



Probing the reflection of Islamophobia in Ibn Warrāq's Portrayal of Islam

Mā'ida Bāyrām¹; Fatemeh Janahmadi^{2*}; 'Abbās Boroumand A'lam³

1. PhD student, Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

2. Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

3. Associate professor, Department of History, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Received: September 6, 2021 ; Revised: November 3, 2021 ; Accepted: November 16, 2021

© University of Tehran

Abstract

Islamophobia is part of the universe of discourse in the Western thought system. Part of the wrong and hostile mentality of the Westerners about Islam should be sought in the way Islam is represented. One of the outstanding contemporary authors active in making a distorted image of Islam is Ibn Warrāq. His works have been promoted many times in different languages, and based on his own claim he has chosen a pen name discreetly in fear of having a fate as that of Salman Rushdie. The present study attempts to probe Islamophobia in the plot of Ibn Warrāq's character as well as the reflection of Islamophobia in his portrayal of Islam. The results of the study show that Ibn Warrāq represents Islam as ugly, inhumane, and irrational and the Muslim as oppressed, belligerent, frustrated, and reactionary. He tries to inculcate the phobia of the religion of Islam into his non-Muslim reader and to encourage his Muslim reader to jump from believing Islam to its denial. Seeking clear, political aims, he tries to promote Islamophobia systematically.

Keywords: Ibn Warrāq, Islamophobia, Westerners' study of Islam, Secularism

Introduction

Dealing with Muslims and Islam and the issue of Islamophobia is not a novel phenomenon in the West. Islamophobia began with the emergence of Islam. Although this issue has roots in the far past, the expression of Islamophobia has been used since 1980s, and it has got a broader use after the incident of September 11, 2001. This word contains some negative prejudice and pessimism about Islam. In English dictionaries, the word Islamophobia is defined as an irrational fear of Islam and Muslims. Augmenting this movement in books and periodicals is one of the current trends. Through lectures, articles, and books, they strain to attack Muslims' central pivot; they try to attract the attention of the public opinion to this point that the Muslims' identity formation cores and central pivot are not legitimate and that Islam is problematic in its essence. Formation of many centers, with good financial support, to study Islam in the West with colonial goals that for a long time have been active in knowing Islamic civilization and legacy and also the being of the Prophet (s) as their main target for their research are clear evidence for this assertion. Ibn Warrāq is one of the conspicuous persons active in this arena. Based on his own claim, he has chosen a pen name to save his life. Translation of his works into various languages indicates his effort to reflect

* Corresponding Author, Email: f.janahmadi@modares.ac.ir

his thoughts broadly. It should be noted that, unfortunately, introducing and criticizing this character and his thoughts as one of the most active persons in the promotion of Islamophobia is manifested very limitedly in our country, Iran. It also should be noted that a comprehensive criticism of Ibn Warrāq's imaginations is not the aim of the present study. This is because it is a broad topic and needs another article. With probing the elements of Islamophobia, the present study just tries to clarify the dimensions of Islamophobia in Ibn Warrāq's portrayal of Islam.

Islamophobia in the plot of Ibn Warrāq's character

Biography and life of Ibn Warrāq

Ibn Warrāq in the preface of his book writes about his life as this,

I was born into a Muslim family.... My first memories are of my circumcision and my first day at Qur'ānic school –psychoanalysts may take what they wish of that. Even before I could read or write the national language I learned to read the Qur'ān in Arabic without understanding a word of it –a common experience for thousands of Muslim children. As soon as I was able to think for myself, I discarded all the religious dogmas that had been foisted on me. I now consider myself a secular humanist who believes that all religions are sick men's dreams, false –demonstrably false –and pernicious.

Such is my background and position, and there the matter would have rested but for the Rushdie affair and the rise of Islam, I, who had never written a book before, was galvanized into writing this one by these events.” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: xiii)

The origin of Ibn Warrāq in the interviews is said to be Indian who immigrated to Pakistan when he was a child. Then he went to the West and passed his graduate studies there. He has chosen a pen name for himself and eschews to show his face in public. He says that he does so for the fear of his personal safety and also for the inclination he feels to travel to Pakistan to visit his family (Abraham, 2007: 15). In spite of the effort by the author of the present article, the real name of this person was not found. Ibn Warrāq has borrowed his pen name from Muḥammad b. Hārūn Baghdādī known as Abū 'Īsā Warrāq, the theologian of the third hegira century. He was an Iranian living in Baghdad, and he was a writer and bookseller. Ibn Nadīm sees him as one of those who had converted to Islam on the outside but did not believe it on the inside (Ibn Nadīm, n.d.: 473). Ibn Warrāq writes that Abū 'Īsā Warrāq was, “an independent thinker and skeptic rather than someone who believed in any fixed system of thought” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 257).

