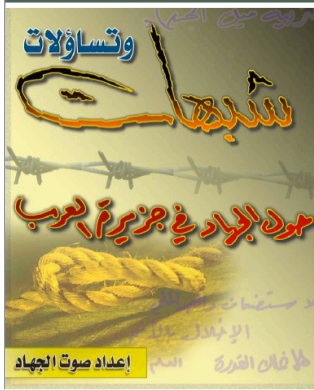
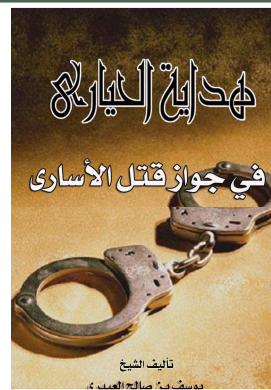


# *Towards a Curriculum for the Teaching of Jihadist Ideology*



أهمية الجهاد  
في نشر الدعوة الإسلامية  
والزود على الطوائف الضالقة فيه

مكتبة  
علاء الدين بن علي الماليني



Part II:

*The Doctrinal Frame*

Stephen Ulph

Senior Fellow

The Jamestown Foundation

*Towards a Curriculum*  
*for the*  
*Teaching of Jihadist Ideology*

*Part II:*  
*The Doctrinal Frame*

by

Stephen Ulph



October 2010

## **Jamestown's Mission**

The Jamestown Foundation's mission is to inform and educate policymakers and the broader policy community about events and trends in those societies which are strategically or tactically important to the United States and which frequently restrict access to such information. Utilizing indigenous and primary sources, Jamestown's material is delivered without political bias, filter or agenda. It is often the only source of information which should be, but is not always, available through official or intelligence channels, especially in regard to Eurasia and terrorism.

## **Origins**

Launched in 1984 by its founder William Geimer, The Jamestown Foundation has emerged as one of the leading providers of research and analysis on conflict and instability in Eurasia. The Jamestown Foundation has rapidly grown to become one of the leading sources of information on Eurasia, developing a global network of analytical expertise from the Baltic to the Horn of Africa, from the Black Sea to Siberia, from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific. This core of intellectual talent includes former high-ranking government officials and military officers, political scientists, journalists, research analysts, scholars and economists. Their insight contributes significantly to helping policymakers around the world understand the emerging trends and developments in many of the world's under-reported conflict zones in Eurasia and engage in addressing today's new and emerging global threats, including that from international terrorists.

THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION

Published in the United States by

The Jamestown Foundation

1111 16<sup>th</sup> St. N.W.

Suite 320

Washington, DC 20036

<http://www.jamestown.org>

Copyright © The Jamestown Foundation, October 2010.

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written consent. For copyright permissions information, contact The Jamestown Foundation.

The views expressed in this report are those of the contributing author and not necessarily those of The Jamestown Foundation.

For more information on this report or The Jamestown Foundation, email [pubs@jamestown.org](mailto:pubs@jamestown.org).

## Contents

<i>Chapter Two - The Salafist Framework</i> .....	6
Al-Qaeda has a pedigree .....	6
A crisis of confidence .....	7
The Salafist solution to Muslim decline.....	8
The Constituents of Modern Salafism.....	9
Creed (' <i>aqīda</i> ).....	9
Law .....	10
The Salafists' progressive intensification of doctrinal positions.....	11
Activism ( <i>manhaj</i> ) .....	11
Origins of the Modern Salafist Movements .....	12
Proto-modern Salafism - Wahhabism .....	12
Early Modern Salafism – <i>Ahl-i Hadīth</i> .....	13
Muslim Modernist Reformism – Islamising politics.....	14
Muslim Modernist Reformism – Politicising Islam.....	16
The Arab / Islamic lacuna in political theory.....	17
<i>Chapter Three - The Salafist Spectrum</i> .....	20
From Pietism to Activism .....	20
The 'Islamic Awakening' .....	21
Opposition to Sahwa within Salafism.....	22
<i>Al-Jamā'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba</i> .....	23
The pivotal year 1979 .....	23
The Transition to Jihadism.....	25
Crossing the <i>takfīr</i> barrier .....	26
Loyalty and Renunciation .....	27
<i>Hijra</i> and <i>Jihād</i> on the <i>Tāghūt</i> .....	28
Jihad on the Infidel .....	29
The significance of al-Maqdisi .....	31
The Salafist framework for Jihadism .....	32
The Saudi Salafist Spectrum .....	33
Salafism and the rôle of Saudi Arabia .....	34
The Salafist paradox: innovation and rigidity .....	35
The unchecked advance of Salafism .....	37
The gravitational pull towards activism.....	39
An illusory opposition to Jihadism .....	40
The Jihadists' claims to being the true Salafists .....	41
<i>Notes</i> .....	43



## Chapter Two - *The Salafist Framework*

*"We are followers, not innovators"*

Omar Bakri Muhammad

### *Al-Qaeda has a pedigree*

AL-QAEDA has derived much of its power to penetrate into Muslim societies to the fact that it cannot be glibly written off as something alien, or external to the broad spectrum of Islamic beliefs. Violent jihadists have not constructed for themselves a doctrine *ex nihilo*. Doctrinal opponents of al-Qaeda, in highlighting its 'errors,' have to concede that its jihadism, doctrinally speaking, lies deeply embedded within a succession of concentric circles of religious doctrine. The process of isolating jihadism from the Islamic mainstream is therefore all the more complex a prospect. As mentioned earlier, the impulse of Islamism, as a fundamentalist movement, is one of 're-authentication', that is, a drive towards regaining the formula that once brought Muslims supremacy but which now has been withdrawn from them. It bases itself on a simple interpretative formula: the political and cultural decline of the Islamic world is not a matter of history or politics. It is a *religious* issue – the abandonment of core aspects of the faith through neglect and intellectual corruption. The solution is therefore to re-establish religious authenticity.

The protagonists of these re-authentication drives inhabited a spectrum of positions, depending on the degree of compromise they could digest in the cause of the modernization of their fellow Muslims. But the most intransigent school of thought eschewed compromise as yet one more process of contamination. For these, the inexorable logic of the 're-Islamization' of the Muslim world must be to reverse the equation: to take Islam as the starting point and adjust modernity to *its* contours. This is the position of the Salafiyya movement, the spectrum of thought from which, ultimately, political Islamism derives. Jihadists are, in turn, a subset of Islamism in its political activism. In doctrinal terms they make claims to define themselves more precisely as adherents to 'Jihadi-Salafism' (*al-Salafiyya al-Jihadiyya*).

Although Salafism is far too diverse a movement to be pinpointed as the source and motivator as such of violence, Jihadists do make a point of signaling their pedigree like this as Salafist. And this underlines at the outset the problems in the use of terminology. In the definition of many groups the use of the word 'Salafist' appears somewhat liberally used. This liberal usage is not only the case among western analysts who may be tempted to think of Salafism as a single school of thought, but also among various shades of fundamentalist movements themselves, since it bestows that all-important aura of authenticity. Not much precision can be gained from either constituencies in using the word 'Salafist' on its own without any further definition, since it gives no clues as to whether it is being used to define a belief or a political-ideological orientation.

The word 'Salafist,' as mentioned earlier, derives from the term used to denote the early Muslim community of *al-salaf al-salih* or *al-salaf al-salihun*, the 'pious predecessors.' While it is correctly seen and used as a broad term to denote 'fundamentalism' – in that all fundamentalist groups look to the past as a model for the future – the term 'Salafist' itself is a far more specific signifier than that. This specificity, as we shall see, is the locus for much internal conflict and lies at the heart of the doctrinal upheaval out of which modern jihadism eventually emerged. We therefore use the term Salafist here to

denote not the common Muslim aspiration to ‘imitate the life of the Prophet and the early Muslim community’ but specifically the spectrum of Muslim reductionist schools that set out on a path separate from mainstream Islam, filtering down the heritage of scholarship to its barer, textualist bones, to its least nuanced, least compromising, least organic currents of thought.

Since Salafism is a significant ingredient in the mixture of currents that make up Jihadist extremism, being considered by the militant protagonists to lay the cultural groundwork and provide their intellectual mechanisms, it is therefore important to understand the Salafist approach to the problem of Muslim identity in the modern world, and the solutions it has elaborated, if we are to understand the course of events of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the issue of the relationship of Salafism to Jihadism is fraught with polemics and controversy, it will be necessary to spend some time on this.

First of all, it should be emphasized that the term ‘Salafism’ properly denotes a *tendency*, one which shares the above inclinations, but does not signify a particular group. It is not in essence a new doctrinal phenomenon, but one that has its origins in theological and legal debates that far preceded our time. The paradigmatic community of pristine Muslims denoted by the term *al-salaf al-sālihūn* is held to comprise the first three generations of Muslims, the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the two succeeding generations after them (the *tābi‘ūn* and the *taba‘at al-tābi‘īn*).<sup>1</sup> Because of the pedigree of the term, it is actually in a broader sense claimed by all Muslims,<sup>2</sup> in that the universal Islamic ideal is to imitate the Prophet and the early Muslim community, just as the entire legal approach is constructed in order to establish rulings that remain consistent with the borderlines set by these ‘pious predecessors.’

Given its significance as an intellectual inclination, the historical origin of the use of the term ‘Salafiyya’ itself is actually difficult to place. The self-styled ‘traditionalism’ that it represents was only retrospectively referred to as *al-nahj al-salafī* or *al-salafīyyah*, although the term certainly goes back to the medieval period, since it is used by Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). Nevertheless, anti-Salafist Muslims today refuse the Salafists’ exclusive claim on the term *al-salaf al-sālihūn*, arguing that most Muslims may claim this denomination, as followers of the doctrine established by these and perpetuated by *al-khalaf as-sādiqūn*, the ‘truthful successors’. Their position is that ‘Salafism’ in the contemporary use of the term, is a latter-day aberration and that in any case the term is not ancient and certainly does not predate Ibn Taymiyya.

### *A crisis of confidence*

As a school of thought, the ‘way of the *Salaf*’ may best be understood as a reaction to rationalizing currents developing in speculative theology during the early centuries of Islam which injected what the pious felt to be an unacceptable amount of foreign – mainly Greek – influence into Islamic legal reasoning, such as logic and analogy, or a response to developments that were taking Islamic belief into a more Sufistic direction. As a countervailing school of thought the *Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jamā‘a* pursued the more ‘Arab,’ textually-founded sciences of Hadīth scholarship, in which the scholar’s effort was invested in the intellectually less troubling arenas of grammar and morphology (to elucidate the precise lexicographical meaning of the text) and *isnād* (to establish the canonicity of the text based on the moral probity and veracity of the chain of transmitters). In this enterprise the exercise of Reason, of speculation as to the theological significance of the Text in the light of other factors (such as context) or *qiyās* (analogical reasoning and logical deduction) was heavily circumscribed. Increasingly, the Qur’ān and Sunna were being considered not merely *sources* of law, but *The Law* itself. The polarity of these two



approaches is often characterized as that between the *Ahl al-Ra'y* ('the People of Opinion') who adopt *qiyās* widely, and the *Ahl al-Hadīth* ('the People of Hadīth') who rely more on Hadīth, and accept these as a higher evidence than *qiyās*, even if the Hadīth as such may be categorized as 'weak' in the reliability of its transmission chain.

The issue of context and historicity conflicted with the reductively philological conception of the Text in a particularly dramatic fashion with the controversy over whether the Qur'ān was created at a certain time and place or whether (as an emanation of the divinity) it co-existed from all eternity. Bound up with this issue of the divine fabric of the Text over its historicity was the desire to avoid the implied doubting of God's omnipotence at having to issue (after the Torah and the Gospels) another Revelation, the others having become distorted and thus failed to fulfil the task appointed them. The contest is anecdotally summed up in the famous 'ordeal' of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal concerning the createdness of the Qur'ān,<sup>3</sup> where the scholar in his defense is to have said:

"It has been transmitted from more than one of our ancestors (*salafinā*) that they said 'the Islam is the speech of God and is uncreated', and this is what I endorse. I do not engage in speculative theology and I hold that there is nothing to be said other than what is in God's Book (Qur'ān), the traditions of His messenger or those of his companions and their followers."

This increasingly essentialistic tradition, characterized by the Ibn Hanbal's defensive position against the scholastics<sup>4</sup> and the rationalizing Mu'tazila school in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, continued to evolve and found its most outspoken ideologue in Ibn Taymiyyah with his introduction of a doctrinal support for militancy against a ruler deemed insufficiently 'Muslim.' Eventually it saw its political fulfillment in the alliance contracted between Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Muhammad ibn Sa'ūd in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to form what is commonly known as 'Wahhābism'.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary Salafism therefore simply re-activates the evolving debates of this period as living concerns for today. The movement revisits issues of source and authority and their implications for contemporary Muslim identity, which they hold traditional scholarship has proved itself unequal to resolve, or which they hold progressive scholars are attempting to resolve only by going beyond the accepted boundaries of true Islam. This rootedness in history, in the work of scholars past, accounts for Salafism's attraction, and the cogency of its appeal to 'authenticity.'

### *The Salafist solution to Muslim decline*

Despite its plurality of expression, contemporary Salafism as a religious and intellectual tendency shares certain features in common. The most important of these features is the diagnosis of why the Muslim world is failing to maintain its divinely ordained primacy in the global order<sup>6</sup>. Muslims were not always so weak, they observed, and being bearers of the True Faith – from which all power derives – their current weakness must only be due to their having progressively jettisoned the ingredients of the winning formula.

Reclaiming the ancient primacy therefore means mining the past for the winning formulæ. And if antiquity is where authenticity is to be searched for, surely the model for this re-authenticated Islam has to be from a time that pre-dated any influence foreign to true Islam, whether this be on the political or cultural levels. Given the culturally hybrid nature of the Islamic world from the time of its earliest

expansion, the sole candidate for such an authentic Islamic model could only be the lifetime of the Prophet himself and the first Islamic community of pious predecessors.

To secure the restoration of this model requires a re-shaping of the Muslim's intellectual framework, and a radical reconfiguring of methodology to protect the boundaries of 'true Islam'. Once these are properly defined, the task is to remove the vulnerability of the Muslim to the pressures of contamination by opening up the field of religious authority to Everyman (having preemptively restricted, however, the spectrum of the source material and the Muslim's room to maneuver).

### *The Constituents of Modern Salafism*

In carrying out this task the Salafist movements are noted for their revisiting of three broad arenas of Islamic identity: the *credal arena*, the *legal arena* and the question of *activism*. How this revisiting is manifested is often the cause for strong disagreement, depending on how true the revisions remain to the common starting points. While the first, theological, arena remains an uncontroversial issue with its conceptions shared in common, the questions of legal methodology excite some levels of dispute, while the third arena – activism – provokes the greatest controversy and mutual polemic.

#### *Creed ('aqīda)*

Salafists are in unanimous agreement concerning the creed (*'aqīda*) that defines their ideologies. The salient points of their approach come down to the following principles:

- return to the authentic beliefs and practices of the first three 'generations'
- expel practices considered to be *bida'*, ('unacceptable innovations') that had accrued over the centuries since this pristine period of Islam
- engage actively against manifestations of Disbelief such as Shi'ism or anything that constitutes *shirk* ('associationism', effectively polytheism, although Christianity is also subsumed under this)
- lay emphasis instead on the following categories of *tawhīd*:

*tawhīd al-rubūbiyya* ('Oneness of Lordship') – denoting God's exclusive sovereignty in the Universe as its sole Creator and Sustainer. To attribute any of these power to other than Him constitutes *kufir*;

*tawhīd al-ulūhiyya* ('Oneness of Godship') – denoting God's rights to be the exclusive object of worship, failing which the perpetrator is a *kāfir*. The category is pointedly targeted at saint-worship or the some Sufi views of saints as intermediaries between God and man;

*tawhīd al-asmā' wa-l-sifāt* ('Oneness of the Names and Attributes') – denoting God's uniqueness with regard to the way He is depicted in the Qur'ān or the Hadīth, without any debate as to their meaning, that is, without distortion (*tahrīf*) or denial (*ta'tīl*) of them, and without any attempt at explaining how they are (*takyīf*) or employing likeness or any metaphorical interpretation (*tamthīl*).

As may be seen from this, while a large part of their effort is expended on *'aqīda* it is not an exercise in theological thinking as such, so much as a defense of the fixed marks of this theology as they see it, and mostly in the face of non-Salafists. Paradoxical as it may sound, the purpose of the Salafist definition of theology is to establish that *there is no more theology*. Speculation as to the nature of God, and as to how to approach knowledge of God's purposes is considered by Salafists to be a closed issue, having been

settled by scholars of the stature of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyya and their repudiation of the rationalist-contaminated methodologies of their opponents. From the abundance of works in this arena it is clear that Salafist writers find writing on *'aqīda* the most intellectually satisfying of their endeavors, since its undisputed starting point lends itself to their absolutism and intolerance for alternative points of view.

### *Law*

In the Salafists' view absolutism on matters theological, with clear borders having been set to what is considered to be Islamic belief, and the concentration on the primary source Texts for authority, opens up the possibility of the individual Muslim's direct encounter with these Texts unfiltered by the scholastic tradition of religious interpretation. Part of Salafism's attraction is the promotion of this more egalitarian approach (or antinomian approach according to their opponents) to authority and learning. They are noted for their dismissal of the accumulated heritage of the four canonical schools of Islamic law – Hanbalism, Shāfi'ism, Mālikism and Hanafism – on the grounds that this accumulation stands in the way of direct contact with the source authorities, impedes the production of opinions and is therefore insufficient to meet the pace of challenges presented by the contemporary world. Instead, deference to the accumulated learning of these schools is to be replaced by independent deduction *by the individual Muslim* of legal precepts direct from scriptural authority (the process known as *ijtihād*).

A prerequisite of this claim to greater certainty of God's law through direct contact with the Text is an intense concentration on the authenticity, precision and purity of the Hadīth materials that make up this law. Salafists therefore promote a hyper-textual approach to Islamic learning, and several major figures in the movement are known for their training as *muhaddithūn* or 'Hadīth scholars.' This narrow concentration of the field of study by Salafists prompts traditional scholars to write them off as lacking in intellectual weight and experience. They note the Salafists' prioritization of the more mechanical exercises of textual scholarship, such as establishing the accumulation of genealogical data required to validate the *sanad*, the transmission chain of authorities. They also dispute their claims that the messages of the Texts are explicit enough as they stand, and for the conclusion the Salafists draw that there is no need to submit oneself to the long apprenticeship demanded by the classical training.

The features underpinning the Salafist approach to legal reasoning may be summarized as follows:

- restrict the source authorities to the *Qur'ān* and the 'strong' *Hadīth* and consensus of Prophet's companions as constituting the sole bases for *Sharī'a* and for how the Muslim should live;
- avoid *taqlīd* (the imitation of conclusions and analyses of earlier Islamic authorities without an examination of their reasoning or the textual authorities on which their reasoning is based) of the four legal schools; bypass their authority and their dogmatic theology (*kalām*), since the textual sources are clear enough as they stand, and are sufficient authority for the validity of a legal opinion without the need for interpreting scholars;
- re-introduce *ijtihād* based on the individual's own reading, rather than follow any of the established schools of jurisprudence;<sup>7</sup>
- to ensure the correct interpretative method, upgrade the study and use of Arabic, which as a language has declined since the source scriptures were recorded over 1300 years ago.

