

Practices of Islamic State (ISIS) in the Context of Islamic Eschatology

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Abstract

The History has shown once again, that one cannot fight something that one does not understand. In modern warfare both the military and the ideological fronts are at the same level of intensity, as the victory always depends not only on battlefield triumphs, but also on enlisting new adherents and holding to the old ones. And after two years of heroic fight of the “Obama Alliance” against IS in Syria and Iraq there is a clear indication, that Caliph Ibrahim (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) is winning on both fronts.

The main goal of this article is an attempt to explain reasons underlying the success of ISIS leadership, that allowed the Islamists not only to evade the “degrade and destroy” strategy of the coalition, but also to build a new state, in the light of the context of Islamic eschatological concepts. To reach this goal, we strive to not only understand the perspectives of this newly-founded state and possible forecasts for its sustainability, but also to look into the reasons of IS attractiveness for large groups of people from a variety of countries and regions, through the lens of Islamic eschatology.

Keywords: Islamic State, Eschatology, End of Times, Dabiq, Mahdi, ISIS, Final Battle, Malhama

From the very beginning IS leaders had invested heavily in the field of Islamic eschatology, as the previous jihadi groups did in the 1990-s, when the common Muslim expectation also focused on both the End of Times and the need to oppose the West¹. The founder of the movement Abu Mus‘ab az-Zarqawi said: “The Spark has been lit in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah’s permission – until it burns the Crusader Armies in Dabiq”².

Here we can find some allusions to the Hadith, quoted in “Kitab al-Sunan” of Abi Dawud as-Sigistani: “The rise of Jerusalem (Bait al-Maqdis), the Fall of Yathrib (Medina) – the Spark of the Great War (Malhama), – the Spark of the Great War, Conquest of Constantinople, – Conquest of Constantinople, the Rise of Dajjal (the Antichrist)”³. Al-Malhama (al-Malhama al-Kubra) in Islamic tradition is the Great Battle between the Muslims and the armies of the West – ar-Rum, or Crusaders in some modern propaganda texts, including all ISIS media without exception. The main precursors of this battle could be interpreted as the sharp rise of Israel and

¹ Cook D. The Mahdi’s Arrival and the Messianic Future State According to Sunni and Shi‘ite Apocalyptic Scenarios. – P. 13.

² Dabiq Magazine. The Return of Khilafa. No. 1, 1435, Ramadan. – P. 2.

³ Abi Dawud al-Sigistani. Kitab as-Sunan. Book 39, Hadith 4 The signs of Malhama (translation of author)

the decline of Islamic tradition in Hijaz (western part of Arabia with Mecca and Medina in its center) during the Saudi rule. So, the next step for Muslims is al-Malhama itself (we will try to show that in more detailed way later), and according to some Hadiths, it will occur at Dabiq.

Nowadays Dabiq is a small village, situated to the North of Aleppo, but for most of Muslims all over the world it is a place of great significance, in some way similar to that Tel Megiddo in Israel has for Christians as the place of the Final Battle (the word “Armageddon” is derived from “Tel Megiddo” in Hebrew). And like Tel Megiddo, Dabiq is also surrounded by vast plains, which makes the place an ideal point for the battle of large scale. Actually, once there already was (in 1516 AD) a great battle between the young Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk state, which led to the undermining of Mamluk regime in Syria.

So, the name of the main instrument of IS propaganda, “Dabiq” magazine, was not chosen just by chance, it is a symbol in itself. And it is not by the rule of incident that its first issue starts with detailed references of the eschatological Hadiths, taking the readers into realm of the End of Times scenery. In the very introduction of the first issue the authors explain the meaning of the word “Dabiq”, quoting another Hadith (conveyed by Abi Huraira) that does not only mention the Northern Syria (Dabiq and al-‘Amaq, which could be located several miles away), but also states, that the battle between the Muslims with ‘Isa (Jesus) leading them and Dajjal will take place at ash-Sham⁴. Finally, we can find references to the prediction that the Muslim stronghold during al-Malhama will be in the city of al-Ghuta near Damascus.