He is the writer of books like *Why I Am Not a Muslim*¹; *The Origins of The Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*²; *The Quest for the Historical Muḥammad*³; *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*⁴; *Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out*⁵; *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*⁶; *Which Koran? Variants, Manuscripts, and the Influence of Pre-Islamic Poetry*⁷; *Koranic Allusions: The Biblical, Qumranian, and pre-*

1. Ibn Warrāq, *Why I Am Not a Muslim*, foreword by R. Joseph Hoffmann, New York, Prometheus Books, 1995.

2. Idem, *The Origins of The Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, New York, Prometheus Books, 1998.

3. Idem, *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2000.

4. Idem, *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2002.

5. Idem, *Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out*, edited by Ibn Warrāq, New York, Prometheus Books, 2003.

6. Idem, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2007.

7. Idem, *Which Koran? Variants, Manuscripts, and the Influence of Pre-Islamic Poetry*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2008.

*Islamic background to the Koran*¹; *Why the West is Best: A Muslim Apostate's Defense of Liberal Democracy*²; *The Islam in Islamic Terrorism: The Importance of Beliefs, Ideas, and Ideology*³; and *Sir Walter Scott's Crusades & Other Fantasies*⁴. In one of his books, Ibn Warrāq writes, “This book is first and foremost an assertion of my right to criticize everything and anything in Islam even to blaspheme, to make errors, to satirize, and mock (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 14).

It should be noted that there are many motivations to write anti-Islamic books including propagating, political, and colonial incentives. In his biography, Ibn Warrāq tries implicitly to state the unpleasant experience of Islam as the reason for writing his books; he strains to show that he has been bothered in the name of Islam, and it is for this very reason that he has become anti-religion and that he had been involved in an unpleasant experience of religious education in his childhood. But Ibn Warrāq’s claim— being taught Qur’ān in his childhood— is untrue. If it had been so, he would not have based his work on the English translation of Qur’ān (Ibid: 104-163).

Moreover, in spite of various interpretations of Qur’ān, he uses only the interpretation by Yūsif ‘Alī which can be read in English easily (Ibid: 41, 46). He bases his work often on the writings of Orientalists such as John Wansbrough, Patricia Crone, Michael Cook, and Henri Lammens, and the name of Muslim historians like Ṭabarī is little in his work.⁵ In essence, Warrāq says that he grew up in an Islamic country; therefore, he should have mastery over Islamic sources and have access to them. This is whereas the sources chosen by Warrāq show that he has no understanding of Arabic. This leads us to cast doubt on the authenticity of his biography.

Ibn Warrāq’s political stance and approach

Soon after September 11, David Frum, the speechwriter of George W. Bush, hosted Ibn Warrāq in the White House for half an hour. Ibn Warrāq says it is high time that the Western politicians like George Bush and Tony Blair oppose those who deny the role of Islam in the ferocities of September 11. He says when you talk to young Palestinians or Syrians in the Middle East, they often tell you that they want a lifestyle like that of Westerners. He holds that they do not employ the media to encourage the views of these people. He asks whether they know that after the September 11, there were protests in Iran in favor of Americans. This also happened in Pakistan, but they never see the reflection of these in the media. To him, the Revolution of Iran has been the biggest change for the Islamic countries that has caused them to delay in becoming secular. Ibn Warrāq writes that criticisms of Qur’ān are still alive and the destruction of it is near.... on the other hand, he continues, the Western civilization is in need of intense, institutional support, particularly from the higher education professors. He believes that, unfortunately, the Western universities and the outstanding research

1. Idem, *Koranic Allusions: The Biblical, Qumranian, and pre-Islamic background to the Koran*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2013.

2. Idem, *Why the West is Best: A Muslim Apostate's Defense of Liberal Democracy*, Encounter Books, 2011.

3. Ibn Warrāq, *The Islam in Islamic Terrorism: The Importance of Beliefs, Ideas, and Ideology*, Ibn Warrāq, New English Review Press, 2017.

