

**Jordanian Salafism: A Strategy
for the “Islamization of Society”
and an Ambiguous Relationship with the State**

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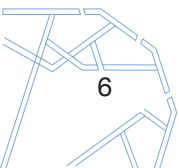
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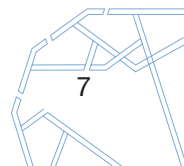
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Introduction

The Conservative Salafist¹ movement is one of the three most prominent movements in the Jordanian, grassroots-based Islamist scene. The other two movements include the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jihadi Salafist movement, with the latter representing the radical face of the Salafist *da'wa*.²

Conservative Salafism is not an Islamist “organization” in the classical or hierarchical sense. It is rather closer to a socio-religious current that is loosely structured around the relationships built between their sheikhs³ and their students or *atba'an* (disciples or followers). Conservative Salafists organize and commit by way of religious instruction, classes, seminars, discussions, joint activities and their own particular scholarly approach or intellectual paradigm. They are further distinguished by a publicly declared refusal to engage or participate in political parties, partisan activities or any other institutionalized political framework, as this is considered contrary to their scholarly approach, intellectual paradigm and school of thought.

Conservative Salafism began to form a presence in Jordan in the early 1980s when one of the most globally renowned sheikhs from the Salafist *da'wa*, Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani⁴, settled in Amman. The circle of Sheikh al-Albani's followers or *muridi*⁵ began to proliferate and a network expanded, based on Sheikh al-Albani's form of religious *da'wa* and his *fatwas*,⁶ not only inside but also outside Jordan through his and his followers' writings and books.

The Conservative Salafist school of thought is characterized by a strategy of direct engagement with its surrounding socio-religious culture and environment. Indeed, Salafists, in general, consider their “mission” as one that rectifies peoples’ beliefs, and of purging these beliefs of “*ibtida’a*”⁷ or “innovations” that are derived of and based on false, incorrect modernized ideas, notions and behaviors (which are not of the true religion).

In a society such as the Jordanian society, which historically had not come into contact with the Salafist *da’wa* as much as it had with Sufism and mysticism – and, Sufism had a large presence, even inside official and state-sanctioned religious institutions –, one could expect a violent confrontation to take place between the Salafists and their historic enemies, the Sufists. And, this is what would take place – the Salafists would wage a proverbial war with the Sufist school as they contended for a place in the socio-religious “spheres of influence” in Jordanian society.

The struggle with Sufism would not be the only war the Salafists would wage. Without a doubt, their principle battle was always and remains with the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood has always traditionally enjoyed an extensive presence and network of communications in Jordan’s mosques and popular base. The Brotherhood’s religious and socio-political discourse has always had a clear presence, which has been communicated and entrenched by way of their imams, preachers and missionaries, and even university teachers and technocrats who have come to have an active presence within the organization.

From its earliest manifestations in Jordanian society, the Salafist *da’wa* declared its explicit disagreement with and opposition to the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, its methodology and its school of thought. The Salafist opposition to the Muslim Brotherhood originated in the stance declared in Sheikh al-Albani’s intellectual discourse, which opposed any form of political participation and engagement – even if that political participation

was Islamist in form or in structure. Indeed, he rejected political participation not only in the form of partisanship but also in any other form deemed part of the political system that operates within the framework of the modern nation-state. Indeed, Sheikh al-Albani unequivocally and publicly attacked the religious beliefs and tenets of other Islamist groups, as he believed these groups or parties contradicted and violated – in theory, principle and practice – the beliefs, tenets and *manhaj*⁸ set forth by the *Salaf al-Saleh*.⁹

On the other hand, and on a more pragmatic level, the Conservative Salafists came to an unofficial agreement with the state; a sort of “marriage of interests” took place between the two sides. This arrangement partly emerged from the state’s recognition of certain benefits that the declared political position of the Salafists provided. Firstly, the Conservative Salafists outwardly rejected any form of involvement or engagement in the political process. Secondly, they called into question the idea of “an opposition” within the prevailing system of governance. And, finally, they had formally declared that pledging allegiance and obedience to the governor was obligatory by Islamic law (as the ruler or the legal guardian of the state). All of the afore-mentioned was notwithstanding the war the Salafists were waging against other Islamist organizations inside mosques and other social and cultural pulpits, which indirectly assisted successive Jordanian governments in their efforts to check the influence of these other movements, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, at first, and the Jihadists, later.

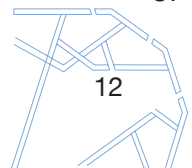
Moreover, the official state apparatus benefited from the *fatwas*, lectures, sermons and discourse of the Conservative Salafists, which always supported and thus served the interests of the state and its official policy line. With time, the Salafists were able to wrestle the (Islamist) religious discourse away from the exclusive ownership of all the other Islamist movements – all of whom stood in opposition to the government. In consequence, the prevailing Islamist discourse was soon divided into two, three

and four positions. This division in the domestic Islamist arena actually permitted the government to gain a competitive edge over other Islamist groups, especially in light of its own official religious institution's paralysis when it came to confronting rival and oppositional religious currents.

Obviously, these Salafist "services" were not gratuitous. In return, the Salafists enjoyed extensive shelter and protection from the state's security, and benefited from a much larger measure of freedom to conduct their activities in mosques, schools, universities and elsewhere than any other Islamist group. They were protected by the government from prosecution or accountability, even with regard to the funding that flowed from the Arab Gulf states towards the Salafist effort, printing their books and in support of their diverse range of activities.

However, there was a dilemma present in this implicit agreement between the state and the Salafists. Indeed, it was a relationship based on a precarious, functional sort of opportunism because, at times, the Salafist discourse was markedly conservative and extreme. And, the government could not adopt or endorse this kind of socially and religiously conservative discourse without embarrassing itself, making the relationship between the two sides controversial, ambiguous and amorphous. For example, the Salafists took a conservative stand on the issue of what they considered proper attire, such as the Arab *thawbs* (a plain white cotton gown) for males and the *khimar* or full veil, where only the eyes are visible, for females. They were against political and intellectual plurality and took a harsh stance against the fine arts, literature, music, songs, any mixing of the sexes as well as many other "manifestations of modernity and modern society".

Meanwhile, in the absence of any clear-cut, precise definition and consensus on what Salafism was itself, a struggle broke out between the "Conservative" school and all the other Salafist tendencies. There was an ongoing debate on the very entitlement of "Salafist" with both the Conservatives and the Jihadis claiming



they were the only legitimate school that was representative of Salafist thought, of Salafist history and of Salafist politics – with each accusing the other of deviating from the righteous path.

The paradox lies in that Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani, the spiritual father of Conservative Salafism in Jordan, was by far one of the most influential and most active figures in forming and in instituting the term “Salafism” in the Islamist domain. He was also a critical figure in insisting and in emphasizing the importance of distinguishing this particular school from any other, to the point that many came to call Jordanian Salafists and the followers of Sheikh al-Albani as “Albanist Salafists”.

However, in the early 1990s and with the emergence of the other face of Salafism – the Jihadists – spawned by the spiritual father of Jihadi Salafism, Abu Mohammad al-Makdessi,¹⁰ both currents began to spar over the name of “Salafism” and who had the sole right to carry it.

Despite the serious struggle between these two currents and the very different political postures both held with regard to how one should deal with “modern” governments and regimes, they agreed on particular points of reference and emblematic figures, such as certain historically-influential religious scholars and jurists that had a presence in both currents’ intellectual and religious discourse. These figures included Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, al-Shawakani and Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab amongst others.

If the Conservative Salafists and the Jihadi Salafists are considered as representing two opposing sides of the Salafist school of thought in Jordan, today, we stand before numerous other, diverse forms of Salafism in the Arab world that go well beyond these two major Jordanian currents.

Undoubtedly, there is not one specific form of Salafism but rather many “Salafisms”. Historically, there is the Revivalist current or the “Enlightened” Salafists, which include the Reformist and Nationalist Salafist movements.¹¹ These movements traditionally represent two of the most prominent schools of Salafism in the Arab world. Reform Salafism and Nationalist Salafism were initiated by the Islamic scholars Mohammad Rashid Rida and Abdel Hamid Ben Badis, respectively, until such time that the Conservative Salafists, or the followers of the *da’wa* of Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab, began to emerge and spread in the early 1970s (particularly in Saudi Arabia).

Conservative Salafism has been supported by oil money whether that support was earmarked for its global “missionary” institutions and structure or its religious publications, taped recordings and communications needs and network. An extensive network of individuals also exists, which works to spread the Conservative Salafist *da’wa* during the *hajj*¹² and the *umra*,¹³ through the active mediation of those working in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab Gulf. These individuals have been imbibed with the education, teachings and ideas of Conservative Salafism through books, lessons, sermons, preaching and taped recordings. All of the latter is notwithstanding the fact that the Saudi state has explicitly and openly adopted the Salafist creed and school of thought, in its conservative form.

The influence of Saudi support for Conservative Salafism has had a large impact on the rise and spread of this current in Jordan, especially in light of the very close geographic proximity of the two countries. This influence has been further reinforced by the large number of Jordanians working in the Arab Gulf, who have become saturated with and influenced by these ideas and views. Adding to the above are the thousands of scholarships provided for Jordanian students to attend Saudi universities and the ease with which communications are carried out between both countries. Certainly, all of the afore-mentioned has greatly facilitated the crossover of this school of Salafism in its religious

ideas, discourse and jurisprudence into Jordan and across vast segments of the Jordanian population. However, in an environment bristling with frustration, anger and disappointment with successive governments, and in a society that directly interacts with politics on a daily basis, politically, Conservative Salafism has yet to convince the Jordanian masses with its political discourse, which has been on friendly terms when it comes to the state and governments.

In the meantime, one could safely state that in the last three decades the followings of Reform and Nationalist Salafism have progressively waned. A significant shift in the favor of Wahhabi Salafism has emerged, with Wahhabi Salafism manifesting itself into several forms that include Jihadi Salafism, the Salafist Da'wa and Conservative Salafism.

In this book, first, we will work to methodically map out and extricate the definitions of and differentiations between the numerous forms of Salafism. We will then clarify where (Jordanian) Conservative Salafism falls within this mapping in order to create the underpinnings and groundwork to delve into the subject of this specific current in a detailed and in-depth manner with regard to its Islamic, social and cultural context.

We also explore and trace the course taken by the “founding father” of Conservative Salafism in Jordan, Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani, and the important stages he underwent in his life that marked and influenced his religious, social and political outlook and vision. The study then examines the rise of Conservative Salafism in Jordan and the various stages of its evolution and development. It will examine the ideology upon which this current is founded, summarizing its vision and its view of the world, of society, politics, Islamic heritage and tradition, and of modernity. The Conservative Salafist outlook on how to affect “change” and its relationship with politics, theoretically and politically, is then examined. Finally, how all these ideas and postures reflected upon how the Conservative Salafists’ came to view other Islamist groups, (political) parties and movements is presented and analyzed.

The book attempts to present an overview and assessment of the Salafist movement's presence in Jordan by examining its activities and its methodologies for activism. It looks into the way the relationship between its members, its leadership and its followers function and its recruitment methodology. It presents an overview on the areas in which the movement has spread and finally, the intellectual and socio-cultural background of its followers.

The book concludes with a discussion of Jordanian state policy with regard to Salafism and other Islamist movements. The latter will help establish the groundwork required to initiate the next study on official state religious policies within this series of publications on Islamists, their movements and their relationship with their societies and the state.



Part 1:
**Hybrid Ideological Maps: Conflicting
and Converging Salafist Paths**

The Conservative Salafist movement in Jordan is considered as one of the branches of the Salafist school of thought in the Arab and Muslim world. But, relative to its widespread prevalence, what “Salafism” actually entails is quite ambiguous and unclear as the range of views in the prevailing terminology used to describe Salafism and define what it stands for vastly differs.¹⁴

The term *al-salafiyya* is linguistically defined (in Arabic) as “of, related to (or relative) to a/the predecessor”; and, according to the encyclopedia, *Lisan al-Arab*, *salaf* is defined in singular form as *al-salif* or “the progressive one who came before; the ancestor; the predecessor”; and the word *al-salafiyya* is the plural form of *al-salif* or “the progressive ones who came before; the ancestors; the predecessors”. The philologist and *mufassir* (or exegete), al-Zajjaj, [d. 311 AH] explains the word *salafan* by defining it as “those of the past; those who have predeceased (or the predecessors)”. Meanwhile, according to al-Razi (d. 666 AH) in his famous dictionary, *Mukhtar al-Sahah*, *salaf* is “the past and the progressive (the advanced)”. And, in the *Mu’jam Maqayis al-Lugha* written by Ibn Fares, it is defined as “the past (or that which has passed), the progressive (the advanced), and the former (the ones who came before) (those who set precedence)”. And, according to the Holy Qur’an, God Almighty says the following of the original *Salaf* (or *al-Salaf al-Saleh*), “We made them ‘salafan’ as a lesson for those who come after them and as an example to later generations.”¹⁵ (Al-Zukhruf [Sura 43:55-56]).¹⁶

The above is merely a quick review of some of the linguistic definitions of *al-salafiyya* as presented by validated and widely accepted sources. Undoubtedly, in its terminological references, the words (and concept) of “*salaf*” and “*salafiyya*” have passed through long, historical phases and have been affected by profound intellectual transformations. This history of transformation has ultimately resulted in the reproduction of various Salafist trends, currents, groups and movements, all of which are encompassed by the general sphere of what is known as Salafism, today, in which all “Salafists” claim they are the followers or “representatives” of the original *Salaf al-Saleh* (Righteous Predecessors). Finally, in view of the inflexible, rigid and stern nature of all Salafist ideology – a nature which lends itself to constant fracture, division, fragmentation, splintering and dispersal – it continues to reproduce itself and proliferate in variant forms.

Despite the proliferation and diversity of *salafiyya* or “Salafisms” that exist today, all Salafists are united in one strict, unbending fundamental core idea: A return to the roots. However, beyond this core point of origin, they all differ in their terminological references and significations they believe are entailed by the term *al-salafiyya* (or Salafism). These differences in definition depend on which historical evolution of the word or concept, scholarly opinions, theoretical jurisprudence, and practical postures are followed and believed to be the “correct” reference.

Thus, in the Arab and Muslim worlds, conflicting and contradictory forms of *al-salafiyya* or Salafisms have developed and evolved such as Da’wa, Reform, Nationalist and Jihadi Salafism. Nevertheless, the common or prevailing historical reference that unites all forms of *al-salafiyya* points to a particular tendency which propagates following the path and way of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, by adopting them as a role model and precedent for the present. According to Salafist literature, the *Salaf al-Saleh* are “the first and best three generations of the *umma al-Islamiyya*.”¹⁷ The following Hadith of the Prophet Mohammad (May Peace Be Upon Him) is used as the terminological reference for this Salafist definition: “*The best*

of people is my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them, and after them there will come those who will bear witness, though they will not be asked to bear witness..."¹⁸

This historical, terminological reference for *al-salafiyya* or "Salafism", however, does not necessarily indicate a consensus on one specific notion, with one group deriving a different meaning or signification that may be rejected by another. There are those who consider *al-salafiyya* as a reform movement that aims to extract Muslims and the *umma* from its current state of scholarly and scientific stagnation, its political collapse and its subjugation under imperial hegemony, through the *da'wa* towards an Islamic revival and resurrection of Islamic tradition. The Reform Salafist *da'wa* is advocated in their mission of working towards restoring the pure, unadulterated image of Islam, and in purifying Islam of practices that originate in *bida'a*, customs, traditions and idolatrous practices (known as *shirk*¹⁹ in Islam) – all of which have become associated with the religion and have contaminated its purity over the course of time.²⁰

There are also those who view *al-salafiyya* or Salafism as a protest "movement", "tendency" or "temperament", which has risen in protest against developments that have embedded themselves in two of the most fundamental tenets of Islam: intellect and worship. This view sees this protest movement, tendency or temperament as having evolved historically without ever labeling itself as "*al-salafiyya*" or Salafism. The rationale behind this view is that one does not find any one group or sect that identifies itself with this specific term or name, in the way that numerous other 'groups' do such as the Shiites, Khawarij,²¹ Mu'tazila,²² Murji'ah²³ amongst others.²⁴

However, one can trace clear roots and origins for this "movement", "tendency" or "temperament". We find the term *salaf* often mentioned in the Malikiyya²⁵ and Hanbali²⁶ schools of thought in Sunni Islam in the context of early verbal debates

between the latter and those historically known as the Mu'tazila. The debates and arguments that took place during this earlier period of Islamic history revolved around complex issues such as the question of the creation and the eternal nature of the Qur'an, the ascribing of attributes to the divine character of God, or the issue of divine predestination in human action and decision.

Henceforth lies the importance of the Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal (d. 241 AH) for modern-day Salafists, who consider him the first of the *fuqaha'* (scholars in Islamic jurisprudence and tradition) in Sunni Islam. For the Salafists, Imam Hanbal's frequent and fluctuating use of the word "*salaf*" in general and ambiguous contexts alludes to the Prophet's *Sahaba*²⁷ and the *Tabi'in* (those that followed, the followers) as rejecting the idea of relying on rational debate and deliberation when dealing with issues and questions related to faith and worship. This reading evolved and took firm root in terms of fundamentalist theory with Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728 AH), who used the term "*salaf*" to describe and differentiate Islamic scholars from philosophers, Mu'tazila theologians, orators, poets and so forth.

The term "*salaf*" was used again by Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab (1115-1206 AH) in the 18th century (AD), who adopted the "creed" of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, in its Hanbali form (related to or referenced in the religious doctrine, jurisprudence and scholarship of the Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal) in confronting and challenging other (Muslim) religious doctrine and schools of jurisprudence. During this particular period, the use of the actual term, "*salafiyya*", begins to proliferate and becomes firmly entrenched.

When tracing the historical origins of this "tendency", which later is actually labeled 'Salafi', one finds that this tendency was born of no other than that current, which was and is still widely recognized as *Ahl al-Hadith* or *As'hab al-Hadith*²⁸. *Ahl al-Hadith* emerged during the second and third centuries of the Hijri calendar as a result of the power struggle, which took place between the *Ahl al-Hadith* and *Ahl al-'Aql* or *Ahl al-Rai'* ("the People of Rhetorical

Theology” or literally, “the People of Reason or of Opinion”) over the institution that had the legitimate right to interpret the text of the Qur’an and the Hadith after the death of the Benevolent Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him).

In the view of *As’hab al-Hadith*, the *Salaf al-Saleh* of the *Sahaba* were the only reference for interpreting and illuminating the text. They saw that it was the task of the *Khalaf* (all the Muslims that came after the *Salaf al-Saleh*; literally, “the offspring”) to ascribe to the *Salaf al-Saleh* as they are the origin (of Islam), or the pure source and the ultimate reference: “For verily they are the ones that deserve the most to be followed, as they were truthful in their faith, strong in their beliefs and sincere in their worship”²⁹ – and they were the role model to be followed in Islamic thinking, knowledge and behavior.

As’hab al-Hadith also saw that *Ahl al-Rai’* and *Ahl al-‘Aqel* (the People of Rhetorical Theology, Reason or Opinion), whose discourse was grounded in the “spirit of the Greeks” (alluding to Greek rhetoric and philosophy), were capable of discussing and deliberating upon the fundamentals and the essence of the model and methodology upon which Islam itself was founded. But, at most, these *Ahl al-Kallam*³⁰ or, these people of opinion, rhetoric and philosophy, would arrive at no more than mere *bida’a* – or “re-inventing of matters” and “innovations” –, which was duty bound to confront and respond to for the sake of preserving the “pure, unadulterated” Islam against the intrusion of the “alien and extrinsic”.

If this “Tarikhiyya (Historical)” Salafism emerged in response to the rational, rhetorical and separatist (Mu’tazila)³¹ tendencies, which also emerged around the time of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal and *Ahl al-Hadith*, it would face further challenges in the era of Ibn Taymiyyah. As for Salafism in its Wahhabi form, it would soon become beset by internal stagnation and perversions, which took place in the name of religion, and in defense of its identity and its alleged purity.

With the colonial challenges (from the 19th century onward), which took place across the Islamic world, new hybrid forms of Salafisms would soon emerge. Nationalist Salafism would rise as an alternative in the armed struggle against colonialism. Meanwhile and simultaneously, Reform Salafism carried the banner of progress and revival against all forms of Western intrusion, and attacked the West as a civilization in itself. Harakiyya (Movement) Salafism rose to confront colonial influences in states that had gained their independence, and called for a return to the Caliphate, or Islamic State, which disappeared under colonialism. According to them, the disappearance of the Caliphate was embodied in the modern nation-state in the Arab and Islamic world, which was nothing more than a mere colonialist inheritance. Meanwhile, Jihadi Salafism emerged to use force in fighting the modern nation-state, which they considered “apostate” and society, which they considered “ignorant”.