As we can see, Syria itself (and especially its northern part and Damascus province) plays a great role in the eschatological concepts, used by IS propaganda for attracting new adherents. It is more than noteworthy, that the Hadith of Abi Huraira appears in the first issue twice (in the introduction and on the last page) and several times more in other issues and in such a way as to make psychological pressure on the Muslims over the world to be at its higher level. Moreover, one of the articles in the third issue (“A Call to Hijrah”) is entitled as “Sham is the land of Malahim”⁵, and the role of Syria in approaching of the Judgment Day (or the Greater Syria, as Jerusalem is also included in Sham) is emphasized enormously.

To give an explanation to such a crucial meaning, the IS propaganda connects Syria with the Hijra (migration) of Ibrahim (Abraham). “The best people on earth will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim’s hijrah”, says “Dabiq”, using the words of a Hadith and adding there some quotes of Ibn Taymiyya, who is often considered as the progenitor of Salafism, saying: “Islam in the End of Times will be more manifest in Sham. <...> So the best people on the earth in the end of times will be those who keep to the land of Ibrahim’s hijrah, which is Sham”⁶.

What is also noticeable, Jesus Christ will descent at the southern minaret of the Great Mosque of Damascus, and the picture of that exact minaret also appears sometimes in ISIS propaganda in order to remind Muslims, that Syria plays in the Armageddon scenery an outstanding role, being the place of the most significant events. And this means, by the way, that by the time of al-Malhama the power of the Caliphate must spread on all mentioned places, including Damascus and Jerusalem themselves, so this emphasis on the role of Sham works like an effective incentive for the Muslims.

⁴ Dabiq Magazine. The Return of Khilafa. No. 1, 1435, Ramadan. – P. 4.

⁵ Dabiq Magazine. No. 3. A Call to Hijrah. 1435, Shawwal. – P. 9.

⁶ Ibidem. P. 10.

It had been already noticed and mentioned that the restoration of the Caliphate is not only a political deed, but also a way to salvation – to the extent that ISIS leadership uses this idea to manipulate the minds of the Muslims. In political sense, it also allows the IS to legislate itself, if not in the International Community on its high level, but in simple Muslims` opinion, which is much less determined by the rationalism (as religion itself rarely bases itself on the rational principles as it does on irrational - beliefs). Such an understanding of legislation side by side with salvation proposal is not new: for example, Graeme Wood wrote in “The Atlantic” magazine that “ISIS follows a distinctive variety of Islam whose beliefs about the path of the Day of Judgment matter to its strategy”⁷. In this way IS leadership continuously proclaims that their struggle upon the secular regimes in the region is a holy duty aimed to speeding up the approaching of the End of Times. On June 29 Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi issued a rallying call to all Muslims, stating that Yowm al-Qiyama (the Day of Resurrection) is soon to be upon the humankind and the duty of all the Muslim Umma (community) was to make it closer.

But this is not the whole matter, as if we look more thoroughly at the controversial discourse of the Islamic State leadership, we will see that ISIS is trying to explain the approaching of the Judgment Day by giving interpretations to the Signs of al-Malhama, taken from different Hadiths (mostly those from anthologies of Abi Dawud, al-Bukhari and Muslim). As there are different lists of the Signs in different anthologies of Hadiths in classical Muslim thought, we will try to put the most important of them to a short list for the sake of convenience with ISIS ideologists` interpretation – and here we have to acknowledge that IS mostly relies on the eschatological interpretations, given by Pakistani scholar Imran Hussein, though he is an archenemy of the very idea of nowadays Islamic state.