4. Idem, *Sir Walter Scott's Crusades & Other Fantasies*, Ibn Warrāq, New English Review Press, 2013.

5. See: Ibn Warrāq (2002), *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*. Amherst, New York; Prometheus Books; Idem (1998), *The Origins of the Koran_ Classic Essays on Islam’s Holy Book*, New York, Prometheus.

institutions are under the spell of postmodernists, multiculturalists, and relativists. The ideas of charlatans like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Edward Said are still taught in undergraduate courses and poison the minds of students. He states that it takes years for them to gain the universities and put them in the course of main goal: the attainment of objective truth. It is only in this way, to him, that they can defend the Western civilization (Ibn Warrāq, 2010).

Accordingly, the book *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* has been written by Ibn Warrāq so that, with criticizing the ideas of Edward Said, it could be clarified that the image made by the Orientalists from the West is real. In March 2006, Ibn Warrāq in collaboration with eleven other persons –the most important of whom was Salman Rushdie –issued the statement of *Together Toward Totalitarianism*, as a response to the reactions triggered by the offensive caricatures about the revered Prophet (s).¹

As it was said, the political stance of Ibn Warrāq is extremely obvious. He tries to promote Islamophobia not only in the Western countries but also in Islamic countries, and, for doing so, he strains to employ politicians and media to advance his goals.

Methodology and historical approach of Ibn Warrāq

Ibn Warrāq, quoting Ignac Goldziher and Joseph Schacht, sees most of the traditions invalid and regards them as a reflection of the inclinations of posterior Muslim societies (Ibn Warrāq, 1998: 36-81). Based on this approach, he claims that Muslims at first did not comprehend the revelation of the revered Prophet (s). Rather, it was at the heyday of literary works of ninth century that revelation was designed to organize and give meaning to a text that was mostly incoherent. In addition, he holds that most of the narrations about the life of the revered Prophet (S) were made many years after his demise, in an attempt to give meaning to Qur'ān. Moreover, he claims that the Coptic sources and the other Christian sources affected the text of Qur'ān dramatically.² According, in his another work, he tries to show that Qur'ān is derived from Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian sources.³ Using the works of researchers such as John Wansbrough, Patricia Crone, and Michael Cook, Ibn Warrāq emphasizes the lack of trustable sources about the life of the revered Prophet (s) (Ibn Warrāq, 1998: 36-81). He is drastically under the influence of radical skeptics' opinions. Thus, as the other radical skeptics, Ibn Warrāq, for proper organizing of the history, first, stressed the use of materialistic evidence and then, the employment of non-Islamic texts (Ibn Warrāq, 2000: 15-89).

The question that should be asked from Ibn Warrāq is this: which unobservable source and power in the range of Islamic civilization in the third and fourth hegira centuries– from India to Andalusia– had the ability of this comprehensive distortion of Islamic tradition? Therefore, we should have a conspiracy view to Islamic tradition to the effect that all Muslim scholars were involved in this conspiracy so that they could conceal the real course of events. In addition, there are problems in using materialistic evidence. First, what is discovered or left

1. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4763520.stm>; Last accessed 2020/7/30.

2. See: Ibn Warrāq (2002), *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*. Amherst, New York; Prometheus Books; Idem (1998), *The Origins of the Koran_ Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, New York, Prometheus.

3. See: Idem, *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*, New York, Prometheus Books, 2002.

always –more or less –is accidental and is only part of a whole. Second, there is no preplanned, causal relation in linking these materialistic evidences; the meaning which is behind every part of this conundrum and the relation between its various parts should be discovered (Nevo & Koren, 1991: 6). Most of the non-Islamic sources that contain a lot of information about the origin of Islam are neither contemporary with the events nor coherent in what they say. Furthermore, they also are written under the support of political and religious forces, a point that itself is not clear how much has affected the way Islamic events are depicted (Donner, 1998, vol. 2: 14).

External evidences are complement to Islamic sources and in case of lack of external evidences, Islamic sources will not lose their validity; this is because they do not need the confirmation of external evidences in the first place and with the ways of criticizing the source, the core of Islamic facts can be attained from the Islamic sources.

Origin of Ibn Warrāq's religious viewpoint

Ibn Warrāq is the founder of the “Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society,” ISIS, in 1998 (Caschetta, 2009, vol. 16: 77-79). He is a higher-up in CFI and explicitly has introduced himself as a secular humanist (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: xiii). This organization is a devoted supporter of secular humanism.¹ Norman Leo Geisler divides the common beliefs among secular humanists into five categories: disbelief in religion, naturalism, evolution, ethical relativism, and self-sufficiency. That said here are short descriptions of the secular humanism principles. First, disbelief in religion where the necessity of the existence of God for creation or survival of the humanity is denied and therefore, it opposes a theologian viewpoint. Second, naturalism where there is no supernatural and that, based on its claim, all life culminates in natural forces. Next, evolution which is the inevitable result of naturalism; it tries to explain the production of natural forces with the evolution of simple forms of life into complex ones through the natural selection. To be more precise, it states that humans are indispensable part of nature and the result of evolutionary change. Fourth, ethical relativism that claims since evolution is the parameter of human growth, there is nothing as final authority. Therefore, the origin of ethics is the human itself and it becomes complete with the evolution. Finally, self-sufficiency which says the human has the essential capacity to survive without God and that no God saves us. It holds that we should save ourselves (Geisler, 1983: 121-22).