1.1 Tarikhiyya (Historical) Salafism: The Triumph of “Doctrinal-Religious Identity”

Tarikhiyya Salafism describes a revivalist religious tendency or current that places monumental importance on the issue of its singular identity, its uniqueness and its purity. As a movement, Tarikhiyya Salafism adheres strictly to the texts attributed to the *Salaf al-Saleh*; and, its main concerns and focus are placed on issues of faith and belief, and forms of worship in relation to faith and belief. Tarikhiyya Salafism emerged in its first form in the 3rd century (AH), with the founding father of this school of Salafism considered to be Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal (d. 241 AH).

The calamity produced by the claim presented by the “Rational” currents that the Qur’an was a (mortal) creation in 218 (AH) is considered a historic turning point in the evolution of the Salafist trend, and its ongoing confrontation with these “innovative” currents. The struggle between these two major schools of thought

revolved around their basic and completely different readings of Islam that emerged from the Rationalist school's guiding principles of construal, interpretation and rationalization instead of surrender and commitment "to that which is apparent in what was divinely transmitted (to man)", which the Tarikhiyya Salafists believed in.

With the end of the 'Abbasid Caliphate in the 7th Century (AH), and following the fall of Baghdad at the hand of the Tartars in the year 656 (AH), a second, more mature form of Salafism would emerge. This time, this Salafism would be more clear in its following of Ibn Taymiyya (661-728 AH) and his school of thought, which held *Ah/ al-Bida'a*³² (that included sects such as the Jahmis³³, Qadiris³⁴ as well as mystics, Sufists and philosophers) responsible for the fall of Baghdad and for the degradation of Islam and the Caliphate. Ibn Taymiyya would launch a violent campaign against all these currents, calling for a revival of the creed of *al-Salaf al-Saleh* and their *manhaj*. He was able to establish a school of thought that attracted a multitude of scholars and *fuqaha* (scholars in Islamic jurisprudence), who were contemporaries of his time.

Tarikhiyya Salafism reached its heights of maturity and comprehensiveness with Ibn Taymiyya. The Salafist *manhaj* crystallized, with a clear vision and theological outlook that reflected the new current's rules and issues in a precise and definitive manner. This era defined certain milestones for all the others who would come after Ibn Taymiyya and become adherents of "Salafism".

Over the course of many centuries, Tarikhiyya Salafism would be represented by a wide range of scholars, who would be difficult to enumerate in the scope of this study. However, the most important of these scholars included, in the first wave of Salafism, Abu Jaafar al-Tahawi (d. 321 AH), Ibn Batta al-'Akbari al-Hanbali (d. 387 AH), Abu Bakr Ahmad Bin al-Hussein al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 AH); and, in a second wave, other such scholars included Aba Shamma al-Makdessi (d. 665 AH), Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH) and Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 795 AH). Emerging in a subsequent period was Ibn Abi al-'Izz al-Hanafi (d. 792 AH), who elucidated

the “Tahawiyya Creed” in a treatise that has become a pillar and frame of reference for Tarikhiyya Salafist theological scholarship and logic.

The Tarikhiyya Salafist system of belief and worship is based on the founding principle of “*al-Itba’a la al-Ibtida’a*”³⁵ or “Following (adhering to and obeying) without innovating (or inventing or originating ideas, or ‘heresies’ in the opinion of Salafists, which are not part of the text in a fundamental or literal sense).” This founding principle finds its roots in a saying attributed to al-Sahhabi Abdullah Massou’d, “*Follow, and follow without innovating*”³⁶ and the saying by Ibn Taymiyya which claims, “that which consummates religion are two fundamental principles: That we worship no other than God, and that we worship Him through no other than that which He has put forth as law. We do not worship him through innovation”³⁷ – with worship understood as being based in the laws of Islam and following them, and not upon one’s base desires and “innovations”.

These two texts encapsulate the religious position and opinions embraced by Tarikhiyya Salafism. They were further outlined by the religious jurist and *faqih* (scholar in Islamic jurisprudence) Abu Abdullah al-Tahawi in his famous doctrine “*Bayan al-Sunna³⁸ wal Jamaa’ah*”, (“A Treatise on the Sunna and its Followers”), which later became a theological constitution and charter for all Salafist currents.³⁹

1.2 Wahhabi Salafism: The Founding Era of Modern and Contemporary Salafism

Wahhabi Salafism emerged from the womb of Tarikhiyya Salafism at the turn of the 18th century (AD) and continued to spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula until the early 19th century through the teachings of its founding father, Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab. The specific form of *da’wa* developed by Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab⁴⁰ called for *al-Tawhid*⁴¹ and for rejecting any notions

of *al-hulul*⁴² (divine incarnation) and *al ittihad*⁴³ (unity of being) in the religious creed. It strongly emphasized the role and responsibility of the human being in this effort and forbade the creation of any intermediary or intercession with anyone or anything but God in worship and in faith, while it rejected any *da'wa* that called for *ijtihad*⁴⁴.

A great number of scholars from various parts of the Islamic world were influenced by Abdel Wahhab's calling, with the most prominent of these including Mohammad Nouh al-Ghallati in Medina al-Munawara (1752-1803 AD), Wali al-Din al-Dahlawi in India (1702-1762 AD), Mohammad Bin Ali al-Shawkani in Yemen (1760-1834 AD), Shihab al-Din Mahmoud al-Alousi in Iraq (d. 1803 AD) and Othman Bin Foudi in Africa (b. 1756 AD).

With certainty, Wahhabi Salafism is considered the guiding paradigm for all the Salafisms that followed this period and which emerged later in both the Arab and the Islamic worlds. The term "Salafism" has come to be accepted and coined in the terminological reference with which it is recognized today. Indeed, all the forms of modern "Salafisms" present today are born of the womb of Wahhabi Salafism – a womb from which new Salafisms continue to emerge.

Today, the term Salafism has become interchangeable with the Wahhabi movement. Both have come to be identified by the same terminological reference that represents a certain sect with specific points of views and opinions in the modern Islamist domain. From a religious perspective, Wahhabi Salafism is considered a "reform and purification movement" or a puritan reform mission, which aims to preserve (Islamic) identity by holding fast to the self-evident texts, the Qur'an and the Hadith, and which is founded upon a somewhat literal understanding of these texts with regard to the creed of Islam, its symbolism and ritual.

Wahhabi Salafism has traditionally waged an aggressive battle against Sufist currents and sects and their religious practices, accusing them of acting on sorcery and superstition. In this battle against the other sects, Wahhabi Salafism (or Wahhabism) has called for a return to the purity of the *tawhid*⁴⁵ and the clarity of the Islamic faith.

Politically, Wahhabism initially came about in rebellion against the Ottoman Caliphate despite the fact that the movement itself did not possess any direct political ambitions or interests. From the very beginning, public affairs in the Arabian Peninsula have been divided up between the House of al-Saud and the House of al-Sheik. The House of al-Sheikh would take on the task of religious affairs, which took the form of Wahhabi Salafism, while the House of al-Saud took on the task of political affairs. With regard to the way it dealt with political authority, Wahhabi Salafism reverted to the general position and precedent of Tarikhiyya Salafism, which called for the obligation of and need for obedience to the political authority as the legal guardians of the state, in times of hardship and in times of fortune.

1.3 Reform Salafism: The Triumph of Revival over Identity

Reform Salafism was influenced by both Wahhabi and Tarikhiyya Salafism, with the difference being that Reform Salafism appeared at the same time as the interaction with the West began, following the period of colonization that had permeated both the Arab and Islamic worlds. Subsequently, this movement exchanged its focus away from religious posturing and jurisprudence to what they saw as the priority or problem, and therefore their primary concern: the issue of “progress versus the regression and backwardness” of the Arab and Islamic worlds in the face of westernization.

There has always been a debate over whether Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897 AD) or Sheikh Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905 AD) had more right to the claim of establishing the original term of Reform Salafism, based on the different approaches both men took to presenting the religious creed of Salafism. However, in general, the student of both scholars, Mohammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935 AD), was likely the closest in terms of his doctrinal *manhaj* to Tarikhiyya Salafism earlier in his life and to Wahhabi Salafism later.

Reform Salafism emerged in the context of prevailing reactions to the challenges posed by the modern West on the Islamic world at that time. As a movement, it aimed to reform the problems of the backwardness and regressive Islamic reality and work towards the challenge of instigating an Islamic renaissance and thus, progress. Working towards achieving these aims was the major concern for Reform Salafists; and, it became more important to them than the issue of the “Islamic identity” being threatened by the contemporary modernity of the West.

Perhaps this fundamental conflict could be summarized in Reform Salafism’s “rational” bent. This rationality came with the recognition by a majority of politically inclined Salafists – who supported al-Afghani’s doctrine – that, indeed, their task was to mobilize people with the goal of gathering popular support for al-Afghani’s reform program. Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Rida himself was not far from this rational tendency before he returned to a form of Salafism closer to Tarikhiyya Salafism, and a Wahhabi form of Tarikhiyya Salafism, to be specific.

Reform Salafism worked towards reviving the *umma* by calling for the *umma* to emulate the industry and scientific advances of the West – especially as Reform Salafists considered these advances as having originated in Islam, in any case – and to use these advances as tools in confronting the challenges coming to the Arab and Islamic worlds from Europe. Reform Salafism was not to

be satisfied with a mere reform of the religious creed, or unifying the internal front in their opinions on matters of faith, worship and in fighting *al-bida'a* as did other Salafist movements, rather, it eagerly pushed for the reform and rehabilitation of the deteriorating conditions in the political and social affairs of Muslims.

1.4 Nationalist Salafism: A Marriage between Reform and Political Liberation

Nationalist Salafism is a term that is used to describe religious Salafist movements whose focus centered around opposing and resisting Western colonization, based on the belief in the concept and logic of Islamic jihad⁴⁶ as a legitimate means and instrument that can be used to oppose aggression and occupation. This “resistance” had as its ultimate aim the establishment of an Islamic state and nation, following the fall of colonization and the independence of modern Arab and Islamic nations.

Nationalist Salafism had its largest presence and was mainly concentrated in the Maghreb (the North African Arab Countries (or *al-Maghreb al-Arabi*). The most prominent pioneers of Nationalist Salafism in the Maghreb included Abdel Hamid Ben Badis (1889-1940 AD), ‘Allal al-Fassi (1910-1974 AD), Sheikh Abi Shu’ayb al-Dakkali (1878-1937 AD) and Sheikh al-Islam Mohammad Bin al-Arabi al-Alawi (1880-1964 AD).

Nationalist Salafism combined matters of revival and reform with the nationalist cause of liberation from colonization. Sheikh al-Islam Mohammad Bin al-Arabi al-Alawi emerged as the most influential figure in the evolution of Nationalist Salafism in the Maghreb. He was not content with merely combating Sufist currents, which were loyal to the local authorities (protectorate authorities, who administered local affairs for colonialist powers), but also embarked upon directly resisting French colonialism by denigrating its policies and inciting popular opinion against it. The

latter was in addition to his joining the ranks of revolutionaries from the more rural areas and populations and continually advocating the cause for national liberation, despite the arbitrary harassment and arrest he continuously suffered.

Thus, Tarikhiyya or Traditional Salafism in its Wahhabi form was transformed by Bin al-Arabi al-Alawi in the Maghreb into a religious ideology, which was later adopted by the arsenal (of the ruling regimes in the Maghreb) as a tool against the recalcitrance of the Tuareg and their rebellions. Nationalist Salafism created the first generation of men in the national resistance movements in the Maghreb and offered them the Arab and Islamic intellectual foundation for their modernist revivalist aspirations and their political struggle.

1.5 Harakiyya (Movement) Salafism: Organizing and Institutionalizing Da'wa Salafism

Harakiyya (Movement) Salafism emerged from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded by Imam Hassan al-Banna (1906-1948 AD) at a time when Islamic reform parties were confronted by a cultural and political crisis and modern realities that traditional Islamist thinking was not able to deal with or present appropriate alternatives for.

The Muslim Brotherhood came about as a counter reaction to the crises in thought suffered by revivalist and reform activism. In its earlier stages, the Brotherhood was a revivalist movement concerned with matters of worship and ritual, as well as the issues of Islamic identity and ethics. In its first decade, it did not concern itself with the larger political, nationalist and social issues at hand. What differentiated the Brotherhood from all the other reform movements (at that time) was the fact that it was a popular movement and not elitist.

Perhaps the greatest influence in transforming the Brotherhood's reformist vision came at the hands of Sayyed Qutub (despite the fact that Qutub is not readily acknowledged by scholars or research on contemporary Salafist currents and their thinking, and despite the fact that he is actually the spiritual father of Jihadi Salafism, particularly in terms of its political dimension). Sayyed Qutub initiated and launched an open (and, thus not underground) Salafist movement that criticized the very foundations of the state in modern Islamic countries and, for that matter, in the world in its entirety. He called for re-establishing the Islamic state based on the concept of "*al-Hakimiyya*"⁴⁷, where governance and sovereignty was for God alone and his core ideas were presented in his book, "Milestones", which paved the way for the birth of Jihadi Salafism.

1.6 Jihadi Salafism: The Shift towards Open Confrontation with Ruling Regimes

Sayyed Qutub (1906-1966 AD) is considered the original founding father of contemporary Jihadi Salafist movements. Qutub's ideas formed an intellectual rupture in the school of thought in Islamic reform, just as his book "*Ma'alem fil Tariq*" ("Milestones") became the constitution and the declaration upon which the ideology of all Jihadi movements would base itself. "Milestones" was a cornerstone in the formation of their vision, their organizational model and approach and the methodology for their work and for affecting change. This was all notwithstanding the fundamental principles upon which Jihadi Salafism was founded, which stemmed from Qutub's founding concepts of "*al-Hakimiyya*" and "*al-Jahiliyya*"⁴⁸ that became the moral backbone for their confrontational nature, both domestically and on a global scale.

The first of the modern Jihadi Salafist movements made its appearance in 1973 when Doctor Saleh Sariyyah established an organization that later became known as *al-Faniyya al-'Askariyyah* (the Military Technical Unit). Sariyyah's organization attempted a

military coup in Egypt in 1974.⁴⁹ Sariyyah is considered the first to develop a comprehensive vision for the work of Jihadi Salafists in his book “*Risalet al-Iman*” (“The Message of Faith”). And of the more renowned organizations, belonging to the school of Jihadi Salafism, was *Tanthim al-Jihad* (“The Jihad Organization”), its most prominent leader being Mohammad Abdel Salam Faraj, who authored the book “*al-Farida al-Gha’ibah*” (“The Neglected Duty”) in which he integrates many of the ideas of Tarikhiyya Salafism with Wahhabi and Harakiyya Salafism.

The jihad in Afghanistan also played a large role in advancing the proliferation of Jihadi Salafism. Indeed, its spread assumed great energy and speed after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the collapse of the Socialist paradigm itself. During this period, tens of Jihadi Salafist movements were established and launched throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. This phenomenon would later lead to the evolution and establishment of the *al-Qaeda* organization under the command of Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, who worked towards globalizing a Jihadi Salafism from which numerous theorists and sheikhs would emerge, the most prominent of which included Abdullah Azzam, Abu Mohammad al-Makdessi, Abu Qatada al-Falastini, Abu Yehya al-Liby, amongst others.

1.7 Conservative Salafism: A Match Made between Tarikhiyya Salafism and Wahhabism

Some prefer to call Conservative Salafism “Theological” Salafism, while others refer to this particular form of Salafism as “Scholarly” or “Traditional” Salafism. The market for this form of Salafism began to evolve in a noteworthy manner in the early 1970s. This “emerging market” reflected the impact of oil money and the growing Saudi role and influence on the spread of the Wahhabi Salafist *da’wa* during the Cold War period, and in the ongoing confrontation and struggle between the Western and Communist camps.

During that period, religious “missionary” and charitable institutions and organizations were also established and supported by Saudi Arabia flourished in a bid to confront the rebellious leftist “calling” in the Arab world, which was posing a serious threat to conservative Arab regimes. Subsequently, the “official” religious establishment was also reinvigorated and given extensive authority in alliance and coordination with the state.

These vigorous Saudi-supported endeavors echoed and reflected upon several countries – one of which was Jordan. This dynamic contributed to the rise of the Conservative (or Traditional) Salafist School, which integrated the Tarikhiyya Salafist’s focus on religious identity, on the one hand, with Wahhabi Salafism’s confrontational nature when it came to *ibtida’a* or “innovation” and deviant behavior, on the other. But, this particular form of Salafism had one novel characteristic relative to the other Salafisms in its alliance with conservative Arab governments, which, in return, provided the Conservative (Traditional) Salafists with all kinds of legal entitlements.

In Saudi Arabia, the most notable face of Conservative Salafism has been embodied by the Council of Supreme Scholars, which is also considered the higher representative body of the official religious authority in the country. The Saudi council included such imminent figures as Ibn Baaz and Ibn al-‘Athimein, both of whom are considered the spiritual fathers of Traditional Salafism. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani is considered the actual founder of Conservative Salafism in Jordan.

Indeed, Jordanian Conservative Salafism can be classified under this latter framework of (Traditional) Salafism. It is marked by hybrid characteristics that combine the Tarikhiyya Salafist creed in its focus on religious doctrine and in its claim of representing *Ahl al-Hadith* and the doctrine of Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyya and Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab, as well as the spiritual paternity ascribed to Nasruddin al-Albani, on the one hand, and between Wahhabi Salafism in its focus on waging war against *al-bida’a*, or innovations, and deviant behavior, on the other.



Part 2:
Nasruddin al-Albani:
The Founding Father of Conservative
Salafism

The path of Conservative Salafism in Jordan was impressed upon and impacted by the life of its founding sheikh, Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani (1914-1999). Sheikh al-Albani's life took place during an era of prolonged and volatile historical periods in the Arab and Islamic world. His arduous personal journey and his observations on the socio-political environment he experienced throughout his life resulted in his coronation as one of the imminent and leading sheikhs and Islamic scholars in the Arab world in particular, and in the Islamic world in general.

Reviewing the course of his life and the major milestones he passed through allows one to better identify the circumstances and conditions that led him to “establish” his school of Traditional Salafism, which reconciled itself with the state and its political regimes and was haunted by clashes with society and other Islamists and Islamist movements, in addition to it brimming with “ideological rigidity”.

Al-Albani emigrated with his family from Albania to Damascus in Syria in 1922, after Ahmad Zagho took over power in Albania. Following the footsteps of Ataturk, Zagho took extensive measures to lead the country into secular modernization after the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate State.

Consequently, al-Albani grew up in the shadow of the colonization that the Islamic world was subjected to, and under which Syria had been turned into a French mandate by 1920.

He also grew up in a poor family, which was conservatively religious and which followed the Hanafiyya⁵⁰ *madhab* (school of law in *fiqh* or Islamic jurisprudence within Sunni Islam)⁵¹. His Salafist leanings began to evolve through his readings of “*al-Manar*” magazine, a publication issued by Sayyed Rashid Rida (1865-1935 AD) and his followers.⁵²

His interest began with studying the Prophet’s Hadith at an early age; he received an education that was parallel to and outside the regular school system, as the regular schools operated under a colonialist policy. The socio-political changes that were taking place at the time al-Albani was growing up played an important role in his character formation, in addition to his own personal motivation and religious incentives.

As an ethnic Albanian, who also came from a marginalized, impoverished class, he did not enjoy the kind of patronage and shelter of relatives or relations, which was required in order to engage and advance in the local game of wealth and authority. Perhaps this mix was the incentive that led al-Albani to focus on a different path, and to work towards breaking social, economic and political barriers instead of trying to achieve symbolic positions of prestige and influence in the manifest, material world. Thus, he devoted a majority of his time to learning the Prophet’s Hadith and participated in the cultural activities that flourished during that period of the French mandate, which aimed to preserve Islamic identity and impede the process of Westernization that came with French colonization.⁵³

Numerous publications also emerged during that same period. The “*Tamadun al-Islami*” (“Islamic Civilization”) magazine, published by the Islamic Civilization Society in Damascus, was the magazine and publication of most interest for al-Albani. Several essays written by al-Albani that focused on the study of the Prophet’s Hadith were published in this magazine.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, in the 1930s, Syria was witness to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, which established itself through a charitable organization founded in 1939.⁵⁵ The Brotherhood went on to establish many other charitable organizations and societies throughout Syria. However, during its fifth conference in 1944, which was considered the founding conference for the organization, the “*Shabab Mohammad*” (“Mohammad’s Youth”) organization was officially transformed into the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and Lebanon.⁵⁶

Al-Albani would develop close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, although he never officially joined the organization. He was particularly close to the Salafist wing of the Damascene Brotherhood, which was headed by Mustafa al-Siba’ai, then Issam al-Attar, followed by Zuhair al-Shawish. But, he engaged in numerous debates with the Ash’ari Sufists, who formed a wing in the Aleppo Brotherhood led by Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah, and had conflicting opinions with the Hama Brotherhood, which was led by Sa’id Hawa.⁵⁷

During that period, al-Albani would become one of world’s most important and notable Salafist figureheads. He ceaselessly worked to develop a clear vision on the methodologies required to bring about change. After the Ba’ath party forcibly took over power in Syria, al-Albani was imprisoned twice due to hearsay that he did not support the governing regime because it did not govern according to Islam and the *Sharia* (Islamic Law).⁵⁸ Among the summary of accusations with which he was charged was the one that accused him of promoting the “Wahhabi *da’wa*”, which distorted Islam and confused Muslims.