The Greater Signs are:

- The Smoke above the Earth, which is explained to be the natural pollution, provided by the “Crusader” nations.
- The Sunrise coming from the West, which is interpreted as a usual for Islamic and Qur`anic culture metaphor, meaning turning the way of life upside down, like using paper money instead of those made of precious metals.
- The Beast of the Earth (Dabba al-Ard) is considered to appear as a Zionist movement with its political incarnation – the state of Israel.
- The Earthquake in the East is attributed by IS propaganda as the latest tsunami in South-East Asia, which occurred in December 2004 and claimed over 100.000 lives.
- The Earthquake in the West is believed to have much in common in intensifying tornadoes and tsunamis like Katrina in America.
- The Earthquake in Arabia, the third of the Earthquakes, is prophesied to happen when the invading armies of the West (ar-Rum) will enter Kaaba, but it is also offered, that the first indications have already manifested itself with the intensifying shifts of the Arabian Tectonic Plate.
- The Fire, coming out of Yemen (in some Hadiths as a consequence of the Arabian Earthquake), does not even need any explanations – the last events of the Yemeni Civil War provide themselves a vivid example of manifestation of that prophecy.

⁷ Wood G. What ISIS really wants // The Atlantic, March 2015.

It is worthy of noting that in another tradition (in “Sahih” by imam Abi Abdillah Muhammad al-Bukhari) the fire will come out of the land of Hijaz⁸.

- The Gog and Magog coming out to the Muslim lands. Imran Hussein himself described these peoples as USA and Russia, and though ISIS has not yet used it in its eschatological discourse, that could be expected in the nearest future.
- The people of ar-Rum will form the majority among the worldwide population. That must be understood as metaphor: the Western culture (which is considered by ISIS propaganda as hypocrisy and apostasy) will prevail, and its expansion is always interpreted by Islamic State as a Crusade (though it does not bother the Islamists to use the advantages of globalization).
- The emergence of al-Mahdi, who will be the last caliph of the Muslim umma and will lead the Muslim armies against ar-Rum in al-Malhama and against Dajjal (alongside Jesus) after it. As the Last Battle approaches, according to IS publicists, and al-Mahdi is the leader, who must unite the “Umma body” together, that is logical to predict, that Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi will pretend to take this place by himself. Although it is noticeable that the very concept of al-Mahdi has rather weak tradition and many Islamic scholars rejected his emergence⁹, so at the moment it is difficult to say, if the ISIS propaganda will insist on his appearance.

The Minor Signs are:

- Women will dress like men and vice versa.
- Homosexuality will become the way of life.
- Children born outside marriage will become commonplace.
- Slavery among the Muslims. This sign was “fulfilled” by ISIS itself, with organizing slavery markets for Yazidis. By the way, “Dabiq” claims slavery to be not only righteous but necessary as it goes back to the Prophetic tradition and as it was canceled in the time of desertion of jihad practice¹⁰.
- The slave girl will give birth to her mistress and master. Adding to the previous Sign, we must give a closer definition and say, that if a slave girl gives a birth to a child of her free Muslim owner in Islamic State, then the child will also be considered as a free Muslim.
- Disproportion will take place in the gender balance: “one man would have to maintain 50 women”. The most significant example of that could be seen in Saudi Arabia.
- The Bedouins will compete with each other whose house is taller. That is what happening now in the Gulf states.
- The treasure will be found in the Euphrates river. It could be simply interpreted as producing oil near Deir az-Zour, in ar-Raqqa province and in Iraq, as now oil is called “the black gold” and can be considered as a real treasure, but some Hadiths warn not to take anything from this treasure, and other claim that there will be a great struggle for this treasure (or exactly a mountain of gold).

⁸ Al-Bukhari. Sahih. Book 92, Chapter 24.

⁹ Mahmood H. Interpreting Sacred Texts: Eschatology in Islam / dissertation. – P. 3.

¹⁰ Dabiq Magazine. No. 4. The Failed Crusade. 1435, Dhul-Hijjah. – P. 14-17.

