THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE IDEA OF NON-DENOMINATIONALISM IN CYBERSPACE ON SOCIAL SOLIDARITY AND STABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the essence of the idea of non-denominationalism (mazhabsizlik), its origins, and its adverse consequences in both historical and contemporary contexts. The author substantiates the significance of the juristic schools (fiqh madhhabs), particularly the Hanafi school, and provides arguments that non-denominationalism constitutes a risky trend that threatens religious stability and social solidarity. Through Qur'anic verses, the practice of the Companions, and examples from social life, the necessity of taqlid is justified. The article emphasizes the need for vigilance among the younger generation, the strengthening of religious and educational immunity, and the relevance of correctly explaining Hanafi teachings.

KEYWORDS: Globalization, non-denominationalism, fiqh, tradition, extremism, religious unity, Islamic fanaticism, taqlid, muqallid, ijtihad, mujtahid.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of intensified globalization and information flows, cyberspace—particularly the internet and social networks—has become a platform where incorrect interpretations and misguided notions about the fundamentals of Islam are spreading, including the idea of "non-denominationalism." Non-denominationalism refers to denying adherence, in matters of jurisprudence, to the four recognized madhhabs—Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali—and it represents a dangerous phenomenon that weakens religious unity and leads to doctrinal and practical fragmentation.

This article examines the sources of this idea, the reasons for its dissemination, its historical roots, and its negative impact on social life. The distinctive strengths of the Hanafi school, its scholarly foundations, and its firmly established position in our country are highlighted, and practical ways to protect the younger generation from destructive movements and malicious calls are presented. In accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, the article argues that Muslims who have not attained the level of ijtihad must follow qualified mujtahids through taqlid. The madhhabs are regarded as part of the Islamic scholarly heritage, and it is demonstrated that denying them also constitutes a betrayal of national and spiritual values.

Non-denominationalism (mazhabsizlik) in Islam refers to rejecting adherence, in matters of Islamic law (shar'iy issues), to the four widely recognized juristic schools (fiqh madhhabs). The word madhhab in Arabic means "path" or "direction," and in Islamic legal terminology it

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denotes "the method by which a particular mujtahid scholar derives and issues legal rulings (fatwa) on a religious matter."

According to the claims of proponents of non-denominationalism, Islam does not require following any one of the juristic madhhabs. They argue that Muslims who follow a madhhab go astray because they engage in blind imitation (taqlid). In their view, practicing Islam should be based solely on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Madhhabs, they claim, resemble following the ijtihad opinions of madhhab founders rather than the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

By the late twentieth century, in addition to dogmatic groups operating under the banner of Islam, a new layer of threat emerged in the Muslim world—those who call for non-denominationalism. According to their assertions, Islam does not obligate a believer to follow any of the four Sunni madhhabs.

It is well known that Sunni Islam has four juristic madhhabs: Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Hanafi. These schools play an important role in Islam. Especially in today's perilous environment, those who adhere to the foundations of these madhhabs do not go astray, because these foundations serve as a basis for refuting the unfounded claims of misguided individuals who, in matters of creed, deviate and call others to fanaticism and extremist movements.

During the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (Khulafa' al-Rashidun), the territory of Islam expanded. Countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Iraq embraced Islam. New cities such as Kufa and Basra were established. The primary factors behind the emergence of madhhabs began from this period. Companions (sahaba)—scholars and teachers capable of conveying Islamic teachings—came to these lands, and through their sincere efforts, Allah willed that eminent jurists (fuqaha) would emerge who could interpret religious rulings comprehensively. One of these great scholars was Imam A'zam Abu Hanifa Nu'man ibn Thabit, the founder of the Hanafi madhhab.

Owing to factors such as the Hanafi school's moderation, its ability to convey the essence of the religion to Muslims in an accessible way, and the fact that the Muslims of our region for centuries have maintained unity, resolved issues with ease, and practiced religious guidance in a commendable manner, stability was achieved in Central Asia. The fact that the religious belief of Muslims in Uzbekistan is mainly based on the Hanafi madhhab is one of the key reasons why believers remain on the path of guidance and preserve harmony and solidarity.