With the rise of the Salafist current, al-Albani was invited to continue his studies in Saudi Arabia at the Islamic University in al-Medina al-Munawwarah, which had been recently established. He was also chosen to serve as a member of the higher council at the university. Indeed, prior to his death in 1999, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia awarded al-Albani with the King Faisal Global Award

for Islamic Studies in recognition of his efforts in the Salafist *da'wa* and for his scholarly contributions to the study of the Prophet's Hadith.

Al-Albani's vision of Conservative Salafism began to develop more clearly after the strategies and policies followed by other Salafist groups failed to take hold in the Islamic world. Reform Salafism itself atrophied after the deaths of al-Afghani, Abduh and Rida. Nationalist Salafism in the Maghreb lost its luster after the countries of the Maghreb achieved their independence and direct colonization ended. This was furthered by the absence of any charismatic, scholarly figures in the Nationalist Salafist movement after independence, such as 'Allal al-Fassi and Malek Bin Nabi. In Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi Salafism eventually became diluted after its progressive absorption into a series of weak councils and institutions within the state apparatus. At the same time, the Arab world was witnessing a rise in secular nationalist and leftist movements, which came to dominate all aspects of political, economic and social life in the region.

Finally, Reform Islam as a school of thought was in decline. In its place, more radical and revolutionary Islamic currents began to emerge, all of which adopted a Jihadi Salafist discourse after the nation-state proved its failure in achieving full independence, progress and prosperity.

By the end of the 1970s, the Islamic world would witness the progressive rise and spread of Jihadi Salafist movements. The *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya*⁵⁹ (the Islamic Group) was formed in Egypt. In Syria, *al-Tali'a al-Muqatila* (The Fighting Vanguard) emerged as an offshoot of the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Afghanistan, the "Afghani Jihad" began to attract new recruits on a global scale. And, in 1981, the Juhaiman Movement was established in Saudi Arabia. In fact, al-Albani was accused of being the principle mastermind behind the Juhaiman Movement – and was subsequently denied entry into Saudi Arabia thereafter.⁶⁰

Al-Albani's outlook and vision of Conservative Salafism finally crystallized into a consistent form after he decided to reside permanently in Jordan in the early 1980s. A group of young men began to flock around al-Albani, calling themselves *talabat al-'ilim al-shari'i* (the students of Islamic legal studies). They eventually evolved into a Salafist current that grew out of a 'traditional' vision, particularly when it came to the kind of Islamist activism they endorsed.

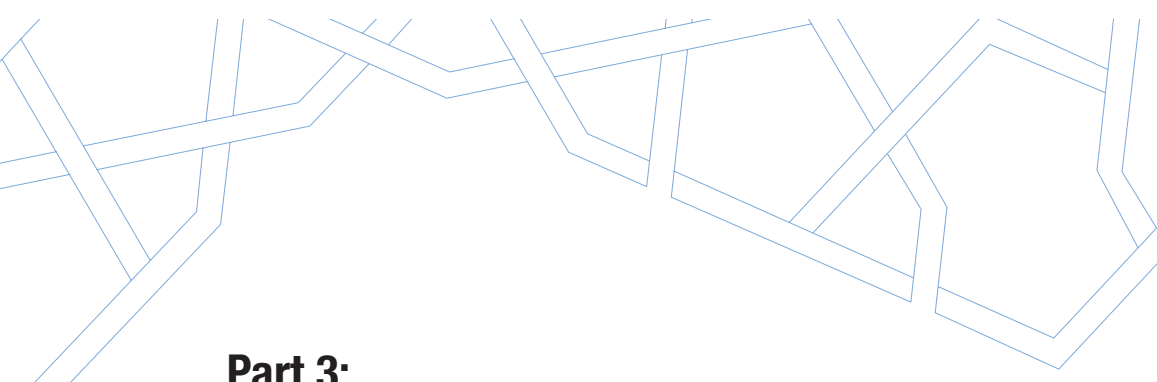
The most notable representatives of this current amongst al-Albani's students included Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, Ali al-Halaby, Salim al-Hillali, Mohammad Mousa Naser and Mashhoor Salman. This group began to work on issuing a publication called "*al-Asala*" magazine. They then went on to establish the Imam Al-Albani Center in Jordan's capital, Amman. And, the Conservative Salafist discourse appeared to be clearer, more obvious and more distinct than other Salafisms such as the Reform, Nationalist, Harakiyya, Jihadi and others forms of Salafism.

In his earlier years, Sheikh al-Albani began to develop his concept or, *al-qawl* (the saying), which would later become the overriding axiom for his form of *da'wa*; and, that was "*al-tasfiyyah wal tarbiyyah*" ("purification and education"). This axiom was a practical translation of what the Conservative Salafists preached in their lessons and in the sermons they conducted while touring through all the different cities and districts of Syria. The work taking place in Syria was in addition to lessons and lectures the Conservative Salafists organized and conducted in Jordan, all of which were actually implemented through the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, and particularly the Zarqa branch of the Jordanian Brotherhood. Members of the Zarqa branch, such as Abdullah Azzam and Dib Anis, were quite close in their ideological disposition to the more Conservative Salafist tendency and similar in their ways of thinking; lessons were prepared by teachers in Jordan such as Dr. Ahmad Nawfal and Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, amongst others.

Despite his preoccupation with his writings and his concentration on developing his *da'wa*, al-Albani continued to work in his small watch repair shop, which he took over from his father. Later, however, he would devote all his time to working out of the Islamic Office, which belonged to his friend Zuhair al-Shawish. During his time at the Islamic Office, he was able to produce a great number of written works, at the fore of which was his booklet entitled, "*Irwa' al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabeel*" ("Quenching the Yearning for Extracting the Hadith of the Enlightened Path").⁶¹

He spent almost two decades living in Amman (from the early 1980s until the end of the 1990s). During that period, he worked on writing books and on encouraging and upholding the heritage of Islam, and particularly that aspect of Islam related to the Prophet's Hadith. He also gave lessons from his home, because he was not allowed to preach or teach in mosques. And despite the ban on where he could teach, his followers and students progressively and continuously grew in number. By the 1990s, his followers had grown to such a point that they actually competed in size, number and influence with the largest Islamist movement in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, they became a force to be reckoned with in the mosques and in public gatherings, in providing lessons and conducting charitable work, and in their volunteerism and religious activism.

Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani passed away in Amman in 1999, after founding and firmly rooting Conservative Salafism in Jordan. Following his death, the Conservative Salafist movement in Jordan became embroiled in disputes, conflicts, divisions and schisms. The most important and greatest of these disputes was about who would be the rightful successor to Sheikh al-Albani. In fact, this conflict and debate is still taking place. Sometimes the debate takes on a scholarly form, other times it is dogmatic in nature while, yet at other times, it can even become financial.



Part 3:
The Evolution and Rise
of Conservative Salafism:
A Grace Period with the State
and Conflict with other Islamists

The rise of Conservative Salafism in Jordan is considered a relatively new phenomenon. As a movement, it emerged in a more distinct form in the beginnings of the 1980s, after its founding sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani moved to Jordan, where he resided until the time of his death. Indeed, numerous Islamist movements and groups already existed and had a presence in Jordan prior to the foundation and rise of Conservative Salafism.

Certainly, during the time in which the Jordanian emirate was established,⁶² there was no real presence of Islamist movements, parties and groups with clear-cut characteristics, attributes, visions, influence or views. Indeed, at that time, the Islam that prevailed in Jordan was that of a Sufist and popular nature.

In fact, the vast majority of Islamist movements established in Jordan were introduced as branches from other organizations, parties and groups, which were based in other countries in the Arab and Islamic world after the collapse of colonialism and in the post-colonial period. For example, in the founding period of the modern Jordanian nation-state, and after Jordan's independence was declared in 1946, the first branch of the mother organization of the Muslim Brotherhood (which was established by Sheikh Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928) was instituted and proclaimed in Jordan. The environment in which the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood was created was one in which the head of the state, King Abdullah I, was quite welcoming and tolerant.

The year 1948 would represent a turning point in the formation of the modern Jordanian state. Following the war of 1948, which led to the creation of the state of Israel a new reality was imposed upon Jordan that led to the unification of the East and West Banks of the Jordan River. In the end, the outcome of all these events was embodied in fundamental changes in the country's demographics, which imposed a complicated new socio-political and socio-economic reality. These structural changes led to the introduction of political reforms by the regime, which ultimately resulted in the creation of a new constitution for the country in 1952.

During that same year 1952, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (the Islamic Party of Liberation)⁶³ was established in Jerusalem by Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (1909-1977). Following this, the *Jamaa'at al-Da'wa wal Tabligh*⁶⁴ was declared in Jordan in 1964 as a branch of the mother organization founded by Sheikh Mohammad Elias al-Kandahlawi in the Indian sub-continent in 1924.

The war of 1967 and the subsequent Israeli occupation of the West Bank imposed yet another reality upon Jordan, the impact of which would affect every aspect of political, economic, social and religious life in the country. This period is considered a pivotal point in the history of *da'wa*, political and jihadi Islam. For, the 1967 defeat was in itself considered a humiliating defeat for the pan-national, leftist and nationalist ideologies; and, it was in this context that Salafism, in all its forms and spectra of tendencies, emerged throughout the Islamic world.⁶⁵

Thereafter, nationalist and leftist Palestinian factions lost their hegemony to a certain extent following their clash with the regime in Jordan in 1970. The 1970 clashes ultimately led to these factions leaving Jordan to seek refuge in Lebanon. It was during this period that the birth of Traditional Salafism took place only to be reinforced later by Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, who himself sought refuge in Jordan and established his permanent residence there in 1980. However, not all of this means that, since the time the emirate in Jordan was established, there were no disputes or clashes between Salafists during that whole period.

The roots of Salafism in Jordan began with the more radical and extreme wing of the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, since its establishment, the Muslim Brotherhood always had two principle currents within its organization: the first being pragmatic and committed to the line established by Imam Hassan al-Banna and whose creed was delineated by Hassan al-Hudeibi in his book, “*Dua’a La Qada’a*” (“Preachers not Judges”); the second wing being much more extreme and committed to the line established by the teacher, Sayyed Qutub, who left his mark on Salafists worldwide in his book “*Ma’alem fil Tarik*” (“Milestones”). Also contributing to the growth of this second tendency were several of Qutub’s followers and students in Saudi Arabia, who studied, learned and took on Salafism in its Wahhabi form.⁶⁶

Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra is considered one of the first Salafists in Jordan. At the beginning, he was a committed member of the Muslim Brotherhood prior to embarking on an independent path after he left for Saudi Arabia to study at the Islamic University there, in the early 1960s. But, according to Sheikh Shaqra himself, Sheikh Abdul Rahim Sa’id was the first real Salafist in Jordan (Sheikh Sa’id is the father of Humam Sa’id, who was the General Supervisor of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan at the time this study was conducted and written).

The 1970s was an era in which the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood witnessed the progressive growth of “Qutubian Salafism” within the organization (a form of Salafism in which Salafist combine the Salafist religious doctrine and creed with Sayyed Qutub’s political thinking). Furthermore, the experience of the *Mu’askarat al-Sheiyoukh* (The Sheikhs’ Encampments) had a profound impact on the formation and rise of an organized Salafist current, with an identifiable character and clear-cut attributes.

The experience of *Mu’askarat al-Sheiyoukh* was the first attempt made by the Jordanian Brotherhood to depart from the model and approach of Reform Salafism. Under the influence of the 1967 defeat and under serious pressure from the extremist wing

in the movement, the Brotherhood entered into the domain of jihad. And thus, between the years of 1968-1970, the Muslim Brotherhood set up between four to seven military encampments in which hundreds of Arab Brothers participated and trained until the events of September 1970. During these events, the Muslim Brotherhood decided to close down its military encampments in a move made to prove and affirm their choice to remain neutral during that complicated phase.

Conservative Salafism had not yet formed or entirely crystallized in al-Albani's mind during that period in the 1970s, and relations between al-Albani and the Brotherhood were good at that time. While living in Syria, al-Albani was close to the Damascene Salafists inside the Syrian Brotherhood; the majority of his lessons were conducted through the facilitation of the Muslim Brotherhood there. Indeed, he would enter the Jordanian Islamist scene through a "gateway" opened and facilitated by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Sheikh al-Albani began to make monthly visits to Jordan on invitation from the "Qutubian Salafists" inside the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, and particularly the Zarqa Branch headed by Dib Anis, in order for Sheikh al-Albani to give lessons and lectures to its members. Several of the leaders in the Muslim Brotherhood also attended these lessons including Azzam Abdullah, Ahmad Nawfal, Abdullah al-Qaryiouti, Faisal al-Jawabirah, Yousef al-Barqawi, Abdul Raouf al-'Aboushi, amongst others.

Organized "Qutubian Salafist" manifestations began to extend beyond the ranks of the traditional framework of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1970s. The first organization based on the foundations set by Sayyed Qutub's school of thought emerged during that time in Jordan; and, indeed, the establishment of this organization represented the first open schism that affected the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood. This group was organized by Sheikh Mohammad Ra'fat Sa'id Saleh in 1973 after he returned from his studies at the Islamic University in Saudi Arabia in 1972. Sheikh Mohammad Ra'afat had been a member of the

Muslim Brotherhood's Shura Council.⁶⁷ But, he had adopted all of Sayyed Qutub's radical thinking, which led him to engage in ongoing conflicts and debates with the more pragmatic wing of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood.

When Ra'fat fell into despair over his failure to divert the path of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, he went to work to establish the *Tali'at al-Baath al-Islami* (The Vanguard of the Islamic Rebirth). Several others, who also had strong convictions about the teachings and ideology of Sayyed Qutub, left the organization with him. Mohammad Ra'fat began his own *da'wa* (calling) and began to recruit new members to his group, using Sayyed Qutub's methodology for organizing and recruiting followers. He also adopted the revolutionary ideas founded in the principle of *al-Hakimiyya*, which aimed to establish an Islamic state through jihad.

The experience of the *Tali'at al-Baath al-Islami* would not last long as Mohammad Ra'fat would renege upon his way of thinking. He worked to dismantle the organization shortly thereafter. These retractions all took place after lengthy debates and discussions between him and Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani. Mohammad Ra'fat himself says, "Were it not for our rectification, by the grace and benevolence of God Almighty, who brought the teacher, Sheikh al-Albani, forth to us, the fundamentalism of the extremist thinking of the embittered dissidents of this contemporary era would take hold, and the idea of spreading Islam and increasing the numbers of Muslims would cease to exist". Soon after, Ra'fat became aligned with the Traditional Salafist current led by Sheikh al-Albani. In 1997, he would even run for a seat in parliamentary elections and win a seat representing the Baqa'a refugee camp in the Balqa District.⁶⁸

3.1 Severing Ties with the Brotherhood: An Organizational and Intellectual Clash

At some point, the leadership of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood began to become suspicious of al-Albani's form of *da'wa*. By the middle of the 1970s, the Brotherhood's leadership commenced with publishing internal flyers and memos that cautioned members from attending Sheikh al-Albani's meetings, lectures and lessons. They, and particularly Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares and Abdullah Azzam, began to attack al-Albani during their lessons and sermons in an attempt to fend off al-Albani's increasingly growing appeal with members of the Brotherhood – an appeal which, indeed, proved to be very effective later.

The precursors and signs of the pending evolution and spread of Traditional Salafism in Jordan were indeed emerging, especially after al-Albani permanently settled in Jordan in 1980.⁶⁹ As a result, in 1982, and due to pressure and lobbying from the Muslim Brotherhood, an attempt was made to exile al-Albani from Jordan after he succeeded in attracting a group of young men who had begun to attend his lessons regularly. However, a mediation effort put forth by Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, who was close to certain decision-makers, was critical in reversing the decision. Sheikh al-Albani was allowed to remain in Jordan but only on the condition that he would no longer conduct public lessons or lectures. Al-Albani indeed abided by this restriction up until the time of his death.

By the early 1980s, indeed, the seeds of the concrete manifestations of Conservative Salafism began to emerge. A circle of new young men flocked to Sheikh al-Albani, the most important of these new students included Abdel Fattah Omar, Marwan al-Qaissi, Ali al-Halaby, Wafiq al-Naddaf, Salim al-Hillali, Murad Shukri, Shacker al-A'arouri, Ahmad al-Kuwaiti, Hussein al-'Ouaisheh and Abu Leila Mohammad Ahmad (who also became al-Albani's deputy). Abu Leila recorded and documented all of al-Albani's lessons, lectures and *fatwas*. Joining this group later

were Omar Mahmoud Abu Omar (also known as Abu Qatada al-Falastini, who would later change tacks and who soon became one of the most prominent theorists of Jihadi Salafism in the world) and Mashhoor Hassan Salman, amongst others.⁷⁰

With all that, Salafism in itself was limited in its proliferation and expansion. The other Islamist groups were more organized and more widespread, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, which also enjoyed warm and friendly relations with the regime during this period. At the same time, Conservative Salafism was not presenting or offering itself as a “group” or “movement”. In fact, in their approach or *manhaj*, they adopted the principle that establishing organizations, groups, parties or even charitable associations, was unsanctified and heretical. They considered themselves a “tendency” or “current”, which represented Islam itself, based on the premise that “purification and education” was the only proper means and methodology for affecting and bringing about change.

In the meantime, the Salafists busied themselves and focused their attention on the matter of whether or not other Islamist groups were actually legitimate. The Muslim Brotherhood got the lion’s share of this Salafist “attention”. Indeed, the Salafists did not hold back in their vilification of the Brotherhood and targeted the organization with criticism and accusations of “innovation”.

The question of which group was the legitimate representative and voice of Islam was the predominant theme of the majority of the debate that took place during this particular period. Indeed, all the Islamist groups were striving to prove and establish themselves as the sole, legitimate representative of Islam. They all tried to monopolize the claim that they were the group of “salvation” or the “victorious sect”. It was during this particular period that Conservative Salafism began to take on a definite shape and form, and began to spread throughout the different areas in the country.

The majority of the followers and constituents of Salafism came from the working classes and from the more impoverished and economically, politically and socially marginalized communities in the country. The majority of them were also of Palestinian origin, as the spread of Salafism was concentrated in the more wretched Palestinian refugee camps, slums and outskirts of cities – particularly the city of Zarqa, which, until this day, remains the main breeding ground for Salafism in Jordan.

Furthermore, due to its rigid ideological nature, Salafism was constantly subject to rifts and schisms. Members leaving this ideological framework, while others joined it, became a never-ending phenomenon in an ongoing cycle of rupture and secession. But, despite this volatility, Conservative Salafism was able to maintain relative coherence under the leadership of its founder, Sheikh al-Albani, who was accepted by all as the ultimate reference and decision-maker when it came to resolving or ending a doctrinal, religious or organizational conflict.

In 1991, the Second Gulf War took the region by storm. Iraq's entry into Kuwait had immense ramifications on the fundamental premises presented by Salafism, in all its theoretical orientations and practical applications. This was furthered by transformations in the international balance of power after the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan and the subsequent collapse of Socialism, the return of the "Afghan Arabs" and the advent of the age of globalization. All these important factors contributed to the profound, structural transformations that would take place in the Salafist tendency on a local, regional and global scale. These transformations led to a new process of vetting and polarization, which crystallized into new forms of fragmented Salafisms in the historic stronghold of Wahhabi Salafism in Saudi Arabia – and which cast a heavy pall over all the forms of Salafism in the Arab world, in general, and in Jordan, in particular.⁷¹

However, despite the Salafist fragmentation in its traditional stronghold, Saudi Arabia, the Traditional Salafists in Jordan, under the leadership of Sheikh al-Albani, maintained relative independence. Sheikh al-Albani's strict postures and his scholarly abilities were strong enough to maintain the cohesion of the group. And, events would reveal how difficult it was to use him for political ends. For example, despite the prevailing pressures at that time, he issued a *fatwa* where he ruled that it was an obligation to fight the Americans in the Gulf War (then) and that the use of foreign troops to expel Iraq from Kuwait was prohibited in his opinion.⁷² Sheikh al-Albani's independence would prove itself several times after that. And, it proved very difficult for anyone to attempt to employ his *fatwas* politically.