- Al-Harj (killing each other without righteous reason) must increase. Different versions of such Hadith appeared several times in “Dabiq”, and nowadays, when the violence becomes widespread, this does not need any comment.
- The people (the Muslims) stop dividing inheritance and rejoicing at the booty. This sign is present now, as the fighters in ISIS join together for the common aim and do not stop after every new battle to divide spoils of war.
But some Hadiths make a wider explanation, stating that there will be a great war in which the Muslims will lose every 99 of 100 men, and after the victory they will not be able to rejoice at it.
- The Muslims will fight with the Jews and will kill them all (“until the stone will say: Muslim, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him¹¹”). Such perspective is considered by the Islamic State leaders as the near future, as after conquering Damascus the next goal is claimed to be Jerusalem and the Jewish state of Israel itself.
- During the struggle between the Romans and the Muslims (which is a long process that cannot be fit in one battle, and for which al-Malhama will be the final action) both sides will take a pause to fight their common enemy. That has not been commented upon yet, but in fact the possible confrontation between two coalitions (led by USA and Russia) and participation of ISIS in this war against the second one could be interpreted in such a way.
- There must be deceptive years in which the truthful person is belied, the liar is believed, the trustworthy is accused of treachery, the treacherous person is trusted, and the worthless person, who speaks concerning the affairs of the general public, speaks. This Hadith, reported by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, is quoted in “Dabiq” without any description, but its placement at the back cover of the issue is significant by itself and gives us clear allusions to the modern world politics.
- The people will begin to worship the ancient idols (in some versions al-Lat and al-‘Uzza, in other – Dhi al-Khalassa). According to ISIS propaganda, the Kharijites and Murji’ites (two branches of Islam, divided by political reasons who elaborated on their own versions of theological doctrine) are pagans, who are “worse than Jewish and Christians”. In the same way the Yazidis are blamed for their “Satanism”, as they accept Iblis (the Fallen Angel) as forgiven angel¹². So the topic of paganism is widely used by IS.

In that way the Islamic state has an ability, to be frank, to blackmail the Muslims all over the world, by proving to them two significant points. The first is that the Judgment Day is coming closer (although the Qur’anic tradition implies that it is only Allah who knows, when Yowm al-Qiyama and connected to this Day events will happen), and the second is that the Caliphate is a means of facilitating its approach.

In this context of legislating the Caliphate as an instrument of struggle for the “pure Muslim world” or the world of Islamic domination the IS propaganda tries to make the Muslims feel the strong necessity of joining the Jihad against Crusaders. ISIS quotes the Hadith, stating:

¹¹ Muslim. Sahih. Book 54, Chapter 18.

¹² Dabiq Magazine. No. 4. The Failed Crusade. 1435, Dhul-Hijjah. – P. 14.

“Whoever dies without having bound himself by a bay‘a, dies a death of Jahiliyya¹³”. The bay‘a in Islamic culture means the oath, that every member of the Umma must take to the Caliph (as successor of the Prophet). For ages the bay‘a was used as a means of uniting the Umma and turning it – in conditions of lack of hierarchical church in Islam – into solid political community. And Jahiliyya signifies the pre-Islamic era in Arabian history, so, “a death of Jahiliyya” for Muslims sounds equal to finding themselves automatically in Hell.

Practical employment of the eschatological motives makes the duties as taking the bay‘a and fighting against “Crusaders” more critical, as every Muslim feels himself in some extent responsible for its success and for his own fidelity in the moments in time just before the Judgment. And with such a strong psychological pressure ISIS leadership calls not only for fighters (as they have enough recruits locally), but for specialists in various civilian fields – doctors, teachers, engineers, managers and others, who can also contribute widely in “Common Islamic duty”.

In its propaganda, the Islamic State uses not only the idea of the Final Battle, but also the following events, including emergence of Dajjal and descent of ‘Isa. As for Dajjal, one of the Hadiths, quoted in the “Dabiq” magazine, states: “You will invade the Arabian Peninsula, and Allah will enable you to conquer it. You will then invade Persia, and Allah will enable you to conquer it. You will then invade Rome, and Allah will enable you to conquer it. Then you will fight the Dajjal, and Allah will enable you to conquer him”¹⁴, and in this narration the time of Dajjal’s appearance and fall is ascribed to be after all great conquests, which include the conquest of Rome. It is usually understood that the Arabic term “ar-Rum” meant not the European Rome but Constantinople, however in IS propaganda the Italian capital itself is attributed to be the final goal before the establishing of the global Muslim state.