However, the starting point on *ijtihād* and *taqlīd* is not as rigorously maintained as their credal position. It has undergone some development and the lack of definitive position reflects ambiguities in the founding

scholars themselves. For instance, although Ibn Taymiyya's principal concern was the creed and he progressively issued *fatwas* without recourse to any interpretative precedent, he still considered himself an adherent of the Hanbali *madhhab*. This paradox was later to be repeated by the Wahhābi school, which officially licenses individual *ijtihād*, but at the same time signals its adherence to the Hanbali *madhhab*, with *ijtihād* not being a conspicuous feature in their activity.

### *The Salafists' progressive intensification of doctrinal positions*

In fact what is interesting for a school that claims pristine authenticity is how, under the influence of hyper-textualism, the ideology of Salafism has progressively evolved, and evolved consistently in the direction of ever-hardening positions. If Ibn Hanbal called for more literalism and vigilance against *bida'* ('innovations'), Ibn Taymiyya was inclined to bypass the *madhāhib* (including that of Hanbal himself) in favor of direct inspiration from the Qur'ān and the early Muslims.<sup>4</sup> His disciple Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya then extended this towards arguing that ordinary Muslims should be freed from subservience to the four schools of law, and in so doing initiated the *lā madhhabiyya* ('anti-school') position championed by the modern Salafists. In his turn, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhāb significantly modified Ibn Taymiyya's teachings in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, most clearly in their antagonistic position towards Sufism, despite the fact that Ibn Taymiyya was himself a Sufi of the school of Abd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the Pakistani radical thinker Abu al-Alā Mawdūdī extended Ibn Taymiyya's application of the term *jāhiliyya*<sup>9</sup> (the state of 'ignorance' of Islam) for a leader and his regime (itself an innovative usage) and applied it to the whole of the Muslim community. This progressive intensification process is significant and, it could be argued, is merely being continued by the Salafī-Jihadists.

### *Activism (manhaj)*

As a reform movement, the logic of the foregoing reconfigurations of creed and law has implications for how these are applied to the Muslim society. Islam is traditionally held to be a faith that does not confine its jurisdiction to the individual's personal conscience, and therefore the *manhaj* of Salafism, the 'path' or method by which they implement their belief, necessarily enters the social and political arena. Just how far their *da'wā* ('proselytism') activities enter into this arena determines the political complexion and commitment of the Salafist trends and groups. It also generates the most disagreement, even mutual antipathy. The disagreement is not only over the level of political engagement, but also whether this should occur at all. Activist tendencies are equally challenged by a strong anti-activist trend of 'Scholarly Salafism' (*al-salafiyya al-'ilmiyya*), which argues for a quietist, or even rejectionist posture towards political activity.

Be that as it may, the gravitational pull of political engagement is unyielding, since it is provided by the same Salafist impulse to imitate the pristine model. The process of revisiting the understanding of the Scriptural Texts embraces equally the course of the Prophet's life (the *sīra*) which is held to hold, concealed in an archaic language, the working paradigm for salvation. This paradigm is considered to be made up of three stages: *da'wā*, *hijra* and *umma*. That is:

- the *da'wā* ('proselytism') period – amid the pagan Arab culture of 'ignorance' (*jāhiliyya*), the Prophet Muhammad, along with a small group of Companions (*Sahāba*), issues in Mecca the call to the people to return to the One True God;

- the *hijra* (‘emigration’) period – as a result of opposition from the polytheists to the new message and the danger thus posed to the Prophet and the *Sahāba*, the community declares its irreconcilable opposition to the *jāhiliyya*, declares them infidels (*takfīr*) and disassociates itself from them by migrating to another city, Yathrib;
- the *umma* period – the eventual establishment and defense of a new, ideal community of believers at this Yathrib<sup>10</sup> with the aid of the *Ansār* allies, and organized along the principles of the new faith, Islam.

Salafists, then, are to keep this paradigm in mind, and use it to re-shape their understanding of their contemporary dilemma. The terms *jāhiliyya*, *da‘wā*, and *hijra*, alongside *Sahāba* and *Ansār*, are words constantly encountered in the names and references of Salafist discourse. To restore their fortunes, and the fortunes of all humanity in the struggle against darkness and the *jāhiliyya*, they are to start from scratch, and progress through the three stages.<sup>11</sup> The question is how to interpret the sequence of the *sīra* model. Are these clear consecutive phases, or does the model also demonstrate the overlapping and parallel operation of these phases? This unresolved issue is of considerable importance since it ultimately lies at the heart of the authenticity claims of the Jihadi-Salafists.

### *Origins of the Modern Salafist Movements*

The essentialism of its doctrinal tendency and the rejection of the jurisprudential schools meant that Salafism appeared destined to remain on the margins of Islamic thought. However, the modern period brought about conditions that mirrored the dilemmas that Ibn Taymiyya had set out to resolve: declining Muslim worldly power and compromises being made with the advancing infidel. The causes of defeat were once again diagnosed in terms of a qualitative decline in the practice of Islam, both in terms of the infidel, and the internal inroads made by an encroaching *jāhiliyya*. The chief responses to this diagnosis took place in three separate areas, each increasing in terms of radical change and sophistication in inverse relationship to their geographical and intellectual isolation. These are the 18<sup>th</sup> century *Wahhabis* of central Arabia, the 19<sup>th</sup> century *Ahl-i Hadīth* of the Indian subcontinent, and the Syrian-Egyptian *Muslim Reformers*. Their responses each represent a strand of the Salafist spectrum.

#### *Proto-modern Salafism - Wahhabism*<sup>12</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya’s views on what constituted the frontier lines of the faith were enthusiastically studied by Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-91) in the peninsular Arabian region of Nejd. Here in this relatively isolated region the issue of un-Islamic behavior did not focus on the role of the outsiders, or even those newly claiming the Islamic mantle. Instead the dilemma was something more internal and more insidious. Whereas Ibn Taymiyya’s prime focus was the character and behaviour of the regime, Abd al-Wahhab intensified the position of intransigence to the point that the ordinary Muslims themselves might not be the Muslims they said they were.

Like Ibn Taymiyya, Abd al-Wahhab extended the qualifications for the profession of faith beyond the simple declaration of *tawhīd*, the affirmation that ‘there is no other god but God alone and Muhammad is His Messenger’ which had hitherto sufficed. Instead, the profession of *tawhīd* was explained as necessarily incorporating a tripartite formula of *tawhīd al-rubūbiyya* (the affirmation that God is One), *tawhīd al-asmā’ wa-l-sifāt* (the affirmation of the oneness of His names and His attributes) and *tawhīd al-ulūhiyya* (the oneness of the object of worship). This tripartite definition of *tawhīd* and true faith, in

particular the third element, the exclusivity of the object of worship, was a pointed definition designed to exclude many Muslims. In Abd al-Wahhab's view Islam was being compromised by creeping syncretism in the form of contemporary widespread religious practices in the Arabian peninsula, such as the call for the intercession of saints, and by what he held to be the unacceptable presence of Shi'a Muslims.

Taking as starting point the most intransigent of the schools of Islamic law, Hanbalism, and the *fatwas* issued by Ibn Taymiyya, Abd al-Wahhab described the tribes around the region as having reverted back to their original state of ignorant depravity — *jāhiliyya*. Therefore, he reasoned, there are Muslims *who may no longer be considered Muslims*. It is not enough to proclaim *tawhīd* in order to be a true Muslim; one must also adhere to it in one's religious practice. Having failed to observe all the implications of *tawhīd*, they are therefore *kuffār* ('infidels'). As such, having rejected Allah's true religion, these were worthy only of destruction.

A natural consequence of this *takfīr* was the unusually strong place Abd al-Wahhab gave to militant jihad in his teachings as an integral part of his reform movement of *Muwahhidūn* ('Upholders of Tawhīd'). When in 1744 Abd al-Wahhab contracted an alliance with a minor local ruler, Muhammad ibn Sa'ūd, exchanging religious-political legitimacy for physical protection, the formula successfully galvanized Arabian tribal muscle to effect a revitalization (or according to his detractors a re-Bedouinization) of Islamic faith, culture and politics, one that took on distinct overtones of puritanism, exclusivism and in many respects, xenophobia.<sup>13</sup>

The significance at the time of this state was more political than doctrinal. In the broad sweep of Islamic history Abd al-Wahhab's intellectual contribution is not significant. Traditional centers of scholarship such as al-Azhar wrote off his 'reform' as a simplistic reconstitution of an already disparaged Ibn Taymiyya, and outside his immediate environment his ideological xenophobia provoked universal aversion and condemnation. The *Muwahhidūn* appeared destined to go the way of other periodic outbursts of religious fervor on the fringes of the Muslim world.

However, the founding of this first 'Saudi' Arabian system does signal a significant landmark in the fortunes of Salafism, given that for the first time a Salafist-inspired ideology determined and shaped the policy of a state.<sup>14</sup> That is, there were alternatives to the inherited Sunni consensus represented by contemporary Muslim systems. Most importantly, the unequivocal *takfīr* of other Muslims, declaring them to be disbelievers, was without historical precedent and marks a significant stage in the intensification of the Salafist doctrinal trajectory.<sup>15</sup> For later jihadist movements, the logic of this intensification, and its claim to reform Islam from within the heritage of Islamic thought, enabled them to claim a pedigree for their own intensification in their repudiation of modern Muslim regimes as 'apostates', Saudis included.

### *Early Modern Salafism – Ahl-i Hadīth*

The intellectual influence of Abd al-Wahhab's reform movement remained limited, not just for its geographical isolation (enhanced by Muhammad Ali's punitive campaigns against them in 1812-18) but also due to the lack of detail on matters of law. Abd al-Wahhab and his followers had focused primarily on matters of *'aqīda* in their preoccupation with *tawhīd*, but had not worked out the implications of Ibn Taymiyya's revisiting of *ijtihād*.

In the Indian subcontinent, however, the intellectual challenge from the colonial power and its culture, coupled with the threat of Hindu revivalism, brought forth far more intellectually thoroughgoing reactions. Early defensive self-ghettoization developed into the foundation of reformist schools, such as that at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh (established in 1867) which promoted a more austere scripturalist Islam than was currently practised. At the same time a current of thought drawing from the well of Ibn Taymiyya developed which called itself the *Ahl-i Hadīth* – the ‘People of the Hadīth’. Founded by Sayyid Miyan Nadhir Husain Dehlavi and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, the organization laid much heavier emphasis than did Abd al-Wahhab on following the hyper-textualist approach to legal opinion, restricting the source material to the Qur’ān and the Hadīth.

The relationship with the Wahhabist current is interesting. The Ahl-i Hadīth were clearly influenced by Abd al-Wahhab’s opposition to syncretistic currents, and there was much communication between them. While their position on historical accretions in cultic practice and on Sufism was (at least initially) less thoroughgoing than their Arabian colleagues, their legal methodology is far more rigorous. They have exerted much more effort on scholarship on the Hadīth, establishing the canon of acceptable sources and expelling the influence of the traditional schools – in this case the dominance of Hanafī scholars in the sub-continent. In this field they have influenced the Arabian arena, in that scholars of the eminence of Ibn Baz<sup>16</sup> adopted a position of open opposition to the Hanbalī school, in a bid to remove the ‘Wahhabi paradox’ – a state that claims allegiance to a Salafist ideology demoting the authority of *taqlīd*, but one which has stopped short of expelling the opinions of the Hanbalī school that underpins its religious establishment. Another point of difference was their reluctance to pronounce *takfīr* against other Muslims, no doubt due to their relative numerical weakness in the region.

However, from the 1970s onwards the direction of influence has been reversed. Initial differences between the groups in points of principle appear to be fading as Saudi funding of what is doctrinally the most propitious territory for Wahhabist expansion gives cause to numerous Ahl-i Hadith leaders to erase the tensions. The result of this relationship is a renewed confidence in the Ahl-i Hadith to take on regional rivals far in advance of what their numbers would appear to justify. The Ahl-i Hadīth are now popularly considered to constitute ‘Indian Wahhabis.’<sup>17</sup>

### *Muslim Modernist Reformism – Islamising politics*

For some ‘back to origins’ reform movements faced four-square with the challenges of the international environment, the search for authenticity was harmonized with the search for modernization. To keep pace with the new challenges, they argued for renewing creativity in Islamic thought by updating both its intellectual and juridical processes. If Muslims lag in technology and science in comparison with the western infidel world, they reasoned, it can only be that they were maintaining mental habits that were dimming the Muslims’ eyes to the perennial truth of Islam – from which all knowledge derives – and which of its nature must be the source of the Reason and Enlightenment the Westerners were now more effectively tapping into. Reformers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century argued for:

- promoting learning on the European model which – outside the Christian religious specifics – is in any case Islamic
- identifying elements in the scriptures and early Muslim community that reflect modern (western) discoveries and practices

- understanding that Islam and *sharī‘a* were compatible with rationality and therefore Muslims could become politically unified whilst still maintaining their faith based on a religious social morality.

This was the line of thinking promoted by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-97)<sup>18</sup> and Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905)<sup>19</sup>, both of whom are considered to be the founders of the type of Muslim reformism that argued for returning to the origins to seek the roots and causes of Muslim success. However, despite their contribution to raising consciousness of the need to confront the western challenge, neither al-Afghani nor ‘Abduh fit comfortably within the contemporary Salafist frame. That is because they appear to straddle the walls at either end, as it were. To the contemporary Salafist, al-Afghani is insufficiently religious in his motivation. His call for reform was primarily aimed at galvanizing a Muslim response to Western *political* pressure, arguing that Muslims must understand enough of the modern technologies to be able to mount a physical defense. At the other end, Muhammad ‘Abduh excites suspicion among Salafists for his far too porous approach to western rationalism. Influenced by his study of logic and philosophy, they claim, Abduh’s work may superficially reflect the Salafist calls for the re-activation of *ijtihād* and the rejection of *taqlīd*, and the primacy of the pious predecessors, yet it takes as its starting point the need to adapt Islam to modernity, rather than the reverse.<sup>20</sup> Contemporary Salafist authors are quite scathing about the attention given to these reformers as ‘pioneers of Salafism’:

What was initiated by Jamaal ud-Deen al-Afghaani (and those carrying his thoughts) was in reality an anti-colonial political movement and it had nothing to do with orthodox Islaam (the Islaam of the Book and the Sunnah upon the way of the Salaf). This movement was really established in its political form to achieve political unity of Muslims to counter the colonial powers, and was not connected fundamentally to purifying Muslims in aqeedah, manhaj, and ibaadah, even if this call was deceptively surrounded with slogans of “returning back to the way of the forefathers”. It is for this reason that you see the mistaken notion amongst western writers that “Salafīyyah” began at the hands of Jamaal ud-Deen al-Afghaani, and Muhammad Abduh.<sup>21</sup>

The issue again comes down to the use of the term ‘Salafist’ – as to whether it denotes a general tendency to look for *inspiration* among the pious predecessors, or to *reproduce the precise model* for contemporary reform. For the above Muslim reformers (sometimes termed ‘enlightened Salafists’), the anti-rationalist and literalist theological teachings of Ibn Taymiyya on the nature of God or His oneness (*tawhid*) held less attraction than the legal methodology that his work implied (that of an individual’s independent *ijtihād*) and the role model he provided as challenger to the status quo. The absolutist instinct and the fear of contamination – consistent features of contemporary Salafism – were also not in evidence, neither in the narrowing of the Hadīth sources of authority and the literalist interpretation of these, nor in the exclusivity of the denomination of who is, and who is not, a true Salafist.<sup>22</sup>

A third figure associated with Muslim reform of this period is Muhammad Rashīd Ridā (1865-1935). His ideological trajectory stands as the pivotal point in the development of Muslim radicalism, in that it gives pointers to how, whether in political or doctrinal terms and irrespective of the ideological fault-lines, the underlying dynamic of Muslim religious reform has historically been one of liberalizing impulses translating into authoritarianism.

In common with al-Afghani and Abduh, Rida’s diagnosis of Muslim weakness was broadly in line with the Salafist starting point: the decline relative to the West was due to the weight of medieval accretions to the pure religion of the pious ancestors, and the extinguishing of creative *ijtihād* under the weight of *taqlīd*. However the initial liberalism of his reformist stance came to be heavily conditioned by an



emergent nationalism which steered his reform energies away from Abduh's pan-Islamism onto the more overtly political path of pan-Arabism, albeit one with an Islamist slant. This in turn was heavily colored by an ethnic and religious chauvinism: as a firm advocate for a re-constituted Caliphate (both before its abolition in 1924 and after) Rida stipulated that the holder of the rank should be an Arab, on the grounds that only Arabs could truly understand the Qur'ān. His reform then progressively shifted in a conservative and authoritarian direction, seeing secularism and nationalism as greater dangers even than foreign domination. Towards the end of his life Rida drew closer to the strict literalism of Hanbalism and Ibn Taymiyya, and began to see in the *Muwahhidūn* of the Arabian Peninsula a more muscular source of resilience, so that he developed sympathies with the Saudi religious establishment.

This, effectively, was as far as reformist Salafism could go. What route should reform now follow? There were some stark implications in the choice. Should the initiative remain exclusively intellectual and cultural, re-examining core beliefs and educational methods in an open-ended fashion with all the risks it entails for Muslim unity and self-confidence? Should the reform initiative relinquish a fundamental Islamic starting point and introduce a separation between the religious and political spheres? Or should the initiative be taken directly to the social and political arenas, to elaborate a ready-formulated, modernized yet 'correct' Islamic package embracing all cultural, social and political activity?

### *Muslim Modernist Reformism – Politicising Islam*

The second choice was the route taken by Hasan al-Bannā' (1906–1949), the founder in 1928 of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn*). Muhammad Rida had progressed the argument on Islamic reform from Abduh's intellectual sphere by overtly working through its more politically activist implications, and al-Banna noted with interest his course from rationalizing reform to reactionary radicalism, from an emphasis on thawing the conservatism of traditional scholars to confronting the threat of western secularism. He similarly identified the source of resilience as lying in the transformation of socio-political structures that only an organized movement, rather than an intellectual tendency, could effect. The Brotherhood excelled in constructing a robust recruiting, organizing and mobilizing framework so that by mid-20<sup>th</sup> century it claimed a membership of one million. The organisational resilience also saw it through its clash with the pan-Arabism of Gamal Abd al-Nasser and would later add a radicalising backbone to Salafists in Saudi Arabia. Its most conspicuous thinker was Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) whose firsthand experience of life in the West convinced him not only of the fundamental challenge which its secularism and socially liberal values posed to Islam but also of the perilous weakness of the Muslim societies to resist its culturally eroding effects.