Perhaps, Sheikh al-Albani's most famous, or infamous, *fatwa* was that which called on the Palestinians to leave the lands of Palestine (as it was now a *dar kufr*⁷³), regardless of the official (Jordanian) policy of maintaining a consistent and stern position on the controversial issue of the "surrogate homeland".⁷⁴ Indeed, this *fatwa* caused widespread indignation in the Islamic world – and subsequently, al-Albani tried to modify and amend this *fatwa* more than once.⁷⁵

3.2 The Second Gulf War and the Emergence of Conflicting Salafisms

The throes of the Second Gulf War led to the introduction of a diverse array of Salafisms into Jordan with the return of more than 300,000 Jordanian citizens from various Arab Gulf States, and particularly Kuwait. Indeed, these Gulf state returnees brought with them all sorts of "hybrid" Salafisms that previously had not existed or had not had a presence in Jordanian society.

During the Second Gulf War, an attempt was made to establish the first group of Reform Salafists in Jordan by a group of young men led by Omar Mahmoud Abu Omar (Abu Qatada al-Falastini) under the name *Haraket Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaa'ah* (The Movement of the People of the Sunna and the Jamaa'ah). The group began to issue a publication entitled "al-Manar". The title chosen for their publication had great significance as it was named after the most famous Reform Salafist magazine in the Islamic world founded by Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Rida (which remained in print from 1899-1935).

But, that organizational attempt did not last long as Abu Qatada decided to leave the country. He moved to Malaysia where his new ideological choices began to develop. His new resolve and postures led him to Pakistan's Peshawar, after which he finally decided to settle in London. In the meantime, Jihadi Salafism was on the brink of announcing its presence in Jordan through the work of several groups and collectives such as *Jaish Mohammad* (Mohammad's Army), *Afghan al-Arab* (the Afghani Arabs) and later, *Bay'et al-Imam* (the Allegiance to the Imam group). Issam al-Barqawi, who is better known as Abu Mohammad al-Makdessi, who moved back to Jordan from Kuwait after the Second Gulf War, played a fundamental role in developing the Jihadi current.

The year 1993 was witness to another attempt of reviving Reform Salafism with the establishment of the charitable association called *Al-Kitab wal Sunnah* (The Book and the Sunna Association), which tried to make a distinction between its posture and that of Conservative and Jihadi Salafism by combining its Reform Salafist identity with components from Jihadi, Conservative and Harakiyya Salafism. It succeeded in attracting a group of young men and issued a magazine entitled "*al-Qibla*". But, the association was harassed and its efforts thwarted by the state and by the Conservative Salafists. The embittering experience this group suffered led to the withdrawal of many of its members, who then found alternatives that were more promising in other Salafist currents. And despite the fact that it has survived and sustained itself until this day, its role and influence has been further and significantly weakened in the recent past.

Another of the major currents of Salafisms that emerged after the Second Gulf War was Harakiyya Salafism. The returnees from the Arab Gulf States, and particularly Kuwait, clearly contributed to the development of this form of Salafism. It included a number of teachers and sheikhs such as Dr. Mohammad Abu Arhim, Dr. Khaled al-Hayek, Abu Qutaiba Mohammad Abdel Aziz, Ihsan Ayyesh and Abu Talha Jamal al-Basha, amongst others.

Indeed, and in general, the debate during this period amongst Salafists focused on a series of issues and questions that were raised by the Gulf War experience, such as organized and group activism and the legality of such forms of organization and work; what is faith, Islam, and *kufur*;⁷⁶ the fundamental notion of *al-Hakimiyya*; the notion of “obedience to the (legal/political) guardians”; and, last but not least, the issue of jihad.⁷⁷

Furthermore, allegiance to Sayyed Qutub, his followers and his school of thought became a focal point in differentiating the various Salafisms from one another. Indeed, during this period, tens of books, letters and critiques that were published dealt with these core issues, which were the subject of great debate between the different followers of the various forms of Salafisms in the Arab world, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

Despite all of the afore-mentioned, Conservative Salafism remained relatively cohesive during the lifetime of Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani. But, after his death in 1999, evident differences and latent polarities came to surface; and the idea of “pluralistic” or “multiple” Salafisms became a fact of reality.

3.3 The Post-Albani Era: Bolstering Relations with the State in the Confrontation with Other Islamists

The year 2001 was a focal point in the institutionalization of Conservative Salafism in Jordan. The project to establish the Imam al-Albani Center was completed that year by Salim al-Hillali, Ali al-Halaby, Mashhoor Hassan Salman, Mohammad Mousa Naser and Hussein al-'Ouaisheh. The events of September 11 contributed to strengthening the ties and relations between Sheikh al-Albani's successors, or those known in some circles as the "Albani Caliphs", and certain official state institutions – particularly the security apparatus, which oversaw the security portfolio related to Islamist movements.

These strengthened connections and bonds with the Conservative Salafists bolstered state policy during the period, which would become known as the "War on Terror". The state linked up with the Traditional Conservatives in order to fight the Jihadi Salafists, and to deal more effectively with the Harakiyya Salafists and other politically motivated and involved Islamist movements, and at their fore, the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Imam al-Albani Center attracted many influential members such as Dr. 'Assem al-Qaryiouti, Dr. Bassem al-Jawabirah, Akram Ziadeh and Ziad al-Abadi as well as a group of Egyptian Conservative Salafists, who resided in Jordan, such as Abu Islam Saleh Taha and Abu al-Yusr Ahmad al-Khashab.

During this particular phase, Conservative Salafism enjoyed a period of unprecedented support and protection. They also enjoyed a large presence in a wide array of televised media. Numerous satellite stations promoting this particular current suddenly appeared such as the *al-Athar* (The Impact) station, *al-Nass* (The People's) station and *al-Rahmeh* (The Mercy) station, amongst others. Thousands of sites and forums proliferated in the infinite platform of electronic space on the World Wide Web.⁷⁸

3.4 Dividing Lines and Splintering Paths

The strict and rigid nature of the Salafist ideology and the marginalized, socio-economic composition of the majority of the following of Conservative Salafism in itself imposed problematic and complex challenges for the movement. The current is constantly under threat by a never-ending series of rifts, conflicts, divisions, polarization and the taking of sides. Indeed, and in parallel to the Conservative Salafists' ongoing war and struggle with other Islamist groups, there is always a fierce power struggle and vehement war raging between the members inside the movement, who continue to fight over influence, benefits and gains.

The dividing lines, splintering paths and struggle that continue to take place within the movement have been and remain over two major issues in the current: The first is the question of who will represent the Conservative Salafists; and, second is the question of the betrayal of their scholarly and social function as a movement.

The question and struggle over representation vehemently emerged between the two sides after the death of the current's founding sheikh, Nasruddin al-Albani. One side of this conflict emerged out of the initiative made to establish the Imam al-Albani Center in 2001 and included: Ali al-Halaby, Salim al-Hillali, Mashhoor Salman and Mohammad Mousa Naser, amongst others. The other side included Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra and others.

The members of the Imam al-Albani Center issued a series of *fatwas* that accused Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra of having Jihadi Salafist leanings, and that he supported Harakiyya Salafism and its pioneer, Sayyed Qutub.⁷⁹ Sheikh Shaqra responded to these claims with counter accusations that the “*al-Asala*” magazine had deviated from the *manhaj* of *Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaa'ah* (The People and Followers of the Sunna) and had betrayed the *manhaj* set forth by Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani.⁸⁰

The ongoing debate over which side was the true representative of Salafism became one of the most important battlegrounds and became the frontline of the verbal and media war that took place between the warring parties. For, being close to Harakiyya Salafism was not acceptable, and defending Sayyed Qutub was forbidden, and praising Qutub or having any affiliation with him or his school of thought was considered aberrant.⁸¹

Jordanian Conservative Salafists themselves were not safe from these allegations when it came to the brothers in Traditional-Conservative Salafism based in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. Even Ali al-Halaby, himself, was accused in the recent past of these same offenses after he published a book entitled, “*Manhaj Al-Salaf al-Saleh*” (“The Clear and Manifest Way of the Righteous Predecessors”).⁸² Indeed, he was accused of belonging to the school of thought represented by Harakiyya Salafism, and of praising and bestowing flattery upon its followers and representatives in Egypt such as Abu Is’haq al-Huwaini, Mohammad Hassan, Mohammad Hussein Yaakoub; and Harakiyya Salafists in Morocco such as Abdul Rahman al-Mughrawi; and in Yemen, people such as Abu al-Hassan al-Ma’aribi, notwithstanding other Salafist collectives such as the following charitable societies and associations, *Jamiat Ihia al-Turath al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic Heritage Revival Society) in Kuwait and the *Al-Bir* (The Goodwill) Foundation in the United Arab Emirates. The latter were considered by Traditional Salafists as being charitable foundations that were Qutubian in nature or run by Qutubians, who followed the approach of the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood.⁸³

The verbal war between the two sides over who was the legitimate representative of Conservative Salafism was marked by an unparalleled level of abusive language, which reflected their general ideological inflexibility and a fear of losing some of the interests and benefits that were associated with being the successor of Sheikh al-Albani in the movement. In the process of trying to strip the other side of its legitimacy, accusations of financial theft and theft of intellectual rights became widespread and commonplace while trying to prove the ethical and intellectual

betrayal of the other side. Indeed, there is a rich bibliography documenting this struggle, which was printed and published on the internet. Even the internet itself became yet another field for waging this fierce battle.⁸⁴

Despite attempts to cover up certain practices, allegations of financial theft began to surface in Jordan. Indeed, this issue could no longer be contained when the representatives of the Imam al-Albani Center recently published a memorandum confirming that there were thefts of money donated to outside organizations such as the *Ihya al-Turath* (Reviving the Heritage) foundation, as well as evidence of embezzlement of donations made by individual benefactors. They further claimed that the individual who carried out these thefts was Salim al-Hillali, which led to a denouncement of his character and his dismissal from the movement.⁸⁵ Mohammad Mousa Naser wrote a very aggressive article entitled, “*Ith Inba’atha ‘Ashiqaha*” (“And the Wayward are Dispersed”).⁸⁶ In the same vein, Akram Ziadeh would also write an article entitled, “*Fassad al-Salafi La Fassad al-Salafiyya*” (“The Corrupt Salafist and not a Corrupt Salafism”).⁸⁷

In fact, some of Conservative Salafism’s most prominent personalities came from impoverished and economically marginalized classes, and were clearly able to improve their financial situation after joining the movement – which may help explain some of the attraction of the movement and its proliferation amongst the more destitute classes.

The afore-mentioned crisis also reflected the decentralized nature of the movement, despite the existence of the Imam al-Albani Center, which represented a sort of central institution or focal point for the Conservative Salafists. Indeed, the movement’s preferred methodology and working structure was that of the “sheikh system”, which is based on a repetition of a simple, cellular grouping of a sheikh and his students or disciples. However, this kind of decentralized system is also highly susceptible and subject to unremitting waves of divisions, continuous conflict and constant splintering, which ultimately leads to allegations, counter accusations and serious ruptures and breaches.



Part 4:
The Conservative Salafist Ideology:
The Strategy of “Purification and
Education” in Bringing About Change

Although Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani was actually imprisoned in Syria for several months, the reasons for his incarceration were not directly political. Al-Albani did not delve into the domain of politics, nor did he involve himself in theorizing or speculating on political issues, with the exception of relatively few *fatwas*, which he issued only after being asked to elaborate on specific subjects (These *fatwas* are documented and available on several taped recordings of al-Albani).

Al-Albani's ideological outlook and vision evolved into a more comprehensive, consistent and mature form after he moved to Jordan in the early 1980s. This ideological maturity was accompanied at the same time with a wide dissemination of al-Albani's speeches, sermons and general discourse by way of taped recordings, magazines and books written by him and his followers, not only throughout Jordan but outside the country as well.

In general, the Conservative Salafist ideology in its "Albanian form" was founded upon the fundamental principle of "a return to Islam" – and a return to the first form of Islam, which was still pure and before it became "contaminated" by "both antiquated and modern vagaries, whims and innovations". Conservative Salafism was also grounded in the idea of working towards building a strong, solid foundation for this "return to Islam", which focused on the individual and not the collective in society, as was the case with the more institutionalized Islamist groups, structured organizations or parties – indeed, the latter forms of working structures were ones that al-Albani had already ruled against, forbade and rejected as *haram*.⁸⁸

Almost certainly, the circumstances and conditions surrounding his relocation to Jordan, and the fact that he was to become permanently settled there helped in transforming his version of Conservative Salafism into a school of thought that was more “appeasing”, “conciliatory” and “passive” when it came to dealing with the state and local authorities. In any case, his vision for how to bring about “change and reform” was based on purifying and re-educating society. This would eventually lead to the required end of establishing an Islamic state anyway; and this inevitable evolution, towards this “ultimate end”, did not require a confrontation with the prevailing authorities in the meantime. It also did not require any questioning of the legitimacy of the current authorities – as the ultimate aim would take place, with time, despite the current state of affairs.

The latter is the overall philosophy that is often reiterated and presented under the general heading of “objectives of the Salafist *da’wa*”. It also emanates out of most of the major headlines found on the covers of all the magazines and publications issued by Sheikh al-Albani’s followers. For example, the “*al-Asala*” magazine preaches, “to present realistic Islamic solutions to the contemporary problems of these modern times, to strive for the resumption of a mature, orthodox Islamic life based on the Prophetic *manhaj*, to establish a Godly society, and to apply the principle of *al-Hakimiyya* on earth based on the *manhaj* of ‘purification and education’.”

4.1 The Intellectual Foundations of the Conservative Salafist Discourse

The major broad lines that delineate the scholarly discourse of the “Albanian” Conservative Salafists are taken almost directly from the discourse presented by *Ahl al-Hadith*, who, for the Salafists, represent the genesis and the point of origin in Islam. Therefore, *Ahl al-Hadith* are also considered by the Conservative Salafists as representing the first source of reference and precedence

when it came to matters of the Islamic faith, creed, ethics and behavior. And, to properly and strictly “follow” the model and precedence set by *Ahl al-Hadith* one was required to commit and be true to this “pure line”, which was also representative of the proper, pure and true Islam – an Islam which is far and free from the intrusion of customs and traditions, innovations and sectarian indoctrination.⁸⁹

Sheikh al-Albani’s scholarship had a definitive bias towards *Ahl al-Hadith* that was clearly reflected in his writings and in his *fatwas*. His religious consciousness conformed wholly to *Ahl al-Hadith*, a current which emerged at the turn of the 3rd century (AH) in response and in opposition to *Ahl al-Rai*. *Ahl al-Rai* was a parallel and counter current, which emerged at that same time, which adopted a rational *manhaj*, based on a reading and interpretation of the texts of the *Sharia* using human reason. Indeed, *Ahl al-Hadith* viewed the approach and *manhaj* taken by *Ahl al-Rai* as being a tremendous threat to the Islamic identity, and as a clear deviation from Islam in its pure form.

According to al-Albani, the Salafist creed in its ultimate form is summarized in “a submission and surrendering” to the texts of the Book and the Sunna⁹⁰, to accept these texts in literal form without further construction, interpretation or innovation, and that the fundamentals are three: the Book, the Sunna and the unity of the *umma*. For al-Albani, *Ahl al-Qibla*⁹¹ are faithful Muslims. No one had “the right to *takfir*⁹² any member of *Ahl al-Qibla*, without lawful justification or the legal right to do so. For him, Salafism was based on the belief that the religion before God is Islam, and that Islam is the median between *al-ghulou* (overdoing something, the extreme) and *al-taqseer* (not doing enough, negligence), as well as between *al-tashbih* and *al-ta’hil*,⁹³ and between *al-jabr* (that which has been forced upon you) and *al-qadr* (that which is predestined for you by God).

Finally, Islam was innocent of all that is whimsical and Islam was innocent of all the sects in breach of Islam such as the Mushbiha,⁹⁴ the Mu'tazila, the Jahmis, the Jabriyya⁹⁵ and Qadiris."⁹⁶

The ideological outlook that was the driving force behind al-Albani's discourse and consequently, that of the Conservative Salafists, can be delineated within the framework of the following major attributes and principle characteristics:

- A concentration or focus on the (holy) texts to a much greater degree than on the mind (or rational thinking, rationalization); a commitment to a traditional reading of religious texts; and a rejection of modern readings and new interpretations of these texts. It is a "literal" or "doctrinal" "discourse" (or "school" so to speak), par excellence.
- Creating theological links between political posturing and thinking, and faith and creed in relation to current events; indeed, "faith and creed" occupy an immense part of this current's discourse and thinking, which is why its discourse is so rigid and inflexible and why Conservative Salafism is limited in its doctrinal ability to maneuver, negotiate and compete with the intellectual, doctrinal postures and discourses of other currents and sects.
- A unipolarity and narrow outlook in its doctrinal, juridical and intellectual vision coupled with an aversion to and often complete rejection of plurality or diversity. What reinforces this particular attribute of Conservative Salafism is one of the major premises of its discourse, which is "There is only one truth; and, it is indivisible". The rejection of plurality and diversity takes on a further critical and often ominous dimension, which is embodied by their religious posture that regards the "other" as contravening, deviating and straying from the righteous path and of (Islamic) law. The "other" is, therefore, viewed as being subject to severe and harsh earthly and heavenly penalties or punishment – all of which makes it

very difficult for the Conservative Salafists to find a “common ground” in which to meet and interact with the “other”.

- The latter characteristic is embodied by the constant presence of religious, scholarly and historical conflict in the discourse of the Traditional Salafist ideology, which then impresses itself and reflects upon its struggle with contemporary realities on the ground and upon its conflict with other parties and political forces. Subsequently, the relationship between Traditional Salafists and other Islamist parties and groups, and even secular groups, is of a sharply provocative and confrontational nature.

Al-Albani’s strict, rigid and stern view of other Islamists and Islamist groups is clearly highlighted in the following statement, “The only remedy is a return to the religion. But, this religion – as everyone knows, and particularly religious scholars and jurists – is wrought with the most extreme of disputes. And, this dispute or conflict is not – as many writers or religious scholars would think – confined to a few, peripheral issues, as they would claim. This conflict, indeed, extends itself to matters of faith and creed. For, there is great disagreement and a dispute between al-Asha’ariyyah⁹⁷ and al-Maturidiyyah;⁹⁸ and there is a conflict between these Mu’tazilah, as well as others. And, all of them are considered or deemed Muslims [like us]; or, all of them are subject to the Hadith that says, *‘God has cast a shadow upon all of you, which He shall not cast off until all of you return to your religion’*... It is therefore that I find that any reform – which must be carried out by the callers to Islam, and those loyally and faithfully calling forth for the establishment of an Islamic state – requires a return, first, to understanding themselves, and second, for the *umma* to understand the religion that was brought forth by the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) – a task than can be achieved by no means other than studying the Book and the Sunna.”⁹⁹

4.6 The Politics of Islamization: From the Individual to Society... then the State

The Conservative Salafist's perception and knowledge of their socio-economic environment combined with their understanding of Islam as a religion helped produce an idyllic concept and strategy for "reforming" the dysfunctions inherent in the modern Islamic world. This Conservative Salafist notion was presented under the idyllic heading of "purification and education". Indeed, this phrase has enjoyed a special distinction and has come to have a heavy presence in the lexicon of the full range of the Conservative Salafist discourse. The idea of "purification and education" also carries with it certain implicit political significations as, according to this "strategy", there is only "one path" to bringing about a revival and renaissance in the Islamic world, in its modern reality; and, only "one path" to the resumption of the Islamic way of life; and only "one path" to achieving the ultimate aim of establishing the Islamic state (the Caliphate).

The principle of "purification and education" is founded on the rationale that the "secret behind the contemporary decadence" of the modern world, according to al-Albani, was the direct outcome of society's deviation from Islam. Consequently, it was imperative to respect, commit to and faithfully follow Islam.