So, the emergence of Dajjal must follow the capture of most parts of the Mediterranean including Rome, and the descent of ‘Isa in this context is also used as a great symbol. While in Christianity Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in Muslim eschatological tradition he is considered a mortal who plays central symbolic role, as after overpowering Dajjal he must break the cross. By this action Muslim ‘Isa will show that he has nothing in common with “fabricated” divine image of Christian Jesus, and this idea has been exploited by the Islamic state leadership. “The bulk of all jihad was against the cross-worshipping Romans with Sham playing an important role in all the wars between the Muslims and the Crusaders. And this will be the case until their taghut (idol, pagan) cross is broken by the Masih (Messiah) ‘Isa¹⁵”. In another issue the authors warn that the descent of ‘Isa will mean not the peace but the war.

And if the overwhelming majority of Hadiths connected with confrontation between ‘Isa and Dajjal are describing Dajjal himself and his appearance in order to prevent Muslims of believing in his “prophetical mission”, the ISIS leadership decided to change all the stresses and senses and tries (with a great success) to displace the emphasis on ‘Isa’s character, and his main role in IS propaganda is not to be advanced as the ideal Muslim ruler, who will deal with all Umma’s matters after the victory over Dajjal, but as the strong opposition to the European and American Christ and to the pacifistic mood of the Christianity itself (as in Hadiths quoted by ISIS ‘Isa shall inevitably kill somebody or brake something).

¹³ Dabiq Magazine. No. 2. The Flood. – P. 4.

¹⁴ Dabiq Magazine. No. 2. The Flood. – P. 44 (the back cover).

¹⁵ Dabiq Magazine. No. 4. The Failed Crusade. 1435, Dhul-Hijjah. – P. 32.

That is not the only topic which is interpreted in rather selective way by demonstrating the necessity of aggression, of using sword instead of making peace, but this very subject is one of the most indicative and the strongest, as using the opposition between Christian peaceful Jesus and Muslim martial 'Isa, the Islamic State points to its own methods and ways of behaving at the global arena as the only righteous and the only suitable in the framework of Allah's religion. From here we can logically move to ISIS practical methods being the result of their eschatological interpretation.

The methods, used by IS, are considered in the Western society as cruel, terroristic and such practices as slavery, beheadings (and other different ways of execution), hand cuttings, rapes could not even be remotely regarded as acceptable for the "civilized society", but for Muslims they are not just reliving the past, but turning to Prophetic tradition. This manifestation of Islamic domination above the non-Islamic communities (in fact, above any community, that refused to join the Islamic state, as the Muslims of the region, supporting the secular regime, are considered as apostates or even heretics) works amazingly, as it attracts more and more common people. In the Islamic state they can not only feel themselves as "the best people" by migrating to the land of Ibrahim's hijra, but also to take part in prevailing of the Muslim Umma over the other communities.

One of the most prestige Hadiths anthology, "Sahih" by imam al-Bukhari, states: "You are the best people. You bring them in chains around their necks, until they enter Islam". An attempt (definitely, a very successful attempt at this moment) of realization of the Hadiths and the Prophetic tradition has a great influence of the minds of Muslims, who begin considering the Caliphate as the way to restore their past glory, and if we return to eschatology, restoring of Muslims' glory in Sham, or Levant, means the approach of the Day of Judgment. One of ISIS leaders (to be definite, the official spokesman for it), emir of Syria Abu Muhammad al-'Adnani, said (quoting Hadith): "We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses and enslave your women, <...> and this certainty is the one that should pulse in the heart of every mujahid from the Islamic State and every supporter outside until he fights the Roman Crusaders near Dabiq"¹⁶. This connection between aggressive politics of IS leadership (and aggressive behavior of IS members) and al-Malhama al-Kubra gives us a clear notion of how the eschatological concepts are implemented in actual events.