Once again the recourse to the pristine template would secure society from the threat. But how exactly was this to be done in the face of the status quo? It required first a rethinking of what the present state of the world actually was and, as the grip of colonial power waned, how an ideal Muslim society should be ruled. In the post-war period new formulas for these questions were being discussed by theorists such as Abū al-A'īā Mawdūdī (1903-1979) who did much to establish a new relevance to the old categorizations of *jāhiliyya* (now no longer a historical but a *qualitative* definition of Disbelief) and *hākimiyya* ('rule' or 'sovereignty'). *Jāhiliyya* was now the default state of all societies, Muslim or non-Muslim, and true *hākimiyya* could only be that of God, given the explicit statement in the Qur'ān that "*hukm ('authority') is for God alone.*"<sup>23</sup> A society that adopted anything other than Sharī'a as its constitution and legal framework can no longer be considered a Muslim society. Like Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb understood that the Prophetic paradigm – which for Salafists hitherto had denoted a model for belief – should also serve

as a template for activism and expansion (see below, *The Ideology of Expansion*). Muslims are to engage themselves, like some salvific revolutionary vanguard, in a mission to rescue the world – whose natural state is Islam – from a resurgent paganism. The mission to reform was now global and it must embrace if necessary the employment of coercion.

Although the Muslim Brotherhood lays claim to the Salafist title, this is rejected by many contemporary Salafists who point to al-Banna's emblematic statement of definition for the Brotherhood: "*Salafist in reform message, Sunni in expression, Sufi in devotion, political in organization*" – as clear evidence of the fraudulence of the claim, with the second half of the statement considered to contradict the first. They write off the use by al-Afghani, 'Abduh and Rida of the Salafism label as "a veil to hide their modernism and attacks upon the Sunnah," and a means whereby they "raised the flag of I'tizal (the way of the Mu'tazilah) in arguing for a revival of the religion." Most importantly, they recognized that

... their thoughts and philosophies constituted the background cultivation for the initiation of all activist based movements in the 20th century.<sup>24</sup>

The purer solution of the activist-minded among Salafists is to repudiate the pattern of Islamizing political practice of bestowing religious legitimisation upon real, power-based politics, and instead to aim at politicizing Islam. This means turning Islam into a 'faith in action' not only in the customary area of private and public morals but also in the arena of domestic politics and international relations. It is a process

that goes in the opposite direction from the historical one of Islamised politics. It is an attempt to link religion and politics not by way of legitimising government, but rather by way of resisting it.<sup>25</sup>

Such a process, however, does not have as long a pedigree as they would wish Muslims to believe, and the explicit concept of a polity of *dīn wa-dawla* (as opposed to an implicitly understood religious ideal) is difficult to place further back than the latest phase of the Ottoman Empire and the writings of the early Islamist theorists themselves, who effectively defined the concept while they dug for sources to provide this pedigree. Despite the claims of the activist Salafists to be re-discovering a lost, alternative polity, Islamic jurisprudence had not been part of the standard learning or reading of the average educated person in the Arab Middle East:

Thus the Islamists were not peeling away a thin veneer of 'westernisation' that was concealing an intact treasury of 'traditional' Islamic learning; rather, they were going through a process of rediscovery and free assembly of pieces long since scattered and dispersed.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Arab / Islamic lacuna in political theory*

These activist-minded movements and agendas were not developed as some subversive underground counter-culture but rather were filling an intellectual space left to them by the failure and dereliction of Arab Muslim intellectuals. Islam boasts a highly sophisticated legacy of historical writing, numerous 'Mirror for Princes' works and a signal and pioneering work on sociological analysis,<sup>27</sup> but is lacking in thinkers like John Locke or Thomas Hobbes to analyze how an ideal human society could be created. The primacy of the *Salaf* paradigm is no doubt partly responsible for this, but the failure of Arab Muslim thinkers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century *Nahda* (the 'Awakening') to revisit issues of authority, the state and the individual, issues which were left unfinished with the medieval closing off of *ijtihad*, is of equal weight.

Of particular import was the neglect of the notion of “non-Divine rule” (*hukm al-Taghut*). The advocates of liberalism, nationalism and leftism in subsequent eras saw no need to focus on this issue ... They all relegated religiously derived thought to the status of an atavistic reflex that would soon be swept away by the organic reality of either progress or nation or class. And Islamism in general, and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, benefited from this omission.<sup>28</sup>

Fascinated by western achievements in these areas, the Muslim educated élite simply imported a foreign conceptual language without indigenizing the underlying issues with reference to the Islamic corpus. Abandoned by the leading lights, this Islamic intellectual enterprise languished and simplified, and it was left to lesser lights to seek the indigenization.

As was to be expected, the conceptual universe from which these Salafist lights drew their frame of reference to build their political structures was the age of the Prophet. The inevitable result was a ‘re-bedouinization’ of political thought, one which does not comprehend the conception of a nation state:

This is a matter which has its historical reasons since Islam was established for Arab tribes diverse in their political structures in a manner akin to a primitive state. It was not possible for any state to be founded in such a primitive Bedouin environment ... neither on a nation state basis – for the tribe is constantly moving and does not recognize a homeland or national borders, nor on the basis of race – unless the races fight each other to the point of extinction ... the individual was a cog in an integral mechanism, a part of it and subservient to it, who could neither recognize nor see outside his kinship anything other than permanently potential enemies. And it was not possible for a tribe to subject itself to the authority of an individual from another tribe.<sup>29</sup>

Such intellectual ground is not fertile for the development of a politics of consensus and compromise, nor one in which the rational ties among people are stronger than blood ties.<sup>30</sup> For the Salafist thinker in the modern era this tribalism translated into absolutism, since it answered to the starting point illustrated by the Hadīth; *Islam dominates and is not dominated*.<sup>31</sup>

It also declared trench warfare against alternative trajectories of political thought in the Arab Middle East. These alternatives were debated early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by reformers acquainted with modern political theory, but since these had studied in western universities Islamic thinkers mistrusted them. They closed themselves off from their works and refused to acknowledge the value of western thought which they only imperfectly understood. As an essential part of this cultural boycott Islamic thinkers attempted to filter out the political and epistemological cradles of the western technologies which their communities were having to import – and it is a mark of the persistence of this boycott that the region stands out as one severely lacking in the development of a knowledge society, as indicated by the *Arab Development Reports* published by the UN.<sup>32</sup>

For their part the western-trained intellectuals disdained to engage with the concerns of the Islamists whom they wrote off as regressive ultra-conservatives, resulting in a dialog of the deaf that has become all but established in Arab culture. Under these conditions of antagonism and the exchange of slogans the principal casualty has been precision. This can be seen at its clearest in the debate on secularism and the issue of the separation of Mosque from State. While the secularists attempt to define their position by drawing a distinction between an opposition to religion and an opposition to clerical power, Islamists universally conflate the two and show no willingness to fundamentally change their understanding:

The call for secularism among Muslims is atheism and a rejection of Islam. Its acceptance as a basis for rule in place of *Shari'ah* is a downright apostasy. The silence of the masses in the Muslim world about this deviation has been a major transgression and a clear-cut instance of disobedience.<sup>33</sup>

Even 'New Islamists,' of the Egyptian *Wasatiyya* trend, who accept the principal of co-operation with secularists, do so as a tactical measure for the achievement of power. The opposition to secularism as a political issue remains entrenched. Underlying this opposition is the fear that Islam, without the coercive might of the state to enforce it, will wither away. This is the position, for example, of the Muslim Brotherhood Shaykh Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, who argues that if the western system separates religion from the state,

the [Christian] faith nevertheless remains standing with its strong, wealthy and potent authority, with its armies of monks, nuns and evangelists working in their separate fields without the state exercising any control over them. This contrasts with what would happen if the Islamic state did this. The result would be that the faith would be left without any authority to support it, or force to maintain it.<sup>34</sup>

As for the Jihadi-Salafists, the argumentation is even more polarized. For Shaykh Salmān al-'Awdah, Islam cannot take its place alongside others under a secular umbrella:

This issue is not open for debate. Islam, as the final religion, has supremacy over all faiths and over every aspect of life. There is no place for secularism in the lands of Islam or among the Muslims ... The phrase "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and give unto Allah what is Allah's" is exactly what the pagans in Mecca were saying when the Prophet was sent to them.<sup>35</sup>

That is, *secularism is a form of polytheism*. Al-'Awdah's reasoning may appear somewhat arcane but is actually typical of the Salafist approach. The sequence of thought is as follows: the polytheists of Makka at the time of the Prophet maintained a position of latitude on the particularities of cultic practice. This separation of cultic practice from power therefore must constitute an *essential feature* of polytheism. Since polytheism is the antithesis of Islam, the tolerance that ensues from this separation cannot be conceived of as a virtue and is thus to be demonized.

The intellectual polarity inherent in this formula continues to this day, and ultimately has implications for the prospects of dialog and any accommodation that is envisaged towards Islamist political participation. For these last, revisiting the position on secularism would be a capitulation to the forces inimical to the tribalized currents of Islamic thought. The polarity perpetuates intellectual deadlock; there has yet to develop a political theory in the Arab world that is progressive in its dynamic rather than one geared, under the shade of Salafism, to the preservation of antique formulas, and the isolation of the region from alternative currents and experiences. As the Jordanian writer Shākir al-Nābulṣī diagnoses it,

unfortunately, the intellectual life of Arabs has been undisturbed by the type of ideological revolution that the West experienced with the ideas of thinkers like Voltaire, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Calvin, and Thomas Paine. Our thinkers are still trying to develop the path to reform that these Western thinkers discovered centuries ago ... This has led to the present failure to reconcile modernity with Islam.<sup>36</sup>

## Chapter Three - *The Salafist Spectrum*

*“The civilized world ought to recognize the immense danger that Salafī Islam poses ... if it is to protect both a generation of young Muslims and the rest of humanity from the disastrous consequences of this militant ideology.”*

T. Hamid

### *From Pietism to Activism*

WITH the field left free like this to the lesser lights, and having to forge anew the application of a purist Islam to the life of the Muslim in the face of a dominating orthodoxy, the solutions that were developed took on an exclusivist, radical tone. The thoroughness of the Salafist enterprise is well illustrated by events in Saudi Arabia. It might be thought that the system in the kingdom was already enough to satisfy the Salafist – a highly orthodox, conservative system, founded upon the work of a Salafist thinker Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. But far from remaining immune to reproach, the Saudi system merely provided the arena in which the Salafists could evaluate the probity and propriety of the model. For some, the ‘Wahhabi paradox’ of a Salafist creed and a Hanbali legal methodology, that is, a non-*madhhabist*<sup>1</sup> starting point of individual *ijtihād*, tempered by deferment to the scholars of a legal school (albeit the most conservative of the Islamic spectrum), was untenable. Sooner or later it would have to be challenged.

The chief voice of this challenge came in the early 1960s from the Hadīth scholar Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī.<sup>2</sup> Taking the course of Salafist textual literalism to its natural conclusion, this scholar argued not only for the insufficiency of the establishment’s recourse to Hanbali jurisprudence (for the reliance that this was placing upon the authority of an all too mortal scholar) but also for the concentration of the scholarly energies on the ‘science of Hadīth’, that is, on establishing the letter and the reliability of the corpus of textual authorities on which the individual would be called to base his *ijtihād*. His single-mindedness in this respect was itself radical, in that he was not afraid to challenge the authenticity and the authority of even the most ‘canonical’ collections of Hadīth. The literalism of his approach is thoroughgoing; Al-Albani considered himself to be the restorer of the medieval school of thought known as the *Ahl al-Hadīth* (‘the People of Hadīth’), a distinguishing characteristic of which was to subordinate the use of Reason in religious rulings to the primacy of the Text, or even oppose it altogether. The endeavor of the scholar under this school should be a grammatical and linguistic one, or one that focuses on the integrity of the ‘chain of transmission’ or the probity of the transmitters.<sup>3</sup> There is no place for the discussion as such of the *content* of the Hadīth. This antipathy to the employment of Reason is decisively expressed by the radical scholar Abu Baseer al-Tartousi:

“They worship ‘Reason’ over and above God Almighty, and prioritize corrupt Reason over sound Tradition ... They are led astray by the scholasticism, philosophy and logic they were brought up with, and they set these above the science of the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunna*, and delve into things that it is not permitted to delve into. Their distortions and perversions resulting from this they call ‘interpretation’ and ‘rationalism’, so as to spread it among the masses and the naïve ones!”<sup>4</sup>

The neo-Ahl al-Hadīth school, for which al-Albani served as chief symbol, returned to center stage the age-old polarity of Text vs Reason unchanged. The effect of this has been to severely condition

and curtail the ability of legal scholars to deal creatively with modern challenges without resorting to the bunker instinct.

### *The 'Islamic Awakening'*

At the same time as the Ahl al-Hadīth were focusing on the finer points of textual authority, and scholars such as al-Albani were challenging the doctrinal status quo by legitimizing stands that diverged from the official line, an endeavor of a different kind was coming together, one which would voice a challenge which was altogether more practically focused and politically activist. The cause of the activism was the turmoil of the 1960s in the Arab Muslim world. The post-colonial period had long been failing to deliver the promised benefits, and at its most important moment of test in the June 1967 Six Day War with Israel Arab nationalism showed itself unable to deliver. Humiliation and frustration galvanized interest in an alternative ideological route, but the arena in Egypt had been closed off since the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood in the mid-1950s. At the same time Saudi Arabia was engaged in fighting off the blandishments of socialism and pan-Arabism at a time when oil-powered development established a pressing need for an imported work force. The kingdom's need for a culturally compatible workforce opened up the borders to educated radically-minded Muslims, including many members of the Muslim Brotherhood, eager to secure a sanctuary from tightening pressures in Egypt and Syria.

Many of these radicals were absorbed into the professional classes and especially the educational system, which thus became strongly influenced by more diversified modern strains of Salafist thought. Equally, the result of this merging of influences was that the broader contemporary Salafist movements, in their turn, came to absorb much of the vocabulary and terminology of Abd al-Wahhab's heirs. The fusion of these two elements – a transformational view of Islamic activity and a doctrinal underpinning re-invigorated by orthodoxy – produced a new compound that came to be known as *al-Sahwa al-Islāmiyya* ('the Islamic Awakening'). Groups ascribing to this hybrid formation blended together reform on religious practice and social issues (the traditional Wahhabist clerical interest) with matters of overtly political import (heavily influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood's organizational experience). Although, once again, the term 'Islamic Awakening' covers a series of trends and interest groups and methodologies for gaining power, the spectrum shared was unapologetically activist, and it dominated the university campuses in the 1970s and 1980s, until it was finally in a position by the 1990s to configure and lead an Islamist political opposition to the Saudi regime.

The constant themes of the various configurations of the *Sahwa* movement was the conspiracy against Islam, the insidious attempts of Muslim regimes, encouraged by their western masters, to secularize the Islamic Nation, derail its salvific mission and emasculate its political potential. As an antidote to these perceived attacks it laid emphasis on the need for the unity of the Muslim *umma*, for the re-education of all Muslims in the Salafist conception of the *'aqīda*, and the re-building of excluding cultural walls through the re-invigoration of the doctrine of *al-walā' wal-barā'* ('Loyalty and Renunciation') which demanded the expression of unequivocal disassociation from and antipathy to non-Muslims (on this principle see below p.27). The *Awakening* was thus an awakening of the Muslim consciousness to the most insidious form of colonialism, the colonialism of the mind.

Although it was initially an intellectually-focused reform movement that highlighted inadequacies in Islamic education and the unacceptable quietism of the establishment scholars, the *Sahwa's* application of these reform instincts soon embraced issues of corruption in politics and the economic management of the Saudi state. This inevitably led to tensions with the regime. But the logic of dissent and extended discussions on the propriety of the present condition, in religious terms, of the

Saudi state (and of all contemporary Muslim states) cut deeper still. The crucial questions occupying the dissident élites came to be asked more openly: What if the government is not pulling its weight in returning society to the true path? What implications does this have for its legitimacy and right to rule? Questions such as these, and the governing features and themes of the *Sahwa*'s challenge, would later come to crystallize in the mental universe of the jihadist.

### *Opposition to Sahwa within Salafism*

As mentioned earlier, while sharing its starting points in common, Salafism as a cultural and intellectual phenomenon is not a single entity and its various schools do not move on entirely parallel tracks. Aside from the establishment Salafists (often opprobriously termed '*ulamā*' *al-sulta* – the 'state scholars') who would be expected to oppose the *Sahwa* activism, the doctrinal preoccupations that promoted the challenge to the clerical establishment could not seamlessly translate into efforts to extend this challenge onto the political arena. The position of pietistic groups such as the Ahl al-Hadīth, and of the schools of thought labeled 'Madkhalism' or 'Jāmism',<sup>5</sup> were that *harakī* ('activist') groups and trends such as *al-Sahwa al-Islāmiyya* and the Muslim Brotherhood were unduly focused on political reform instead of on the truer function of the Salafist – the reform of the creed and the religious sciences.

In fact the rigorous approach of the Salafist mindset regularly clashes with the intellectual and doctrinal compromises required by the group organization and group loyalty that necessarily underpin political activism. The most interesting example of this tendency is the position taken by al-Albani. "The best politics," he said, "is to quit politics," arguing that the correct position for Muslims to adopt was one which was analogous to his individualistic approach to textual interpretation. That is, to restrict one's activity to that which can be undertaken as an individual, with an individual conscience, as part of the one community, rather than adopt the *bid'a* (heretical 'innovation') of acting in concert with a group, be it overtly political or merely civic in scope, on the grounds that Muslim society should not sub-divide itself in this way. Instead, the efforts of the believer should, after the example of the Prophet, focus on activities of *da'wā*, on purifying belief, purging the Sunna of all that is foreign to it and corrosive of its purity, and educating others in this retrieved purity. The pre-occupation with creed should always take precedence over anything else.

His position on the need to firmly establish *tawhīd* before engaging in political activity was somewhat uncompromising, and led to his issuing a *fatwa* in 1997 calling on all Palestinian Muslims in Palestine, Southern Lebanon, and the Golan Heights to quit their territories on the grounds that, under Israeli occupation these had reverted to *Dār al-Kufr* ('Land of Disbelief'), and that since any Muslim land occupied by non-Muslims becomes a non-Muslim land it is prohibited for any Muslims to continue living there. This extreme standpoint predictably exposed him to much opposition and ridicule.<sup>6</sup>

It should be emphasized, however, that the position of a scholar such as al-Albani was always a matter of technicalities, that these groups were not wrong *in principle* to attend to the political implications of Salafist reform. The problem was that they were putting the cart before the horse. It is therefore erroneous to see in the purists, or 'scholarly Salafists' such as these, some form of fundamental apoliticism, or acquiescence to pluralism or still less a liberal, *laissez-faire* approach to politics. Al-Albani himself was candid on this point:

"All Muslims agree on the need to establish an Islamic state, but they differ on the method to be employed to attain that goal. [For me] only by the Muslims' adhering to *tawhīd* can the causes of their dissensions be removed, so that they may march toward their objective in closed ranks".<sup>7</sup>

Salafists therefore are continually engaged in the modalities of operating in a political world, even if this debate at times expresses itself in the language of apoliticism. The thrust of Salafism is towards empowerment, and its sense of reformist mission necessarily generates an activist identity. The constituents of Salafism, as an intellectual school of a faith that does not separate the political and social from the devotional life, will therefore inexorably be drawn towards political expression.