Therefore, the *manhaj* of "purification and education" soon became the cornerstone for the ideological construct and framework upon which Jordanian Conservative Salafism was founded. Of course, this *manhaj* is a derivative of the also fundamental principle of Tarikhiya Salafism, which is summarized in the simple statement of "*al-Itba'a la al-Ibtida'a*" ("following and not innovating"). Indeed, the theory of "purification", according to Sheikh al-Albani, cannot materialize or succeed except by exposing the *bida'a* or innovations that have contaminated the true faith; and it cannot crystallize until they have acted against these innovations, cast them off and purged society of the damage and ills they have caused.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, the majority of al-Albani's writings – whether they were books, letters or essays – were replete with pleas “urging for a strict following of the religion, and the abandonment of all *bida'a*.” This entreaty was grounded in al-Albani's firm conviction that the direct cause of the backwardness, decline and decadence of the modern Islamic world was the presence of sects, which were of *Ahl al-Bida'a* (“The Innovators”) and of the fabricators, who have distorted the pure form of faith and worship in Islam. And, for al-Albani, at the fore of these sects of “Innovators” or *Ahl al-Bida'a* were *Ahl al-Rai*. The “virtuous” were only those who followed or represented the *Salaf al-Saleh*. And, those who followed or represented the *Salaf al-Saleh* were *Ahl al-Hadith* – these were the true representatives of the “victorious sect” who have faithfully upheld that which was sent forth by the Prophet Mohammad and His *Sahaba* (May Peace Be upon Them).

Sheikh al-Albani promotes and reinforces the concept of “purification and education” as follows: “Educators must take on the task of cultivating and raising the new Muslim according to what was sent forth by the Book and the Sunna. We must not call upon the people to follow inherited concepts and incorrect notions – some of which are understood as definitively false by the *umma*, and some of which have caused serious disagreement amongst them. Indeed, there are many forms of *ijtihad*,¹⁰¹ points of view and opinions about these matters; and, indeed, some of this *ijtihad* and some of these opinions contradict the Sunna. Thus, after purging the religion of these matters and clarifying what it is that must be initiated and what it is that must be sustained, we must educate and cultivate a new generation based on this proper and sound scholarship. And, this education and cultivation is what shall reap, for us, a pure, uncontaminated Islamic society; and thereby establish, for us, the Islamic state. Without these two introductions, ‘sound scholarship’ and ‘proper education based on sound scholarship’, it is my belief that it will be impossible for the Islamic agenda to succeed, or for Islamic rule or the Islamic state to come about.”¹⁰²

He continues to say that the cornerstone of “purification and education” is proper and diligent religious scholarship, because “the key to returning to the glory of Islam is the application of useful knowledge and to engage in good, righteous work. This is what is venerated; this is what is admirable. Muslims cannot reach this goal except through the *manhaj* of ‘purification and education’ and, this will not take place until, firstly, the following obligations are fulfilled:

First: Purging the Islamic faith of that which is foreign to it, such as *al-shirk*, or denying the divine character or interpreting the attributes of the divine; and restoring the Hadith to its proper and righteous connection with and place in the faith.

Second: Purging Islamic *fiqh* or jurisprudence of all *ijtihad* or rationalizations that are incorrect and that contravene the Book and the Sunna; and liberating minds from the influence of inherited rituals, customs, traditions, and from the darkness of fanaticism.

Third: Purging all texts and treatises on matters of interpretation and jurisprudence, as well as other such texts, of any weak or extrinsic Hadith, and of any *Israeliyyat* (influences or that which was extrinsically applied from the Jewish scriptures) or *munkirat* (things that have been forbidden, prohibited or deemed unacceptable by the Book and the Sunna).

And, the final obligation is: To educate, cultivate and rear the new Muslim generations in this Islam, which has been purged of all that was aforementioned... an Islamic education and cultivation that is proper and true, from the earliest moments of their childhood (“when their nails are still soft”), without any of the influences of the pagan Western education or contamination by the pagan Western way of life.¹⁰³

In Conservative Salafism, there is no other means, no other path but that of “purification and education” to achieving the ultimate goal, the Islamic state.

Indeed, Al-Albani excludes any other strategy that does not follow or employ the process of “purification and education”, or in other words – the “Islamization of society” – in establishing the Islamic state. The “purification and education” or “Islamization” of society cannot be achieved by engaging directly in politics, either by way of political participation (democratically, as this is considered an individualistic process) or by way of revolution, because these are all instruments and means, which are considered fabrications and innovations that have been imposed on the way and approach – or the *manhaj* – advocated by the Prophet (May Peace Be upon Him).

According to the theory of “purification and education”, the process of re-Islamization of society must operate on several, parallel external and domestic levels. The first level is “purification”, which involves: Firstly, to bring about reform and change through the purification and purging of the Islamic faith from all that has intruded upon it, and all that is strange to it, such as *al-shirk*, or denying the divine character or interpreting the attributes of the divine, or falsifying the Prophet’s true Hadith, or employing and exploiting weak Hadith; and secondly, to purge Islamic *fiqh* or jurisprudence of all *ijtihad* or rationalizations that are incorrect or contravene the Sunna, and all interpretation influenced by the *Israeliyyat* (influences or that which was extrinsically applied from the Jewish scriptures) and deviance.¹⁰⁴

In case that this “purification” does not happen immediately or take place, at least education can work towards purifying the Islamic identity from the deviance, which has come about as an outcome of imitating the ways and education of the pagan West. According to al-Albani, their duty was to “raise and cultivate the next generation in this Islam, purged of all the aforementioned, by providing a proper Islamic education to the new generation from

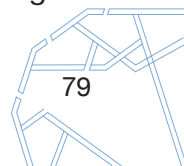
as early as the time ‘when their nails are still soft’, and ensuring there are no pagan Western influences in their education and in their upbringing.”¹⁰⁵

An obsession with identity also appears to have a strong presence in the Conservative Salafist discourse. The narcissistic wound of identity has become a force in the movement’s discourse, which is seeking out a “pure” identity – an imagined identity, as it has never before been attained in history, but rather in the minds of some. This proposed identity concentrates on an education and upbringing from the earliest age, or as often stated in their discourse, “When the nails of children are still soft”. This way, the offspring of Conservative Salafism would never be touched by outside Western and thus, pagan influences, or by the deviant education and upbringing of internal forces such as other Islamist groups and sects, which they classify as misguided groups and sectarian influences gone astray – or, “doomed sects.”

The challenge of identity is considered one of the most difficult and most important obstacles that stand before the task of establishing an Islamic state. The issue of identity is perceived as being one of the major factors that led to the collapse of the Caliphate system. For, according to al-Albani, “it is obvious that a *da’wa* such as this would be impossible to uphold after the intrusion of that which does not belong to it by the intrigues made against the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) in the alleged name of the ‘Hadith’, and by the intrigues that have befallen the various explanations made of the Qur’an in the alleged name of ‘interpretation’. Therefore, serious, scholarly efforts must be made to purge the aforementioned references from all that which has intruded upon them, in order to allow for the purification of Islam from all these different ideas, opinions and doctrines, which have become so proliferate amongst Islamic groups and sects – and even those amongst them that belong to the Sunna. And, it is my belief that any *da’wa*, which does not emanate from this proper, purifying process and foundation, will find that it will not be destined for a success that is worthy of this God’s immortal religion.”¹⁰⁶

Thus, all other *manhaj*s followed by the other Islamist groups and movements were sentenced to failure due to their inability to achieve the proper and right conditions required for the Islamic revival and reform. This judgment was further endorsed by the fact that all these groups and movements were tainted by the *bida'a* or innovations, which contradicted the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. Sheikh al-Albani says, “There is a great conflict taking place between all the Islamic movements that exist in this field today – this field of reform –, all of whom are involved in the efforts being made to resurrect the Islamic way of life, bring about a return to an Islamic life, and to reestablish an Islamic state. It is with great regret that I say that these different groups are in a very sharp disagreement over the starting point of reform. We disagree with all the other Islamic groups on this point. We see that one must simultaneously commence with purification and education. But to begin with political matters...! Those who busy themselves in politics will find their faith and creed in desolate ruin. And, their actions and behavior from an Islamic standpoint is far from what is considered legitimate and lawful by Islam. These groups raise their voices in the call for divine governance and sovereignty, and that governance must be only with that which was set forth by God... And, of course, these are words of truth. But as the saying goes, ‘He, who does not have, cannot give’. Thus, if the majority of Muslims today do not, in themselves, live according to the laws of divine governance and sovereignty, but ask others to live according to the rule of God in their countries; then, they cannot possibly achieve success in this lofty goal... For those who do not have, cannot give.”¹⁰⁷

With this *manhaj* at hand, al-Albani waged a relentless campaign against contemporary Islamist groups and movements for their engagement in the political arena and in the field of economics. He says in the course of his criticism of the latter, “The bulk of their attention appears to be geared towards Islamic ethics, while those amongst them appear to work on nothing more than educating their followers in politics and in economics... And, it is towards this end that most of their writers talk about today. With that, they all claim they are striving for an Islamic society, and for establishing Islamic rule... I wish it were so... I wish it were so!”



Sheikh al-Albani sets the foundation of his *manhaj* of “purification and education” on the notion of the “surviving party” (or, those who allegedly possess the religious truth in Traditional Salafism). He justifies this *manhaj* on the conviction that the “victorious sect”, which is referred to in the Prophet’s Hadith, is actually *Ahl al-Hadith*. It is *Ahl al-Hadith*, who represent the purity of Islam... an Islam purged of the deviance and the distortion that were brought forth by all those who hail from the “doomed” parties, sects and factions.

In the midst of one of his declarations, al-Albani affirms what he considers is the core definition of the emerging, “victorious sect”, through an explanation he makes on the following Hadith, “*There is a sect amongst my umma that remains true, until the hour of reckoning*”. Al-Albani sees the “rising” sect or “surviving” sect, as being *Ahl al-Hadith* because:

Firstly, by virtue of their focus and specialization in the study of the Sunna, *Ahl al-Hadith* were, without exception, the most learned and knowledgeable in the Prophet’s Sunna, His guidance, His ethics, His battles and all that is connected to Him (May Peace Be upon Him).

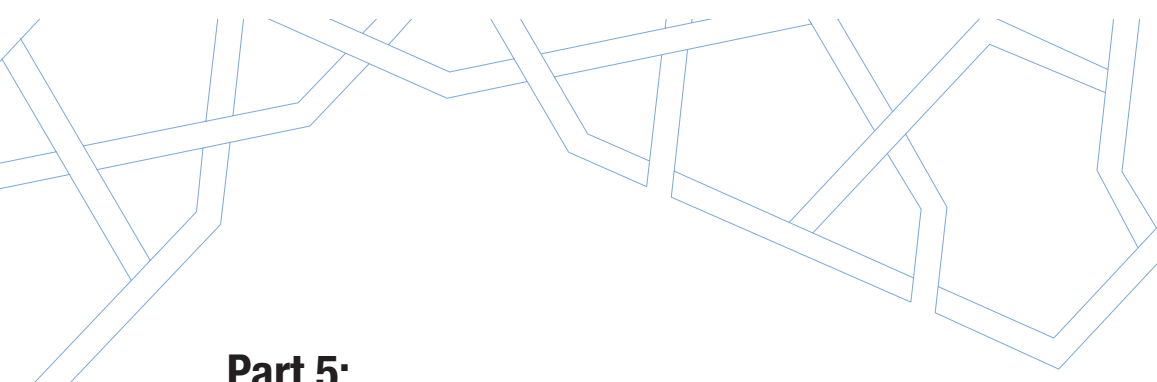
Secondly, the *umma* was divided into many groups and sects, which did not exist in the first century (Hijri); and each of these sects has its own particular origins, branches and Hadith upon which they depend for guidance. The individual who belongs to any one of these sects, is prejudiced and loyal to his sect, and upholds all that comes forth from within his sect... whereas, *Ahl al-Hadith* are not as such; for, they take every Hadith as derived from its rightful source and in its original reference regardless of the sect.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, Sheikh al-Albani places all the contemporary Islamist groups in the same category as the “doomed parties or sects” due to their misguided faith. According to him, “It is evident to every Muslim, who is learned in the Book, the Sunna

and in our *Salaf al-Saleh* (May God's Blessings Be Upon Them), that factionalism and clustering into groups are, firstly, based on differences in ways of thinking and of ideas, and secondly in differences in *manhaj* and in approach. There is no Islam in this but that which God Almighty forbade in more than one verse in the Holy Qur'an, in one of which He states, "*Do not be amongst the idolaters, [or] amongst those who have broken the unity of their faith and have become sects, each group exalting (rejoicing) in but what they themselves hold.*"¹⁰⁹ And God Almighty states, "*If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one people: but they will not cease to dispute. Except those on whom thy Lord hath bestowed His Mercy: and for this did He create them...*"¹¹⁰ For God, the Almighty and the Exalted, excluded or prohibited this controversy, which does exist on an earthly basis but which is still deemed unlawful; and He thus excluded the blessed community when He said, "*Except those on whom thy Lord hath bestowed His Mercy...*"¹¹¹

Al-Albani's *manhaj* set off widespread reactions amongst other Islamist groups and movements as well as amongst a wide circle of Islamic jurists, thinkers and scholars. Several individuals from the Jihadi Salafist current published dozens of books and essays responding critically to al-Albani's *manhaj*, as did individuals from the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir and dozens of other Islamic jurists, scholars and thinkers such as Sheikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah, Mohammed Sa'id Ramadan al-Bouti, Mohammad al-Ghazali, amongst others.¹¹² The vast majority of the criticism directed at Sheikh al-Albani revolved around the issue of al-Albani being a *muhadeth*, or an individual specialized in the study of the Prophet's Hadith, and not a jurist who was qualified to theorize on current events and contemporary matters. In fact, some of his opponents did not even acknowledge him or his qualifications as a *muhadeth*.

However, the followers of the school of Conservative Salafism were of the view that their *manhaj* of “purification and education” was realpolitik. And, this *manhaj* was, indeed, one that penetrated the very fabric of society, individual by individual, reforming and correcting misguided, mistaken and deviant concepts and behaviors. And, according to the Conservative Salafists and their doctrine and *manhaj*, reform had to begin with the individual; only after the individuals in society were reformed or “Islamicized” could this be transferred from society to the state.



Part 5:
An Ambiguous Policy towards Politics:
Closing the Front Door
while Keeping the Backdoor Open

As mentioned previously in this study, the Conservative Salafist vision, its *manhaj* for bringing about change and its outlook on political work and engagement were established and developed by its founding sheikh, Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, and were presented in his theory of “purification and education”.

Necessarily and as a direct result of their declared creed, these particular Salafists did not show any direct opposition to the state or question its legitimacy. Instead, they focused their attention on society and on individuals who were active within society.

Infact, Sheikhal-Albani’sstrategicoutlookwouldclearlymaterialize after the June 1967 defeat. After that war, he became of the conviction that victory and empowerment were clearly impossible without a long-term strategy and methodology for reforming and priming society and state for victory and empowerment. This conviction was further reinforced after the bloody confrontations that took place between the Islamist movements, and particularly the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, with the regime in Syria. These were all part of the critical, historical turning points that helped define the intellectual process and political course that led to the Albanist-Salafist *da’wa*, which clearly manifested in the period after al-Albani permanently settled in Jordan until his death (from 1980-1999).¹¹³

Al-Albani's vision for bringing about change and reform began to crystallize near the end of the 1970s. It was also during this same period that the Islamic world witnessed the rise of Jihadi Salafism. In Egypt, *Jamaa'at al-Jihad* (The Jihadi Group) and *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* (The Islamic Group)¹¹⁴ surfaced. In Syria, *at-Tali'a al-Mukatila* (The Fighting Vanguard) emerged from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood. And, in Afghanistan, the "Afghani Jihad" had entered into a phase where it began attracting new volunteers and members on a global scale. Finally, in Saudi Arabia, the Juhaiman Movement made its appearance.

In fact, al-Albani was actually accused of being the theoretician and spiritual mastermind of the Juhaiman Movement¹¹⁵. Consequently, al-Albani was denied entry into Saudi Arabia until further notice. Perhaps these incidents carried over to the development of al-Albani's particularly defined vision, which was founded in the principle of "purification and education" as the alternate route and means for political engagement, for establishing a state founded upon the *Sharia*, and for returning to an Islamic way of life.

Indeed, Sheikh al-Albani's form of *da'wa* prohibited direct interference and engagement in political matters. He attempted to draw an intellectual iron curtain between his form of *da'wa* and the types of organized political work and activism that he rejected outright. However, in general and despite his prohibition, in practice, al-Albani's followers indirectly engaged in politics and political matters. Indeed, they waged intellectual and political battles in lieu of the government in its confrontation with other Islamist currents.

The fact was that the Conservative Salafists closed the proverbial front door on politics and instead, engaged in the political game through the backdoor.

5.1 A Policy of Two Extremes: The Legitimacy of Islam versus the Kufr of the West

Islam, according to Sheikh al-Albani, is a self-contained religion that, in itself, is comprehensive and complete. According to him, Islam contained the definitive answers to every problem and issue that could possibly arise. Thus, Islam did not require anything extrinsic or any input from the outside in order to complete it. In his opinion, today, the problem was with the Muslims and not with Islam itself. And, Islam had been historically subjected to misrepresentations, manipulation and perversions, which distorted and disfigured the pure image it once possessed during the era of the *Sahaba* and the *Salaf al-Saleh*. For, *bida'a* and age-old social and political customs and traditions had done their work to distort Islam.

For al-Albani, there was no doubt that a return to the original “spring” or source from which Islam emerged was what was required. And, that original source was that which the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) brought forth and that was embodied by only two things: the Book and the Sunna. A return to the religion meant a return to the Book and the Sunna, because this was, by the consensus of all of the *umma*, the true religion. Finally, a return to the Book and the Sunna was the only way to safeguard the religion from deviance and distortion, and from falling into the darkness of misguided faith. Sheikh al-Albani summarized all the aforementioned by citing the Hadith in which the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) says, “*I have left amongst you two things which, if you hold fast to them, you will never stray: the Book of God, and my Sunna and they will never be separated until they have reached al-Hawd* (the place where the Prophet will stand on Judgment Day).”¹¹⁶

By virtue of a mere return to the Book and the Sunna, reform and renewal would become a *fait accompli*. But, this could not be achieved save through following the legitimate representatives of the proper and pure Islam; and, according to the Traditional

Salafists, the legitimate representatives of Islam were *Ahl al-Hadith*, who were the only true “surviving and victorious” sect – the only sect, which preserved the purity and clarity of Islam.¹¹⁷

As for the rest of the doctrinal, political and historical sects and groups such as the Mu'tazila, the Asha'ira, the Shiites, the Sufists and others like them, they are but lost or “doomed” sects.¹¹⁸ And the judgment of being guilty of *ibtida'a* (innovation) and of being doomed, having gone astray and of being misguided also applies to contemporary Islamic groups, movements and parties. It is the same even for other sects that follow the Islamic *fiqh* of the Hanafiyya, Malikiyya, Shafi'iyya and Hanbaliyya schools of thought, as well as others, who have helped reinforce divisions and fanaticism, and have helped contribute to the current state of *ibtida'a*, backwardness and disunity.¹¹⁹

Politics, according to al-Albani, is already embedded in the religion of Islam, and decreed as such by Islamic *Sharia*.¹²⁰ He emphatically stresses this point of view in his *fatwa* that says, “It is political to abandon politics.”¹²¹ And, in this, the Conservative Salafist position is close to that of the pious, purely “missionary” religious movements, such as *Jamaa'at al-Da'wa wal Tabligh*, which also do not engage directly in politics or political matters. These kinds of movements also believe that it is an aim inevitably achieved through the politics endemic in the Islamization of society. These schools of thought were all of the conviction that submerging and influencing society at the broadest, grassroots level was in itself an indispensable and requisite strategy, which must be applied prior to entering into such matters as reviving and restoring an Islamic way of life and an Islamic state.

