everything in early Islam is impossible and Islamic societies need to “build” with the elements from the “past” and “today”. This is the identity to which Manuel Castells refers as “constructed identity”. He believes that “a new identity is constructed but not by a return to the tradition rather through working on the traditional materials and elements for the sake of realization of a divine and fraternity based world where the deprived people and dissident intellectuals can build a new meaning that serves as a universal alternative for the repulsive global order” (Castells, 2001, vol. 2: 37).

Therefore, political Islam contrary to Salafism not only refuses to fossilize the past tradition rather it returns to it and takes advantage of it. This current through a continuous process of returning and in an innovative fashion had been struggling to solve the problems of Islamic societies.

The present study focusing on the concept of “return” follows the hypothesis that Salafism seeks to tackle the existing crises in Islamic societies based on a reactionary approach while political Islam has a more comprehensive and all-embracing notion of return. Basing itself on a return-based approach and in a narrative context, political Islam considers the transcendence of Islamic societies to be possible only when they follow up the process of return from the “past” to “today” and from “there” to “here”, and from the “self” to the “other”.

Conceptual Framework; Trans-institutional Identity of Tradition and Modernity

The clash between Islamic societies and the foreigners particularly when it ended up in the failure of the Muslims would have triggered reactions in Islamic world the common differentia of which was the identity retrieval (Nasr, 1994: 166). To put it otherwise, Islamic movements were of the same view of the idea of identity retrieval though they became divided as regards the method used for retrieval insofar as

some sought to rediscover the stolen identity of Muslimhood while another group were thinking of its construction. But the key question is whether identity is basically something to be found or something to be constructed? According to Craig Calhoun, identity is not a simple thesis rather it is dynamic and can only be understood in the context of a narrative and this is why propositional essentialism fails to fathom the identity (Calhoun, 2010: 54). Thus conceived, identity is not merely retrievable through returning to past rather one needs to return to a wide spectrum of historical, cultural and political issues in order to construct an identity.

Alberto Melucci is the other thinker who discusses the problem of identity as a significant element in formation of social movements. According to Melucci, construction of collective identity is the most important task of new social movements. For this problem is not a means for reaching a strategic goal rather it is the goal of the collective action (Moshirzadeh, 2002: 203-204). The process of construction of identity is the other important issue discussed by Melucci.

Alberto Melucci puts the maximum emphasis on the factor of “intangible floating networks” in the course of daily life in his explication of the causes of movements. He believes that contemporary societies are complicated societies in which information plays a key role. This problem causes people to create new experiences in their life and exchange them with each other and this is influential in the construction of identity (Jalaeipoor, 2002: 58). Melucci explains the connection of two concepts of information and identity as follows:

“Individual and collective identity should always resist the insecurity caused by the incessant current of information resulted from the truth that people simultaneously belong to different systems. Identity should be continuously reestablished and conveyed. The effort for identification is a solution against the ambiguity and darkness of the system” (Melucci, 2008: 139).

Accordingly, one should find a middle path between the incessant change of values resulted from the current of information, on the one hand, and the radical insistence on the return to old values, on the other hand. “Construction of a new identity” using materials from yesterday and today is the middle path.

The last thinker whose ideas concerning the problem of identity are discussed here is Manuel Castells. He is considered to be one of the later

theoreticians of new social movements in terms of the intellectual tradition. Just like Alberto Melucci, he regards identity as the focal point of the ideas of the modern social movements.

According to Castells, network structure of the modern world leads to information exchange in global level. This feature causes the social activists to create new meanings of culture in the space of network society. This new creation that has been proliferated in information age relying on communicative and information technologies threaten the existing identities in different societies (Castells, 2011: 23). He sees identity as an inseparable part of the history of societies which has been influenced by religious hypotheses. He also suggests that this identity is grappling with serious challenges in information age due to its separation from the history of nations. This problem instigates the resistance of ethnic identities (ibid.) Here Castells refers to the resistance identity.

According to Castells, resistance identity is created by those activists who are in such conditions that are considered to be valueless by the logic of domination. This is why these people build fronts for resistance and existence based on different principles which are even in contradiction with the principles supported by the domination institutions (Castells, 2001, vol. 2: 24).

It is needless to say that in this stage the preservation of the former values versus the latter values is at stake by the activists. But an efficient social system cannot stop in this stage. The second phase of the operation of modern social movement revolves around the construction of a new identity in the form of “planned identity”.