In criticizing Ibn Warrāq's thinking, it should be said that this thought is nothing but upheaval and nihilism which brings about no result. In the thinking framework of humanism, human is the pivot and yardstick of everything, and human reasoning replaces revelation, denying all sublime authority. Thus, in human reasoning and among humans, the number of humans becomes the yardstick for goodness and badness, and at the end there remains no standard. Virtue, vice, good, and bad all lose their meanings, causing the denial of every type of ideal and value-based system. Under such circumstances, humans see themselves under no commitment; they live in absolute nonalignment and levity, ending up in nihilism. This is because the destiny of a thinking that sets mortal human as the pivot of worship is, ultimately, nothing but nihilism. Moreover, in the divine thinking, whenever the human forgets God, in essence he forgets himself, and self-oblivion brings about nothing but nihilism and vanity (Ibrāhīmīyān, 2002: 104-105).

The secular humanism thinking leads to practical and doctrinal materialism, and nothing should be expected from a philosophy that is based on human's materialistic and instinctive inclinations. Based on such a philosophy, everything is tainted with materialism and lust and

1. <https://centerforinquiry.org>.

is void of ethical values and virtues. Ideal and value-based concepts such as justice, freedom, human rights, growth, advancement, development, and the like all are coated with materialistic savor (Rabbānī Gulpāyigānī, 2000: 57).

Secular ethics makes humans selfish and egotistic and also makes them indifferent towards the salvation of others. This is because in this system for one who sees his interest in conflict with the interests of others, it is meaningless to act according to justice and fairness (Khusrupanāh, 2002, vol. 1: 202). Generally, of the pernicious results of secular ethics are the individualism and relativism of ethics, ethical pluralism, and ethical nihilism.

Islamophobia in Ibn Warrāq's opinions and writings

The works of Ibn Warrāq are teemed with criticisms of Islam and the doing of the revered Prophet (s). In one of his books, Ibn Warrāq writes, "This book is first and foremost an assertion of my right to criticize everything and anything in Islam even to blaspheme, to make errors, to satirize, and mock" (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 14). He depicts Islam in a way that it causes fear and hatred in the reader. The images made by Ibn Warrāq from Islam are probed in the following.

Ibn Warrāq and depiction of Islam as a violent and belligerent religion, supporting terrorism

Ibn Warrāq strains to portray Islam as violent and belligerent. He argues that Islamic terrorism is latent in the early Islamic sources. He states that to understand the behavior of Islamic terrorists and to fathom their incentives, we have to take their beliefs serious (Ibn Warrāq, 2017: 1). Ibn Warrāq writes, "Assassinations, murder, cruelty, and torture must all be taken into consideration in any judgment on the moral character of Muhammad" (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 99). Somewhere else about Jihad, he writes, "To read such blood thirsty injunctions in a holy book is shocking" (Ibid: 218). He also, quoting Schumpeter, says, "Islam was a war machine that did not stop at anything once it had been set going. War is a normal activity in such a military theocracy" (Ibid: 219).

Jihad and peace are both of the Islamic pillars. Islam does not only limit itself to recommendations and advice, but also it legislates Jihad to do away with oppression. Of Muslim honors is having the injunction of Jihad in the religious programs.

Moral and humane aspects of the revered Prophet (s) in battles are abundant like not harassing the innocent persons, women, and children; observing the rights of war prisoners; taking care of the injured; forgiving the enemies; committing to the covenants with the opposing persons and enemies; having talks with the enemies; and so on. Amnesty issued by his Holiness in the conquest of Mecca is a true evidence for the noble behavior of the Prophet (s) with his old-time enemies (Ibn Hishām, n.d., vol. 4: 48). Watt says, "His kindness extended even to animals, which is remarkable for Muhammad's century and part of the world" (Watt, 1964: 231). He points to a happening that occurs on the way of the army to conquer Mecca where they hear the howling of a dog feeding its puppies in a hole, being disturbed by hearing the clamor of the marching army. Prophet (s) posts one of his companions to approach the hole and avoid that animal from disturbance until the army goes away (Wāqidī, 1988, vol. 2: 804). The policy of his Holiness in emancipating the inmates of Badr war (Ibn Sa'd, 1989, vol. 2: 18, 22); freeing about six thousand war prisoners of Hawāzin even without asking for ransom (Ibn Hishām, n.d., vol. 1: 127-129); observing emotional points even about the war prisoners in the war of Khaybar (Ibid: 337) and also at the time of selling them; and so on are merely some of the instances of Prophet's (s) compassionate and kind behavior that the history has left behind as a legacy. Probing the verses of Qur'ān as to Jihad also clarifies that Islam, in the most violent scenes of life, sets