Conservative Salafism views politics in its modern context and definition as being a Western innovation, based on a pagan principle founded in prevarication, hypocrisy and fraud. Mashhoor Hassan al-Salman sees contemporary politics as “decadent and degenerate and meant only to defraud the weak, to devour them and to kill their capacity to digest and grasp (that which is around

them), and to trick those who are still awake to sleep and, to rock the sleeping gently so that they may not awaken. Indeed, *there is no strength or power except in God.*"¹²²

It is because of this kind of understanding of modern politics that the followers of Conservative Salafism emphatically reject any description of the Salafi movement as being – in this inferior and base understanding of the meaning – a “political” movement. Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra confirms this opinion in his statement, which asserts that Salafism is “a word that, by virtue of its own innate definition, negates any meaning or significance alluding to or pointing to a political movement”.¹²³ Shaqra stresses upon their opinion of the perversion and disparaged nature of (modern) politics when he continues to say, “I do not mean the political work, which is known to all in the name of various theories and schools of thought and the deviating regimes associated to these theories and schools of thought. These have all strayed far from the requirements set by the *Sharia*. You will never see a ‘sultan’ in this new faith... In truth, this is a religion known by the name of ‘politics’... in its teachings and its culture, and in its prevarications and its falsifications.”¹²⁴

If politics, in its modern context and prevailing meaning, entailed such connotations of censure and vilification in the Traditional Salafist discourse, because of its departure from what was viewed as “legitimate politics” and what was considered “lawfully political”, then obviously, any contact with it was not permissible: “It is on this premise that engaging in political behavior, in the form in which it (modern politics) exists today, is not appropriate. There is nothing permissible in it to remove it from the domain of legal prohibitions. And, those who engage in it, sin; and, those who repent, God will forgive.”¹²⁵

Mohammad Shaqra concludes with a summary of the principles that have set the basis for establishing the Conservative Salafist outlook on politics and political work, that is: that politics and political work is, in any case, part of the general Islamic system of

governance – when there is an Islamic state that exists to protect this system. However, currently, it is considered part of the legal prohibitions and violations of the *Sharia*, because “politics” in its modern form contravenes the fundamentals of the faith and all that which comes out from within the faith.¹²⁶

The followers of the Conservative Salafist school of thought have all reached a consensus on this vision and outlook on “politics”. Ali al-Halaby views (legitimate) politics as that which exists in the “legal” form that is in accordance to the tenets of the Islamic religion. And, he finds the unrestrained, contemporary concept of what is “modern politics” as reprehensible. Thus, for him, the Salafist *da’wa* is not a political movement and it would never accept to be that.¹²⁷

However, the Conservative Salafists offer their view on what differentiates religiously legal politics from modern politics without any real critical analysis of what is contemporary politics. Mohammad Mousa Naser sees that “For the Salafists, politics is of the religion. But, the question is, which politics are we talking about? Is it the politics of newspapers, magazines and Jewish and Crusader press agencies? Or is it the politics of the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) and the politics of his *Sahaba*? Is it the politics of the democrats, who cite the pagans and say: ‘The rule of the people by the people for the people’? Or is it the politics of the people of Islam that say: ‘The rule of God Almighty by the Book of God and His Prophet’s Sunna, which is imparted by the principal of the *Shura*¹²⁸ as decreed by Islam? Is it the politics of finding the truth by the number of hands raised in a representative assembly or parliament ... even if this count is in support of that which is immoral, evil or idolatrous... or a night club or a factory in which alcohol is brewed?! Or is it the politics of: ‘there is no command or governance except by God’s rule alone and you will worship none other than Him?’¹²⁹

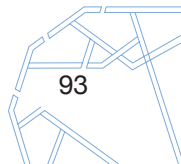
The political discourse of the Conservative Salafists can be replete with contradictions, ambiguities, allegories and metaphors. For them, politics is religiously required; but this politics is religious politics. But, contemporary politics is unbelief, hypocrisy, fraud and deception; and, modern regimes, which do not comply and apply divine governance (the rule and command of God), are considered outside of Islam. For the Conservative Salafists, today, Islam is living the greatest alienation it has ever experienced. According to Sheikh al-Albani, Muslims, today “are surrounded by infidel and pagan states, which are very powerful in their reach. They are plagued by rulers, many of whom do not rule by that which God has brought forth, with the exception of certain cases (and rules of law) that are too few, and too insignificant and ineffective.”¹³⁰

What is politics?

Al-Albani responds, “If what is meant by politics is the politics of the *umma*, then the truth is that politics is not the work of an individual amongst those that make up the *umma*, but rather it is the obligation of the Muslim state. If what is meant by politics, in its rightful meaning, is the politics of the *umma* and the administration of the affairs of the *umma* in accordance to what is most beneficial to its religious and its earthly requirements... then, this is a communal obligation. However, it is not the obligation of those individuals, who neither possess a state or power or authority or influence, and who possess neither the capacity nor possibility to benefit or harm.”¹³¹

5.2 Takfir of Democracy and Rejecting Pluralism and Electoral Processes

Democracy, according to the Conservative Salafist discourse, is an illegitimate, apostate system exported from the outside (the West), which violates and contravenes the *Sharia*. Al-Albani stresses that “democracy is by virtue of the definition accorded



to it by its authors and adherents: the rule of the people by the people for the people. And that the ‘people’ are the ultimate reference and authority. Indeed, it is exactly this matter, in point, that is in contravention of the Islamic *Sharia* and the Islamic faith because democracy is a system of *al-taghout*;¹³² and, God ordered us to declare apostate all forms of idolatry (*takfir al-taghout*). For, democracy and Islam are two contradictions that will never meet! It is either faith in God and governing by that which He brought forth to us – or faith in *al-taghout* and governing by that. All those who violate God’s *Sharia* are *kuffar* (unbelievers, infidels) and idolatrous (of *al-taghout*). Those who attempt to include it as part of the system of the Islamic *Shura* are of no consequence, because the texts of the *Shura* make no mention of this. And the ‘people of authority’ in these matters are those who are pious and of the religion; and, democracy is in violation of the religion and all that is pious and sanctioned by it, as previously noted.”¹³³

“As for the multi-party system, this is merely a ‘branch’ or corollary of the system of democracy; it is comprised of two major components: political pluralism and intellectual-doctrinal pluralism.

The significance of doctrinal pluralism is that, in the shadow of the democratic system, people have the freedom to believe in any doctrine as they see fit or desire. And, it is possible for them to leave Islam for any other faith, religion or creed – even if that creed was Jewish or Nazarene (Christian), Communist, Socialist or Secular. This, in itself, is pure *kufr*. As for political pluralism: It means opening the way for any and all parties, regardless of their beliefs or creed, to govern Muslims by way of the electoral process. This makes Muslims equal to all others; and, this, in itself, violates all the peremptory doctrine which explicitly forbids that Muslims be governed by those who are not Muslim. Finally, plurality leads to dissension, divisions, disunity and conflicts that are punishable by God.”¹³⁴

“As for the electoral process: In its democratic form, elections are *haram* (forbidden by Islamic law) and should not be allowed by any means. Legislative or representative assemblies or parliaments, which do not govern by the Book of God and His Prophet’s Sunna and, instead, govern by ‘majority rule’, are nothing but *taghout* assemblies. Thus, the Muslim must not acknowledge or recognize such assemblies much less assist in establishing them, or cooperating in making their existence possible while they wage war against God’s law (*Sharia*); and, because it is a foreign method and instrument devised by the Jews and Nazarenes (Christians) and, by law, it is not permissible to imitate them.”¹³⁵

Declaring the *takfir* of democracy, plurality and the electoral process is of the major constants and givens in the Conservative Salafist discourse. In the book, “*Madarik al-Nathar fi al-Siyasa*” (“Insightful Perspectives on Politics”), in which al-Albani wrote the introduction, the following is stated: “The electoral process is an apostate system; because it makes Muslims equal to non-Muslims and *kuffar* (unbelievers, infidels). What is even greater is that it equates Islam with the *kufr* that makes all votes equal in weight in its scales.”

“I took it upon myself to research this electoral list and platform”, (here, al-Albani means the electoral platform and list of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front) “in order to find something about ‘governing by that which was sent forth by God’ or ‘the application of Islamic *Sharia*’; but, I could not find a single word in it – not even once. Instead, I only found these soft words – which would not disturb the guardians of their parliament – such as when they would say things like ‘the Islamic project’ and the ‘Islamic cause’. In the meantime, they mention ‘the people’ and ‘the constitution’ over 47 times in a document that is only two and a half pages long! I fear that command and sovereignty are complete for them; and, there is no share for God Almighty in either. Ponder that! For, in their talk, it is all about the victory of ‘the choice of the people’ and ‘the will of the people’ and ‘the stipulations of the constitution’, and so on. God defiles this religion! It has left nothing for God,

and has turned Him into no more than an offering, a sacrifice to its *taghout*. This is the religion of democracy. And, these obscene terms come from its lexicon... a lexicon in which they have replaced revelation with desecration and within which they have debased their religion.”¹³⁶

The principle of *al-Hakimiyya*¹³⁷ is wider in meaning and in its significance in the Conservative Salafist discourse than what is generally purported by others. In Salim al-Hillali’s view, “The meaning of *al-Hakimiyya*, in the words of God and His Prophet, is wider in scope than what is generally believed or understood by most laymen, and even the partially educated, who think it solely relates to or deals with those who govern or with rulers. Meanwhile, the scope of *al-Hakimiyya* extends well beyond any one individual.”¹³⁸

Political awareness in the discourse of Conservative Salafism is understood within the context of the view taken by those who see Islam as a religion that contains within it all the answers to any or everything related to earthly issues and matters. The Conservative Salafist *manhaj* sees itself as that which represents the “surviving and victorious sect”. They see themselves as the sect responsible for and charged with protecting and preserving the Islamic identity from contamination, deviation and from its descent into oblivion. Indeed, Conservative Salafism is of the view that the modern Islamic world, which today is founded on the democratic, politically plural system, has deviated from Islam and has entered into an era of *kufr*, and has surrendered itself to *al-taghout*. In the meantime, the Albanist Salafists, with this harsh knowledge and awareness of the political reality of their day and age, have distanced themselves from directly engaging in any political work or activity. For them, what is obligatory is to work with and in society through its individuals, and far from the framework of the prevailing authorities and the state in the form in which they exist today.

Thus and based on all of the aforementioned, the strategy of the Albanist Salafists emerges from the fundamental premise of first remedying and redressing the ills of society and its masses and popular base prior to resorting to any prospects of working on official authority structures or in the state. It is based on a long-term policy that focuses its efforts on important matters and political issues by reforming the people in their doctrine and faith, in their worship, and in their dealings and relations with one another in society. In the end, according to Albanist Salafism, this strategy, based on the long-term policy of “purification and education” of society, will lead to the restoration of and return to an Islamic way of life and, that this “Islamization” of society will eventually lead to the establishment of the proper and true Caliphate state.

5.3 The Woman from the Perspective of Conservative Salafism: An All-Encompassing Rejection of “Westernization”

The Conservative Salafist perspective on women and women’s issues is grounded in quite solid foundations. Sheikh al-Albani established the parameters of this particular issue by first setting a solid base that, primarily, excluded the woman from the public realm. He specifically defined her place and her work as being confined to the framework of managing her household and to child rearing, within the context of the strategy of “purification and education”. And, although he affirmed that men and women were equal in creation, he determined that, “The righteous place for the women is to be confined to her house, based on God’s words: *“Dwell (remain) in your homes.”*¹³⁹ Indeed, the woman of the *Salaf al-Saleh* did not interfere or engage in politics.”¹⁴⁰

Traditional Salafism stressed the need for the woman to remain confined to her home. And, while affirming her equality to man in creation and in composition, they made it clear that women should not demand equality with men in their rights. Sheikh al-Albani

asked that the woman accept this and adhere to this condition, saying, “The wife does not ask, for example, to be equal to the man in all of his rights... And, specifically, a woman must obey her husband in his demands of her, to the utmost of her abilities. For, God favored men over women in two verses, which state that “*men shall take full care (are the guardians) of women...*”¹⁴¹ and “*men are a degree above them.*”¹⁴² There are several Hadith, which followed, that also confirm this.”¹⁴³

And despite the fact that Wahhabi and Conservative Salafism share this emphasis on the importance of the woman remaining confined to her home, Conservative-Albanist Salafism is more forgiving than their “brethren” in Saudi Arabia, in general, and when it came to a woman’s attire, in particular. Sheikh al-Albani dedicated several books to the subject of what was the proper attire required for the Muslim woman. One of these books was entitled, “*Hijab al-Mara’a al-Muslima*” (“The Proper Veiling of the Muslim Woman”); and, in this book, he sets eight stipulations for ensuring the proper attire of a woman. In summary, these eight conditions can be summarized in requiring the woman to cover her entire body, totally, with the exception of “the face and the hands.”¹⁴⁴

The issue of Westernization and imitating the West is an all-encompassing notion in every school of Conservative Salafist thought. For Conservative Salafism, these two issues are considered of the most important and most threatening challenges that face the Islamic world today. Indeed, Westernization of society and the Westernization of the woman are seen as direct consequences of imitating the *kuffar*. The latter premise is the rationale behind al-Albani’s warning against all forms and images of “imitation”. In his view, “Muslim men and women must not imitate the *kuffar* in their worship, in their holidays and in the attire that is specific to them. And, it is with great regret that, today, they have deviated from this major tenet of the Islamic Sharia. Unfortunately, many Muslims, even those to whom matters of the religion and its *da’wa* are of great importance, due to ignorance of their religion follow

their whims, or deviate towards the ways and customs of modern times and pagan Europe – even if these are of the causes for the humiliation of Muslims, and the reasons for their weakness, and their domination by foreigners, and their colonization.”¹⁴⁵

In the Conservative-Albanist Salafist discourse, the domain of “change” and the parameters of working towards “change” is also defined according to specific tenets in which it is considered a “male” domain – a domain in which there is no place for the woman and no need for her presence. Indeed, the Traditional-Conservative Salafist worldview is marked by a Manichaeian¹⁴⁶ dualism in the way in which it perceives the clash of values between civilizations. In this worldview, the essence of Islam is marked by purity and absolute goodness; whereas, the essence of the contemporary, modern world is no more than a ruin founded upon hypocrisy, corruption and fraud. Accordingly, for the Traditional Salafists, there was no way that the woman should have a presence or be involved in this modern world of politics.

The Traditional Salafist awareness and understanding of their environment and their socio-economic reality, and their understanding of the religion of Islam, itself, generated a view in which, essentially, women were considered inferior. With that, Traditional Salafists worked to employ the woman as an instrument within the framework of their strategy of “purification and education”. In the past few years, though, slight developments have taken place when it comes to the role of the woman in the *da’wa* of Traditional Salafism. For example, a women’s committee has been established under the umbrella of the Imam Al-Albani Center whose mission is to connect and communicate with other women, and to conduct lectures and lessons for other women in their homes.¹⁴⁷

It would appear that Conservative Salafism represents an obstacle in the path of the woman’s progress, particularly in terms of her civic and political rights. For, Conservative Salafism is based on the firm conviction that the experience of Islam and the way

of Islam is wholly comprehensive and complete. And, this firm conviction does not take into account any historical variables and changes that have taken place (since the time of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, for example). It insists on confining the role and work of the woman to the private space of her home and of taking care of her family's affairs, according to a very strict interpretation of the phrase and notion that: "... *and men shall take full care (are the guardians) of women...*"¹⁴⁸. Furthermore, according to their surface and literal reading and interpretation of Islam, Conservative Salafists see that the status which was bestowed upon the woman in Islam guarantees her rights in any case. They see in her, the Muslim woman, absolute perfection and in "other" women, only evil and corruption.

Therefore, according to such an outlook, revival and progress was but a mere elementary matter and a fait accompli if one simply returned to the Book and the Sunna according to the model of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. Consequently, taking on or benefiting from other civilizations was nothing more than regression, *ibtida'a* and deviation from the proper and righteous path of the religion. According to Sheikh Mashhoor Salman, "The Islamic library is rich with studies about the woman, and about her rights and her duties; and, it is rich with proof of the conspiracies being made against her by the agents of Westernization, and refutes the empty delusions and claims made by the enemy and the fraudulent calls of the secularists."¹⁴⁹

According to this perspective and outlook, the modern woman, in her modern reality, has become nothing more than "a net for collecting money, and a trap for young men, and an instrument of corruption and of corrupting, and a ladder with which to achieve certain goals. The reason for all this is: Leaving behind proper judgment and the provisions in which mankind's true happiness lies."¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, Mohammad Mousa Naser sees women's rights organizations as nothing more than a conspiracy against the Muslim woman and an instrument of promoting Westernization and corruption. He says, "We must take heed of the conspiracies set forth by the enemies of Islam. They are conspiracies and not conferences."¹⁵¹ These are conferences in which they regurgitate what the Jews dictate to them, and what the devils amongst mankind and the jinn dictate to them... For, they want our societies to fall into the mire of vice... And, they want our societies to chase, gasping, after shameful decadence... Because the fall into moral decay always precedes military occupation. That is why the Islamic *umma* must fall into decay. And, that is why the Muslim woman must be corrupted."¹⁵²

As for (the modern notion of) "women's rights" and celebrating "international women's day", these are merely examples of holidays and ploys used by the enemies of Islam in order to inflict the Western woman on the Arab and Muslim woman, and in order to ruin Islamic societies and corrupt the Muslim family so that the Arab and Muslim woman becomes just like the foreign and Western woman, who does not shy her hand away from a greeting,¹⁵³ and whose husband is not her guardian and caretaker, and whose father has no authority over (her)."¹⁵⁴

In conclusion, the theoretical discourse of Conservative Salafism is based on a puritanical and orthodox vision of society and the state. It has a categorical certainty about which instruments and methods are required to affect change, and what the targets of this change must be. The grassroots and popular base of society is the fundamental target for the work of comprehensive change; and this, for them, is politics.

In the course of declaring the Conservative Salafist political *manhaj* for bringing about change and in response to the political *manhaj* presented by the Jihadi Salafists, Sheikh al-Albani says the following:

“They declared and avowed that the rulers are *kuffar*; and, that the rulers are *kuffar* who are guilty of apostasy... But what can you all do? The infidels occupied the lands of Greater Syria, while, with great regret, here, we have been plagued and beset by the occupation of Palestine by the Jews. But, what can you all... and we... do about them that you think you can do with these rulers, whom you believe are *kuffar*? You all have left this aspect of the matter aside; and purport to commence with setting the foundations upon which the Islamic government will be established... Does the path towards achieving that end begin with declaring a revolution against these leaders, who you believe are *kuffar*?

It seems that this is what they believe ... and, with all this belief – and it is a mistaken belief – they still cannot do anything! What is the manhaj proposed? What is the path? There is no doubt that the path is that which the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) recited, and reminded His *Sahaba* of in every sermon, ‘The best guidance is the guidance of Mohammad (May Peace Be Upon Him)’. Therefore, it is the duty of every Muslim, and especially those amongst the Muslims who are concerned with the restoration of Islamic rule, to begin where the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) began; and, that is what we cherish and that is what have harbored in two true words ‘purification and education’.

Thus, it is essential that we begin with educating people in Islam, the way the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) began. But, we do not limit ourselves to education alone, because there are things that have intruded into the religion, which do not belong to the religion and which have no connection with it, at all. Therefore, it is obligatory for those carrying out the *da’wa* to commence with purging this Islam of all that does not belong to it. The second thing is to ensure that in juxtaposition with this purification process that the new generations of young Muslim men are educated and cultivated in this lofty, chosen Islam.”¹⁵⁵

The Conservative Salafist *manhaj* for bringing about reform and change in order to pave the way for the establishment of the Islamic state is based on a revivalist vision founded in safeguarding the Islamic identity and preserving it through processes and strategies, which aim to purify society; and purge it of its *bida'a* and *shirk*; and to fight evil; and to carry out one's duties towards society. Because, society is the base, the foundation which must undergo processes of purification and education, in order to prepare it for directly engaging in political work that, in the end, will inevitably lead to the establishment of the Islamic state.

However, this vision changed, partially, after the death of Sheikh al-Albani and after the movement went through several upheavals, schisms and divisions. The Conservative Salafists began to lean towards a more reconciliatory policy towards the state and allied itself closer to the authorities by issuing political *fatwas* that were in support of or in harmony with official state policy when it came to certain thorny, sensitive political issues. Indeed, the Salafist Sheikhs have issued hundreds of *fatwas*, which fall under this category.¹⁵⁶ Several essays and books, which dealt with the subject of “obedience to the guardians (the rulers)”, were also published, in the spirit of the fragile alliance that was perceived, by both sides, as being mutually beneficial. It resembled a deal in which the state would allow the Traditional Salafists complete freedom to conduct their “missionary” activities, and would turn a blind eye to their “digressions”, in return for the Conservative Salafists acting as an agent, that was of little or no cost to the state, which countered, counteracted and offset the state's more irksome Islamic opponents, such as the Jihadi Salafists and the Harakiyya Salafists. This was all notwithstanding the fact that the Traditional-Conservative Salafists were spreading a sociology of hope, which led to individual heavenly salvation amongst the poor and the marginalized, and which helped relieve some of the burden on the state to face up to the country's socio-economic problems and ills.

But, as the politics of this alliance between the Conservative Salafists and the state¹⁵⁷ was not grounded in a solid foundation based on longer-term, mutually intellectual, political or ideological commonalities, this political pact could be considered under the framework of temporary, short-term alliances – as was the case in the past with the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the state once allied with and employed in confronting leftist and nationalist parties and currents.

Indeed, when it comes to religion, the relationship between the Salafists, in general, and the state is not based on a balanced and comprehensive strategy. In fact, there is no national reform agenda, which reproduces and reintegrates religion and politics, while using a reformative perspective. This kind of reformative effort could try to integrate all the active political forces, in all their ideological diversity, based on a solid foundation and based on the aim of achieving social justice and genuine political participation.