In this stage, social activists using all types of the accessible cultural materials and elements proceed to build new identity that redefines their situation in the society and thus, they struggle to change the general form of social structure (Castells, 2001, vol. 2: 24). Here the construction of an identity is at stake (contrary to the identity of resistance in which finding an identity is the main criterion). Planned identity in this stage not only protects the early values in order to bring change into the society and create a new space, rather it also chooses and adopts other values. Of course, this issue does not imply refusal from returning to past, rather early values is of a particular importance in construction of planned identity. But the important problem is the mechanism of the interpretation of these values, on the one hand, and taking advantage of other identities (even the conflicting identities) on the other hand, the

output of which is the construction of a new identity (ibid: 28). As highlighted by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Nasr, 1994: 179-180) and Bassam Tayyibi (Tayyibi, 2010: 62), in political Islam particularly in its maturity era, the planned identity was pursued and this is why in addition to returning to past, it has referred to elements of other identities either in order to build a new identity. For it believes in the proposition that “self (identity) traverses a special track from the past to future in the course of its evolution and development. In the light of what a man has predicted for his future, he reviews his past” (Giddens, 2003: 112). The hypothesis of the present essay is that Salafism is stuck at the stage of the resistance identity and therefore, in the process of return, it has chosen the reactionary path, while the political Islam not only insists on the notion of “constructed identity” rather it takes into account the process of return from the past up to this day and from here (geographical self) to there (geographical other) and thus, it has reached the stage of planned identity.

1- Salafism and Reactionary Return to Resource:

Salafism is made of the root word “Salaf” in the sense of “early” and it represents the intellectual current that aspires to return to the early opening eras of Islam. They cite the tradition by Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) in which His Highness states: “The best people are the people of my time. And in the second stage stand the people who follow the early people”. Thus, they believe that early people of Islam represent the brilliant picture of a correct understanding of the rules, laws and programs of Islam (Abu Roman, 2017: 38). The concept of Salaf, then, in view of its extension dates back to opening years of Islamic life and precisely speaking, to “three early centuries of Islamic life” (Alboti, 2004: 19).

Then, purity of the early years of Islam is taken for granted by the Salafism. But the second hypothesis of this current is that the more Muslims distanced themselves from this golden era, the more they have missed of the correct understanding of Islam (as the early Muslims understood it). These two hypotheses are followed by one major result, i.e. returning to the early Islamic era, and several secondary results as follows:

- I) Reactionary return to the text;
- II) Denial of hermeneutical exegesis and interpretation;
- III) Puritanism;

IV) Historical shortcut.

1-1- Reactionary Return to the Text:

As Mohammad Abu Zahra emphasizes, epistemology of Salafism is based on religious texts. This reliance has its origin in the belief that the correction of the surrounding world is only possible via the connection to the Sacred Text, because the obedience to texts has once led the Muslims to the leadership and it will again do so. In this regard, Rached Ghannouchi states: “Our history has started its movement and development from the Sacred Text and now no reconstruction and renewal is possible unless within the framework of the same text” (Ghannouchi, 2004: 57-58).

According to Salafism, religious texts are of such a comprehensiveness that they “would cover all actions of the servants” (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.: 152). Moreover, validity of texts is for all times and places. This is why referring to something but text is useless and futile (Ibn Hazm, n.: 77).

Although the belief in text is accepted by all Muslims, it is pursued among Salafis in a reactionary fashion, in a way that they would search for the answer of every question in the Sacred Text. Meanwhile, reason does not have any independent place. Ibn Taymiyyah as the spiritual father of Salafis believed that in the absence of tradition, reason is not even able to understand the profit and loss of daily life (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2015, vol. 19: 100). This is why continuous reference to the Sacred Text is a requirement of a prosperous life.

The other root of reactionary approach in referring to the text in Salafism is originated in negligence and denial of other sources of knowledge. Ibn Qayyim Jawzi the pupil of Ibn Taymiyyah insists that when reason and prophetic tradition are in conflict, it is the reason that one should trespass it “as God has trespassed and trampled them (reasons and their owners)” (Ibn Qayyim, 2002: 107).

Radical emphasis on returning to the resource in Salafism is pursued to the point where the great figures of this intellectual current consider the reference to other resources to be an act of apostasy. “Abd Al Qadir Ibn Abd Al Aziz” one of the Jihadi commanders of Egypt insists on the necessity of reference to Sharia in all issues of the life of Muslims, and at the same time, he sees the refusal of this reference as an act of apostasy (Shahadah, 2017: 107).

But the most radical reactionary form of the return to the resource in Salafism is giving priority to the prophetic traditions over the verses of Holy Quran. For we know that in the eyes of the majority of the Muslims, Holy Quran is the ultimate resource among other religious texts the validity of which is evaluated by Quranic touchstone. It seems that among Salafis the prophetic traditions have been prioritized.

Radical emphasis on prophetic traditions can be seen in the works of such classic Salafis as Ibn Taymiyyah (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991: 1) and also in the works of contemporary Salafis like Nasiruddin Al-Bani (Al-Bani, 1995: vol. 11, 207). However, some Salafi scholars have discussed this issue in a more direct fashion. For example, Al Qurtabi clearly notes that Quran needs the Sunnah more (Al Qurtabi, 1985: 44).

Perhaps this emphasis is for the sake of overcoming the paradox of the rationality that rules in Quran through the reactionary beliefs of Salafism, because as Maxime Rodinson endorses in his “Islam et le Capitalisme”, rationality governs the whole atmosphere of Holy Quran and any return to Holy Quran cannot be reactionary as such (cf. Rodinson, 1980). Accordingly, to complete its reactionary project, Salafism in the time of its reference to the Text gives the priority to the prophetic traditions and in one sense it puts off the Quran.