ethics and humanity as the basis for action including the verse 190 of chapter 2 where it reads, “Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loveth not transgressors” (Qur’ān 2:190). It also reads, “Therefore if they withdraw from you but fight you not, and (instead) send you (Guarantees of) peace, then God Hath opened no way for you (to war against them)” (Qur’ān 4:90).

Ibn Warrāq and propounding a misogynous attitude of Islam

Ibn Warrāq sees the legislation of Islam misogynous, and writes, “Muhammad's ideas of women were like those of his contemporaries—women were charming, capricious playthings, liable to lead one astray” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 292). To him, women were treated as incapable beings in Islam (Ibn Warrāq, 2003: 324). He holds that Islam treats women as beings who are “intellectually, morally, and physically inferior. First comes man...” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 301).

Ibn Warrāq does not consider that Islam does not see being a man as the standard for superiority, but rather it sees piety as the yardstick for supremacy. In Qur’ān, God says, “Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you” (Qur’ān 49:13). In addition, Islam sees both genders qualified to attain grand stations and it sees no difference between man and woman in this. God says, “If any do deeds of righteousness, - be they male or female - and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them” (Qur’ān 4:124).

In the society of Arabia where gender bias was dominant, Prophet (s) tried to transform many beliefs including the humiliating and mean view of women, and give a new image of them, as many perceptible instances show this. For example, when Qays saw that the Prophet (s) had put his daughters on his knees caressing them said with surprise, “I have never done such a thing, and in the past I had many daughters that I buried them all.” Then, he recounted the burial of one of his daughters. The happening was so pathetic that the messenger of God (s) was moved from hearing it, and shed tears from his eyes. Then he said, “Who does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy (Ibn Athīr, n.d., under the entry of Qays). The Prophet (s) observed high respect for his own daughter, Fāṭima, as he said, “Fāṭima is part of my being” (Ibid, vol. 3: 332). The role of woman is manifested in the Biography of the Prophet in allegiance, consultation, Jihad, and hegira as the main arenas of social activities at the beginning of Islam.

Ibn Warrāq and propounding of Islam as a religion incompatible with human rights

Ibn Warrāq compares the Declaration of the Human Rights In 1948 with the Islamic rules and regulations, and tries to prove that Islam is against human rights.¹ Accordingly, he says, “They (human rights) are universal, and not culturally bound or relative. Under Islam, nothing like these ideas has ever developed. Human beings have duties, duties toward God; only God has rights” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 185). Elsewhere he says that the main factor in thwarting Islam to move toward international human rights is the existence of Allah or, in clearer words, following the tradition and Qur’ān (Ibid). To criticize Ibn Warrāq, it should be said that if the starting point for supporting human rights in the West dates back to the nineteenth century, in Islam it dates back to the emergence of the religion, i.e. about twelve centuries before that in the West. Of course, it should be considered that in a legal system that has a materialistic approach and encapsulates the life of the human in the circle of birth and death, it is natural to define the human rights in that very circle too. However, in a legal system that thinks about a

1. Ibn Warrāq, Is Islam Compatible With Democracy And Human Rights? November 16, 2018, in <https://centerforinquiry.org/blog/is-islam-compatible-with-democracy-and-human-rights>.

life beyond that of the physical world and regards the human to have an eternal spirit, it is obvious that human rights will be offered more comprehensively (Ibrāhīmīyān, 2002:15).

4. Ibn Warrāq and the analysis of the relation between Islam and the previous religions

Ibn Warrāq depicts the religion of Islam a derivation from Christianity and Judaism. Accordingly, he, quoting S. M. Zwemer writes, “Islam is nothing more nor less than Judaism plus the apostle-ship of Mohammad” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 49).¹ Elsewhere he writes, “Muhammad never even understood the doctrine of the Trinity. What is in the Koran about Christianity derives from heretical sects” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 62). Ibn Warrāq continues that the basic principles and doctrines of Islam are also borrowed from Judaism, among which the following are the most important: unity of God; the written revelation; creation; seven Heavens, seven Hells; the mount Caf; moral and legal laws; and stories and legends (Ibid: 49-61).