5.4 The World in the Eyes of the Salafists: An Obsession with Religious Identity

The Conservative Salafists view the world from a fundamentally dualist perspective, which is based on a logic that is embroiled in the conflict between the “good” and “evil”.

According to the Salafists, the pure essence of the Islamic character conveys and carries absolute “good”, with no room for doubt. As for the “other”, contemporary character, it is no more than a ruin comprised of fraud, immorality, hypocrisy and deceit, and based on “evil”, whose trappings and trickery must be worked against and avoided at all cost.

This worldview means the Conservative Salafist discourse rejects any engagement in contemporary politics and adopts a political vision, which concentrates entirely on issues related to

the religion, its creed and jurisprudence and centers its focus on society and not the state. Society, in its individuals, is the primary and fundamental target for the Conservative Salafist message. On the other hand, they hold that the state and its institutions are something which they should maintain a distance from, and with which they should avoid any engagement or connection.

The discourse of the Conservative Salafists was entrenched in a view of the world, the state and of society that saw in all three a deviation from the Book, the Sunna and the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. One of its claims in its preaching is that the poisons – that have drained the strength of the Muslims, paralyzed their very abilities and polluted their pool – were not the swords of the infidels, which gathered in malice and spite against Islam, its people and its state, but rather the “malignant germs”, which have infiltrated the very core of the giant Islamic corpus over long periods of time. And, despite the slow infiltration of these germs, they were nevertheless progressive and certainly effective.¹⁵⁸

Salim al-Hillali sees that the fortresses of Islam were threatened from within “so that the Islamic *umma* could not awaken from the prick of the poisonous needle, filled with the deadly germs that have plunged it into darkness. For, the nations of *kufr* have worked to instill programs of indoctrination inside the Islamic *umma*, which produce poisons from within... And this is what the masters of the *Franj*¹⁵⁹ and the Jews have schemed and plotted for – and what these prostrating slaves, who have come to have power over lands, carry out. Today, these dark forces still raise their voices and banners high over our lands, calling the *umma* forth to hellfire. May God forbid! For, here are the preachers of democracy, screaming... and, here are the fathers of socialism, contravening... and, here are the guardians of nationalism, barking... and the people follow them, gasping... because they have not been illuminated with the light of knowledge and learning, and they have not sought out higher grounds, where decisions are trustworthy and sound.”¹⁶⁰

The political reality in the Islamic world, according to Conservative Salafism, was disastrous due to the weakness of the Muslims; and, this was a result of the *umma*'s deviation from the Book and the Sunna; and a result of the international conspiracies that have plotted against it, whose aim is to corrupt it and loot it of its treasures. Sheikh al-Albani confirms this view, when he says, commenting on the following Prophet's Hadith "*There will be treasures extracted by the most evil of people*"... "There is no doubt that the most wicked of people alluded to in this Hadith are the *kuffar* (the unbelievers, the infidels); and that He (the Prophet) is alluding to that which the Muslims are plagued with today brought forth by the Europeans and the Americans to our Arab lands to extract its resources and wealth ... and *from God we seek assistance*."¹⁶¹

But even with al-Albani's affirmation of the cause behind the humiliation of the Islamic *umma* and its enslavement by the outside (the West), he also affirms the importance of the internal factor in perpetuating this reality. Indeed, he stresses in the following statement that, "The ailment that keeps the Muslims in the state in which they are in, humiliated and enslaved by the infidels – even the Jews –in some of the Muslim countries, is the ignorance of so many of the scholars in the *fiqh* of this reality, or of the inability to make a stand against the plots and scheming of the infidels' conspiracies, which they carry out as they wish."¹⁶² According to al-Albani, knowing and understanding this reality was easy "but the problem was... their negligence in carrying out and working according to the ways and rules of the religion, as it was brought forth in its Book and in its Sunna."¹⁶³

Ali al-Halaby lends his endorsement to this conspiratorial view of the world when he says, "What is exported by the Western media, whether it is by television or radio, or magazines and press agencies, when it comes to Islam and the Muslims, and their malevolence towards both, and in their schemes to oppress them, is embodied by two intentions or objectives – one of which or both of which must be achieved: The first is to keep the Muslims occupied in

the problems of the East, while they continue to scheme in the West, and continue to divert the attention of Muslims away from the reality of their wicked scheming and this malicious reality that they are working on carrying out! The second is to make them appear great in the hearts of Muslims... that they are shrewd, and that they are planners... and, that they do not miss a thing! ... And, that they are in control... Knowing all of this, how can we remain tempted by their experts and expert analyses?"¹⁶⁴

Imitating the *kuffar*, in the view of Conservative Salafists, and following the path and *manhaj* of the infidel were of the main factors that led to the backwardness, *ibtida'a* and *kufr* so rampant in the Islamic world. And, all Western (and Westernized) political regimes had no place or chance in Islam.

According to the Conservative Salafists, "What was brought forth by the Book and the Sunna, and all that was set forth by the *Salaf al-Saleh* as examples and precedents in their goals, conduct, methods and means are enough for the *umma*. However, it can be said, with all accuracy, that the reason some people permit themselves to devise, invent or innovate other ways is because they lend themselves license to imitate the *kuffar* in their means and in their *manhaj*, which they adopt in order to achieve what is so-called democracy – or so they claim – and social justice, or any of those other terms, which are so lacking in any truth. For, they – and here I mean, certain Muslims, permit themselves to imitate the *kuffar*. For us, our God – the Almighty – enriched us with our *Sharia*, in the way which has been explained in detail above, so that we will not be dependent on the *kuffar*. And, if we take their path, we will have deviated from the path of the believers; and we will have taken the path of the *kuffar* and the idolaters (those who commit *shirk*)."¹⁶⁵

Perhaps, anyone who attempts a thorough review of the "*al-Asala*" magazine, which is one of the official mouthpieces for the Conservative Salafist movement, would be alarmed by the conspiratorial tone and discourse that permeates every single

issue. Indeed, the editorial committee of “*al-Asala*” clearly states in one of its editorials entitled, “*Ahwal al-‘Alam al-Islami*” (“The State of the Islamic World”) that, “They bore their fangs, scowling, as they folded the deceitful pages of their democracy, and revealed what was hidden in their hearts... These are fabricated claims and decadent slogans... Boasted and flaunted by the Western politicians when it comes to anything and everything but Islam and *Salam* (Peace).”¹⁶⁶

The fundamental view of the Conservative Albanist-Salafists with regard to external factors does not differ much from its opinion of the internal factors. Indeed, their stance and relations with regard to the other, contemporary Islamist groups, movements and parties is also based entirely on the heritage and school of thought left by *Ahl al-Hadith* and *Ahl al-Hadith*’s struggle with other Islamist groups and sects that existed during their time.

The “missionary” work and *da’wa* of the Conservative Salafist movement was firmly entrenched in its one major objective: To revive and reproduce the discourse of *Ahl al-Hadith* and to apply that discourse to their contemporary, modern reality. For them, the picture of pure Islam they envisioned was governed by this exhaustive discourse, and was formed and constructed by it. For, there is only one Islam, not many. And, there was only one understanding of Islam, which could not differ. And, there was no path to Islam through plurality and differences of opinions or otherwise.

This unipolar vision and outlook produced a traditional way of thinking that was insular and marked by rigidity and inflexibility. It also generated a discourse that was replete with aggressive, militant and confrontational language, which systematically struggled to preserve the “purity of the identity of Islam” – an Islam that only existed in their imagination, did not take into account the course of history, the differing time periods between the era in which *Ahl al-Hadith* existed and today, and all the developments and transformations that society had undergone since then.

Their discourse and vision also did not take into consideration the structure and nature of language that allows for debate, differences and diversities in opinions. Indeed, according to the Conservative Salafist reading of matters, there is only one text with only one meaning, a static reality that never changes and a mind that does not reproduce or expand upon matters; and, finally, there was no use or reason for debate or for differences in opinion. Indeed, this kind of thinking generated a dualist vision of the world, which was governed by the concept that the world is ruled by the antagonistic forces of good versus evil, right versus wrong, the Sunna or the righteous way versus *al-bida'a* or innovation, and other endless dualisms.

This discourse remains one that creates divisions under the pretext of “unification”. In the eyes of Conservative Salafism, all other Islamist groups, movements and parties, which existed in the past or exist today, are of the “doomed sects”. The only surviving sect is that which is represented by the “victorious sect”, which is *Ahl al-Hadith* and no other sect.



**Part 6:
The Conservative Salafist's
“Intellectual War” against other
Islamists: The Domination of the
“Surviving Sect”**

Conservative Albanist-Salafism's position and stance with regard to other Islamist groups, movements and parties that exist today is defined by an absolute, macro-vision, which is premised in unity and separation. This position is founded and dependent upon the overriding Conservative Salafist notion that there is a single, straight, pure path from which there must be no deviation.

In this context, the Hadith, which is considered the reference for the way the *umma* was divided is taken on the authority of Abu Hurairah¹⁶⁷ (May God Be Pleased With Him) who said: "The Messenger of God (May God Bless Him and Grant Him Peace) said '*The Jews split up into seventy-one sects; one in Paradise and seventy in the Fire. The Christians split up into seventy-two sects; seventy-one in the Fire and one in Paradise; and, by Him in whose Hand is the life of Muhammad! My umma will split-up into seventy-three sects; one in Paradise and seventy-two are in the Fire*'". And, on the authority of the *Sahaba* 'Awf ibn Maalik, (May God Be Pleased With Him), it was said: "O Messenger of God! Who are they?" And, He replied, "*The Jamaa'ah*".¹⁶⁸

The above is the reference upon which Conservative Salafism builds its opinion about all the other contemporary Islamist groups, movements and parties, who are seen as falling within the framework of the "doomed" sects or groups. Al-Albani confirms the latter in the following statement:

“It is evident to every Muslim, who is learned in the Book, the Sunna and in our *Salaf al-Saleh* (May God’s Blessings Be Upon Them), that factionalism and clustering into groups are, firstly, based on differences in ways of thinking and of ideas, and secondly in differences in *manhaj* and in approach... There is no Islam in this...”¹⁶⁹

The Conservative Salafist threshold on this subject is delineated by one red line; and that is, there is only one division and this division cannot withstand more than two groups – one group for God and the other for the devil. Al-Albani confirms this notion when he says, “There is no successful party except for the party of God that the Qur’an speaks to us about. Therefore, if a party is not of the party of God, then it is of the party of the devil and not from the party of the Merciful.”¹⁷⁰

In the perspective of the followers of Conservative Salafism, being part of the “surviving” and “victorious” sect cannot be attained except through *Ahl al-Hadith* and the followers of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. Sheikh Salim al-Hillali says, “We did our research on all the elders and on the Hadith; and, we did not find one group that meets the standards that would be approved by the Gracious Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) except for *Ahl al-Hadith* and the followers of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. For, they went forward in the footsteps of the Prophet and of His *Sahaba* (May God Be Pleased With Them) in their creed, in their behavior, in their education, in their upbringing, in their *da’wa* and in their politics. And, in this, the milestones and tenets of the *manhaj* of the ‘surviving sect’ and the ‘victorious sect’ were set.”¹⁷¹

Al-Hillali goes on to stress the satanic nature of the divisions and partisanship, which have taken place in the name of Islam, and the impact these have had on the religion when he says, “Thus, the murderous devil’s party understood... They continued on the path of corruption, and took it upon themselves to transform societies into remnants of what they once were, drowning it in divisions and parties that were too preoccupied with each other to wake up and know the righteous path.”¹⁷²

Sheikh Mohammad Mousa Naser reaches the same conclusion, saying, “The bountiful and righteous centuries (and generations) witnessed neither sectarianism nor partisanship. These differences and divided affiliations took place after them.”¹⁷³ Naser summarizes the “pestilence” of divisions and partisanship as being a form of *al-walaa’ wal al-baraa*¹⁷⁴ and a form of chauvinism to a specific party under the pretext of Islam, which is something that inevitably leads to political engagement; and, it was no more than a *bida’a* or an excuse to gain authority and domination over other Muslims. This was to be expected of divisions and differences; and, of rigidity and of insularity; and, it was contrary to the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. It lacked the proper values required for maintaining the righteous path and the methodology to working collectively, and to working towards the *da’wa*.¹⁷⁵

Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra sees the other contemporary Islamist groups and parties as being an extension of the “doomed sects”, because he sees that partisanship and divided affiliations are nothing more than a regression and diversion from the path of Islam. According to his experience and his reading of this matter, he says, “Anyone who reviews the history of Islam, knows with all certainty that the groups, which are renowned in this history, are not of *Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaa’ah*. They are all misguided groups, sects and parties. There is no excuse for anyone who uses the absence of the Imam as a reason to commit the *kufir* of clustering and thinking in terms of political affiliations and acting through partisanship. And, the interpretation of general texts, which overzealous Muslims fall prey to in an attempt to legitimize their organized partisan activities, will not guide one to reaching the truth and to what is right.”¹⁷⁶

In the same vein of this Conservative Salafist position on the prohibition of divided affiliations and partisanship, Sheikh Ali al-Halaby stresses on the corrupting nature of partisanship and its contravention of the tenets of Islam because, in his words, “Islam cannot bear another organization within it as the basis of such an organization and its principle foundations would be set in *al-walaa’*”

wal al-baraa'. For, the Hadith is to the effect that partisanship, divided affiliations and the separation into groups and parties is a matter which is inapplicable and contradictory to the meaning of Islam and does not emanate from it."¹⁷⁷

The Conservative Salafist view of partisanship does not depart from the confines of their notion of *ibtida'a*, misguidance and falsehood; that is why Islamist parties are viewed by them from within the framework of the "doomed sects". Al-Albani confirms all of the aforementioned when he says, "We do not believe that these parties are on the righteous path; indeed, we are certain that they are on that path where, at the head of every other path branching from it, the devil stands calling people forth to him."¹⁷⁸

According to al-Albani, these groups are not founded in and do not follow the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, nor the followers of the Book and the Sunna; he says, "Any Islamic party or clustering or grouping is not of the *Jamaa'ah*, nor are these parties based on the Book of God and the Sunna of God's Messenger, nor do they follow the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. Therefore, they are clearly mistaken and misguided. There is no doubt that any party, which is not based on these three references and sources, loses in all matters as a consequence of their error."¹⁷⁹

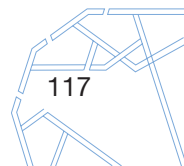
And, thus, it would appear that, in the eyes of the Conservative Salafists, the *manhaj* of all the other different Islamist groups and parties are in contravention of the fundamental rules and proper foundations for assembly and collective work. So, what are the principles, rules and proper foundations for assembly and collective work according to the followers of this current?

6.1 The General Stance of the Conservative Salafists with regard to other Islamist Groups and Parties

Those who follow the history, evolution and formation of Conservative Salafism will take note of the transformations that took place in their position with regard to what they deemed to be legitimate forms of collective work and assembly, and in their stance with regard to the organized work of other Islamist groups and parties, and cooperating with them.

Indeed, in the earlier periods of his life, Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani showed a willingness to cooperate with certain Islamist groups, such as the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, then the Brotherhood in Jordan. He used to give lessons in various branches of the Brotherhood and was close to many of its leading figures.¹⁸⁰

Also during this period and prior to his decision to reside permanently in Jordan, his stance towards other Islamist groups in Syria was also characterized by leniency and flexibility, and a willingness to offer his opinions and his cooperation. At that time, he was in favor of the establishment of Islamist groups, and said, with regard to the legitimacy of these kinds of initiatives, the following, “I support the establishment of Islamic groups. And, I endorse the idea that each of these groups focuses on a particular specialization and takes on a specialized role, whether that specialization be political, economic, social or otherwise. However, I have put forth one stipulation and that is, that the circle of Islam is what unites all these groups... I call upon all Muslims to return to their proper and true religion; and, in that, to depend on the Book and the Sunna, first, and on the proper and true Sunna, second. And I insist on this *da’wa*. I say this as I remember the long years in which I lived in Syria, when members of the Brotherhood used to attend my lessons, as did brothers from Hizb ut-Tahrir, Jamaa’at al-Tabligh as well as others from other sects... So how is it that after all this, we are accused of waging a war against Islamic groups?”¹⁸¹



However, al-Albani issued a clear *fatwa* about the obligation that collective work and assembly be free of any partisanship; he said, “Gathering and assembling to work for the sake of the Islam of the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) is a command and an obligation over which no two will differ; or, as the saying goes, over which two rams will not butt heads. Indeed, the rise of Muslims will not take place, and a Muslim society will not be achieved, and the Islamic state will not be established, except through this kind of assembly. But this is conditional on the premise that there will be no prejudice, chauvinism or allegiance towards a single individual or sect, without the other. And, that the only allegiance will be to God, in what was brought forth by His Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him), and to the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*.”¹⁸²

Collective work, which is built on the principle of cooperation, was not discounted by Sheikh al-Albani. Indeed, he encouraged it and stressed that it could be discounted, as long as it did not emanate from, or lead to any kind of partisanship and divided affiliations. Indeed, he saw collective work as being venerated in many verses, such as “Be amongst the truthful”, “Do not hoard amongst yourselves the food of the poor” and “Cooperate in goodwill, righteousness and piety”. Indeed, this kind of collective cooperation cannot be denied by any means because Islam is founded on this kind of cooperation.¹⁸³

However, this collective work based on cooperation must be carried out according to the Book and the proper Sunna, and must not work towards creating differences and divided affiliations between Muslims. To this end, al-Albani cites the word of God, “*Turn repentant towards Him; and fear Him, and be steadfast in prayer; and be not of the idolaters (30) Of those who have divided their religion and become sects, each party exalting (rejoicing) in what they have...(31)*”.¹⁸⁴

Al-Albani continues, “The excess and proliferation of parties and partisanship in the Islamic world is manifest and evident to every Muslim today. Each party has a *manhaj* and its own organizational

structure and statutes. These parties are not harmonious and are reprehensible in their conflicts, which are intended to lead to clustering and groupings of Muslims – each with their own *manhaj*, each with their own leader and each with their own sect. And, none of these converge or agree with the other.”¹⁸⁵

Al-Albani stresses upon the stipulation that every Muslim, or Muslim group or party strictly commit to the Book and the Sunna, and the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. With that, he was more lenient with this condition earlier in his life only to return to a more extreme position later, which is embodied by his declaration that, “We do not believe that these parties are on the righteous path; indeed, we are certain that they are on that path where, at the head of every path branching from it, the devil stands calling people forth to him.”¹⁸⁶

As for Sheikh Ali al-Halaby, he reaffirms that partisanship and parties are a form of *ibtida’a* and are forbidden if they are not in strict accordance with the Salafist *manhaj*. He says, “There is no place for partisanship, divisions or polarization... but only assembling and uniting under the *manhaj* and the righteous approach and the manifest path of goodness.”¹⁸⁷

The followers and supporters of Conservative Salafism all agree on the importance of cooperation between Muslims, albeit based on the right foundations that, in the end, are defined as a commitment to the Salafist notions of what is proper and legitimate assembly. Indeed, the idea that partisanship was innovative in nature and thus, prohibited was a given in the eyes of the Conservative Salafists.

It seems this position on partisanship originates from the more general view the Albanist-Salafists have taken with regard to engaging in politics. The Albanist Salafists saw that contemporary politics was something that they should distance themselves from; and, instead their focus should be on their version of politics, based on the strategy and principle of “purification and education”. Only that way would society be prepared and ready to enter the horizons of engaging directly in politics and in the Islamic state.

Accordingly, the declared objective of the Albanist-Salafists was to restore an Islamic way of life, which did not mean they had to engage directly in politics, in the way that politics is understood in its modern and contemporary context. Therefore, and according to the Albanist vision, the only obligation that they were bound by and that was imperative was that of working towards “purifying and educating” individuals in society.

Indeed, the foundation of the Albanist-Salafist outlook on collective work, assembly and partisanship was quite theoretical in nature and was based on a very stringent and strict understanding of Islam, and a dualist worldview. The stance of the Conservative Salafists with regard to contemporary Islamist groups and movements was thus characterized by a rigid set of criteria, the most important of which were governed by the Salafist understanding of the notions of *al-Tawhid*¹⁸⁸ and *al-aqida*¹⁸⁹. Other criteria were set in the context of the war they were waging against *al-ibtida'a*, which was also understood from a position that was closer to a unipolar and dualist vision that viewed and judged all matters in terms of “black or white”.

Based on all the aforementioned, the majority of contemporary Islamist groups and movements, such as the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Jamaa’at al-Tabligh and the Jihadi Salafists, fall under the framework of the “doomed” and “innovative” sects, according to Conservative Albanist-Salafism.