Eschatological discourse is blatantly used by IS leadership not only as an instrument of mobilization but as means of state-building. If we consider the main functions of the state as the defense of its sovereignty, taxation and keeping order within the borders, we will have to acknowledge that Islamic State succeeded in fulfilling all of them. IS leadership uses Islamic taxation (including jizya – a special tax taken from Christian and Jewish population), Islamic jurisprudence, often realized as harsh justice, and also coinage minted of precious metals. These steps are directed to perception of IS as an only true Islamic state and to perception of other states as those mentioned in the Hadiths, containing the Signs of al-Malhama al-Kubra.

One of the most difficult problems that the scholars meet trying to study the Islamic state is that IS differs from national states we got used to deal with. The Muslims of IS avoid any concept of nation, quoting the Hadith: "Whoever is killed under a blind banner, calling to 'asabiyya (tribalism) dies a death of jahiliyya"¹⁷. In a way to understand ISIS leadership politics

¹⁶ Dabiq Magazine. No. 4. The Failed Crusade. 1435, Dhul-Hijjah. – P. 8.

¹⁷ Dabiq Magazine. No. 8. Shari'ah Alone Will Rule Africa. 1436, Jumada al-Akhirah. – P. 3.

correctly, we should eliminate anything besides religion itself (or, to be accurate, the perceptions about religion, which are forced to the heads of Muslims), as an attempt to look at IS rationally throws habitual institutions and practices into being doomed to failure onset.

Taking all this to mind, we should be completely aware of, that ISIS in nowadays manifestation is not another rouge band of terrorists, loosely glued together by their vague notions of righteousness, but the revolutionary enterprise, aimed towards reshaping the Middle East as physical set of states, borders and regimes and a religious and cultural region, and also towards alteration of all the worldwide Muslim context along the clear lines of Medieval religious discourse, teleporting it into the lives of modern society of the XXI century. And the eschatological concept, being the base for each religion, as the main question that any religion must answer is “What will be Hereafter”, must be perceived and studied as the core of ISIS ideology and ISIS survival itself.

IS leadership calls: “Rush to the shade of the Islamic state with your parents, siblings, spouses and children. There are homes for you and your family. You can be a major contributor towards the liberation of Makkah, Madinah and al-Quds. Would you not like to reach Judgment Day with these grand deeds in your scales”¹⁸.

In this connection we must cite here the passages from the Qur’an:

- And those who believe and do good deeds, they are dwellers of the Paradise, they dwell therein forever (2:82).
- But those who die while not believing that “There is no true god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God” or are not Muslims, will lose the Paradise forever and will be sent to the Hellfire, as God has said: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter” (3:85).

The durable link between the traditional Islamic culture (including Qur’anic tradition, Prophetic tradition or practical implementing of the Hadiths, and classical theology) and the practices of ISIS should bring us to the clear conclusion about largely discussed perspectives of returning of Foreign Fighters back to their native countries. Although now it is one of the greatest fears in Europe, there are no any real preconditions for such a turning-point in the nearest years. Of course, such a danger is real for Western countries, but this prospect is remote in time, as now the Islamists have quite a lot on their plate, bringing the End of the Times closer in the Middle Eastern political, military and ideological theatre. Their confidence in holiness of their matter goes to the extremes: “Being killed – according to their account – is a victory. This is where the secret lies. You fight a people who can never be defeated”¹⁹, – declared Abu Muhammad al-‘Adnani.

And there are not only religious reasons for that, of course, as ISIS helps its members to release the anxiety and frustrations of the postcolonial East²⁰, to avoid these great transformations, which the Eastern societies have survived during last few decades, including ruining the traditional social structures and a great attack on the traditional Islamic culture. This

¹⁸ Dabiq Magazine. No. 2. The Flood. 1435, Ramadan. – P. 3.