Ibn Warrāq does not pay attention to this fact that the mere resemblance in some of the teachings is not out of replication. The same origin of Abrahamic religions is the reason for this similarity and some of the teachings are taken from the valid source, and not from Jews or Christians. As to this, Qur’ān says, “They say: ‘Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (To salvation).’ Say thou: ‘Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined not gods with God’” (Qur’ān 2:135). The difference of elements of Islam with those two religions is also another evidence for the falsehood of Ibn Warrāq’s claims.

Ibn Warrāq and the interpretation of Islam as a totalitarian religion

Ibn Warrāq believes that democracy is in no way connected with Islam, but rather it is a sworn partner of despotism and tyranny. He writes,

Democracy depends on freedom of thought and free discussion, whereas Islamic law explicitly forbids the discussions of decisions arrived at by the infallible consensus of the ulama.... Democracy functions by critical discussion, by rational thought, by listening to another point of view, by compromise, by changing one's mind, by tentative proposals that are submitted to criticism, and by the testing of theories by trying to refute them. Islamic law is not legislated but divinely revealed and infallible. (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 181)

He also, partially quoting Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, writes,

Islamic law has certainly aimed at controlling the religious, social and political life of mankind in all its aspects, the life of its followers without qualification, and the life of those who follow tolerated religions to a degree that prevents their activities from hampering Islam in any way. The all-embracing nature of Islamic law is apparent in that it does not distinguish between ritual, law (in the European sense of the word), ethics, and good manners. In principle, this legislation controls the entire life of the believer and the Islamic community (Ibn Warrāq, 2017: 109-110).

Moreover, somewhere else he says, “Georges-Henry Bousquet...distinguishes two aspects of Islam he considers totalitarian: Islamic law and the Islamic notion of Jihad, which has as its

1. See: Ibn Warrāq, *Christmas in the Koran: Luxenberg, Syriac, and the Near Eastern and Judeo-Christian Background of Islam*, New York, Prometheus, 2014; idem, *Koranic Allusions: The Biblical, Qumranian, and Pre-Islamic Background to the Koran*, New York, Prometheus, 2013; idem, *The Origins of the Koran_ Classic Essays on Islam’s Holy Book*, New York, Prometheus, 1998; idem, *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text, and Commentary*. Amherst, New York; Prometheus Books, 2002.

ultimate aim the conquest of the world in order to submit it to one single authority” (Ibid: 110).

Ibn Warrāq writes, “At least King Fahd has had the honesty to admit the incompatibility of Islam and democracy” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 172). He also puts forward this hypothesis about the Salman Rushdie affair (Ibid: 1-3). In addition, the unwillingness of [Muslim] authors to deny the rule of executing one due to religious belief reveals the big gap between their mentality and the modern philosophy of human rights (Ibn Warrāq, 2003: 114). He sees the West and particularly New York City as the emblem of freedom (Ibn Warrāq, 2011: 11-18).

Ibn Warrāq does not see that a religion should guide one in all of the arenas related to the life of the human. Islam is a complete program for all the dimensions of humans’ life, and that totalitarianism is quenched in the destiny of despotism and tyranny which has no place in Islam. As a high theological authority, who is the founder of one of the most democratic systems of the world in the form of “Islamic Republic,” Imām Khumaynī, through establishing the Islamic system in Iran, proved that Islam and democracy do not have any heteronomy and contradiction, but also these two are collectible and that Islam has the most democratic way to manage the society through relying on the people.

Religious, fundamental concepts such as “principle of monotheism,” “principle of counsel and “principle of caliphate” not only show the compatibility of Islam with democracy but also necessitate it. A) Principle of monotheism: supporters of Islamic democracy argue that unity of God is a necessity for a democratic system. The governing of a person is incompatible with the governing of God because all persons are equal to God, and blind subservience to one person is against Islam. B) Principle of counsel: to Qur’ān, a benevolent person is one who organizes his or her affairs through mutual consultation (Qur’ān 42:38). This matter was promoted through the traditions of the Prophet (s) and the speeches, acts, and demeanors of the first governors of the Islamic society. This means that Muslims are to manage their political affairs through mutual consultation. C) Principle of caliphate: another basic concept as to Islamic democracy is the concept of caliphate that is redefined in the contemporary discussion about the political use of the traditional word *caliphate* (Esposito & Voll, 2005: 9). It should be noted that Islamic government differs from the democratic government in the West. What is valid and executional in the Islamic government is the divine rule, and it cannot be said that the legislation of the laws is entirely in the helm of people.