1-2- Denial of Hermeneutic Exegesis:

The idea of the return to the Sacred Text in Salafism is the result of the thesis of the sufficiency of the Sacred Text. Accordingly, Salafism denies the accumulated knowledge of Muslims which is itself the result of hermeneutic exegesis and interpretation of the sacred texts in the course of time and in its stead relying on the idea of purification of the space of Islamic thought from all exegetical additions openly opposes all types of interpretation and sets the direct return to the texts as its discourse border.

Ibn Taymiyyah describes hermeneutic exegesis as the result of the belief in the conflict of reason with the prophetic tradition (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1971: 10). He insists on the consistency of reason with the religious texts and believes that by disappearance of conflict between reason and prophetic tradition, the issue of hermeneutic exegesis turns pointless, because reason does not have any inconsistency with the text and as a result, tracing the superficial meaning back to other meaning is against truth (Great Islamic Encyclopedia, vol. 3: Ibn Taymiyyah). There is no report of such an act of trace-back among the early righteous

Muslims (Ibn Taymiyyah, n., B: 185). In the same spirit, Ibn Qayyim Jawzi, the brilliant pupil of Ibn Taymiyyah, considers hermeneutic exegesis to be a new phenomenon that is against the path of the early Muslims and this why it is taken to be an extension of heresy (Ibn Qayyim Jawzi, 1997: 77).

The important point in the belief in the lack of conflict between reason and prophetic tradition in classic Salafism is the latter's being followed by the former not vice versa (Al Gharavi, n.: 27). In other words, reason is conditioned by text and it does not have any credit as such. Therefore, reason in the eyes of classic Salafis is a means of endorsement of prophetic tradition as the final source of knowledge. This belief led to the conflict between Salafism and those currents that considered reason to be a resource of knowledge, e.g. philosophers, theologians, the Shia and Mutazilites. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, rational reasons provided by theologians and philosophers as regards Islamic teachings can be found in a clearer and perfect form in Holy Quran away from error and mistake. While the ideas and views of the men of reason are full of error and deviation in a way that "their deviation is more than their guidance as their ignorance is more than their knowledge" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2006, vol. 9: 125).

Even beyond deviation and ignorance, Ibn Taymiyyah accuses the philosophers of lying. He believes that philosophers are liars who attribute the doctrines of the apostates (Greeks) to divine prophets like Edris (Enoch) (Ibn Taymiyyah, n., Al Fatawi Al Kubra, 72). This is to say that philosophers not only are themselves plunged in deviation rather they deliberately deviate others. Thus, "since the time when philosophy and logic became popular among the Muslims, they misled many of them" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004: 132).

The reactionary perspective of the classic Salafism became even more radical. If classic Salafism defended the lack of conflict between reason and prophetic tradition as well as the latter's being followed by the former, and accepted the reason as a means for the prophetic tradition, the neo-Salafists even did not accept reason as an endorsement of prophetic traditions.

Denial of reason by neo-Salafists is pursued to the point where they deny the traditional endorsement of reason. For example, Mohammad Nasiruddin Al Bani in his interpretation of the prophetic traditions that endorse the virtue of reason states: "I studied whatever discussed in the

Book of “Reason and Its Virtue” and found these prophetic traditions unauthentic” (Al Bani, 1985: 53). Neo-Salafists by the denial of traditionally grounded reason and with the slogan of “necessity of immediate return to Quran” read the notion of “following” in the eyes of the classic Salafism in the sense of following the text-based exegesis back into the notion of “innovation” in the sense of refusal of imitation of the Mujtahid and indeed immediate understanding of the religious texts (Firahi, 2011: 81). As to this issue, Sheikh Al Bani states: “Islam is a religion that is perfect as such and does not need any further explanation and interpretation. We need just to refine it from the ideas and theories that have been attached to it in the course of the history in the name of Ijtihad” (Shahadah, 2016: 71).

In this way, neo-Salafism denied the slim rationality once found in classic Salafism and pursued the process of return to the resource in a more reactionary fashion than that of their fathers and grandfathers. But in general, Salafism does not consider the interpretation of the Divine Word and Prophetic Traditions intelligible. For “in most cases hermeneutic exegesis of texts ends up in the inconsistency of the interpreted text with the author’s intention; then, following the surface of the words of God and prophet is the best option so that the Muslims not to be entrapped by the distortion” (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1996: 36).

1-3- Literalism:

Denial of the interpretation of religious texts by Salafism had a determinate consequence, i.e. direct and simple interaction with text or puritanism; since Salafists considered the moderate reading of religious texts an example of deviation they turned to the idea of “acceptance of the surface meaning of the text”. Thus conceived, sacred texts are of such features as transparency, comprehensiveness and sacredness. All these three characteristics not only make the believers needless of interpretation and hermeneutical exegesis rather they render the latter pointless and set the scene for a literalist reading of sacred texts as the sole desirable and possible reading.