### *Al-Jamā‘a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba*

Although al-Albani’s motivation was reform, not revolution, the attraction to marginalized scholars and thinkers of calling into question the authority of the Wahhabi religious establishment was natural, and it contributed to a climate of challenges to religious authority. While the educated élite of the *Sahwa* were organizing a political opposition, and the scholars of the Ahl al-Hadīth concentrated their efforts on reforming the faith, less educated and less sophisticated pietistic classes who were increasingly appalled by the manifestations of modernity, pushed for an intensification of religious activism on the ground.<sup>8</sup> These more radically-minded ‘neo-Salafists’ were no longer content to focus their energies on rooting out unacceptable innovations in religious practice, and increasingly sought to demand reforms of a more thoroughgoing kind, reforms which would transform society in a more socially conservative direction, along lines more closely consistent with their doctrine. One expression of this activism was the formation in Medina, by disciples of al-Albani, of *al-Jamā‘a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba* (‘The Salafi Group which Practices *Hisba*’, the JSM) to institutionalize the challenge and force through societal change by tightening what they saw as laxities in Saudi society. Beginning with a series of direct action against ‘un-Islamic’ practices, such as the use of pictures and photographs in public spaces, the JSM progressively broadened their activities against a whole range of expressions of modernity.

Waxing extremism in the behavior of members of the JSM inevitably caused tensions in the ranks, and the result was the formation of a still more radical breakaway faction calling itself the *Ikhwān*.<sup>10</sup> Led by Juhaymān al-‘Utaybī, this faction adopted a number of hardline doctrinal opinions, including the concept of a ‘true Islamic society’ that disassociates itself from *all* forms of impiety (called the *Millat Ibrāhīm*, the ‘Community of Abraham’). It encapsulated the concept of the unity and solidarity of all Muslim believers and the all-important principle of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* as an expression of this unity and solidarity. These concepts would all be of pivotal significance in the subsequent development of Jihadism.

In the original conception of this group these doctrines were exclusively doctrinal. Indeed they proceeded on the assumption of the irrelevance of politics and the irrelevance of the Saudi state. But the corollary of these positions was nevertheless to draw the group towards politicization despite itself. For notwithstanding their respect for al-Albani and recognition of his role in calling the Wahhabi orthodoxy to account, Juhayman’s followers held that al-Albani’s teachings failed to ‘follow through’ the logic of Salafism, which was to oblige Muslims to resist all forms of *shirk* (‘associationism’) in whatever form this should present itself. In the present era, that *shirk* was most patently in evidence in the fact of a government system that was not based fully on the Sharī‘a and all it requires. Making sure that the rule of God prevailed was therefore not an illegitimate ‘political activity,’ it was nothing less than a requirement of faith.

### *The pivotal year 1979*

The logic of the Salafist trajectory – taken to its ultimate – exploded on November 20<sup>th</sup> 1979 when Juhayman, along with a group of several hundred *Ikhwān* made up of Arabs and non-Arabs (including



two Americans), seized control of *al-Masjid al-Haram*, the Grand Mosque in Mecca. There are some specific peculiarities to the event, such as the Mahdist doctrine of the assailants, the choice of date relevant to the appearance of the ‘Renewer of the Century’ (November 20<sup>th</sup> 1979 corresponds to the first day of the 15<sup>th</sup> century of the Islamic calendar) and the distinctly eschatological perception of the struggle, all of which may be said to shift the trajectory away somewhat from the Salafist mainstream.<sup>11</sup> But in addition to the calls to cut off oil exports to the United States and expel all foreign civilian and military experts from the Arabian peninsula, the demands made by the group’s statements such as the *Saba’ Rasā’il* (‘Seven Letters’), are notable for how they reproduce faithfully the Salafist paradigm and the demands that later came to be repeated by jihadists. These demands included:

- The legitimization of rulership solely as one founded on devotion to Islam, based on the Qur’ān and the Sunna and not on the interpretations of the *‘ulamā’*;
- The necessity for the Muslims to overthrow their corrupt rulers whose legitimacy is no longer sustainable;
- The call to disassociate from the mechanisms and institutions of state;
- The repudiation of a state that “makes religion a means to guarantee worldly interests, puts an end to *jihād*, and pays allegiance to the Christians”
- The duty to establish a pure Islamic community that promotes the mutual solidarity of all Muslims, that protects Islam from unbelievers and does not court foreigners, that is, one that ensures the proper enforcement of the doctrine of *al-walā’ wal-barā’*.

In essence it is a demand for reform in favor of a more Islamically-oriented government, a return to what the proponents held to be a ‘pure Islam’, and a straight reversal of the tentative modernization initiatives undertaken up to then by the Saudi regime.

The legacy of the event is highly significant in a number of ways. First of all the Saudi regime’s handling of the siege was disastrous: the fight to regain control of the Mosque lasted a full two weeks and was marked by considerable violence, with many pilgrims and civilians caught in the crossfire. The consequent popular image of callousness, instability and incompetence in the regime was further compounded by the recourse to foreign (French) commandos to manage the restoration of order.<sup>12</sup>

More important by far, however, was the impact on the social and doctrinal front. In order to carry out armed operations within the precinct of the Mosque to clear the dissidents, the Saudi regime turned to the *‘ulamā*. The clerics duly issued a *fatwa* based on verses from the Qur’ān that allowed the government to use all necessary force to retake the Great Mosque. But this license had to come at the cost of significant concessions in order to co-opt critics, concessions which only strengthened the religious establishment. Significantly, the *fatwa* issued did not contain outright condemnation of the dissidents, and this indicated the levels of passive sympathy for them already existing in the religious establishment. Subsequently, with each concession made to the clergy the *quid pro quo* became less and less equal. Each concession validated the position of the dissidents still further, as the regime appeased the clerical classes through their approval of ever greater restrictions on social mores, or through their financing of educational institutions that spawned a multiplication of theology graduates preaching ever stronger, hard-line interpretations of the Faith. The Saudi regime was powerless to reverse the trend, based as it was upon an ideological underpinning that in essence implied the same religious trajectory. In this sense, while the *Ikhwān* rebellion was itself a failure, the ideas underpinning the JSM and Juhayman’s faction moved a little closer to center stage, bequeathing a doctrinal seam which promoted outright rejection of the legitimacy of the Saudi state and all its institutions, and which prescribed a *hijra* from all that it represented.

This was hardly surprising since 1979 was a momentous year in world politics. Earlier in the year the world had seen in Iran its first Islamist revolution, which had taken place only a few weeks after the assassination of Egypt's President Sadat. A month after the events at Mecca the Soviet forces entered Afghanistan. The significance of the two-week Juhayman rebellion was missed. The Meccan events, in contrast, were written off as an archaic reaction against modernity that had more to do with the 19<sup>th</sup> than the 20<sup>th</sup> century (which in some ways it was), instead of what it also represented: a prototype militant action of jihad carried out by an early example of a Muslim *internationale*.

### *The Transition to Jihadism*

For the development of contemporary Jihadism the Mecca incident signals an important marker. Deeply outraged by the bloody resolution of the event, many Muslims in Saudi Arabia, took up a position of opposition to the regime. The question of the contradiction between their Islamic credentials and the reality of power – the explicit dependency on western powers and conformity to their interests – was brought into sharper relief. The year 1979 had also featured one more ground-breaking event that shattered perceptions of consensus, the signing in March of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty between the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and the Prime Minister of Israel Menachem Begin. The sense that Arab regimes were not acting properly in the interests of the people, either as Arabs or Muslims, was efficiently exploited by radical thinkers, who stiffened the political disaffection with proposed 'deeper' analyses as to the causes of these events. For instance, might these powers no longer constitute 'Islamic authorities'? Might the incumbents not be Muslims at all? In which case might the Islamic obligation of obedience to authority no longer be valid?

This is a key departure. The campus activism of the Islamic Awakening was targeted at Islamic-oriented reform of the state's policies, at times quite vigorously, but without at any time directly questioning the state's legitimacy, or the Muslim credentials of those in power. Even the violence of Juhayman's revolt, which called into question the Islamicness of the system, stopped short of *takfīr*, of declaring the regime non-Muslim. Juhayman had spoken of the insufficient credentials of the Saudi regime not on the grounds of their Islamic faith, but on the grounds of their lineage. Since the Āl Sa'ūd were not descended from the Quraysh, from the tribe of the Prophet, they had little right to demand allegiance, and certainly none in the light of their social policies which stood in contradiction to God's word. Conscientious Muslims should therefore distance themselves from the administrative and educational institutions of an imperfectly configured Muslim state.

As the Saudi regime unsuccessfully attempted to keep one step ahead of the implications of its actions on public opinion, and as the clerics of the Sahwa undermined the religious establishment for its failure to denounce the state's subservience to western powers, the decade following the Mecca siege saw the progressive politicization of Islamic opposition, and some more overt discussion on the question of *takfīr*. Events outside the Kingdom showed where this direction could lead. In October 1981 President Sadat was assassinated by an Islamist group that had been actively plotting since the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 to unleash "a popular uprising against secular authority all over the country." For the Islamists the Egyptian state had shown its true nature: progress on Shari'a-compliant legislation had stalled, secular laws had been promulgated in favor of female emancipation and the permanent separation of Mosque from State was being overtly championed. Mass arrests of Islamist activists spelled that the Egyptian state, under the leadership of the 'new Pharaoh,'<sup>13</sup> was attempting to reverse the inexorable momentum of mankind's return to Islam.<sup>14</sup>

To the East the concept of 'Islam under siege' from the forces of Disbelief was fed equally by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Thousands of Saudi youth responded to the call of the *mujāhidīn* to

resist, creating a gravitational pull that took along with it many who had hitherto framed their Islamic reform exclusively on the rejectionist, anti-political track. This overt *jihad* endeavor added a new color to the Salafist spectrum, one which combined the rejectionist disdain for reform-based political participation, with the hostility of the *harakī* activists to the Saudi state. The glue binding together all of these currents was *takfīr*.

### *Crossing the takfīr barrier*

The *takfīr* weapon, right from the beginnings of Islamic history, has always been heavily loaded with controversy and polemic, since the consequences of its use are themselves loaded.<sup>15</sup> Much as was the case with Ibn Taymiyya, in the modern period the issue was brought into the foreground by the problem of the conduct of a regime on the frontier line between the Muslim and the non-Muslim worlds. Unlike in the earlier medieval period, the issue did not disappear with the growing success of the anti-occupation movements. In the Indian subcontinent, for instance, Mawdudi wrestled with the dilemma of government systems inherited from the colonial culture. In Egypt Sayyid Qutb deepened the consciousness of a long-term, western cultural conspiracy against Islam. Throughout this period the *takfīr* weapon remained problematic and was a major source of disagreement and disruption to the re-Islamization programs, since it had a highly fragmenting influence on the constituency the Islamists were attempting to win over. “Whether the cause of this mischief is narrow-mindedness with good intentions,” Mawdudi lamented,

or selfishness, envy and self-seeking with malevolent intentions, the fact remains that probably nothing else has done the Muslims as much harm as this has done.”<sup>16</sup>

The process of *takfīr* of the ruling regime is fraught with difficulty, and demands some considerable scholarly nuancing. However, the experience of Juhayman’s revolt, and the ultimatum made to the authorities at the time, did attract some acute observers. One of these was the Jordanian scholar Abū Muhammad ‘Āsim bin Muhammad Tāhir al-Barqāwī, known as al-Maqdisī. Living in Kuwait in the early 1980s while the remnants of *al-Jamā‘a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba* were filtering into the country from Saudi Arabia, al-Maqdisi was strongly impressed by Juhayman’s ideological stance on challenging the legitimacy of the ruling regime.<sup>17</sup> He took the logic a step further, however, arguing that the regime was indeed unfit to rule not through a technical matter of lineage but on the basis of its behavior as Muslims. It is therefore unequivocally a *kāfīr* regime.

His œuvre is therefore a seamless progression from the events of 1979 and the line of argumentation is inexorable. It is logically argued in his works *Millat Ibrāhīm* (*The Community of Abraham*)<sup>18</sup> and *The Patent Proofs of the Disbelief of the Saudi State*,<sup>19</sup> both composed in the 1980s during his travels in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and his popular work *Democracy is a Religion*<sup>20</sup>. Juhayman had highlighted the contradiction between the purported *tawhīd* promoted by the Saudi regime, and the reality of their state, which was compromised by the weak Islamic pedigree of its functioning institutions. He had stated his intention to

clarify to you the *Millat Ibrāhīm* so that you may be clear on this, so that it will become apparent that it rests on the differentiation between Truth and Falsehood, contrary to what some say, that Islam is a ‘modernistic’ religion, just so that they can mix the East with the West, imitate them and live among them.

Al-Maqdisi took up these issues and developed their ramifications. As true Salafists, the demand is for authenticity and freedom from contamination. A slogan for this process, as we have seen, is uncompromising *tawhīd*, and this is the foundation of both the *Millat Ibrāhīm* and indeed the

founding claims of the Saudi state. But the corollary of promoting *tawhīd* is the repudiation of that which compromises it. This means disavowing the behavior of others that may weaken or contaminate the faith in any way. A feature of the *Millat Ibrāhīm* was therefore equally to include enmity and hatred. The Qur’ān, he argued, speaks plainly of this aspect of repudiation:

*There is a goodly pattern for you in Abraham and those with him, when they told their folk: Lo! we are guiltless of you and all that ye worship beside Allah. We have done with you. And there hath arisen between us and you hostility and hate for ever until ye believe in Allah only.* [Qur’ān: LX,4]

### *Loyalty and Renunciation*

The words ‘innocent’ and ‘guiltless’ (*barā’*, *bura’ā*) in Qur’ānic verses such as these<sup>21</sup> provide the vocabulary for the doctrine of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* (‘loyalty and disavowal’) which becomes the defining expression, as characteristic as the profession of *tawhīd*, for the true Salafist believer. Although, as Joas Wagemakers illustrates,<sup>22</sup> the doctrine of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* has highly suspect origins for Sunni orthodoxy, being associated with the *Khawārij* and subsequently with Shi’a Islam, al-Maqdisi follows the progressive Sunni indigenization of the concept from Ibn Taymiyya, through to the Wahhabi doctrine, whereby ‘the firmest of bonds of the faith’ (*awthaq ‘urā al-imān*<sup>23</sup>) are ‘love in God and hatred in God’ with the command to cut all ties of loyalty between the believers and non-Muslims.

Naturally, while the state scholars confined the application of the ‘renunciation’ element to the religious status of non-Muslims, al-Maqdisi follows Juhayman in extending the doctrine to all forms of relationship with these non-believers, including foreign economic and political linkages. The claimed *tawhīd* of the Saudi state, as heirs to the Wahhabi reforms, is a sham. The state

deceives the people by its promotion of *tawhīd* ... encouraging the scholars to wage war against [worshipping at] graves, Sufism and the *shirk* of amulets, enchantments, trees and stones, from things it does not feel threatened by or which do not influence their domestic or foreign policies.<sup>24</sup>

His work follows the logical progression of Juhayman’s standpoint for the *Millat Ibrāhīm*: disavowal of *shirk* and those who uphold it, emigration (*hijra*) to a safe place where one can gather without suffering contamination from Disbelief; and fighting (*qitāl*). It becomes a natural expression of the Islamic faith, the first pillar of Islam and hence incumbent upon every Muslim to practice. Al-Maqdisi’s own contribution to the development of the doctrine is the extension of what constitutes infraction of the true worship of God: it must now include *political obedience and a willingness to abide by a country’s secular laws*, on the grounds that, according to the Qur’ān, the infidel Christians and Jews had taken their religious leaders “as lords besides Allah.”<sup>25</sup> Respect for authority that is outside the Islamic spectrum (even if this be outside the normally understood religious sphere of activity) equates to setting up an alternative object of *religious* allegiance, and therefore now constitutes Disbelief.

The Muslim profession of faith, al-Maqdisi explains, “means disavowal of all religions and idols, legal methodology, laws and objects of worship other than Almighty God, his law and his faith... and enmity towards the polytheists, and loyalty to the people of [true] Belief.”<sup>26</sup> ‘Idols’ are therefore no longer matters of stone and wood, but “idols of ruling according to something else than what God has revealed, the idols of the [secular] law.”<sup>27</sup> If a Muslim state has anything other than total recourse to Sharī‘a, as opposed to ‘Sharī‘a as a principal source of legislation,’ it is tantamount to altering the *shahāda*, the Muslim profession of faith, to a formula saying: “I bear witness that God is one god among the principal gods, and that along with Him there are other principal and supplementary gods.” That is, it is *shirk* against the divinity and an open manifestation of *kufr*.<sup>28</sup> In *The Patent Proofs of the*

*Disbelief of the Saudi State* al-Maqdisi enumerates what he perceives as fundamentally anti-Islamic behavior – the employment of usury systems, the repression of radical scholars and the undue ring-fencing of Sharī‘a jurisdiction. He also lists the infractions to the principle of ‘hostility and hate for ever’<sup>29</sup>:

- Saudi relations with foreign idols<sup>30</sup>
- Saudi relations with regional idols, such as the GCC, the Arab Union, the Arab Monetary Fund, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and OPEC
- Saudi relations with idols of the international community such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Red Cross and International Freemasonry
- Saudi acquiescence to the idols of international law and of international human rights
- Saudi trade and defense pacts with the USA, royal visits to the USA and the conferring of gifts
- Saudi defence of ‘its Christian and Jewish brothers’
- Saudi security cooperation against religious extremism.

He contrasts this with the opinion of the founder of the Saudi state Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab:

We declare as infidels those who make *shirk* palatable for the people, and give spurious support for it, and those who wield the sword in its defense, or denounce and fight against those who would strive to do away with it.<sup>31</sup>

What were the implications for the Saudi state in all of this? By linking *walā’* (‘loyalty’) to the principles of *tawhīd* with a correlated *barā’* (‘disavowal’) to that which compromised this *tawhīd* – such as the above behavior of the state and its adoption or acquiescence to man-made laws – al-Maqdisi made the clear equation that ‘pluralism in administration equals pluralism in worship’<sup>32</sup> and was thus able to bring the Muslim to the inescapable conclusion: he has a religious obligation *to declare the ruling regime as infidel*.

### *Hijra and Jihād on the Tāghūt*

Having established that the Saudi regime are convinced enemies of Islam, and not merely ‘insufficiently Islamic,’ the question now turns to what the appropriate response is. Under the rubric ‘*The Way Out of the Fitna*’<sup>33</sup> al-Maqdisi lays out in *The Patent Proofs* the religious imperative. If the regime operates as if faith is partly to God and partly to some other authority, the Qur’ān is explicit: *Fight them until there is no more fitna and so that all faith belongs to God.*<sup>34</sup> This therefore licenses the broad struggle, but it is recourse to the Hadīth which solves the issue of allegiance and treason. For if the Prophet bound all Muslims to obey their rulers, there is an important qualification to this: authority may be withdrawn if the Muslims “noticed him having open Disbelief, for which we would have a proof with us from God.”<sup>35</sup> This act of *kufr* removes the inviolability of ‘his property and his blood’<sup>36</sup> and al-Maqdisi defiantly challenges the state scholars to prove him wrong on this. Indeed, it is their duty to ‘rise up, expel and replace him, so as to establish God’s law and confirm a complete *tawhīd*.’ For those unable to carry out this task

*hijra* is obligatory, anything but acquiescence to Disbelief and its laws. Indeed, their conscience should constantly urge their *jihad* in this, to bring up their children for this task, and implant it deep in their hearts.