In the Islamic culture, the basic foundations of thinking structure are based upon the rationality of the human, and humans have always been recommended to employ the light of the reason, sublimity of the thinking, and proper intellectual discussions. Therefore, the biggest treachery against the human is to contaminate the intellectual ambience of the society through fomentation and to agitate the public mind for distinguishing the right from the false. Execution and punishment of an apostate can be counted as a sturdy barrier that stands against the psychological warfare and propaganda assaulting Islam and Muslims.

Is freedom, absolute and unrestrained, possible? Nowadays, the lethal and contagious disease of “Corona” has appeared in the world and has frightened the people in all countries. Therefore, to stop this disease from spreading, every type of traveling is forbidden to the hot zones, and the travelers of those zones must be quarantined so that the spread of this disease could be stopped. Is any government recognized as a violator of freedom because of this doing? It is interesting that the rules in England forbid insulting the sanctities of Christianity, but Salman Rushdie is not seen deserved to be punished for the violation of this rule by insulting Islamic sanctities; rather he is encouraged. The government of England considers limitations for freedom. For example, any act against monarchy or the discouragement of people as to monarchy is deemed treason (Emmerson et al., 2012: 200).

From 2017, it is estimated that every day nine persons are arrested in England due to online lecturing from whom five are found guilty.¹

About the demands of Muslims in the West, Ibn Warrāq writes,

The implications of the Muslim demands on the wider British are enormous.

Unless great vigilance is exercised, we are all likely to find British society greatly impoverished morally, and all the gains, social and moral, may well be squandered in an orgy of multicultural liberalism. (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 353)

Later on, with providing examples, he continues, “And in giving in to Muslim and Jewish demands for their own methods of butchering we in effect condone behavior that we have previously judged immoral. We sanction immorality because of our respect for the religion of others” (Ibid: 354). Does Ibn Warrāq really believe in freedom of expression? Or does he always manipulate it to his own interest? Anti-Muslim attacks in England, Canada, the United States, and other Western countries show the freedom of expression in these countries! Massacring fifty praying Muslims in two mosques of New Zealand, just because they were Muslims and were praying in the mosque, is only one instance of these attacks.²

Ibn Warrāq and propounding the doubt of Islam as to science and seeking knowledge

Ibn Warrāq believes that the essence of Islam has always been dubious about science and knowledge, considering their acquisition pernicious to the religion and the faith. Accordingly, he says, “There is a persistent myth that Islam encouraged science. Adherents of this view quote the Koran and hadith to prove their point: ... (Koran 39.12); ...This is nonsense, because the knowledge advocated in the preceding quotes is religious knowledge” (Ibn Warrāq, 1995: 273).

Ibn Warrāq does not see that the most important mission of Islam is creating a supernatural incentive among people and proper directing of their daily efforts. This is in a way that in addition to meeting daily needs the human could become goal-oriented and show effort to attain the goal of the universe. Thus, in Islamic culture all sciences needed for the life of mankind are of importance, and it is recommended that people acquire them to the extent of the requirements and needs of the society. This can be confirmed as the history of knowledge is garnished with the names of Muslim scientists such as Jābir, Khārazmī, Rāzī, Mas‘ūdī, Abulwafā, Bīrūnī, and ‘Umar Khayyām in sciences like chemistry, algebra, medicine, geography, mathematics, physics, and astronomy.

Conclusion

Islamophobia is completely evident in the plot of Ibn Warrāq’s character. In his biography, Ibn Warrāq has given an extremely negative depiction of an Islamic life experience. He has shown traveling to the West as an outlet for saving oneself, and does his best to direct readers towards secularism. He claims to have Islamic studies, but his references indicate his claim to be untrue and, as a result, there is doubt as to the veracity of his biography. Ibn Warrāq’s visit with the speechwriter of George W. Bush, establishment of ISIS, and membership in CFI show the political goals he pursues. He tries to promote Islamophobia systematically not only in the Western countries but also in Islamic countries and, for doing so, strives to use politicians and media to advance his goals. In methodology and historical approach, Ibn Warrāq is counted as a radical skeptic and, in essence, the religious attitude of Ibn Warrāq originates from secular humanism. To criticize him, it should be said that the thought of secular humanism leads to practical and doctrinal materialism. Based on such a philosophy,

1. Parker, Charlie, “Police arresting nine people a day in fight against web trolls.” The Times, 12 October 2017.

2. <https://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/2379139>.

everything is tainted with materialism and lust, everything becomes void of ethical values and virtues, and value-based and idealistic concepts such as justice, freedom, human rights, growth, advancement, development, and the like are all coated with the materialistic savor. No other result can be anticipated from philosophies whose bases are comprised of human's materialistic and instinctive inclinations. By and large, individualism and relativism of ethics, ethical pluralism, and ethical nihilism are of the malicious results of secular ethics.