According to Salafists, text as a living being has preserved its life in the course of history and this is why it is needless of interpretation and hermeneutical exegesis and therefore, the believers by direct reference to the surface of the texts find the course of their life (Nirmal, 2009: 59). Even the correct observation of the Prophet’s tradition can be found in the surface words of the Quran (Duderija, 2007: 293).

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, translation of the surface meaning of Quran is wrong and in contradiction with the truth (Great Islamic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, Ibn Taymiyyah). For it is an act of heresy to divide the words of Quran into real and metaphor (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1996: 87). Moreover, this division is against the common sense, “because for using a word somewhere other than its proper place we need to prove an early position for it and this is rationally impossible (ibid.)

Refusal of interpretation (particularly the allegorical verses) and insistence on the surface meaning of the text led to the embodiment of divinity in Salafism. This belief (embodiment of divinity) can be seen in classic Salafism and in the works of such figures as Ibn Taymiyyah and his pupil Ibn Qayyim Jawzi as well as the neo-Salafist works, i.e. those of Ibn ‘Athimin.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, invisible and nonostensible self-subsisting being does not exist in the outside world at all and is more a fabrication of human mind (Great Islamic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, Ibn Taymiyyah: 83). Moreover, he believed that in the Doomsday the believers can clearly and transparently sight the Lord (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2016, 5: 272). This view is also supported by Ibn Taymiyyah’s pupil Ibn Qayyim Al Jawzi insofar as he claimed “when the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) visited his Lord he put his head between the two shoulders of God!! (Al Amin, 2008: 141).

Mohammad Ibn Salih Al ‘Athimin one of the contemporary Salafist scholars has also underlined the notion of embodiment and considered the notions like “seated on the throne” or “having hand and eye” to be real as noted in the verses of Holy Quran (Al ‘Athimin, 1984: 5-6).

Insisting on the self-sufficiency of the sacred text and denying the achievements of human reason, Salafism misled the process of returning to past and ended up in reactionary Islam. This reactionary perspective of sacred text can be criticized from two points of view. Firstly, paying no attention to the internal capacity of the sacred texts which could have flourished through the process of interpretation and exegesis and provided solutions for the complications caused by the existing crises in Islamic societies and secondly, negligence of human achievements in the fields which are in the words of Martyr Sadr “Buffer Zone” where the sacred text is silent and allows the reason to extend its idea. This type of Salafism has disarmed itself before the contemporary crises and this is

why such Salafist movements as ISIS preferred to take rifles instead of using reason as their weapon!!

1-4- Historical Shortcut:

As previously mentioned, Salafism in reaction to the existing crises in Islamic society has raised the idea of returning to the Golden Age or Early Islamic Era. Accordingly, they have devoted themselves to the return to the primordial version and avoiding every posterior pattern (Firahi, 2010: 108). According to Salafism, “obedience” is the basic principle of religiosity and obedience in this context refers to following the Holy Prophet of Islam and the early righteous Muslims (disciples, their followers and those who followed the latter); this is the principle that started to get weakened after the “Noblest of All Centuries” (early three centuries of Islamic history) among Muslims and it was replaced by following the jurisprudential schools (Shahadah, 2016: 68-69). Its outcome was the regression of Islamic societies.

Depiction of an ideal atmosphere of early Islamic era along with the emphasis on the regression of Islamic society after it was followed by returning to the early centuries of Islam and cutting the centuries after it for Salafism. If the early Islamic centuries is taken as the age of flourishing of Islamic society while any distance from them leads to the regression of Islamic society, no doubt the return to the past and lessening the distance from the Dawn of Islam will be regarded as the cure for the decline of Islamic societies.

Radical effort for neglecting the history of Islamic societies was developed to the point where in the eyes of Salafism “any new tradition that was not observed by the disciples and their followers and there is no Sharia based reason for it” will be an act of heresy.

Ibn Taymiyyah claims that those groups of Muslims who were not faithful to the traditions of the righteous early Muslims and believed in other resources like reason (i.e. Shia Muslims and philosophers) are responsible for the underdevelopment and decline of Islamic societies (Abu Roman, 2017: 37). This is why returning to the righteous early Muslims is the main criterion of Ijtihad for him insofar as he would refer to the early Muslims almost as to every problem. For example, in response to the possibility of visiting the graves (Ibn Taymiyyah, n.: 49), reciting Quran on the graves of the Muslims (ibid.), possibility of different readings of Quran (ibid: 54), possibility of paying tributes to Ali

Ibn Abi Talib (ibid: 55) and etc., he would issue permission by referring to the early Muslims.

In fact, Salafism insists on the idea of “text as a living and uninterpretable entity” and seeks to answer all questions with this single idea and in this path, it regards the history of Islamic societies as regressive. Thus, it has neglected the accumulated experience and knowledge of Muslims in the course of history (except three early centuries) and struggles to establish a bridge between the contemporary world and the dawn of Islamic civilization.