¹⁹ Dabiq Magazine. No. 4. The Failed Crusade. 1435, Dhul-Hijjah. – P. 7.

²⁰ Mishra P. How to think about Islamic State // The Guardian.

challenge to the liberal world sometimes even reaches the stage of nihilism, rejecting principally all modern moral and ethical foundations to offer something close to Muslim time-honored values in contradiction of those that the globalization tries to impose.

Of course, there is another question, concentrated on sustainability and adaptation of ISIS and its propaganda in the region, but it must be considered as a topic for different wide discussion, which will not be referred to here and now.

The last thing we have to acknowledge is that ISIS leadership uses necessary Hadiths in a very selective way, throwing away everything that could spoil its reputation. For example, in “Sahih” by imam al-Bukhari, the most influential and authoritative author of Islamic tradition, we can find this: “I heard the truthful and trusted by Allah (i.e. the Prophet, Peace be upon Him) saying, “The destruction of my followers will be through hands of young men from Quraish””²¹. Taking into account that the nowadays Caliph and the Head of the Islamic State Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi is from the Quraishi people himself, this Hadith could be interpreted in a rather unpleasant for IS way, as the perception of many Islamic scholars is that leaders of the Caliphate is that the Islamic State presents not Islamic religion and Islamic tradition, but their quite inadequate manifestation.

Also “The Hour will not be established until <...> the religious knowledge is taken away”²² in context of everyday attempts of the ISIS theologians to prove their position is not officially posed in propaganda, as the behavior of ISIS itself contradicts the Hadith. Finally, another “Sahih”, completed by Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, mentions the army of people from Syria, which will be sent against Mecca, but will be sunk by the plain near the holy place of Ka‘aba²³.

So, now there are two radically extreme phenomena in the Arab world: a tendency to make it a democratic camp with secular elections, equality between the men and the women, and a tendency to return to the times of the Prophet by rejecting all principles of the Western liberal society (but not the Western achievements such as technical and military inventions, style of male clothes etc.). The Islamic State is not the only one, who represents the second tendency, but it is the clearest and the most manifested model. Its leadership allows itself sometimes even to twist the Islamic culture by using selective texts or by interpreting them in very literal way. Of course, this politics help the Islamic State not only to survive and to fight successfully in the Middle-East, but also to attract new adherent from different countries. The threat of global Muslim reaction thus has to be taken into consideration, as the rise of IS in Syria and Iraq led to active supporting actions in Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, China (Xinjiang) and to separate terrorist attacks in Europe and in Arab world (Tunis, Kuwait).

And the only weapon that could be effective as a real remedy to such worldwide aggression is not a military operation, as it does not lead to any significant results, but the knowledge. All Muslims must be given an opportunity to read the Qur’an and the Hadiths by themselves in order to avoid their incorrect interpretations. All Muslims should have enough access for their own cultural and theological heritage, that could better and more honestly explain what their religion and their holy duties are. All Muslims should understand that there is

²¹ Al-Bukhari. Sahih. Book 92, Chapter 3.

²² Al-Bukhari. Sahih. Book 92, Chapter 5.

²³ Muslim. Sahih. Book 54, Chapter 2.

no any directive in Qur'an to destroy the West and to kill everyone who do not believe in the God in the "only righteous Muslim" way.

To finish our review of using by IS leadership eschatological propaganda, we'll just remember that nobody in the world knows, when the End of Times will come, but the God is only who knows it. And there is no any sense in predicting the approach of the Last Battle, and nowadays there appears a new phenomenon: Islam itself and interpretational Islamic ideology of ISIS contradict each other, and the question is just "What will be the choice of those Muslims, who have not stated their position yet?", as the overwhelming mass of the believers at the moment have not decided either they are ready to accept ISIS ideology or they totally deny it.