This *hijra* has been a permanent obligation since the beginning of Islam, in accordance with the Prophet’s Hadīth that ‘the *mujāhid* is one that strives in obedience to God, and the *muhājir* (the one

performing *hijra*) is he that forsakes everything that God has forbidden him.’ The *hijra* for al-Maqdisi is now defined as ‘disassociation’ from the state systems. The religious example remains uppermost and the requisite scriptural texts adduced:

Leaders will come who will gather round them evil men, and who will postpone the prayer from its appointed times; let he who understands this not serve as an overseer, a guardsman, a tax collector nor a treasurer ...<sup>37</sup>

Failure to disassociate risks being tainted by the charge of *kufir*, as demonstrated by the example of Pharaoh whose chief minister and soldiers were equally ‘sinners’<sup>38</sup>:

*Therefore We seized him and his hosts, and abandoned them unto the sea. Behold the nature of the consequence for evil-doers!*<sup>39</sup>

The charge of *kufir* must consequently extend to government employees and agents of the regime<sup>40</sup>, to the employees of usurious banks, as well as to its rulers, scholars<sup>41</sup> and legislators. Indeed, it must extend to any activity that aids the smooth functioning of this un-Islamic state. This is no more and no less than what is demanded by the example of *al-Salaf al-Sālih* themselves.<sup>42</sup>

That there should be enmity to this state of *jāhiliyya* is hardly a controversial standpoint for Salafists. But al-Maqdisi now has to demolish the argument that there is ‘a time and a place’ for resistance, that the stirring up of antipathy serves no purpose, or that the resort to militant jihad is something that is not automatic. Al-Maqdisi again establishes the legitimacy of jihad, over against the current practice of what he calls merely ‘theoretical *tawhīd*,’ on the basis of the Prophet’s example. He argues that in the Prophet’s time *tawhīd* was not something that was ‘studied’ among themselves without materializing into action. How, if this had been the case, were the polytheist Meccans minded to be hostile to the Muslims?

If the Messenger of Allah had remained silent ... with respect to confronting their gods and shaming them, and if he (God forbid!) had concealed the verses of disavowal (*barā’a*) from them and from their religion and that which they worshipped ... they would have sat with him and honored him ... and he would not have been in need of the *hijra*.<sup>43</sup>

Instead, he argues, if Muslims are to follow the Prophetic paradigm, there is no place for concealing enmity, hatred and disavowal. It has to be open, it has to be now and it has to be ubiquitous. The disavowal is no longer one of shunning and avoidance. Its logical expression is *takfīr* and its resolution is militant, violent jihad, which constitutes

the loftiest of categories of demonstrating enmity and hatred to the enemies of God.<sup>44</sup>

### *Jihad on the Infidel*

The antipathy for the *tāghūt* and all his works is defined and powered by *al-walā’ wal-barā’*, with its prerogative to disavow all objects of worship other than Almighty God and remain loyal to the people of [true] Belief who alone, as adherents of the sole Saved Sect, protect it from contamination. However, the contamination threat was never conceived of as something passive such as dilution of core beliefs. By definition, the pagan forces of *jāhiliyya* are not merely non-Muslim, but actively *anti-Muslim*, and have always been so since the time of the Prophet. Since their enmity was to the Prophet’s new faith, the logic of this Salafist principle is that it is not just Muslims, but *Islam itself* which is under attack. Even the most ‘political’ writers in the tradition took this starting point as self-evident. Sayyid Qutb explicitly stated that the conflict was not merely one of economics or politics

but one of a conflict between Islam and *jāhiliyya* and ‘Abdallah ‘Azzām, writing in the thick of the Afghan jihad arena against the Soviet forces, expressed the task as one of

the battle between Truth and Falsehood for the righteousness of mankind, that the Truth may be made dominant and Good propagated.<sup>45</sup>

For the Salafist and the *mujāhidīn* of the Jihadi-Salafists equally, the conflict is in essence a conflict of religion<sup>46</sup> and a war against idolatry. But a noteworthy aspect of this conflict is that ‘religion’ and ‘idolatry’ is defined in the broadest of terms to include – in addition to doctrines of faith – political and social systems, cultures, even epistemologies of knowledge. The principal idol is a western one. It is the symbol of a polytheistic rival to God that passes under the name of ‘democracy.’

In his work *Al-Dīmuqrāṭiyya Dīn* (‘Democracy is a Religion’)<sup>47</sup> al-Maqdisi seeks to awaken the Muslim’s consciousness to his unwitting *jāhiliyya*, with his argumentation for identifying the false god:

- God is the only true Legislator
- Democracies impiously do not apply the law, the Sharī‘a, as given to mankind by God
- Worse still, democracies instead legislate other systems in place of this Sharī‘a
- This means they arrogate to themselves the functions of God Almighty
- They therefore invent and serve another ‘god’
- Democracies are therefore by definition polytheistic cultures, irrespective of the purported religious denomination of its collaborating subject peoples, Muslim, Christian or Jewish.

It is important to resist the temptation to see the above as metaphorical language. Al-Maqdisi, in common with all Salafists, does not have recourse to metaphor for such core points of belief. In a reform movement as deep and thoroughgoing as theirs, where *al-walā’ wal-barā’* serves as a principal differentiating and defining mechanism, there is no ‘non-religious’ space in Salafist discourse. The language is literally meant and faith is the filtering lens through which all phenomena, not merely doctrinal issues, are viewed.

It is from this starting point of essential enmity provided by the doctrine *al-walā’ wal-barā’* that Jihadi-Salafists extend the hostility without difficulty to the western powers in their function as active subverters of Islam. They are certainly adept at providing catalogues of western aggression to make the point, but it should be stated that these examples of aggression are adduced as *illustrations of the essential enmity*, which Muslims are bound by the obligations of faith to resist, rather than causes themselves of a war “that has been going on ever since the existence of Faith and Disbelief”<sup>48</sup> or one

which has persisted right since the combat between the two sons of Adam, where the Cain the evil one slew his righteous brother Abel.<sup>49</sup>

As a universal and perennial conflict, Al-Maqdisi is forthright in his definition of jihad. All the categories of ‘enmity and hatred to the enemies God’ apply equally to Muslims considered apostates and to the infidel proper. The conditionalities imposed on declaring and waging jihad or the argumentation on appropriate timing are brushed aside, since “Jihad is continuous with every group of the Muslims, and the person can wage Jihad by himself or with the leaders be they pious or corrupt until the Day of Judgment ... It is not stopped due to the absence of the Imam or the extinction of the Islamic state.”<sup>50</sup>

Jihad is a valid act of worship that is permissible any time. It is the school that educates the believers and it is the symbol that flourishes and yields the Broad Base that many Sheikhs await for and impose as a condition for the initiation of Jihad. Hence, it must not be interrupted nor should the Ummah ignore it.<sup>51</sup>

For al-Maqdisi, not only is Jihad permanently permissible, it actually defines the life of the true Muslim. It fills the first of the three definitions of faith: action, statement and intention, and it becomes the believer's core expression of his belief.<sup>52</sup> As an 'act of worship' it need not lead to results for its justification, the mere inflicting of injury suffices:

Any fighting done for the sake of inflicting injury upon the enemies of Allāh is a righteous, legislated act ... even if it does not directly lead to consolidating the Muslims in the land. Furthermore, those who undertake the fighting are – God willing – to be considered among the benefactors, whether the defeated losers like it or not.<sup>53</sup>

Life is lived for struggle. Inflicting injury upon the enemy, al-Maqdisi asserts, 'is one of the purposes and goals of life for a Muslim'. The Prophet himself, he maintains, held that this was one of

the great goals for which they were created, the greatest of which are: worshipping Allāh Alone, and granting victory to His religion by inflicting injury upon the enemy. *So for this reason the Muslim is alive.*<sup>54</sup>

The words reverberate with the language of the totalitarian revolutionary. Indeed the parallels with other manifestations of the totalitarian mindset are unmistakable – the action for action's sake, the living of life as a permanent state of struggle, the cult of death and the hero. The call to constant war, the cult of the *shahīd* ('martyr') who 'loves death more than life' recall the shared features of the anti-culture that Umberto Eco calls *Ur-Fascism*, and replicate closely the impatience of the Ur-Fascist hero to die and the disdain for pacifism, which is "trafficking with the enemy, an evil since life is permanent warfare and is the collective duty."<sup>55</sup>

### *The significance of al-Maqdisi*

In the work of al-Maqdisi we can see encapsulated the rise and consolidation of Jihadi-Salafism. His writings are the most interesting of the jihadist ideologues since they present the 'pure Jihadism' free of the *hizbī* admixture of the *Sahwa*. They take us from Salafism as an anti-contamination evasion ideology, to Salafism as a protection against contamination (focusing primarily on removing the internal tumor of rationalism and modernity), to Salafism as a reactivation of Islam's prerogative to supremacy, not only within its own house but as a definer of reality.

Al-Maqdisi may therefore justly be considered an ideological pioneer for radical Islam for the contribution he has made to the fundamental building blocks upon which all jihadist thinkers depend. First of all, he laid the theological foundation for the concept of *al-walā' wal-barā'*, rooting it seamlessly within the religious tradition of the Salafist schools and establishing the doctrine as an indispensable confirmation of the Islamic profession of faith.

Secondly, he applied this concept to the already existing doctrines on opposing the ruler that 'rules through un-Islamic laws' promoted by thinkers such as Sayyid Qutb and Muhammad Farag. However, in doing so he added considerable subtlety to the logic of *takfīr* which the Egyptian authors failed to provide, thereby rendering the concept more robust against criticism. Having established the doctrine he was the first prominent Islamist scholar to delegitimize the House of Saud as unbelievers on the basis of their belief and their political behavior.



Thirdly, his contribution was to enrich the highly political act of *takfīr* with strong doctrinal legitimization, which allowed him to communicate his vision of violent transformation as something which was the very opposite of a modernist ‘revolution’. In its place he offered a new, old state styled as the logical product of the Salafist ‘return to roots’, and presented as the natural consequence of the basic beliefs of Islam – the *Millat Ibrāhīm*. In this way al-Maqdisi made a direct link between the religious demands of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* and its political application in *takfīr*. The success of this formula in co-opting the Salafist-minded pietistic reformers to militant jihad may be gauged from the difficulties now experienced by the Saudi regime in their de-programming initiatives and the unchecked spread of the Jihadi-Salafist vision across the Muslim world.

Al-Maqdisi’s influence on the course of jihadism is indisputable and demonstrated by the respect accorded to him by the most conspicuous of jihadist men of action (such as al-Zarqawi) and for the documented evidence of his iconic standing among active *mujāhidīn* both in the Muslim world and in the West. His work is the most influential of all the jihadist ideologues as the ‘contemporary godfather of Islamic extremist ideology’.<sup>56</sup>

His life and work illustrate some very important points. That is, that the ideology of jihadism is not weakening, but remains robustly immune to military reverse, and will long outlast the present wave of jihadist-inspired violence represented by groups such as al-Qaeda. Their apparent internal cogency, particularly with respect to the denigration of democracy and its aspirations to pluralism, tolerance and mutual respect, also illustrate very well the observation made earlier, that the failure of Arab and Muslim intellectuals to indigenize modernity within the fabric of the Islamic heritage has left the task to gifted, but fundamentally flawed intellects. The Saudi commentator Mshari al-Dhaydi puts across this cultural tragedy succinctly:

The truth is that ... al Maqdesi ... represents a striking example of the depth of the intellectual malfunction from one side, and the political one from another, under which Muslim generations have been living for the past century and a half.<sup>57</sup>

### *The Salafist framework for Jihadism*

What the foregoing illustrates is that there is no ‘radical departure’ from Salafism represented by the Jihadi-Salafist current, but rather a logical progression and working through of the implications of Salafism from the outset. We have seen the progression: the all-encompassing demands of the ‘Community of Abraham’, *al-walā’ wal-barā’*, the redefinition of disbelief to extend to areas not previously encompassed by religious faith, the concept of new ‘idols’ the corollary of *takfīr* of the ruling systems and legislators, and consequently the legitimacy of waging jihad against them. Taken from a historical viewpoint, the implications of this approach – jihad against disbelievers and insufficiently Muslim believers – would not have raised eyebrows to Ibn Taymiyya or to the founders, for instance, of the Wahhabi state. Taken a-historically (which is the essential impetus of Salafism in its belief in a permanently valid paradigm that stands outside history) the current validity of the doctrine still ought not to present any surprises, certainly not to Salafist Muslims.

This is the cultural underpinning, the doctrinal trail that was blazed well before the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the subsequent entry into the public domain of names such as Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri or Abu Mus‘ab al-Zarqawi. Nor has the religious doctrine subsequently ‘intensified’ due to the influence of these figures. If anything it has become more circumspect in its application. Bin Laden was actually initially reluctant to take the radical line on the Saudi regime as espoused by al-Maqdisi,<sup>58</sup> and only later authorized dissemination of his work among al-Qaeda members. A reading of works such as those of al-Maqdisi is enough to demonstrate that the enmity to

the West is a natural constituent of its religious conceptions, and is not dependent on western political behavior. All of the ingredients determining jihadism were set in place before the rise to prominence of al-Qaeda and, as we have seen, draw their authority from classical sources. Nor should it be imagined that the anti-western hostility demonstrated by pietistic and jihadist Salafists is in some way a secondary feature, a product of the ‘anti-colonial’ struggle. This is an important element to stress, since we have seen that Salafist culture considerably pre-dates the colonial enterprise. If there is a ‘reaction’ it is only on the intellectual, rather than political, front and the friction here derives from differences on both the religious and epistemological levels.

### *The Saudi Salafist Spectrum*

The gravitational pull of ‘back to roots’ Islam, its rejection of the accumulated nuancing of tradition to adapt to a *changing* world order, has taken us to this point. We should take a step back now and view the spectrum that Salafism presents in Saudi Arabia, in order to establish the origins, continuities and points of divergence of Jihadism with respect to this spectrum. Naturally, when it comes to defining a doctrinal and intellectual tendency, with all its myriad permutations and individualisms, any summarized scheme will appear hopelessly simplistic. But in order to avoid joining in with the internal polemics of Salafist groups, all of whom configure the spectrum to reflect their own central and ‘correct’ position,<sup>59</sup> it is best to reduce the scheme to four broad areas: *Da‘wā Salafists*, *Acquiescent Salafists*, *Activist Salafists* and *Militant Salafists*.

Under the first category of *Da‘wā Salafists* may be grouped those whose primary focus is on the creed, on purifying it of anomalies and weak textual authorities, and on refining the methodology of law based on this rigorous and exclusively textual approach. They strive to restore the Islamic identity and moral fabric of society and challenge the state’s monopoly on religion and the official religious establishment’s interpretive authority. They reject the participation of politics of any kind, or the believer taking any interest in it, on the grounds that this is not the proper function or priority of the true believer, and is in fact a perversion of the faith. Conspicuous in this group are figures such as al-Albani and the Ahl al-Hadīth.

Under *Acquiescents*, one may place the *Establishment Salafists* (‘Wahhabists’) whose doctrinal positions in theory run counter to the secularizing mechanisms of the state<sup>60</sup> (alliances with infidel, lack of *al-walā’ wal-barā’* and the incomplete application of Sharī‘a) but who nevertheless support the Saudi government, confining most of their energies to placing conditions and brakes on manifestations of modernity on social mores. Similarly politically acquiescent are the *Madkhalī* and *Jāmī* Salafists who are independent of the establishment Salafists, oppose their close relationship with the government and the compromising effect this has on their doctrinal positions, but who nevertheless advocate obedience to the constituted authority that the government represents. They base their argumentation on Hadīth which specifically mandate this position.<sup>61</sup> Their apolitical, piety-focused position has gained them much support from the Saudi regime, who see in them a non-establishment ideological counterweight to the Islamist opposition currents of the Islamic Awakening.<sup>62</sup>

In the politically *Activist* category of Salafists the balance of faith and acts changes somewhat. Significantly for its implication for the development of jihadism, the *Activists* argue against the *Da‘wā* and *Acquiescent* Salafī position that his profession of the creed alone makes the Muslim a member of the Saved Sect, arguing that *īmān* (‘faith’) has been defined by the Qur’ān, the Sunna and the consensus of *al-salaf* as consisting of statements and actions, inwardly and outwardly. Hence, these believers disagree with the *Da‘wā* activists’ preoccupation with individual behavior at the expense of

what they consider more important issues of government corruption and social injustice. Contrary to the cold tolerance or antipathy to political participation expressed by these latter, they see the contesting of elections as the best means to achieve power and redress the inequities of the state. These standpoints on political activism and *‘aqīda* mark them off from the preceding categories of Salafist and, from the point of view of the latter, call their Salafist affiliation into question. *Da‘wā* and *Acquiescent* Salafists are particularly suspicious of the *hizbī* (‘organized political party’) groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Hizb al-Tahrir, whom they regard as out and out *mubdi‘īn* (‘innovators’) and hence having no part in the Salafist endeavor to return to authenticity.

Finally the *Militant* category of Salafism, represented by the Jihadi-Salafist current (*al-salafiyya al-jihādiyya*), takes the logic of the *hizbī* groups to its direct action conclusion. But they also significantly re-intensify the doctrinal underpinning. In common with the *Da‘wā* Salafists, the militants condemn the cultural ‘defeatism’ of the *Activist Salafists* in that the latter’s employment of religion in the political process only validates the process of accommodating Islam to modernity, which is the reverse of the Salafist logic. Instead, the Jihadists focus more intensely on the position that contemporary society has returned to a state of *jāhiliyya*, and that therefore *taḳfīr* is not only permissible but an essential operational tool. We can see here how the Jihadist Salafists selectively combine the activism of the third category with the doctrinal intransigence of the first to initiate the new formula: militant political activity to defend the purity of the faith against any form, or any degree, of challenge, in any place, and perpetrated by any agent, infidel or Muslim, ruler or ruled.

### *Salafism and the rôle of Saudi Arabia*

Some important points emerge from the foregoing that throw light on the position of Saudi Arabia in the rise and development of Salafism, and its trajectory from pietism to activism. While the earliest modern established manifestation of Salafism was the *Tawhīd* movement of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, as we have seen Salafism is not an Arabian invention, neither in the doctrinal sense nor in the sense of a movement. Saudi Arabia imported pan-Islamic Salafist currents before it exported them, and by so doing the basic Wahhabi focus on *tawhīd*, *shirk* and *bid‘a* were armed with stronger defensive muscles through the work of the Salafi Hadīth scholars. However, the process of the progressive shift in Salafist doctrines from pietism to activism was incubated by Saudi Arabia, for the lack of strong alternatives to compete effectively with the country’s mainstream religious orthodoxy. As the intensifier logic of purism spawned activism, the regime’s attempts to head this off were implemented only at the cost of acquiescing to more purism, and therefore more intensification.