This issue once again reveals the reactionary return to the past by Salafism. This is indeed an issue that led to the inefficiency of this intellectual current and made the emergence of alternative approaches necessary that simultaneously struggled to preserve the Islamic identity through returning to past and making Islamic society efficient via rationalization of the return to the resource. Political Islam is a current that claims to be one of these alternative approaches.

2- Political Islam and the Problem of Return:

Since 1970s, the role of politics in Islamic world clearly led to change and development. Islamic groups emerged not as a simple reaction inside Islamic society rather in the form of the resource of new ideas for depiction of new borders (Sposito and Wahle, 2010: 23). Weakness of governing ideologies like Nationalism and Liberalism as well as Salafist approaches that had failed in their encounter with the existing crises in Islamic societies to tackle two problems of inefficiency and metamorphosis of identity of Muslimhood led the Islamic societies to acceptance of the political Islam's pattern. This is indeed a pattern that did not neglect the efficiency and compatibility with modern world in the course of revival of Muslim Identity and did not forget Muslim Identity in the time of reflection on the concept of efficiency. To put it otherwise, political Islam in the course of construction of a new identity reflected on the simultaneous return to past and present as well as to self and the other. This way of return by political Islam was posed against Salafism which preferred the reactionary return to past.

Political Islamists struggled to establish certain structures that could act in a completely Islamic way in the context of modern culture (Sposito and Wahle, 2013: 21). For they perfectly recognized that “if we resist radicalism against modernism the very existence of Muslims as an efficient community would be in danger” (Bhutto, 2009: 344-345). Of

course, this mode of action does not imply distortion of original content of religion rather as Rached Ghannouchi states, it is an interaction between Sharia and real developments in daily life in a way that this interaction does not damage the texts but does not limit itself to the inherited expressions and interpretations. However, this does not reduce the importance of the interests and welfare in life for Muslims Ghannouchi, 1993: 94-95). Therefore, process of return in political Islam was extensive and it simultaneously including the sacred text, the other and daily life.

2-1- Political Islam and Process of Return to Text:

Political Islam as a maximal narrative of religion considers Islam to enjoy extensive politico-social aspects the identification of which can reduce the pain of Muslims. On the other hand, as Graham Fuller (Fuller, 2004: 15) and Bernard Luis (Luis, 2008: 25-31) argue, roots of political Islam like its other aspects should be sought for in Holy Quran and prophetic tradition. This is to say that this current return to the sacred text in order to depict the outlines of its own thought insofar as Hassan Al Bana as one of the founders of political Islam in contemporary world chose “Quran our law and Prophet our leader and paragon” as the slogan of Moslem Brotherhood (Al Bana, 1993: 17). But contrary to Salafism, process of return to the text is not reactionary in Political Islam.

Political Islamism pursues two main goals through the process of the return to the text; first, revival of metamorphosed Islamic identity by the invasive wave of modernism and second, efficiency and action in the context of modern structures; in other words, political Islam simultaneously pursues two seemingly paradoxical processes of “preservation” and “change” of religious values. Thus, it must preserve Islamic values for revival of identity and at the same time, change some elements of it for making it more efficient (Yavuz, 2013: 17). Political Islam pursues the first goal by returning to the text and seeks to fulfil the second goal based on a modern interpretation of it referring to existing needs.

The Islamists who are faithful to political Islam do not consider the sacred texts to be solid and spiritless and believe in the flexible structures and free floating laws in Islamic Sharia. These flexibility and fluidity take form as a result of the interpretation of sacred texts based on the needs of contemporary world (Ghannouchi, 2002: 145). This is why, as John Sposito and Jean Wahle insist, referring to religious texts among the

political Islam current does not lead to the return to pre-modern conditions rather the goal of the advocates of this current is referring to the text and its interpretation as well as establishing those structures that can act in the context of modern culture in a completely Islamic fashion (Sposito and Wahle, 2010: 21).

Rached Ghannouchi takes Islam to be of two basic pillars; text and council. He believes that text includes the Holy Book and Prophetic tradition and only deals with the goals and prospects and it is indeed the council or collective reason that reflects on the texts and determines the processes that govern the Islamic society. This is why Ghannouchi considers Islamic government to be tantamount to the council governance (Ghannouchi, 2002: 125).

In addition to hermeneutic exegesis and interpretation of religious texts, the other strategy of the political Islam for further efficiency has been the extension of text, on the one hand, and development of the Buffer Zone (domains outside the text), on the other. Ennahdha Movement in Tunisia as one of the significant movements of political Islam in the document published in its annual congress in 2007 not only insists on revelation as a valid pattern for all stages of history, it emphasizes the extensive expanse of the Buffer Zone, because Muslims “regulate their life with it ... and follow the developments of time overcoming the stagnation resulted from these growing developments in the course of time. Accordingly, Buffer Zone expresses the capability of Islamic Religion in pursuing different historical eras” (Alqawmani, 2014: 375).