Indeed, if we examine the situation attentively, we can observe that many destructive extremist movements and groups operating today under the guise of religion are, in effect, the outcome of non-denominationalism. At times, those who oppose the madhhabs become stubborn, refuse the truth, and do not accept the advice and guidance of our scholars who possess sound belief; eventually, they may end up joining the ranks of destructive—terrorist—movements.

For centuries, firm faith, belief, and purity of creed have occupied an important place in the spiritual life of Central Asian Muslims. Today, protecting the faith of Muslims in the region from various malicious attacks and assaults, and correctly explaining the pure ideas of Islam to the population—especially to young people—are among the most urgent tasks of our time. The younger generation, as the future of the country, must be well developed in every respect—physically, morally, and spiritually.

Various destructive movements and sects operating under the guise of religion aim to undermine peace and stability in the country, as well as harmony between nations and religions. This, in turn, requires every individual to remain constantly vigilant and aware, to

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approach youth upbringing with a strong sense of responsibility, and—by placing enlightenment against ignorance—to decisively protect young people's hearts from all external attacks.

For several centuries, the Muslims of Central Asia have practiced the Hanafi madhhab. Throughout all stages of its historical development, Hanafism has striven to ensure Muslims' solidarity, mutual concord, and unity. It opposes any form of factionalism among Muslims and has never accepted the idea of dividing the community into groups based on markers of religious affiliation.

It is not without reason that Ramadan al-Buti described non-denominationalism as "the greatest innovation (bid'ah) threatening Islamic Sharia." Even today, the presence of people who—knowingly or unknowingly—are influenced by this idea makes it a pressing and important task to study the phenomenon of non-denominationalism thoroughly on religious and educational grounds, to reveal its true essence, to explain it correctly to the public, and thereby prevent its negative consequences.

Non-denominationalism causes disputes and conflicts in social life, and as a result, individuals inclined toward various radical movements may emerge. It negatively affects solidarity and stability. Therefore, today it is necessary to attach special importance to the spiritual, religious, and educational foundations for preventing non-denominationalism.

A person who does not know the evidences indicating Sharia rulings, and does not know how to derive rulings from those evidences—or even if they know the evidences, they do not know the method of extracting legal judgments from them—namely, a person who lacks the capacity for ijtihad, follows the mujtahids. This is called taqlid. The one who practices taqlid is called a muqallid.

The term "taqlid" is an Arabic word which, in its lexical meaning, signifies "placing or hanging something, or an ornament, around another person's neck." In technical (juristic) usage, it means following a legal ruling without knowing the evidence upon which it is based. Thus, a muqallid—that is, a person who performs taqlid—either does not know the evidence for a ruling at all or, even if they know the evidence, does not know how to derive a ruling from it.

The majority of scholars have emphasized that taqlid is not contrary to Sharia; on the contrary, a person who has not reached the level of ijtihad, even if they are knowledgeable, is obliged to perform taqlid. In support of this position, they have cited evidence from the Qur'an, consensus (ijma'), and rational reasoning.

Evidence from the Qur'an: According to the verse of the Noble Qur'an, "…So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know" (al-Nahl, 43), a person who does not know a Sharia ruling or its evidence is obliged to ask someone who knows and to follow them.

Evidence from consensus (ijma'): As stated by Ibn Khaldun and other historians, not all Companions (sahaba) issued legal verdicts (fatwas), nor was religious knowledge taken from each of them individually. Rather, the number of Companion mujtahids who issued fatwas was very small compared to the number of Companion muqallids who sought fatwas. The mujtahid Companions did not prevent the muqallids from asking for fatwas, nor did they instruct them to attain the level of ijtihad themselves. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also sent learned Companions to communities that had little or no knowledge of Islam, and the people of those regions followed all the fatwas issued by the Companions sent to them. At times, when no explicit evidence could be found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, the Companions exercised ijtihad,

and people followed their ijtihad. None of the Companions or the Successors (tabi'un) objected to this practice. This silence is regarded as a tacit consensus (sukuti ijma') affirming the permissibility of taqlid.