The Saudi Arabian regime has also been a pivotal factor in the accelerated growth of Salafism in the Muslim world and beyond, through its financial patronage and support in the publishing and educational spheres of works which are on the highly conservative wing of the doctrinal spectrum. It has considerably advanced the profile of Wahhabist Salafism abroad through its generous oil revenue-funded establishment of schools, charities, mosques and youth centers, with the aim of altering the balance of influence over other denominations of Sunni Islam.<sup>63</sup>

The regime in Saudi Arabia clearly benefits from this promotion of their state Salafist ideology, since the country secures thereby the image of ultimate yardstick of ‘Islamicness’ of a society and ultimate arbiter and champion of Sunni ‘orthodoxy’. The spread of Wahhabism in the sub-continent is a good illustration of this policy and its effects. Generous patronage of Indian Muslim organizations and individuals has advanced the profile of like-minded groups such as the Ahl-i Hadīth, notwithstanding their numerical insignificance. The effect has been to narrow down such doctrinal differences as exist, or gloss over them altogether. Competition between the Deobandis and the Ahl-i Hadīth for Saudi patronage has resulted in both these groups seeking to stress their closeness to Saudi Islam and to the

Saudi regime. The result is a narrowing of view and increased tensions with indigenous Muslim trends, as the assumption implicit in Wahhabism – that all other forms of Islam are, by definition, aberrant or even ‘anti-Islamic’ – embeds itself in the soil.<sup>64</sup>

Salafism cannot be considered to be solely an arm of Saudi policy simply because the movement has its own momentum and spectrum of views, many of which are antagonistic to the regime and its claims to legitimacy. It is a phenomenon capable of progressing under its own momentum, with or without help from Riyadh. But given the Saudi regime’s dependency for its legitimacy to rule upon its ideological foundation, and the need for the regime to appease rather than dictate, it is unlikely to be able to, or willing to, respond significantly to calls to limit its support for radicalizing currents of Salafism domestically or abroad.

The difficulty of this position accounts for some of the difficulties that Saudi Arabia’s religious establishment has had in countering al-Qaeda on a doctrinal level, and its inability to exploit what should be a major weakness in the ideology of al-Qaeda, its *takfīr*. Effectively the state *Muwahhidūn* have been employing this *takfīr* doctrine for all of its existence and still actively promote it – the recent demolition of tombs associated with the Prophet and early Companions being but the latest example of this, since they constitute focuses of ‘un-Islamic’ interest and devotion to material, mundane objects. The trajectory of Salafism in Saudi Arabia turns out to be a case study in the logic of riding a tiger which ultimately cannot be controlled.

### *The Salafist paradox: innovation and rigidity*

Debates on the role of Salafism in the rise of extremism focus on the usefulness of the term to denote what is in fact a spectrum of doctrinal positions. Scholars identify as many as eight ‘schools’ of Salafism distinguished by their methodologies.<sup>65</sup> But there are common characteristics of this wing of Islamic thought that make this collective consideration valid.<sup>66</sup> These characteristics are based on the impulse for reform. The formula for this reform might at first glance appear progressive – the repudiation of fossilized tradition – but as detailed above the reform is modern only in its chronology, and its essence is to seek a return to a perceived earlier state of authenticity.

In fact there is an odd Janus-like quality to the position of Salafism as a reform movement. Salafists are not traditionalists in the sense of ‘conservative’ or ‘old-fashioned’, for the simple fact that their program for renewal is not a drive to return to old, pre-modern ways, which are strenuously repudiated. Salafism’s claim is actually to free Islamic legal thought from the shackles of tradition by licensing personal *ijtihād*. However, this *ijtihād* endeavor is given even less room to maneuver than was granted some of the traditional schools of law. Of the four categories of *usūl al-fiqh* (the source areas for legal argumentation) – *Qur’ān*, *Hadīth*, *Ijmā’* (consensus) and *Ra’y* (reasoning and analogy) – the third is heavily circumscribed and the fourth is expelled altogether.<sup>67</sup> It is therefore a revolutionary breaking of the shackles of tradition, but one which is in favor of an even tighter series of intellectual bonds. Here is where the essential uniqueness of this type of revolution resides. It is essentially an act of leap-frogging over a millennium of traditional authority and scholarship. Only this leap-frogging is not forwards, but backwards, to a reputed earlier (and therefore greater) authority, a modern initiative aimed at out-antiquing the antique.

Under the influence of this impulse the trajectory of Salafism reform has proved itself repeatedly to be regressive. It begins with reforming Islamic polity to re-establishing it as precondition for everything else, and in this way an originally creative renewal impulse aimed at liberating thought from the bonds of time-worn obscurantism, inexorably transforms under an authenticity impulse into resistance to cultural pluralism, into doctrinal conservatism, chauvinism and social authoritarianism. We saw

this in the steady progression to ever more conservative positions at the beginning of the Salafist reforms of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the relatively liberalizing reform drive to update Islam to modernity under Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad ‘Abduh gave way to Muhammad Rida’s Arab chauvinism, anti-liberal authoritarianism, doctrinal narrowing and Islamic supremacism.

Salafism cannot therefore be understood as an attempt at ‘modernization’ in the sense of reviewing the intellectual legacy in the light of contemporary, more rationalist approaches, since Reason is irrelevant to their reforms. As we have seen in the development of the modern Salafist movements, the primary rallying point is textual authenticity, that is, the *pedigree* of the starting points, not their content. This emphasis is consistent with the instinct on the part of the traditionalist schools throughout Muslim history to oppose the challenges of rationalism. In the Middle Ages this challenge came from the inroads made by Hellenistic philosophical thinking with the development of scholasticism, in the modern era the enemy bearing the challenge is the legacy of colonialism and the forces of globalization.

As the challenges to its starting point increase, or morph into new forms, the Salafist response is only to dig deeper into the paradigm, and become more, not less, conservative. Indeed, the perception of threat and siege from the West is becoming all the more intensified as intellectual tensions between the Islamic and non-Islamic world views have ceased to be an issue of the intelligentsia.<sup>68</sup> Increased migration and communications has meant that shoulder-rubbing of Muslims with alternative systems, non-Muslim or secular, has become a more widespread and personal matter than the conduct of a detached administrative system or the behavior of the upper class *élites*.<sup>69</sup>

The intellectual endeavor of the Salafist reaction focuses strongly on a retrenchment back onto the indisputably ‘Arab’ science of Hadīth scholarship championed by the *Ahl al-Hadīth*. This is a field of endeavor that demands two fundamental authenticities: the mastery of the Arabic language and (as mentioned earlier) the massive accumulation of genealogical data required to validate the *sanad*, the transmission chain of authorities. In neither of these disciplines is Reason a threatening foe since in this arena Reason is not employable. If fact, Reason is considered to constitute a veritable threat to the field, since its only operative room would be the *content* of the Texts thereby evaluating, on the basis of what could only be human-originated standards of common sense, what might turn out to be words, dispensations and the behavior of a divinely-guided Messenger. Since Salafism focuses its reform closely upon the science of the Hadīth, these two features – anti-rationalism and Arabic linguistics – form a distinguishing feature of the mentality, stiffening its resolve to erect excluding borders.

There is, of course, a striking paradox in this approach, and it is a paradox which inevitably yields priority to in-built intellectual mechanisms which add to, rather than subtract from, rigidity. Indeed, rigidity in doctrine forms the essence of its claim to authenticity, and such an emblematic position demands a correspondingly rigid mental absolutism. This authenticity pre-occupation acts to preclude intellectual curiosity and appreciation of diversity, no matter how much these diversities are painted as all essentially ‘Islamic.’ The constant application of the Islamic referent, to pass everything through the filter of the early Muslim community on the grounds that its template is eternally true, clearly spells that the authenticity instinct will win out every time against curiosity. It also in its own way promotes a form of anti-intellectualism and antipathy to scholarly learning, given that the requirement is to deal directly with the source texts of revelation every time they seek an Islamic judgment or opinion.<sup>70</sup>

The interest in the pristine model is less often taken as a source of inspiration and more often manifests itself in an anti-innovation (*bid‘a*) instinct outlawing any practice without Qur’ānic or Sunna precedent,<sup>71</sup> while the *imitatio Prophetæ* instinct at times descends to absurd banalities of fetishism: the true believer is to use three fingers when eating, drink water in three pauses with the

right hand while sitting, ensure that he grows a beard<sup>72</sup> and see to it that the *thawb* does not extend below the ankle.<sup>73</sup> Much of this is aimed at maintaining the visual distinction of the Salafists from the *jāhiliyya*, but the effect of the conscious repudiation of the neighbor's ways is to inculcate a thoroughgoing cultural xenophobia. In fact, Salafism in essence is a 360° instinct of xenophobia, whose polar terms *walā'* ('loyalty') and *barā'* ('renunciation, disavowal') have a pedigree that goes back to the Qur'ān<sup>74</sup> and further to the oscillation of loyalty and disavowal that characterized the ancient Arabian tribal political culture. The result of this xenophobia is a movement that is modern only by chronology, one that is hamstrung by its closed off intellectual arena and distinguished by the absolutism of its thought.

We have seen this in the Salafist attitude to *ijtihād*, the independent deduction of legal precepts direct from scriptural authority without recourse to the filter of inherited scholarship. At first consideration this *constructionist*<sup>75</sup> interpretation of the Texts would appear to be a process of intellectual liberation, the individual standing before the divinity, as it were, without an intermediary. It conjures up the image (if one permits the Christian Protestant terminology) of a type of 'priesthood of all believers'. All the same, a parallel fear of intellectual anarchy permeates the thinking: those less intellectually capable of the exercise will need to tap in the learning of others, even if this is no longer the repudiated *taqlīd* so much as *ittibā'*, the 'following' of advice given by a *mujtahid* complete with the detailed proof (*dalīl*) that underpins the opinion.<sup>76</sup>

But we should beware of seeing evidence of enlightenment or a thoroughgoing revival of religious thought in this Salafist advocacy of individual *ijtihād*. Nowhere in this emblematic Salafist call for independent deduction is there space for creative re-interpretation, for notions of rationality, progress or the adaptability of Islam to new circumstances. One should remember Ibn Hanbal's manifesto:

I do not engage in speculative theology and I hold that there is nothing to be said other than what is in God's Book, the traditions of His messenger or those of his companions and their followers.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the Salafism is to follow Ibn Taymiyya's lead in expelling the work of the scholastics, to establish that the era of speculation as to God's purposes is over. As such, there is no purpose to any theological discussion with non-Salafist Muslims because, quite simply, there is no more theology. To see life in Salafist *ijtihād* is wishful (and usually western) thinking.<sup>77</sup> Salafism therefore cannot be a productive movement for reform. There are no solutions to be found in moving further away from the reality of the present, and it is therefore impractical to seek allies among Salafists, as some have tried (see above *Part I* p.13) in the task of reconciling Muslim disaffection with western environments. Under the influence of the prime instinct to avoid contamination, the guy-ropes can only be drawn tauter, the responses ever more tense.

### *The unchecked advance of Salafism*

To date the self-contained intellectual and religious edifice that Salafism offers is proving to be a successful formula. A clear indication of the transformation role of Salafism, and in particular of its Saudi backers, is the progressive 'Arabization' or 'Wahhabization' of Muslims across the Muslim world, as peninsular Arab dress codes, the proliferation of the full covering *niqāb* for women and the beard for men, replace long established traditional indigenous styles from Morocco to Malaysia. Despite their ambiguous attitude to politics Salafists have been elected to the Kuwaiti parliament and are leading the resistance to any change they believe threatens traditional Islamic values, and are becoming more strongly represented in opposition groups across the Middle East. Saudi funded Salafist messages are proliferating on the media in countries such as Egypt, where the middle class and the urban poor are responding to its message of pietistic renewal, encouraged by government

regimes anxious to out-Islamize the Islamist opposition platforms by supporting groups that are politically quiescent. Liberal critics of these developments warn that these governments are playing with fire – that Salafism creates an environment that breeds extremism. In an article for the *Wall Street Journal*<sup>78</sup> one of the most authoritative of these warning signals was given by former president of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid, who provided a detailed outline of the attraction of Salafism to Muslims:

- an aggressive program with clear ideological and political goals
- immense funding from oil-rich Wahhabi sponsors
- the ability to distribute funds in impoverished areas to buy loyalty and power
- a claim to and aura of religious authenticity and Arab prestige
- an appeal to Islamic identity, pride and history
- an ability to blend into the much larger traditionalist masses and blur the distinction between moderate Islam and their brand of religious extremism
- a full-time commitment on the part of its agents and leadership
- a network of Islamic schools that propagate extremism
- the absence of organized opposition in the Islamic world
- a global network of fundamentalist imams who guide their flocks to extremism
- a well-oiled ‘machine’ established to translate, publish and distribute Wahhabi/Salafi propaganda and disseminate its ideology throughout the world
- the provision of scholarships for locals to study in Saudi Arabia and return with degrees and indoctrination, to serve as future leaders
- the ability to cross national and cultural borders in the name of religion
- Internet communication
- the reluctance of many national governments to supervise or control this entire process.

This success of Salafism and its particular Wahhabist form in claiming the center ground for Islamic identity, if unchecked, will have serious implications for inter-faith relations globally and for Muslim communities outside Muslim majority environments. Traditional scholars such as Abd al-Hakim Murad have indicated the problem with this movement:

The principle is totalitarian; it’s highly judgemental; it has no track record of dealing with other sorts of Islam or unbelievers with any kind of respect. If you are outside the small circle of the true believer you are going to hell and, therefore, you should be treated with contempt.<sup>79</sup>

No less cause for concern are the longer term political implications of the Salafist ideology. These may not be immediately obvious at first glance, since most Salafis repudiate the mechanisms of political and civic organisation. Their self-image is primarily one of religious and social reformers, and it would seem that their activism would limit itself to personal piety and religious communal order. But there are inherent dangers in their reform program too. We have seen that the constituent parts of Salafism as a religious movement may be summed up as follows:

- the quest for ‘authenticity’
- the location of that authenticity in the model of the early Muslim community
- the interpretative filter of the Islamic referent
- the rejection of the modern intellectual order
- the rejection of traditional symbols and structures of doctrinal authority.

These constituents are highly significant since their influence has been to reduce the spectrum of Islamic belief and culture by shedding those elements that have naturally accumulated from over a millennium of practical, pragmatic human experience. The core left behind is therefore inevitably pre-

primed against compromise and adaptation, and towards abrasiveness and tension. With its elaboration of new parameters for Islamic identity, and the rejection of the modern social order, Salafism cannot long avoid the implications of this tension. The lesson of the 1979 Meccan siege is that politics is not the only route to militancy; extreme puritanism or apocalypticism may just as easily turn violent.

### *The gravitational pull towards activism*

As the historical example of Saudi Arabia has demonstrated, Salafism sooner or later manifests itself in a drift towards activism as the pietistic requirements of the community are seen to be ill-served by the political and social structures of the state. There, the gravitational pull of the Salafist intellectual challenge to orthodoxy inevitably released energies and tensions that targeted the legitimacy not only of the religious establishment, but also that of the *political* system that the religious hierarchy was upholding. The drift is constantly in operation and effects even those, such as the Madkhali Salafists, who are most reconciled with the Saudi regime. This school was heavily promoted by the Saudis in the early 1990s as a means to split the ranks of the *Sahwa*, since its doctrines were highly compatible with the Wahhabi establishment positions: unconditional submission to religious and political authority, and condemnation of clerical politicization. However, a splinter group formed under the influence of Abū al-Hasan al-Maʿribī, who adopted positions closer to the politicized *Sahwa* clerics – generating a storm of anxious refutations from the state Salafists which reflected their deep-felt fear of defection and subversion. This appears to be a common phenomenon in Salafist thought. Developments within the movement tend to be highly divisive since Salafism’s characteristic of absolutism leaves little room for intellectual and ideological breadth. New splinter groups therefore tend to form and, when these emerge, are generally more radically activist in nature.

The ideology of Salafism therefore presents a conundrum for social cohesion and security. Although the doctrine is primarily focused on doctrine and Islamic practice, it exhibits at least the language of what one might term ‘proto-politics’ – a preparatory or preliminary pattern for the formation of a true Islamic state.<sup>80</sup> The pull of activism is inexorable. Despite pietistic Salafist disapproval of overt political activity, the course of events in Saudi Arabia illustrates the trajectory well:

- Salafist purism clashes with social currents seen to be alien to Islam
- Salafist Muslims, however, are discouraged from dealing with politics and enjoined to confine themselves to reforming other Muslims in their faith and practices (*al-Albani* and *Ahl al-Hadīth*, the early *JSM*)
- But reform requires an organizational challenge in order to effect reforms to the state’s policies that are seen as contradictory to Islam (the *Sahwa*)
- Since the state itself is failing to do this basic task, it is no longer legitimate and must be removed for a more legitimate one (*Juhayman al-Utaybi*).

If rebellion against a Muslim authority is troublesome the line of argumentation towards *takfīr*, it appears, can be argued successfully step by step:

- Muslims must demand the conditioning influence of *tawhīd*
- But *tawhīd* demands that one shuns that which compromises it
- That which compromises it is a state that is not administered fully through Sharīʿa law
- No Muslim regimes administer fully through Sharīʿa law, they are therefore all *kāfir*.



From there the extension to jihad is but a logical step:

- Shunning the forces antagonistic to *tawhīd* cannot be confined to outright infidel, but must embrace the behavior of others which, while it may not constitute *kufr*, nevertheless weakens the faith (the doctrine of *al-walā' wal-barā'*)
- Part and parcel of the process of *al-walā' wal-barā'* is to hate that which obstructs or opposes the primacy of the True Faith (thus blurring the lines between the doctrines of defensive and offensive *Jihād*)
- Not only is the modern state *as such* illegitimate, so also is the international system that is built upon it; it must therefore be overthrown, wherever and in whatever form it manifests itself – in its national and supra-national institutions, in the systems of international law, aid agencies and human rights organizations (this has been the avowed position of jihadist groups such as *al-Qaeda*).

The acceleration of Salafism in Saudi Arabia is therefore a case study in the logic of the relationship of this doctrinal trend to jihadism. The process of shift from pietism to activism to militancy occurs entirely *within* the Salafist framework.

### *An illusory opposition to Jihadism*

Defenders of the Salafists who argue that these constitute the most effective opposition to Jihadists are therefore confronted by contradictory facts on the ground. Here is where the problem of isolating jihad out of the equation lies. For instance, non-Jihadi Salafis opposed the efforts of Afghan veterans against the Soviet Union by insisting that the priority should be a focused effort to promote Salafi thought before launching a jihad. The task, they argue, is to ensure a proper disassociation, doctrinally and intellectually, from the surrounding *jāhiliyya*, the state of ignorance of the true faith. Only once this is achieved, following the model of the Prophet, can the next phase of expansion be legitimately entered into.