Insistence on the return to the text along with the belief in the interpretation of religious texts as well as the expansion of the Buffer Zone caused political Islam to expose Islamic frameworks as efficient despite acquisition of identity and revival of Islamic values, because Muslims relying on the possibility of interpretation of religious texts doubles the capacity of its application in today’s world and at the same time, provides an answer to two crises of metamorphosis of identity and inefficiency. In this way, political Islam in the process of the return to past is neither inflexible like Salafism as regards principles and foundations nor it is immersed in western culture like the pro-western scholars.

2-2- Political Islam and Process of Return to the Other:

The decline of Islamic societies (particularly in contemporary era) had been associated with the military failures of Muslim countries and their colonialization and reminded the necessity of the revival of the past glory. This type of question of the decline in Islamic societies was raised and given certain answers. Some found the answer of this question in adaptation of western civilization and thinking. Replacement of western institutions with Islamic institutions as well as the use of nonreligious legislation instead of Sharia and finally the domination of secularism occurred in such a space. But soon the idea of “progress as westernization” got cracked. The operationalization of westernization was followed by two crises in Islamic societies; inefficiency and metamorphosis of identity; in other words, if earlier, Islamic societies were suffering from inefficiency, the process of westernization added another crisis to it called identity metamorphosis. In such a process, the validity and dependability of Muslimhood as an identity was hijacked (Yavuz, 2013: 21). Emergence of these crises intensified the interest in acceptance of Islamic values, because as Bernard Lewis insists, Muslims in the time of emergence of crisis become more interested in the acceptance of Islamic values (Lewis, 1999: 29).

Islamic revivalism almost overcame all Islamic regions but this movement because of its being a reaction to the process of metamorphosis of Muslimhood as an identity in many cases led to the contradiction with the totality of western world and even its achievements. Muslim fundamentalists introduced the west as the “other” of Islamic civilization and considered the distance from it to be a condition of Muslimhood. In fact, this movement introduced western civilization as an “absolute other” that has exposed Islamic world to many identity crises (Dagi, 2005: 3).

In fact, returning to the early days of Islam as well as the refusal of the return to the non-Muslim other were introduced as the border of Islamic discourse. It was clear that this return to past and absolute refusal of the return to the other could not have any achievement but inefficiency. Political Islam emerged following two crises of the return in Islamic world, i.e. the crisis of the complete return to west by the pro-west Muslims and the crisis of the unconditional return to past by Salafism.

To answer the first crisis, i.e. complete return to west which has itself led to the identity crisis, Political Islamists turned to antagonization of the west. Hassan Al Bana as one of the pioneers of political Islam left the Egyptian Youth Society which was established by him and a number of his intellectual fellows in 1927, and decided to found the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. He announced that the reason for his decision was the Society's negligence of Islamic education and refusal of containing the greatest existing threat against Islam, i.e. the radical immersion of educated youth in Western culture and traditions. Therefore, as Bruniar Lia emphasizes, antagonization of western civilization has had a fundamental role in formation of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement (Lia, 2009: 87). Insistence on antagonization of west can be seen in the thoughts of other leaders of political Islam such as Seyyed Qutb (Seyyed Qutb, 1970: 187-188), Rached Ghannouchi (Ghannouchi, 2002: 7-8), and Yusif Al Qarzawi (Al Qarzawi, 1992: 7). But this mode of encounter among the leaders of political Islam never led to the denial of the totality of west and the leaders of this movement in addition to understanding the requirements of the modern world were contemplating of the critical interaction with the western world.

Although political Islam movement first pursued the process of depiction of the discourse borders of "self", i.e. "process of antagonization of west", after its stabilization turned to critical return to west. In fact, Islamists distinguished between westernization and modernization. They struggled to extract modern notions via the experience of Islamic life.

As previously mentioned, Hassan Al Bana criticized "radical immersion of educated youth in western culture and traditions" not the interaction with it and its use; he outlines his own perspective of the interaction with west as follows: "In current situation and conditions, we need to take advantage of the foreign culture in order to prepare ourselves for renaissance" (Al Bana, 2009: 110). He also insists that the idea of every human being except the immaculate (prophet) can be accepted or denied (Al Bana, 1993: 10). Moreover, Hassan Al Bana in a letter addressing the then Egyptian Prime Minister, outlines the perspective of Muslim Brotherhood of the way of return to Islam and west as follows:

"Muslim Brotherhood believes that the only path for reform is that Egypt to return to Islamic teachings and correctly perform them.

However, it also adopts every past or contemporary eastern and western idea if it is not in contradiction with Islam and there is a goodness and profit for the nation in it” (Al Bana, n.: 368).