Rational evidence: Ijtihad is a capacity that only a very limited number of people can attain. Therefore, obliging all people to perform ijtihad would amount to imposing a burden beyond their capacity, which is not permissible in Sharia, as stated in the verse: "Allah does not burden any soul beyond its capacity…" (al-Baqarah, 286).

Thus, performing taqlid is a natural and unavoidable practice. Even those who claim that they do not follow any madhhab, although they may not follow the mujtahid imams of the four madhhabs, nevertheless end up following someone else.

The arguments presented above indicate that a person who has not attained the level of ijtihad and istinbat (i.e., deriving rulings) must follow a mujtahid through taqlid. In this regard, the well-known scholar Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Shatibi states: "For a mujtahid, the Shar'i evidences are what they are; likewise, for the common people, the mujtahid's fatwa holds the same position."

For centuries, Muslims have practiced one of the four madhhabs—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali. No one denied this established tradition. Numerous jurists (fuqaha), hadith scholars (muhaddithun), theologians (mutakallimun), and Sufi scholars (mutasawwifa) also conducted their scholarly and religious activity on the basis of these madhhabs.

The idea of non-denominationalism inherently carries the danger of pulling a nation backward, condemning it to stagnation, and causing it to fall behind progress. If specialists in various fields were to follow the idea of non-denominationalism, they would spend their lives not on improving their professional mastery and conducting research, but on becoming entangled in endless problems and devoting their time solely to issuing religious rulings for themselves. As a result, specialists in different fields would lose their competence under rapidly changing globalization conditions: they would be unable to become either strong professionals or mature scholars. Consequently, as the number and quality of competent specialists decline, the nation first faces stagnation and later slips into decline. In reality, however, each specialist mastering their field thoroughly, serving social development, easing people's burdens, and contributing to the prosperity of the country is also a great act of worship.

The existence today of individuals influenced by the idea of non-denominationalism makes it necessary to explain to our people the corrupt essence of this idea, and at the same time to clarify the true nature of the madhhabs, their invaluable worth, and especially the significance of the Hanafi madhhab, which our people have followed since ancient times.

At present, the idea of non-denominationalism promoted by certain individuals is one of the dangerous factors threatening a correct understanding of Islamic Sharia. This idea effectively nullifies the efforts of thousands of scholars over many centuries and renders meaningless unique sources produced through a lifetime of hardship and devotion. It leads to the conclusion that the traditions followed by all Muslims for centuries were wrong and that so many Muslims were misguided. Most regrettably, it damages the correct path that unites and gathers Muslims, thereby causing fragmentation and division among them. Such calls arise from a lack of understanding of the essence and value of the madhhabs. Although there are four madhhabs, they are regarded as orientations within the single mainstream of Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah, and they serve to consolidate and unite the Muslim community. The Prophet (peace be upon

him) is reported to have said: "Allah will not unite my community upon misguidance." Another hadith states: "What Muslims deem good is also good in the sight of Allah."

CONCLUSION

Although globalization has created new opportunities for human development, in some cases it undermines religious values, customs, and traditional structures. In particular, under conditions of globalization, instances of rejecting or neglecting the madhhabs as values are increasing. This creates the ground for the emergence of a dangerous social and religious phenomenon known as non-denominationalism. Non-denominationalism is not merely a matter of personal belief; rather, it should be viewed as a factor that threatens national unity, religious solidarity, and social stability.

Therefore, in today's era of globalization, it is exceptionally important to strengthen educational and awareness-raising efforts, equip young people with correct information, and warn them about the consequences of religious fanaticism and non-denominationalism. In this process, the role of scientific and educational institutions, scholars, and mass media is invaluable. Only through an academically grounded approach can the harm of non-denominationalism be overcome and authentic values be preserved.

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