Ibn Warrāq sees it his right to offend and mock the Islamic principles. He depicts Islam as ugly, inhumane, belligerent, and irrational, and represents Islam in a way that it causes the feelings of fear and hatred as to Islam in the addressee. Exploring the images of Ibn Warrāq clarified the dimensions of Islamophobia in this depiction. This is done by portraying Islam as a religion violating the rights of women; a religion incompatible with the human rights; violent, belligerent, and supporter of terrorism; a second-hand religion, derived from Judaism, Christianity, and the previous religions; an anti-democracy religion with a totalitarian system; and anti-knowledge. Ibn Warrāq's employment of words like women rights, human rights, democracy, and freedom of expression are to advance his political goals. However, where there is a talk of using these words for the Muslims settled in the West, he prescribes for the West not to accept them and to see the demands of Muslims inappropriate. Hence, with playing on words, Ibn Warrāq depicts an Islam which is far away from the real Islam, and that he has only strived to promote Islamophobia.

References

The noble Qurʾān

Abraham, P. (2007), "Dissident voices." *World Magazine*, vol. 22, no. 22, June 16.

Caschetta, A. J. (2009), "Defending the West." *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 1, ...

Donner, F. (1998), "Narratives of Islamic origins: the beginnings of Islamic historical writing." *Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, vol. 14, Princeton, Darwin Press.

Emmerson, B., Ashworth, A., & A. Macdonald (2012), *Human rights and criminal justice* (3rd ed.). ..., Sweet & Maxwell.

Esposito, J., & J. O. Voll (2005), "Islam and democracy." Translated by M. Ḥujjat, *Bāztāb Andīsha*, no. 67, 7-13.

Geisler, N. (1983), *Is man the measure? An evaluation of contemporary humanism*. Oregon: Wipf and Stock.

Ibn Athīr, A. (n.d.), *Asad al-ghāba fī maʿrifa al-ṣaḥāba*. Tehran, Ismāʿīliyyān.

Ibn Hishām, A. (n.d.), *Al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*. Edited by A. Abyārī & A. Shalabī, Beirut, Dār al-Maʿrifa.

Ibn Nadīm, M. (n.d.), *Al-Fihrist*. Beirut, Dār al-Maʿrifa.

Ibn Saʿd, M. (1989), *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*. Edited by M. A. ʿAṭā, Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya.

Ibn Shahrāshūb, M. (n.d.), *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*. Qom, Al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿIlmiyya.

Ibn Warrāq, (2000), *The quest for the historical Muḥammad*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Id., (2017), *The Islam in Islamic terrorism – The importance of beliefs, ideas, and ideology*. Nashville: New English Review Press.

Id., (1998), *The origins of the Koran – Classic essays on Islam's holy book*. New York: Prometheus.

Id., (2010), *Virgins? What virgins? And other essays*. New York: Prometheus.

Id., (1995), *Why I am not a Muslim*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Id., (2011), *Why the West Is best: A Muslim apostate's defense of liberal democracy*. New York: Encounter Books.

Id., (2003), *Leaving Islam – Apostates speak out*. New York: Prometheus.

Ibrāhīmīyān, Ḥ. (2002), *Anthropology: Islam, existentialism, and humanism*. Tehran, Nashr Maʿārif.

Khusrupanāh, A. Ḥ. (2002), *New theology*. Qom, Ḥawza Center for Cultural Studies.

Rabbānī Gulpāyigānī, A. (2000), *Roots and signs of secularism*. Tehran, Cultural Institute of Contemporary Knowledge and Thought.

Nevo, Y., & J. Koren (1991), "Methodological approaches to Islamic studies." *Der Islam*, vol. 68, 87-125.

Wāqīdī, M. (1988), *al-Maghāzī*. Edited by M. Jones, Beirut, Muʿassisa al-Aʿlamī.

Watt, W. M. (1964), *Muḥammad: Prophet and statesman*. Oxford.