This vision of Al Bana and Muslim Brotherhood as a whole of west, though existed before him in the ideas of such thinkers as Muhammad Abduh (Khaduri, 1987: 75), permeated into the minds of other thinkers of Political Islam. Rached Ghannouchi the leader of Islamic movement of Tunisia who was first pursuing explicit criticism of west insisted that western modernity is of positive results which the existing modernity in Islamic countries lack them (Ghannouchi, 1999: 149). Of course, despite accepting the positive points of modernity, he emphasizes that one needs to enter the modern world from the gate of Islam (ibid: 149-157). This vision had serious followers among the Turkish Islamists. Saeed Nursi as one of the pioneers of social Islam in Turkey considers Islamic stance as to the adoption of the experiences of other civilizations to be open. He believed that “there is no progress in the field of civilization which has not been explicitly or implicitly supported by Islam” (Seyhan, 1983: 56). According to Hakan Yavuz, Nursi’s project attracted Turkish society because it developed a conceptual bridge for transferring Turkey from tradition to modernity. He developed a conceptual framework for the people, who were undergoing through transition from a *Gemeinschaft* to a *Gesellschaft*. These concepts led to the establishment of a new semantic map that provided a project for interaction with modern challenges via redefinition of Islamic notions (Yavuz, 2013: 220-222).

As we see, Islamists from Egypt to Tunisia and Turkey were all insisting on critical interaction with west and the necessity of adoption of its achievements. This is why Fuaz Gerjis emphasizes the point that political Islam not only is not anti-modern rather its understanding is only possible within the context of modernity and therefore, it has the potentiality for compromise with west (Gerjis, 2003: 62). We would like to bring this discussion to its end in this part by quoting Yusuf Al Qarzawi who provides a manifest of the stance of political Islamists of west and modern values as a whole:

“Yes to science and no to secularism; yes to Islamic state and no to dictatorship; yes to modernization and no to westernization; yes to intellectual interaction and no to intellectual invasion; yes to pride in religion and no to blind reactionary radicalism; yes to constructive

dialogue and no to destructive verbalism” (quoted from Shabul, 2010: 279).

2-3- Political Islam, Pragmatism and Return to Daily Life:

Epistemologically speaking, political Islam not only thinks of “living for” (eschatological reason) rather it is also mindful of the concept of “living in” (livelihood reason). The latter concept is concerned with the domain of daily life which itself finally leads to pragmatism. This is why referring to daily life is an inseparable part of the thought of political Islam. To state the matter differently, political Islam adopts operational strategies in view of the realities of daily life. This perspective has come to existence in political Islam due to two reasons: firstly, maximal narrative of the fact that it covers all issues of human life from the most general ones to the details, and secondly, the content of the Sacred Text that deals with the deeper layers of human life, e.g. marriage (Roma: 21), livelihood (Molk: 15), food (‘Abas: 80) and etc. Of course, dealing with the concept of “living in” did not lead to lack of practice and passive reactions among the thinkers of political Islam movement, because Islam envisages higher goals for human life within its general framework. This issue reveals the normative dimension of political Islam. But overall, paying attention to daily life is the fundamental pillar of this current.

Ahmad Hassan Al Ziat the Egyptian writer and journalist as an independent onlooker describes the Muslim Brotherhood Movement as follows: “They (Muslim Brotherhood) sees Islam as an insignificant part of life as a whole. For them, mosque and market are the same” (Musavi Al Hosseini, 1998: 171).

Moreover, Abd Al Wahab Al Efendi the researcher of the center for democracy studies in London believes that the goal of the new Islamic movements is the implementation of Islam and its laws in public and personal life of Muslims as far as they would “change the framework of return in public life into a framework in which Islam and its different interpretations constitute the primary force of formation in life” (quoted from Al Khazander, 2011: 139).

The idea of return to daily life is even prevalent among the radical fraction of political Islam movement. Seyyed Qutb as the main representative of this fraction states:

“The rulebook of Islam for human life despite all its nobility, purity, holiness, and exceptionality is indeed a program and constitution for normal life of the man within the limits of his actual capability. The same

man who eats, drinks, walks outside in the alley and the marketplace, copulates and reproduces and has such feelings as love, anger, fear and hope” (Seyyed Qutb, 1990: 284-285).

Referring to daily life (as Abd Al Hakim Abu Al Lawz has noted as to the Islamic movement of Tunisia) led political Islam movement from mere religious-philosophical idealism to political realism (Abu Al Lawz, 2011: 136). Thus, despite early emphases of political Islam movement on the revival of Islamic values and identity retrieval, this movement turned to further accommodation with the modern world. Although in identity retrieval, Islamists were mostly concerned with the preservation of the general framework of Sharia.

According to Nathan Brown and Amru Hamzei, contemporary Islamic movements (including political Islam) introduced political pragmatism into their own political discourse and practice in step by step form. This process took form in such conditions that these movements retained their central and general ideological framework, i.e. Islam. Therefore, Islamists, on the one hand, took pragmatic stances in order to advance their comprehensive programs and develop their activities and functionality, and on the other hand, they have sought to retain their referential frameworks which have been previously defined based on Islamic values (Brown and Hamzei, 2013: 25).