But this position vis-à-vis Jihadism is fundamentally weak. In practice, the Jihadi-Salafis 'out-authenticate' the pietistic Salafis. Their argument is simply that if 'authenticity' is the aim, the first Muslim community was historically in the stage of formation and fighting for its existence and its expansion, that is, a society at war, and therefore the model for emulation must include the characteristics of a society of *mujāhidīn*. It takes very little to drift the focus correspondingly towards 'faith in action,' and into this intellectual universe jihadism enters seamlessly and with the advantage of logical consistency. The Jihadi-Salafis can simply claim that they are re-awakening the political and militant dimension of Islamic belief ('The Neglected Duty'), as the only effective means to halt the political and cultural decline of the Muslim world. The pietistic Salafists have no satisfactory answer to this argument, which leaves its members separated from their jihadi subset by little more than a paper door.

For all the respect that Jihadi-Salafists must accord to pietistic Salafist scholars such as Shaykh Muhammad al-Albani, who emphasized that their common role model, the Prophet Muhammad, "spent the first half of his message making *da'wā* (proselytism) and he did not start it with *jihād*,"<sup>81</sup> the Jihadi-Salafists appear to have no difficulty dispensing with this argument. They argue that the *da'wā* period is past, and that an exclusively pietistically construed stage of *hijra* (emigration) as a personal religious endeavor is no longer justified.<sup>82</sup> The *hijra* should rather be seen as a geographical, physical action (such as Bin Laden's *hijra* to the hills of Tora Bora<sup>83</sup>), one that matches closer with the actual *hijra* of the Prophet and the Companions, which coincided with the fight to form and defend a new community. The antagonism of the nominally Muslim but de facto *jāhili* (ignorant, or

originating in the pre-Islamic era) regimes, along with the implacable Crusader-Zionist enmity, calls immediately for an appropriate response – *jihād*.

*The Jihadists' claims to being the true Salafists*

The school of Jihadi-Salafists therefore do not suffer doctrinal isolation. They openly identify themselves as adherents to the Salafī *manhaj* and use well-known Salafī identity markers such as *Ahl al-Hadīth* (people of Hadith), *al-Tā'ifa al-Mansūra* (the Group Granted Victory), *al-Firqa al-Nājiya* (the Saved Sect), and “those who follow the creed or way of the Sunna and Jamā'a.” As a result, the arguments which they use to support the use of violence cannot be easily expelled since they conscientiously follow the Salafī *manhaj* and devote considerable effort locating the religious evidence needed to legitimize particular conflicts, actions, and decisions”.<sup>84</sup>

For instance, if the Muslims are the standard-bearers of Truth, and the invincible power of Truth comes from Almighty God, how is it that they are not dominant in the world? Why would the winning formula entrusted to the Muslims not prevail? Why is the Muslim world so weak? The problem is stated and resolved using a new, religious political vocabulary:

- If we have the Truth, why did we fail? *We no longer behave like true Muslims*
- In what way are we no longer true Muslims? *We have abandoned a fundamental tenet of Islam*
- What is that tenet? *The jihad, the 'Neglected Duty' which we must restore.*

There is therefore no aberration from the prototype for victory. All that is needed is to reinstate the authentic Islam. This position, as Salafists, is axiomatic – the difference is the methodology of that authenticity. For the *mujāhidīn* the jihad verses of the Medinan suras of the Qur'ān should be evidence enough to convince them of the greater authenticity of their militancy, but did not the Prophet explicitly warn against the future consequences of shunning violence?

The Messenger of God said: the nations are about to flock against you [the Muslims] from every horizon, just as hungry people flock to a kettle. We said: O Messenger of God, will we be few on that day? He said: No, you will be many in number, but you will be scum, like the scum of a flash-flood, without any weight, since fear will be removed from the hearts of your enemies, and weakness (*wahn*) will be placed in your hearts. We said: O Messenger of God, what does the word *wahn* mean? He said: love of this world, and fear of death.<sup>85</sup>

*The 'Hadīth of Thawban'*

The Hadīth fits the jihadi self-image perfectly: they are the authentic Muslims, the ‘Saved Sect’, surrounded by a majority of Muslims who fail to fulfill their appointed role as defenders of Truth. The *mujāhidīn* are therefore doing nothing more than leading the Muslims in restoring Islam’s destiny to rule and to define.’ Quietism, henceforth, is no longer an option. As the infidel love life, so the *mujāhidīn* must always love death.

There is therefore some considerable difficulty in maintaining a permanent separation between Salafism and Jihadi-Salafism, given that the larger part of the ideology is shared in common. Facts on the ground attest to this difficulty. We can get an indication of this by observing the progress of Salafist thought in the Muslim majority countries. For instance, a spate of arrests in 2008 in Morocco was

... targeted against the Salafiyya Jihadiyya group, blamed for the 2003 Casablanca and 2004 Madrid bombings. Their origins go back to the 1980s when the then King Hassan II allowed Saudi Arabia to spread Wahhabism in order to counter the growing tide of political Islam in Morocco. What this

produced was simply a new generation of radical preachers schooled in Saudi Arabia, who transformed themselves into militant radicals.<sup>86</sup>

One former jihadi, Tawfik Hamid, illustrates unequivocally the role of Salafism in pre-priming for the jihadist mindset:

Salafi indoctrination operates through written words and careful coaching. It is enormously seductive. It rapidly changed me into a jihadi. Salafi sacred texts exert a powerful influence on millions of Muslim followers throughout the world, and terrorism is only one symptom of the Salafi disease ... A peaceful interpretation of Islam is possible, but the Salafi establishment is currently blocking moderate theological reform. The civilized world ought to recognize the immense danger that Salafi Islam poses; it must become informed, courageous and united if it is to protect both a generation of young Muslims and the rest of humanity from the disastrous consequences of this militant ideology.<sup>87</sup>

oo00oo

It has been necessary to dwell at some length on Salafism's role as midwife to Jihadism, because it is not yet established among policy-making circles that the Salafist movement presents a problem for the pluralist state. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. It is also important to establish the fundamentally *religious* reasoning that has underpinned the jihadist movement right from its beginnings in order to challenge the common perception that jihadism represents an opportunistic exploitation of religious symbols and vocabulary to mask an ideology that is at root political, modern and ultimately western. The foundation stones of jihadism are none of these things. Jihadism roots itself in an entirely authentic strain of Islamic thought, and the cultural framework in which it esconces itself is Salafism. It is from Salafism's narrowed cultural and doctrinal spectrum that jihadism trains its muscles against all other religious currents within and outside of Islam, against competing political currents of socialism, nationalism or pan-Arabism, against the intellectual currents of liberalism and secularism, even the epistemological currents underpinning modernity.

The *mujāhidīn* therefore have a number of in-built advantages, principally that they represent a radical movement which is cosily embedded within the broader fabric of Islamic law and doctrine. They also capitalize on the groundwork laid by Salafists towards rejectionism and social exclusivity, and the drive to protect themselves from cultural contamination, by extending the culture of alienation beyond the social, doctrinal and intellectual levels, to the *political* level in the elaboration of the new identity of the Islamic *Umma*. The internally argued cogency of al-Qaeda's radical diagnosis is a major source of its ideological strength and resilience, they flourish in the current hiatus of doctrinal authority – and enjoy considerable freedom of action due to the present period of doctrinal free-for-all, where there is no single Sunni Islamic authority influential enough to outlaw their ideology effectively.

In this doctrinally anarchic climate, they can claim the highly effective mantle of 'authenticity' to draw the Islamist sympathizer inexorably to their militant ideology, placing at the centre an authentic Islamic tenet – Jihad – that had become a 'Neglected Duty.'<sup>88</sup> The Jihadists are therefore more akin to an internal tumor, rather than a foreign infection or some extraneous outgrowth. If the *Salafiyya-Jihādiyya* differ from most of their doctrinal cousins in the manner in which they operationalize the Salafist rejection, choosing the path of militant violence, it is the Salafists, whether they wish to recognize it or not, who furnish the jihadists with the doctrinal antechamber.

# Notes

---

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> They derive this principle from the following *hadith*: “The people of my generation are the best, then those who follow them, and then those who follow the latter.” (Bukhari 3:48:819 and 820 and Muslim 31:6150 and 6151). The entire period assumed by this therefore extends from the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad (c. 610) to about the time of Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s death (855 CE), each generation understood as approximating some eighty years.

<sup>2</sup> The only exception to this would be the Shi’a and Isma’ili Muslims, because their understanding of Islam is based on the assumption that, in addition to the Prophet Muhammad, a series of divinely guided Imams who appeared subsequently over a period of two and a half centuries, and one of whom is due to re-appear, are also religious authorities. This accounts for why the dynamic of authority in Shi’ism is in some ways less retrospective than that of Sunni Islam.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Abrahamic’ faiths have experienced difficulty with the point at which the divine makes contact with the mundane. For the Christians it was the controversy over the nature of Christ, anecdotally summed up as the differentiation caused by the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet, the *iota* subscript: □μοῦδοσιος or □μοιοδοσιος (is the Son of the *same*, or *similar*, substance with the Father)? For the Muslims it was whether the Qur’ān is created or co-eternal with God. The rationalist Mu’tazilī school held that ‘the Speech of Allah Most High is created, invented, and brought into being’, while at the other end of the scale the textual literalists held the extreme position that ‘the alphabetical characters, the materials on which they are written, the colors in which they are written, and all that is between the two covers [of the volumes of Qur’ān] is beginning-less and pre-existent.’

<sup>4</sup> “The partisan of speculative theology (*‘ilm al-kalām*) will never prosper. No one is ever seen who has studied speculative theology, but that there is a corrupt quality to his mind.” Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Jami’ Bayan al-‘Ilm* 2/942, ed. Abu al-Ashbal, Dar Ibn al-Jawzi 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Hassan Mneimneh, ‘The Islamization of Arab Culture,’ *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* vol. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Jabarti (1753-1825) at the time of Napoleon’s invasion, observed that the proper order of things as divinely ordained had been overturned.

<sup>7</sup> Although some Salafīs do rely on the jurisprudence of one of the four famous *madhāhib*, (Ibn Taymiyya was a Hanbalī and Ibn Kathīr a Shāfi‘ī) the division of Muslims into separate legal schools is considered to be unacceptable. By definition the True Faith can only admit of one correct interpretation. The decline in Islam’s fortunes is directly ascribed to the uncritical adherence or imitation (*taqlid*) of a particular school. Truth is to be found in the divine sources, not in the texts of mortal jurists.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of Ibn Taymiyya’s relationship with Sufism see ‘On Tasawwuf and Sufism’ in M. Hisham Kabbani: *The Repudiation of ‘Salafi’ Innovations* (Kazi, 1996) p. 354-366.

<sup>9</sup> The term *jāhiliyya* is a key indicator of Salafism’s primary motivation: the pre-occupation with authenticity. From its original meaning rooted in history (the ‘Age of Ignorance’ that pre-dated the coming of Islam), Mawdudi developed the use of the term to one which can claim perennial, permanent validity. It is now a state denoting Muslims – and non-Muslims – who stand outside the community of the Righteous Ones.

<sup>10</sup> The city is subsequently renamed *Madīnat al-Nabī* — ‘the city of the Prophet’, and is now known today as Medina.

<sup>11</sup> One of the argumentations for this is the Qur’ān’s *Sūrat al-Kahf*, the ‘Chapter of the Cave’, which discusses the *Ashāb al-Kahf* (People of the Cave) to give the lesson that every Muslim must follow the example of the youths of the cave who defiantly resisted every effort of that godless world to break their faith: “Hence, now that you have turned away from them, and from all that they worship instead of Allah, take refuge in that cave: your Lord-God will shower His mercy on you and take care of your affair for you with comfort and ease!” (XVIII,16).

<sup>12</sup> On the use of this term, see above: Part I, *A Note on Terminology*, p.5.

<sup>13</sup> Within two years of the founding of the alliance the *Muwahhidūn* openly declared jihad against other Muslims, culminating in 1802 with the occupation and destruction of Karbala (in present-day Iraq), a centre of Shi’a Islam. It should also be noted that the movement, though initially a reaction to Ottoman colonialism in the Arab world, later found its chief propagators espousing its dialectics as a response to Western intellectual colonization.

<sup>14</sup> It is important, however, to underline that the religious ideology of the Saudi state does not mean that the majority of Saudi nationals share it. It is estimated that 15 to 20 percent of the population are Shi’ites, and of the Sunnis, up to 60 per cent do not support the Hanbalī austerity of the establishment *Muwahhidūn*. The ideology is an imposed one. Nor, as a state supported ideology, is it bounded by the national borders of the Kingdom. While the ideology is the only officially recognized Islam in Saudi Arabia, it is also influential in Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, and has a substantial following in Yemen.

<sup>15</sup> Although some may dispute the position of Abd al-Wahhab’s *Muwahhidūn* in the spectrum of true Salafism, many Salafists do consider him to have been the first figure in the modern era to push for a return to the religious practices of *al-salaf al-sālih*. Abd al-Wahhab’s works (especially *Kitāb at-Tawhīd*) are still widely read by Salafis around the world today.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bāz held the post of Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia from 1993 until his death in 1999.

<sup>17</sup> For a highly informative analysis of the relationship of the Saudis to the Ahl-i Hadīth, see Yoginder Sikand, ‘Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection,’ in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 27, Number 1, 2007, pp.95-108.

<sup>18</sup> Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Safdar al-Husayn, an Iranian-born political activist and Islamic nationalist, was one of the founders of Islamic modernism and an advocate of pan-Islamic unity. His ideology has been described as a welding of 'traditional' religious antipathy toward unbelievers 'to a modern critique of Western imperialism and an appeal for the unity of Islam'.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), a student of al-Afghani and also considered to be one of the founders of Islamic modernism. He was the head of the religious law courts in Egypt and did much to popularize the term 'Salafist.' His work heavily influenced the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>20</sup> In his treatise *Risālat at-Tawhīd* Muhammad Abduh argued that humans can in principle know good and evil by reason alone, even if they fail to do so without the guidance of Revelation.

<sup>21</sup> *Historical Development of the Methodologies of Al-Ikhwaan Al-Muslimeen And Their Effect and Influence Upon Contemporary Salafite Dawah*, Part 8, Salafi Publications, March 2003, p.5.

<sup>22</sup> Contemporary Salafists are liberal in their disparagement of these reformers as 'Freemasons', 'Freethinkers' 'neo-Mu'tazilis,' 'Rationalists' and 'Modernists.' See *Historical Development of the Methodologies*, p.5.

<sup>23</sup> Qur'ān, XII,40.

<sup>24</sup> *Historical Development of the Methodologies*, p.5.

<sup>25</sup> Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam, Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, Routledge, 1998, p.123.

<sup>26</sup> Nazih Ayubi, *op. cit.*, p.124.

<sup>27</sup> The famous *Muqaddima* (or 'Introduction' to his work *Kitāb al-'Ibar*) by Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406) which seeks to analyze and explain the causes for the advance and decline of states.

<sup>28</sup> On this, see Hassan Mneimneh, 'The Islamization of Arab Culture,' in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* vol. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Sayyid Qimny, فلسفة القيم ... نحو إصلاح القيم ('*The Philosophy of Values ... Towards a Reform of Values*') on [www.alhewar.org](http://www.alhewar.org) July 22, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> "A patriarchal society ruled arbitrarily by the tribal sheikh can in no way accept the idea of a political party. If the idea is imposed on it, it will result in every tribe or ethnic group having a party... When these tribe-parties rise to power, they will... put together a government with their allies [only] – and, ultimately, they will distribute the assets of the homeland amongst themselves [alone]. Slowly and gradually, they will take the place of the state." Mohamed el-Houni, *The Arab Dilemma in the Face of the New American Strategy*, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Classified as a weak Hadīth but nevertheless representative of the mindset.

<sup>32</sup> The *UN Arab Development Report* (2003) provides evidence that this lack of indigenization has not changed, or has indeed deteriorated. It states that this question of internalizing knowledge acquisition "represents the largest challenge facing the contemporary Arab world, which has not succeeded yet in indigenising knowledge as a social institution and an authentic cultural dimension." The Report goes on to argue that "lessons learned from this history of indigenous and acquired knowledge during the early Arab scientific and linguistic renaissance were not enlisted when the modernization of science became a central question in the Arab world. Attempts at scientific modernisation by Muhammad Ali and Gamal Abdel Nasser during the 19th and 20th centuries respectively neither drew nor built upon this legacy. Instead, leaders turned to imitating what the West offered. Neglecting this heritage ... an approach that still dominates the minds of officials and reformist intellectuals today -- was a missed opportunity, historically, and likely created a significant *impediment to establishing a knowledge society in the modern Arab world*" (authors' italics). See *UNDP Arab Development Report 2003, Building a Knowledge Society*, pp.42-44.

<sup>33</sup> Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi responding on [www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net) to a question posed: *How does Islam view secularism?* June 2002.

<sup>34</sup> بقى الدين قائما، في ظل سلطته القوية الغنية المتمكنة، وبقيت جيوشها "من الرهبان والراهبات والمبشرين والمبشرات"، تعمل في مجالاتها المختلفة، دون أن يكون للدولة عليهم 'Islam and Secularism Face to Face'), section: 'The Justification for the Appearance of Secularism in the Christian West'. See [www.qaradawi.net](http://www.qaradawi.net).

<sup>35</sup> Salman bin Fahd al-'Awdah, *Islam and Secularism*, pp.5-6 at [www.islamtoday.com](http://www.islamtoday.com).

<sup>36</sup> Shaker al-Nabulsi: *Arab thinkers' fear of the West*, [www.arablife.org](http://www.arablife.org), August 2007.

## Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> Salafism is distinguished for its anti-*madhhabism*, that is, the distrust of relying upon the *fiqh* methodologies of any of the four legal schools (*madhāhib*) of Sunnism: the Hanafis, Mālikīs, Shāfi'īs or Hanbalīs.

<sup>2</sup> Shaykh Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914-1999), at one time a leading figure in the Saudi religious establishment and popularly known as the *muhaddith al-'asr* ('the Traditionist of the [present] Age'), that is, the greatest Hadīth scholar of his generation.

<sup>3</sup> Hadīth science is therefore the "science of men" ('*ilm al-rijal*'), which appraises the morality, and thereby the reliability of the transmitters (also known as the "science of critical study and just appraisal" - '*ilm al-jarh wa-l-ta'dil*').

<sup>4</sup> أنهم يعبدون العقل من دون الله تعالى .. فيقدمون العقل الفاسد على النقل الصحيح، ويُعارضون النقل الصحيح بالعقل الفاسد المريض .. والسياسة الشرعية بالسياسة الوضعية !! غرهم علم الكلام والفلسفة والمنطق الذي تربوا عليه .. فقدموه على علم الكتاب والسنة .. فحاضوا فيما لا يجوز الخوض فيه .. وسموا تحريفاتهم وشذوذاتهم - الناتجة عن خوضهم الباطل - احذر ثقافة المهزومين، Shaykh Abu Baseer al-Tartousi بالتأويل والعقليات .. لتروج على عوام الناس وبسطانهم !! November 2000.