Glossary

Al-Harj (الهرج) – a term from the Hadiths, which means killing each other or struggling each other in the chaotic way without any reason.

Al-Malhama (الملحمة), or **al-Malhama al-Kubra (الملحمة الكبرى)** – the last battle between the good and the evil, the believers and the disbelief, or, in simple way, between the Muslims and the Western warriors. This battle is preceding the arrival of the Antichrist and then the descent of Jesus Christ, who will kill Antichrist and open the last epoch before the Judgment Day.

Ar-Rum (الروم) – a collective term meaning in most of interpretations the West itself. Primarily "ar-Rum" was attributed to the Byzantine Empire, but some time later (especially after the Crusades from Italian Rome) it was ascribed to all Western Christian civilization, and after the rise of the Zionist movement and Western contribution in the creation of Israel – to whole Western "Jewish-Christian" space.

'Asabiyya (عصبية) – an old term, meaning "the pride of own tribe" or in wider way tribalism.

Ash-Sham (الشام) – an old semitic term, that could mean three different places: the very city of Damascus, Syria itself and Levant (or the Greater Syria) including Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, the Hatay province of Turkey and sometimes Iraq, Sinai, Kuwait and some northern parts of Saudi Arabia.

Bay'a (بيعة) – an Arabic word meaning the oath that the every member of the Umma must take to the caliph, as by the rules every caliph must be elected by the Muslim community, and the oath itself presents agreement with Umma's decision.

Dabba al-Ard (دابة الأرض) – in the Islamic tradition the beast that will be sent against the mankind after the Sunrise would come from the West.

Dajjal (دجال), or **al-Masih ad-Dajjal (المسيح الدجال)** – an Islamic equivalent of the Antichrist, who will emerge on the Earth after the Final Battle between the Muslims and the Evil in order to embarrass the Muslims and lead them by the sinful way, but will be killed by Jesus.

Hadith (حديث) – a piece of report of what had the Prophet Muhammad said on this or that matter.

Hijra (هجرة) – an Arabic word meaning "a migration". As two of the main prophets, Ibrahim (Abraham) and Muhammad, had committed hijra in order to find some place for

extending their religion, it is now used as a migration from disbelievers' lands to the Muslim land (or, in ISIS discourse, to the Islamic State itself).

'Isa (عيسى) – an Islamic equivalent of Jesus Christ, who is in Qur'anic tradition one of the prophets of Allah.

Jahiliyya (جاهلية) – the period of Arabian history before the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad, literally means in Arabic “ignorance” and refers to polytheism and paganism of the Arabian nomadic tribes before the birth of Islam.

Jihad (جهاد) – a complicated Islamic concept of fighting on the ways of God, including the inner fighting (when the believer overcomes his sinful wills) and fighting with non-Muslims. The last is interpreted in many classical works in different ways.

Jizya (جزية) – a special tax for Christians and Jews living in the lands of the Muslims in exchange of giving them guarantees of defense and safety.

Kharijits, or Khawarij (خوارج) – the Muslim branch, broke into revolt in the early stage of Islam because of the political reasons (they accepted only two first caliphs) and elaborated their own political and social systems, significantly different from that in the Sunni culture.

Mujahid (مجاهد) – an Arabic word, meaning a man, fighting in the Jihad.

Murji'its, or Murji'a (مرجئة) – the Muslim branch with rather liberal ideology (a sin does not spoil human's faith, according to their doctrine).

Quraish (قريش) – the name of the tribe living in Hijaz. The Prophet Muhammad was from the Quraish tribe too.

Taghut (طاغوت) – an Arabic word, meaning “idol”, “pagan”, usually used in ISIS propaganda as attributed to all secular leaders of the Arab world (honestly, all of the leaders excluding the Caliph are seen as secular).

Umma (أمة) – an Arabic word meaning “community”, often indicates the worldwide Muslim community.

Yowm al-Qiyama (يوم القيامة) – an Islamic equivalent for the Day of Resurrection and the ultimate End of the Times.

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