Simultaneous return to Islamic values and daily life which has led to pragmatism and finally to the acceptance of certain dimensions of modernism in political Islam made some thinkers to believe that political Islam has been metamorphosed and defeated in the process of pragmatism and in the course of making itself more efficient. Oliver Roy is one of these thinkers. He considers the pragmatist approach of political Islam to be its failure and in one sense, he believes in the metamorphosis of political Islam movement from Islam to modernity (Roy, 1994). However, on the other hand, there are some thinkers who believe in the possibility of the interaction of Islam with new achievements. Mohammed Arkoun is one of the most famous one of the latter thinkers. He believes that “today there are scientific figures who own a higher scientific level and have the capability of integration of the achievements of modern reason and Islamic intellect” (Aron, 2016: 49). Therefore, theoretically speaking, there is the possibility of taking advantage of modern achievements of human reason along with the belief in the religious values. Political Islam struggles to fulfil this goal focusing on

the improvement of daily life. In this way, political Islam by returning to the daily life once again avoids reactionary stance in return and by emphasizing on the retention of Islamic values focuses on the promotion of the quality of life.

Conclusion:

The rise of Islam in Arabian Peninsula and its miraculous growth and development heralded the emergence of a developed civilization. Relying on the rich Islamic content as well as taking advantage of the heritages of such civilizations as Iran, India, Syria and Egypt, soon Muslims laid the grounds of a civilization that acquired the scientific-cultural authority of world at least for 5 centuries. It prevailed the world by dominating great civilizations of the time, i.e. China and Roma. But at least since the Sixth Century of Higea, due to the internal and external developments, Islamic civilizations started to decline. Political-moral decline of the later Abbasid caliphs, domination of the irrational culture of Ghuz tribes (which was the heritage of the rule of such regimes as Saljuqis and Ghaznawids), religious conflicts which haunted the Islamic society following the moral decay as well as the incessant invasions of the foreigners led to the decline of Islamic civilization (cf.....). This decline caused the question of regression to be raised and thus, some answers were given the most important ones of which were Salafism and Sufism. Sufism recommended seclusion and by this proposal evaded the responsibility while Salafism failed in practice to come up with an appropriate prescription for the revival of Islamic civilization due to its reactionary return to the resource and marginalization of rationalism.

By the domination of such regimes as Mughals in India, Safavids in Iran and Ottomans in Islamic west, Islamic civilization experienced an era of temporary revival though it didn't become an authority like the hey days of Islamic Civilization. Nevertheless, once again such disciplines as art, literature, architecture, and even philosophy and logic became prevalent in Islamic lands.

Following the fall of Mughals, Safavids and at last, Ottomans as well as the military defeats of Muslims in West, once again the question of regression was raised in Islamic society and numerous answers were given to it. Return to the early Islamic days and complete accommodation with western culture was two answers that were given to the question of regression and decline of Islamic countries. The first answer (just like the first time) due to the lack of attention to the modern

achievements despite its potentiality for being an appropriate answer to the identity crisis, proved to be inefficient. The second answer (accommodation with west) also ended up in identity crisis due to keeping away from the Islamic values. Meanwhile a third answer was the so called “political Islam).

Political Islam as the outcome of two crises of inefficiency and identity metamorphosis should have prepared an answer for both crises; for this reason, it pursued two simultaneous processes: revival of Islamic values (identification) and taking advantage of modern human achievements (accommodation). The prescription of political Islam for this seemingly paradoxical process can be outlined under three categories; non-reactionary return to the resource (in the form of the interpretation of the text) and the return to other civilizations and taking advantage of their achievements and finally, the return to daily life.

Overall, simultaneous acceptance of Islamic values and some values of modern world by political Islam movement is an undeniable fact, but what is controversial is the question whether this movement as an Islamic movement has accepted modern values or as a modern movement is a return to the Islamic values? The answer of this question is different in Islamic world due to the existence of diverse patterns of political Islam. For example, it seems that the pattern of Egyptian political Islam approaches modernism from the Islamic perspective while Turkish pattern of political Islam has chosen modernism as its point of departure. It is needless to say that first pattern gives the priority to the process of identification while the second pattern attaches more importance to the modern world. But it seems that if political Islam can establish a logical balance between these two processes, many movements in Islamic world will certainly pursue this pattern or model in a similar way. Therefore, success or failure of the political Islam movement is one of the key issues as regards the future of Islamic world and should be taken serious by the political thinkers and statesmen in Islamic world. In this regard, a number of scenarios can be envisaged.

In first scenario, if Political Islam movement pursues two processes of accommodation and identification within the framework of the planned identity in a balanced fashion and at the same time, it creates in society the sense of confidence of the retention of the previous identity and efficiency in the new world, the radical groups will be surely weakened in Islamic societies and moderate groups will be strengthened.

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In second scenario, if political Islam movement pursues the process of identification in a radical fashion and neglects the process of accommodation, it will give its place to such groups that claim to be efficient in modern world and this will be tantamount to the strengthening of radical pro-west groups. Finally, in the third scenario, if the political Islam movement prefers the process of accommodation over the identification, the sense of seclusion of Islam will be strengthened among the Islamists and this will in turn lead to the strengthening of radical groups. Therefore, operationalization of the first scenario is the only path that can save Islamic societies.

Resources

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- 1 The author has borrowed two key concepts of “authenticity” and “contemporariness” from the Arab scholar Abdullah Al Eravi in his book entitled “Islam and Modernity” (Al ‘Eravi, 2002: 129).