<sup>5</sup> So named from the principal proponents of the apolitical (or perhaps, more accurately, politically conformist) view – Shaykhs Rabī' Ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī and Muhammad Amān Ibn al-Jāmī, whose oppose Sayyid Qutb's *takfir* of other Muslims and remain acquiescent on the



<sup>29</sup> Al-Maqdisi has little difficulty in enumerating the infractions, but is on less sure ground in the *Millat Ibrāhīm* when defending against Qur'ānic precedent for co-operation with the infidel, such as Joseph's employment by the Pharaoh, Muhammad's protection from polytheistic relatives, the refuge sought by the early Muslim community from the Ethiopian Christian emperor or the participation of the Prophet in the al-Fudhul alliance, and he attempts to establish a middle ground between open enmity and evidence of 'persistent' disbelief as opposed to passive support from infidels, which would have been motivated by tribal rather than ethical obligations.

<sup>30</sup> The term used is *tawāghūt* (plural of *tāghūt*).

<sup>31</sup> الكواشف الجلية 147.

<sup>32</sup> See الكواشف الجلية p.47. Abd al-Wahhāb would have been referring at the time to the forces of the Egyptian potentate Muhammad 'Alī Pāshā during his anti-Wahhabi campaign in the Hijaz 1811-1818.

<sup>33</sup> الكواشف الجلية 143-150.

<sup>34</sup> Qur'ān, VIII,39.

<sup>35</sup> The Hadīth quoted by al-Maqdisi is Bukhari, 88,178: . إلا أن تروا كفراً بواحاً عندكم من الله فيه برهان .

<sup>36</sup> من قال لا إله إلا الله وكفر بما يعبد من دون الله حرم ما له ودمه: 34,35. The reference here is to Hadīth Muslim I, 143-4. الكواشف الجلية

<sup>37</sup> ليأتين . عليك أمراء يقرّبون شرار الناس ويؤخرون الصلاة عن مواقيتها فمن أدرك ذلك منهم فلا يكون عريفاً ولا شرطياً ولا جابياً ولا خازناً . By 'postponing the prayer from its appointed times,' al-Maqdisi is at pains to underline that this refers to prayer being delayed according to the pleasure and convenience of the ruler.

<sup>38</sup> الكواشف الجلية 146. The reference is to Qur'ān XXVIII,40.

<sup>39</sup> Qur'ān XXVIII,40.

<sup>40</sup> Secret service agents are particularly singled out for Hellfire by al-Maqdisi, basing his argument on Hadīth Bukhari 5709 and Muslim 105: لا يدخل الجنة قتات: (\*'Informers do not go to Paradise').

<sup>41</sup> Al-Maqdisi is particularly focused on the rôle played by scholars that support the regime: "We believe that if the scholar gives the oath of fealty to the Taghūt who legislates, or the Kāfir ruler ... or helps him, allies with him, or gives legal verdicts according to his [the rulers] desire, then he is a Kāfir apostate." هذه عقيدتنا ("This is Our 'Aqīda'), Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2003, p.39.

<sup>42</sup> الكواشف الجلية p.149.

<sup>43</sup> وكذلك رسول الله لو أنه سكت في بادية الأمر عن ... التعرض لآلئهم وعبهيا ولو أنه "حاشاه" كتم آيات البراءة منهم ومن دينهم ... ومعبوداتهم ... لجالسوه وأكرموه وقرّبوه ... ولما احتاج إلى هجرة *Millat Ibrāhīm*, 17-18.

<sup>44</sup> *Millat Ibrāhīm*, 56. وهو أعلى مراتب إظهار العداوة والبغضاء لأعداء الله.

<sup>45</sup> A. Azzam, translation: *Defense of the Muslim Lands, The First Obligation After Iman*, by 'Brothers in Ribatt', p.12. الصراع بين الحق والباطل وذلك من أجل صلاح البشرية وسيادة الحق وانتشار الخير

<sup>46</sup> This interpretation of the conflict is equally a feature of al-Qaeda's ideology which is usually underplayed by western analysis, which tends to consider Bin Laden's language of faith as the material of opportunistic slogans to rally support.

<sup>47</sup> Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, n.d. Translation by Abu Mohammad al-Maleki, November 2004.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Maqdisi, *The Dogs are Barking but the Caravans are Moving On*, Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, n.d. p.6.

<sup>49</sup> لمسار الصراع منذ تقائل ولدا آدم عليه السلام وقتل الشريبر منها (قائيل) أخاه الصالح (هابيل) Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, 196.

<sup>50</sup> هذه Al-Maqdisi, والجهاد ماض مع كل طائفة من المسلمين، وللمرء أن يجاهد وحده مع الأمراء بزهم وفاجرهم إلى قيام الساعة ... ، لا يعطله فقد إمام ولا اندعام دولة الإسلام. هذه عقيدتنا ("This is Our 'Aqīda'), Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2003, p.40.

<sup>51</sup> Interview text for *al-Nida* published with *This is Our 'Aqīda*, At-Tibyān Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. P.18.

<sup>52</sup> Jihadists commonly cite Prophetic precedent for this. A frequently cited Hadīth on this is *Muslim*, Book 20, 4721: لا تزال عصاية من امتي : "A group of people from my Umma will continue to fight in obedience to the Command of Allah, remaining dominant over their enemies. Those who will oppose them shall not do them any harm. They will remain ill this condition until the Hour overtakes them."

<sup>53</sup> : فالقتال الذي يكون الهدف منه التكيل بأعداء الله ... حتى وإن لم يؤدي عاجلاً إلى تمكين للمسلمين إلا أنه عمل صالح مشروع ، وأهله إن شاء الله من المحسنين ، رضي بذلك : Al-Maqdisi, *Reflections on the Fruits of Jihad* (Section Twelve: *Between fighting for injury and fighting for consolidation*, Minbar al-Tawhīd wal-Jihād, May 2004, p.56. Translation of text available serialized at At-Tibyān Publications: *From the Fruits of Jihad, A Balanced View*.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Maqdisi, لتحقيق المقاصد العظيمة والجليلة التي خلقوا من أجلها وأن من أجلها هذا المقصدان : عبادة الله وحده ونصرة دينه بالكتابة في أعدائه ، فمن أجل ذلك يحيى المسلم ، وقفات مع ثمرات الجهاد ، *ibid*, p.57.

<sup>55</sup> In particular the categories: Action for Action's Sake, Life as a Permanent Struggle and The Cult and Death of the Hero. See Umberto Eco: *Fourteen Ways of Looking at a Blackshirt*, in New York Review of Books, 22 June 1995, pp.12-15.

<sup>56</sup> Mshari al-Dhaydi noted how debates in 2005 with Jihadist detainees in Saudi Arabia underlined that "that the most influential factor, from a doctrinal and intellectual perspective, is the figure and writings of Abu Mohammed al Maqdesi", and that groups such as the followers and successors of the UK-based al-Muhajiroun listed him as among their "sheikhs and mentors." M. al-Zaydi, "The Contemporary Godfather of Islamic Extremist Ideology," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 25 2006. The point has also been conclusively proven by the study undertaken by the scholars at the CTC at West Point and their ground-breaking publication *The Militant Ideology Atlas*, CTC November 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Mshari al-Dhaydi, 'The Contemporary Godfather of Islamic Extremist Ideology.'

<sup>58</sup> Nibras Kazemi points out that al-Maqdisi's work *The Patent Proofs of the Disbelief of the Saudi State* was considered too radical by Osama bin Laden when it was first written in 1989, and was not disseminated by al-Qaeda even during the late 1990s. N. Kazemi, 'A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi' in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol.II, 62 and note 15.

<sup>59</sup> Jihadi Salafists are no different in this respect. Cf. Abu Bakr Naji, in his *Management of Barbarism*, configures it thus: 1) the current of Jihadi Salafism (*al-salafiyya al-jihadiyya*), 2) the current of Sahwa Salafism (*salafiyyat al-sahwa*), 3) the current of the Brethren, 4) the current of the Brethren of Turabi (Sudan) and 5) the current of Popular Jihad (e.g. the Hamas movement, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Moro Liberation Front).

<sup>60</sup> "The Governments of Muslims have openly adopted secularism as the alternative to Islam. In almost all of the constitutions of these governments it refers to Islam as 'one of the sources of legislation' as opposed to 'the one and only source of legislation' in accordance with the basic principles of Tawheed ... Saudi Arabia is the only state, at this time that has not yet openly declared secular laws as the constitution. The Saudi constitution still specifies Islamic shariat as the only source of law. However, some of the Kingdom's opponents contest this stand." Dr. Tariq Abdelhaleem, *The Counterfeit Salafis, Deviation of the Counterfeit Salafis from the Methodology of Ahlul Sunnah Wal-Jama'a*, Dar Alarqam, November 2004, p.16 (and note 13).

<sup>61</sup> Examples of this are the Ahādīth of Muslim (*Kitāb al-Imāra*): "Whoso obeys me obeys God; and whoso disobeys me disobeys God. Whoso obeys my commander obeys me, and whoso disobeys my commander disobeys me" [20/4519]; "A commander (of the Muslims) is a shield for them. They fight behind him and they are protected by (him from tyrants and aggressors). If he enjoins fear of God, the Exalted and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a (great) reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, it redounds on him." [20/4542].

<sup>62</sup> Tensions between the Activist and Acquiescent Salafists are marked. The website [salafipublications.com](http://salafipublications.com) features an interesting confrontation by activists at a lecture given by Shaykh Muhammad Amān al-Jāmī in April 1997 ([www.thenoblequran.com/sps/audio/GRV070028.ram](http://www.thenoblequran.com/sps/audio/GRV070028.ram)).

<sup>63</sup> Stephen Schwartz notes that although no more than 40 percent of Saudis domestically hold to the Wahhabist ideology, "unfortunately, the U.S. is the only country outside Saudi Arabia where the Islamic establishment is under Wahhabi control. Eighty percent of American mosques are Wahhabi-influenced, although this does not mean that 80 percent of the people who attend them are Wahhabis ... Wahhabi agents have sought to impose their ideology on all attendees in mosques they control." See 'The Good & the Bad, Stephen Schwartz on Islam and Wahhabism' in *The National Review*, Nov. 18 2002.

<sup>64</sup> On this, see Yoginder Sikand, Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection, in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Volume 27, Number 1, 2007, pp.95-108.

<sup>65</sup> Tariq Abdelhaleem gives these as: the Jami or Madkhali Group; the Albani Group; the Academic Salafis; the Conventional Shaikhs of the Salafiyyah; the Salafi "Ikhwan"; the Salafi Ahlul Sunnah Wal-Jama'a; the Moderate Ahlul Sunnah Wal- Jama'a and the Jihadis of Ahlul Sunnah Wal-Jama'a. See Tariq Abdelhaleem, *The Counterfeit Salafis, Deviation of the Counterfeit Salafis from the Methodology of Ahlul Sunnah Wal-Jama'a*, Dar Alarqam, November 2004, pp.16-39. (and note 13).

<sup>66</sup> 'Salafism is a term that is heuristically useful because it is a marker of a distinctive form of engagement with the world, and one that is identifiable as such to many Muslims.' (B. Haykel, 'On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,' in *Global Salafism, Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer, Hurst, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> In this respect it is reminiscent of similarly anti-rationalist movement of Fideism, one of the Christian millenarian movements of the Middle Ages. In its most radical form, this school held that the scriptures are enough with the motto: *sola scriptura* ('faith alone').

<sup>68</sup> The debate over the work of Taha Hussein, whose writings on pre-Islamic poetry cast doubt on a source of linguistic interpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith, was argued, done and dusted decades before the accelerated rise of political Islam in the 1970s and did not engage the passions of the Egyptian masses. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri (*Global Islamic Resistance Call*, p.556) calls Taha Hussein the first Muslim to openly deny the divine origin of the Qur'an, "following the starting point of doubt which he inherited from Descartes."

<sup>69</sup> Samuel Huntington noted the interesting phenomenon of the de-westernization and indigenization of élites in many non-western countries, attributing it to the effect of the increasing interactions between peoples of different civilizations, in that processes of economic modernization and social change "enhance increased civilization-consciousness," and are "separating people from long-standing local identities." Huntington also highlighted how, "In most religions the people active in fundamentalist movements are young, college-educated, middle-class technicians, professionals and business persons," that is, the people most likely to experience, or be affected directly by, the globalization of ideas and cultures (Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, 72 no 3, 1993). The move towards increased civilization-consciousness from this period was stressed by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, who divides the history of the Salafist movement (the 'Islamic Awakening') into three broad stages: First phase: *Birth* (1930-1965); Second phase: *Differentiation* (1965-1990) and Third phase: *Crises* (1990-2000). See al-Suri, *Global Islamic Resistance Call*, Chapter 5.

<sup>70</sup> The tendency to demand the direct exegesis with the sources ( العمل بالدليل ) is sarcastically summed up by a traditional Muslim scholar's definitions of Salafism as "an unsuccessful flight from complexity" whereby "to make progress, we need to start at the beginning every day." Abd al-Hakim Murad, *Contentions VIII*, nos. 4,25.

<sup>71</sup> In this the Salafists follow the sentiment expressed by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: "The war against innovators is greater than the war against the polytheists."

<sup>72</sup> This appears to be a particular Salafist preoccupation. Cf. *Is Keeping Beard That Important?* on [http://www.allaahuqbar.net/important\\_issues\\_of\\_islaam/beard.htm](http://www.allaahuqbar.net/important_issues_of_islaam/beard.htm): "Shaving the beard results in a series of Islamic violations: Disobedience to Allah; Disobedience To the Messenger; Deviation from the Appearance and Guidance of the Messenger; Deviation from the Way of Believers; An Imitation of the Disbelievers; Changing Allah's Creation without Permission; An Imitation of Women; Shaving the Beard Contradicts the Pure Fitrah (Nature)" There are a number of works dedicated to this topic as a religious requirement. Cf. Muhammad al-Jibali: *The Beard between the Salaf and Khalaf*, Al-Kitaab & as-sunnah Publishing, n.d. The work by Abu Muhammad al-Juday: "دراسة حديثية للنصوص المرورية في حكم اللحية من الأحاديث النبوية وأثار الصحابة والتابعين: (*Hadīth Study on Texts related concerning the Beard, in the Prophetic Hadīth and the Works of the Sahāba and the Tābi'ūn*)" February 2004, extends to 153 pages.



<sup>73</sup> Termed *isbāl* ‘draping’: [www.allaahuakbar.net/important\\_issues\\_of\\_islaam/clothes.htm](http://www.allaahuakbar.net/important_issues_of_islaam/clothes.htm). “The way for a believer to wear the lower garment is to have it halfway down his shins, and he is not guilty of sin if it comes halfway between that and the ankles, but whatever comes lower than that is in hell ... On the day of resurrection, Allaah ... will not look at him who trails his lower garment conceitedly” (Abu Dawood).

<sup>74</sup> In the Qur’ān the language of tribalism manifests itself at *Sura V*, 51, where Jews and Christians “are friends [*awliyā*’, from the same root as *walā*] of each other.” The negative counterpart, *barā’a*, is the first word in *Sura IX*: “Freedom of obligation [is proclaimed] from Allah and His Messenger, toward those of the idolaters with whom you contracted mutual alliances.” The terms ‘freedom of obligation’ (or ‘immunity’) and ‘disavowal’ are related in the sense that the subject is freed of the duty of protection, that is, that God and His Prophet disavow the obligation. On this see J. Wagemakers, ‘The Transformation of a Radical Concept: *al-wala’ wa-l-bara’* in the Ideology of Abu Muhammad al-Maqqisi,’ in *Global Salafism, Islam’s New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer, Hurst, 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Taking the term to mean the active process wherein learners are actively constructing mental models and theories of the world around them.

<sup>76</sup> Haykel notes the internal inconsistencies of this standpoint: “Opponents of the Salafis ridicule this argument by insisting that an unschooled Muslim is on account of his ignorance incapable of understanding the proof, and that the Salafis are proposing is highly idealized in that it pre-supposes the existence of mujtahids around every corner, an impossible scenario given the difficulty in attaining this exalted rank of scholarship. It also assumes that the great learning embodied in the established schools of law, which is after all the legacy of the eponymous founders of the schools, is worthless.” Bernard Haykel, ‘On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,’ in *Global Salafism, Islam’s New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer, Hurst, 2009.

<sup>77</sup> “Such associations with *ijtihad* emerge from modernist and modernizing Muslim intellectuals and western scholars, many of whom have no training in Islamic law, and who have injected unprecedented meaning into this legal principle, something which is not shared by Salafis.” Bernard Haykel, ‘On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action,’ footnote 28.

<sup>78</sup> Abdurrahman Wahid: ‘Right Islam vs. Wrong Islam, Muslims and non-Muslims must unite to defeat the Wahhabi ideology’, *Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2005.

<sup>79</sup> *Dispatches - Undercover Mosque* broadcast on 15 January 2007, Channel 4 TV, United Kingdom.

<sup>80</sup> The preparatory proto-politics is equally shown by that most strategic and practical of Jihadist thinkers, Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, who devotes sizeable chunks of his oeuvre to the moral and doctrinal training of the new ‘Muslim Man.’ See, for example, the section on ‘Theory for a Complete Education for Global Islamic Resistance’, Part II, Section C, ‘Morals and Education in Conduct’.

<sup>81</sup> Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Bani [d.1999] argues that instead of waging war, Muslims should use the early model of the Prophet “and train the people to understand the correct Salafi doctrine, which is void of myths and heresies, and to teach them good morals, so that we can emerge with a broad base that embellishes this religion for human beings.” Wiktorowicz. Q, *The New Global Threat, Transnational Salafis and Jihad*, Rhodes College.

<sup>82</sup> The discrediting of this conception began with the failure of Shukri Mustafa’s *Takfir wal-Hijra* exercise, where supporters decamped to caves along the Nile in an abortive attempt to re-establish an Islamic community set apart from the *jāhili* Egyptian state.

<sup>83</sup> The Jihadi Salafists view Usama bin Laden’s migrations to Sudan and Afghanistan through this lens. The Afghanistan phase was rationalised by jihadist ideologues by identifying the country as having reverted to *jāhiliyya* under Communist rule, and presenting the appropriate conditions for *hijra* among the communities rebelling against this rule. It would thus provide a ‘solid base’ (*al-qā’ida al-sulba*) for the future society. From this interpretative weft of ideology, Al-Qaeda drew much of its aura and prestige.

<sup>84</sup> Wiktorowicz. Q, *The New Global Threat, Transnational Salafis and Jihad*, Rhodes College.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. The use of this Hadīth in Muhammad Farag, الفريضة الغائبة (*The Absent Obligation*): ويقول صلى الله عليه وسلم (يوشك الأمم أن تتداعى عليكم كما: تنداعى الأكلة إلى قصعتها فقال قائل: أو من قلة نحن يومئذ يا رسول الله؟ قال: بل أنتم كثير، ولكنكم غثاء كغثاء السيل، ولينزع عن الله من صدور عدوكم المهابة منكم وليتدنن في قلوبكم الوهن فقال قائل: وما الوهن يا رسول الله؟ قال: حب الدنيا وكراهية الموت)

<sup>86</sup> T. Renard, Moroccan Crackdown, *Terrorism Focus*, July 23 2008.

<sup>87</sup> Tawfiq Hamid, ‘The Development of a Jihadist’s Mind,’ *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol.5.

<sup>88</sup> This argument is put forward strongly by Muhammad Farag in *Jihad: The Absent Obligation*.