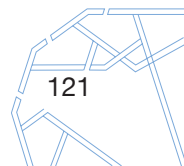
6.2 The Conservative Salafist Position towards the Muslim Brotherhood

Sheikh al-Albani’s position with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood went through two different stages. The first was when he was still residing in Syria when the relationship between al-Albani and the Brotherhood was marked by warmth and cooperation, despite the fact that he never joined their ranks. During that period, al-Albani

used to give lessons in several Brotherhood centers in both Syria and Jordan. He also used to write articles that were published in the Muslim Brotherhood's newspapers and magazines, particularly the "*Tamadun al-Islami*" ("Islamic Civilization") magazine.¹⁹⁰ He remembers this stage – as cited above –, saying, "I remember the long years in which I lived in Syria, when members of the Brotherhood used to attend my lessons, as did brothers from Hizb ut-Tahrir, Jamaa'at al-Tabligh and others from other sects... and of these, there were those who admitted they were followers of Ali, who were also appreciative. So, how is it that after all this, we are accused of waging a war against Islamic groups?"¹⁹¹

For a while, al-Albani's position was more flexible towards the Muslim Brotherhood than it was towards other Islamist groups and movements. But that position would significantly change after Sheikh al-Albani moved to settle in Jordan in 1980. The friendly relations with the Brotherhood, whose various branches and centers actually hosted al-Albani's lessons at one time, transformed into a conflict, which ultimately led the Brotherhood to issue a statement warning its members from attending al-Albani's lectures and sermons, and warning those who did attend that they risked being expelled from the organization.¹⁹²

At one point, Sheikh al-Albani decided that the Brotherhood was a failed project. The reason for this failure, in his opinion, lay in their lack of understanding of the truth of Islam and of the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*; and that they had lost the capacity to advise one other. On this matter, al-Albani says, "The Muslim Brotherhood operates from a foundation that was set by their first leader, and by that I mean the foundation set by Hassan al-Banna. That is why one cannot find an effective synergy amongst them... The truth, as you know, is that which is not false; and falsehood has an origin and it has corollaries; and, all that violates what is right is false. This statement explains why, after practically seventy years, the Muslim Brotherhood remains intellectually far from understanding Islam properly; and thereby, remains far from being able to apply Islam on a practical level. Because, as the saying goes, 'those who do not have cannot give...'"¹⁹³



The question of “*al-bay’aa*”,¹⁹⁴ which was characteristic of many Islamist organizations and particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, was considered one of the main issues that dictated al-Albani’s position with regard to the Muslim Brotherhood. For the Conservative Salafists, the notion of *al-bay’aa* was considered a reprehensible *bida’a* (innovation). And, the question of *al-bay’aa* carried great importance for them when it came to determining their position on whether or not Islamist groups and movements were guilty of *ibtida’a* (innovation).

Sheikh Ali al-Halaby wrote an entire treatise on the question of *al-bay’aa*. In this lengthy essay, he concludes that these groups and movements are indeed guilty of *ibtida’a* and lacked legitimacy. He also determines that this form of *al-bay’aa* was one of the major causes for the divisions and fracturing that had taken place in the name of Islam. Indeed, al-Halaby launched an extensive campaign that specifically targeted the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁹⁵

Sheikh Salim al-Hillali, on the other hand, summarized the deviation of the Brotherhood in three fundamental points (that he found the Brotherhood guilty of): firstly, *al-bida’a* in the creed – and innovation in the creed is the well from which glorifying Sufism and denying the divine attributes sprung forth (according to al-Hillali); secondly, sectarianism and not “following” – in the sense of “*itba’a la al-ibtida’a*” or “following and not innovating”; and, thirdly: polarization on an organizational level, in a manner that is unlawful and illegal (according to the *Sharia*).¹⁹⁶

It appears that one of the most prominent figureheads and symbols of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyed Qutub, would receive the lion’s share of the most aggressive Albanist-Salafist assaults against the movement. The Albanist-Salafists published several volumes critical of the Qutubian-Brotherhood *manhaj*, which went to the extent of accusing the movement of *kufr* and of blaspheming the religion.

During earlier periods in his life, al-Albani had actually commended Sayyed Qutub, describing him as the “learned-teacher”. However, towards the end of his life, he became much more severe in his criticism and extreme in his stand. Meanwhile, his followers used a most obscene manner to describe him, which went anywhere from accusing him of being guilty of *ibtida’a* and misguidance to being guilty of *kufr* and at some extremes, even of apostasy in their *kufr*.¹⁹⁷

Indeed, most of the time, a very aggressive and severe discourse characterized the Albanist-Salafist position towards, and stance against, the Muslim Brotherhood. For them, the Brotherhood was classified as being amongst the “doomed sects” and of being amongst the innovators who hailed from *Ahl al-Ahw’a* (The Whimsical). They were accused of being guilty of Sufist thinking in their creed, and innovative partisanship in their work, and of lacking in their overall Salafist outlook. They were accused of not adhering to the *fiqh* of evidence or to the *manhaj* of the (true) followers; and of being flawed by their chauvinistic sectarianism; and in their understanding of *al-Tawhid*; and, that their concept of *al-Tawhid* did not follow the jurisprudence and precedence set by the *Salaf al-Saleh*. Also, according to Albanist-Salafists, the Brotherhood belonged to the reprehensible fold of Sufism; and, they belonged to the “doomed sects” of the Asha’ira and the Mu’tazila when it came to issues such as *al-Tawhid* and the divine attributes. The *manhaj* of assembly and collective work followed by the Brotherhood was also, in their opinion, in contravention to the Sunna; and, the form of *al-bay’aa*, or allegiance, which they require of their followers and members, was considered a part of the realm of *bida’a*, whim and fabrication.

6.3 The Conservative Salafist Position towards Jamaa'at al-Tabligh

Conservative Salafism views Jamaa'at al-Tabligh as being another group that belongs to the “doomed sects” of innovators. Sheikh al-Albani presented a *fatwa* that prohibited any engagement or interaction with Jamaa'at al-Tabligh, and which considered them as being guilty of acting outside the *manhaj* set forth by the Book and the Sunna. In this regard, al-Albani says, “Jamaa'at al-Tabligh is not based on the *manhaj* of the Book of God, nor the Sunna of the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him), nor the precedence set by our *Salaf al-Saleh*. If the matter is so, then it is forbidden to engage with them, because it is contrary to our *manhaj* of invoking and promoting the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*. And they are not concerned with the *da'wa* of the Book and the Sunna, as a general principle. Instead, they consider this *da'wa* divisive; and in this, they are similar to the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. There is no creed that unites them.”¹⁹⁸

The previous text is considered a clear summation of the position that the Albanist-Salafists generally hold towards Jamaa'at al-Tabligh. Indeed, Salim al-Hillali, Ali al-Halaby, Mashhoor Hassan and Mahmoud Mousa Naser repeat the same logic and justifications: that Jamaa'at al-Tabligh does not adhere to the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, and that their group embraces dangerous *bida'a* (innovations), a corrupt Sufist *manhaj*, and is an innovative sect.

6.4 The Conservative Salafist Position towards Hizb ut-Tahrir

The position of the Conservative Salafists towards Hizb ut-Tahrir is considered by far the most severe and extreme. They are considered by Sheikh al-Albani as being the offspring of the Mu'tazila and then, the Neo-Mu'tazila, for they use the rational mind and govern by it in their *ijtihad* (rationalizations of the texts), in their postures and in their approach, which is contrary to the

Book and the Sunna, according to the Conservative Albanist-Salafists. Therefore, they fall in the realm of *ibtida'a* (innovation); and, the description of “doomed sect” applies to them.

In the course of his criticism of the party, their corrupt *manhaj* and their misguided creed, al-Albani says, “This truth is lost upon all the contemporary Islamic parties, as it was on all the misguided and lost parties that came before them, especially Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is particularly distinct from any other Islamic party. It lends more weight to the human mind than Islam does. It is on this point that we draw attention to the form of *da'wa* followed by Hizb ut-Tahrir, which shows the influence of the Mu'tazila in the path they have chosen in their faith. Indeed, “*Tarik al-Iman*” (“The Path of Faith”) is the title of a study they present in the book “*Nitham al-Islam*” (“The Islamic System”) that was authored by their leader, Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, may God have mercy on his soul. I met with him more than once and know him very well; and, I know what Hizb ut-Tahrir stands for very well.

The first point against them is that they gave the (rational) mind more credit than they should have – this is where the Mu'tazila deviated long ago. For, the Mu'tazila denied very many, great truths that are clear in the *Sharia* because they gave their rational minds too much authority over the texts of the Book and the Sunna. And, subsequently, they distorted these texts, altered and changed them. In the words of the Salafist *'ulama* (scholars): ‘They rendered the texts of the Book and the Sunna inoperable.’ Therefore, we suffice with what we said before with regard to their misguided premise, which states that, ‘The Muslim is not required to build his faith upon Hadith, which has not been validated, but is instead ambiguous in its source.’ Where did they come up with this? Is there no evidence in the Book and the Sunna, and in the precedence of the *Salaf al-Saleh*? The precedence set by the *Salaf al-Saleh* contradicts this. Indeed, this idea was adopted by some of the *Khalaf* (those who followed after the *Salaf al-Saleh*), who were the Mu'tazila of long ago; and this idea was adopted by their contemporary followers, in creed at least – and today, they are Hizb ut-Tahrir.”¹⁹⁹

6.5 The Battle between Conservative and Jihadi Salafisms

The intellectual stance and discourse that characterizes the position the Conservative Salafists have taken towards Jihadi Salafist groups is particularly aggressive and violent. This severity is attributed to the theoretical fundamentalism both groups have in common, and to the fact that both groups belong to the school of Salafism, in all the broad lines entailed by this school's framework. Indeed, both adopt a *manhaj* that is necessarily based on focusing on the core issues of *al-Tawhid*, creed and the fundamentalist "origins" (of Islam). Both groups call for a strict following of the Book, the Sunna and the *manhaj* of the *Salaf al-Saleh*, as well as the notion of *al-tazkiyya*.²⁰⁰

Jihadi Salafism became active at the end of the 1980s, began to flourish in the 1990s and proliferated extensively at the turn of the 21st century. It was able to attract a large number of followers from Conservative Salafism as well as from other forms of Reform Salafisms. It engaged in a diverse experience and range of activities across the Islamic world, which culminated in *takfir*,²⁰¹ and violence, and in direct confrontations against domestic regimes, as well as in attacks against the "outside" (the West) – which led to the birth of the organization of al-Qaeda,²⁰² and its violent attacks against the United States on the 11th of September, 2001. Maintaining its headquarters in Afghanistan and Pakistan, al-Qaeda went on to establish branches of the 'mother organization' throughout the Arab world in countries such as Iraq, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as well as other places.

The stance that the Conservative Salafists took against the Jihadi Salafists was unparalleled when compared to any other position the Conservative Salafists took with regard to all the other Islamist groups or movements. Indeed, both sides exchanged harsh accusations with the other when it came to questions of faith or activism. Indeed, the Jihadis accused the Traditionalists of being regressive in their faith, and of being idealistic in the *manhaj*

they followed in their work – which was based on the principle of “purification and education” that focused on educating society before engaging in any political activity, and before trying to establish the Islamic state. Meanwhile, the Jihadi Salafists held to a *manhaj* that was grounded in bringing about change by use of force, based on their understanding of the concept of jihad.

Sheikh al-Albani believed that Jihadi Salafist thinking was based on that of the *Khawarij* when it came to *takfir* and when it came to their extremism. To this, he says, “The question of *takfir*, in general, is not a matter of those who govern alone, but also relates to the governed. It is a long-standing and divisive matter and a great controversy, which was adopted by one party from the ancient parties better known as *al-Khawarij*. And I say, with great regret, that some of those who partake in the *da’wa* and other enthusiasts have fallen into the trap of deviating from the Book and the Sunna, in the name of the Book and the Sunna.”²⁰³ Indeed, al-Albani sees that “Those who excommunicate others and tenaciously drive Muslims out of their religion are not of the surviving sect. Indeed, they are of the misguided and lost sects that God’s Messenger spoke of.”²⁰⁴

In addition to the above, the question of *al-Hakimiyya* and the ideas that branched out of it within the framework of “the jihad” against the leaders, and in regime-change, were considered of the most important issues that determined the stand the Conservative Salafist took against Jihadi groups and movements. To that end, al-Albani depicts the followers of Jihadi Salafism as being inciters, extremists and ignorant, saying, “We know the truth is lost on them, or to be more correct, is ignored by those extremists and inciters, who have nothing better to do but declare the *takfir* of leaders; and then, nothing else – other than continuing to declare the *takfir* of leaders. And, nothing comes of them but discord and conflict. What has been taking place these past few years, which you know began with the problems and strife that took place in Holy Mecca, then in Egypt with the assassination of Anwar Sadat; and, the blood of many Muslims has been shed because of the

strife in Syria, Egypt and Algeria – with great regret – all this is due to the fact that they have violated many of the texts of the Book and the Sunna.”²⁰⁵

The followers of Conservative Salafism produced dozens of essays and books, which were very critical of the Jihadi Salafist groups, based on its view of what was proper in terms of theory and practice: and, for the Conservative Salafists this was grounded in the principles of focusing efforts on “purification and education”, avoiding any direct engagement in political work, the belief that partisan work and organization was a *bida’a* (innovation), not to mention other issues of faith and other factors that the Conservative Salafists believe impede the faith, and confuse questions of governance and *al-Hakimiyya*, obedience and deviation, fighting and jihad.

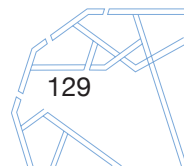
The position of both groups, against each other, was marked by a violent rhetoric characterized by a harsh exchange of accusations. The situation ultimately culminated in a complete rupture in relations, which was increasingly characterized by an even more aggressive rhetoric in their debates, arguments and responses to one another in the absence of any productive dialogue and constructive exchange and platform for their differences of opinions.

6.6 Conclusion

The Conservative Salafist belief system was cast in the idea that there was only one straight and righteous path representing proper Islam, which the Muslim must follow without deviation, interpretation, questioning or obstruction. This paradigm produced a literal, surface reading of the texts of the Book and the Sunna, which did not take into consideration any interpretive or innovative readings of what is meant or intended by Islamic legislation in the Sharia, or the historical context in which the Hadith was born – all of which led to a hostile attitude towards the “other”. Indeed,

Islamist parties, movements and groups were seen as belonging to the realm of *ibtida'a* (innovation), modernization, misguidance and whim. This was notwithstanding the belief that there should be, and there is, only one “*Jamaa'ah*” (group) and not many. For, according to the Albanist-Salafists, the outcome of plurality and diversity is division, dissent, schism and rupture. They also believed that partisanship was an illness that has infected the Islamic world, and that working in politics was a dangerous deviation. For the Conservative Albanist-Salafists, politics, in its contemporary form and modern context, was not a gateway that would lead back to Islam, or restore the pride of Muslims. That mission could only be achieved by depending on the *manhaj* of “purification and education”; and this *manhaj* was the only road to salvation from the fires of hell, and to achieving *al-Tawhid*, and to restoring the Islamic way of life and Islamic state.

It could be argued that Conservative Salafism, with its absolute conviction in the correctness of its *manhaj*, can be viewed as an exemplary model of the fundamentalist, revivalist movement. Its unipolar view of the world, of the texts and of people has produced a dualist mentality par excellence. For, it is either *al-Tawhid* (monotheism, the oneness of God) or *al-Shirk* (polytheism, idolatry), *al-itba'a* (proper following/adherence) or *al-ibtida'a* (innovation), *al-khair* (good) or *al-sharr* (evil). This is what governs the framework of the Traditional Salafist discourse and which sets the context for its hostile attitude and position towards the “other”, based on quite strict and severe comparative criteria. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood are the same as *Ahl al-Kallam* (The Rhetorical People), and Hizb ut-Tahrir are the same as the Mu'tazila (the Rationalists), and Jamaa'at al-Tabligh are the same as the Sufists, and the Jihadi Salafists are the same as the Khawarij (the Seceders / the Rebels). In Traditional Salafist thinking, there was no path to entering into the dimension of *al-Tawhid* and *itba'a* (following, adherence) except by identifying, agreeing, following and adhering to the Traditional Salafist vision – or else, one was doomed, misguided and lost; and, the punishment of hellfire is awaiting those who deviate from the straight, righteous, Traditional Salafist path.





Part 7:
**The Social Presence of Conservative
Salafism: Spaces to Proliferate
and Work Methodologies**

Conservative Salafism does not act as a movement, or have an organized presence or hierarchical structure in the way that other Islamist movements, parties and groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb ut-Tahrir, have. Indeed, it maintains a loose, amorphous presence and structure for itself, which has no regulatory or institutional dimension, and is anything but regimented by organizational standards. The current is structured around relationships built between a sheikh and his students or a teacher and his students. Salafist groups cluster around and emerge out of lessons, lecture circuits and Friday sermons conducted by their sheikhs – a phenomenon that, to a certain degree, reveals the size of the current, the numbers of individuals influenced by it in Jordanian society, and the areas in which it has proliferated most.

Semi-official sources estimate that the number of followers of Salafism, who are directly affiliated to the Traditional-Conservative current, is around 5,000 individuals, although one must bear in mind that these numbers are continuously waning and increasing. There are inconsistencies in the numbers available; and, with the lack of precise indicators with which one can make a solid, scientific measure, some observers think that the number of followers is actually double these estimates.

Despite the fact that the Salafists have spread to all parts of the Kingdom, it appears they have a more concentrated presence in specific areas and cities such as East Amman, Zarqa and

Ruseifeh – cities which have a high concentration of Jordanians of Palestinian origin amongst their populations. With that, they do have a strong presence in certain Jordanian cities such as Ramtha, Tafila and to a lesser degree in al-Salt, Aqaba and Kerak.

Osama Shehadeh, a researcher who monitors this current and several others, points to the fact that Conservative Salafism is no longer confined to the students of Sheikh al-Albani at the Imam Al-Albani Center, or to the followers of the more well known figures in the current. Indeed, there are new groups emerging on a daily basis that are distinct in their form and character, relationships and even in their discourse. But despite this, none of the newer additions has been able to provide any novel ideas or opinions of any real significance when it comes to Albanist-Salafism.²⁰⁶

Observers note that the fold of Conservative Salafism includes individuals from a diverse range of social backgrounds, economic classes, origins and upbringings. Its followers do not appear to be confined to a certain socio-economic and demographic profile, although some contend that the great majority of its adherents are from the poorer (and not middle) classes; and, they are mostly Jordanians of Palestinian origin. However, there is no real evidence supporting this contention except for the fact that religious fundamentalism does indeed appear to be more concentrated amongst these categories of the population, i.e. Jordanians of Palestinian origin and the poorer to lower middle-classes (where economic life is predominately comprised of tradesmen, craftsmen, skilled workers and other vocational professionals and the kind of socio-economic environment in which the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood gained its grassroots popularity).

The relationships between individual Salafists are concentrated and built around lessons and lecture circuits that focus on studying the Islamic *Sharia*. These lessons, and the relationships built through study circles, are what distinguish this particular current from others. They also form the basis for recruiting and initiating new members and increasing the scope for expansion

within the current. Consequently, theological books on Islam and Islamic religious scholarship are of paramount importance for the individual followers of this current.

Indeed, their lessons and studies in the Islamic faith and creed, jurisprudence and Hadith actually “ideologize” knowledge – or, transform learning into “ideological knowledge” where the focus is concentrated on what distinguishes the Salafist creed and jurisprudence from other Islamic groups, sects and movements. This “ideological knowledge” cultivates a dialectic tendency and confrontational logic in the current’s individuals – especially when it comes to other Islamist groups or movements – from the moment they are recruited and initiated into the current and from their first lesson in Conservative Salafism.

Today, the Imam Al-Albani Scholarly Research and Study Center represents the main institutional structure in the current. The center produces the “*al-Asala*” magazine and issues “approved” *fatwas* validated by the signature of the Sheikhs of the current. It also organizes and conducts seminars and lectures; and, it has become the focal point of Conservative Salafism where individuals in the current have a place to meet, assemble and communicate with one another.

Osama Shehadeh, a specialist in Salafism, points to the role of what he calls the “second-rank Salafists” in the current. According to Shehadeh, lessons and lectures are not the sole domain and responsibility of the upper ranks (leaders and sheikhs) in the current; but rather, today, second-ranking individuals, who are imams in smaller mosques, preachers, lecturers and university professors, all contribute to disseminating the Salafist rhetoric and discourse, to recruiting more followers and to garnering new support for the movement.

The internet also represents a very important and dynamic channel of communication for these Salafists. The internet, today, has become one of the most important tools used for disseminating

their rhetoric, discourse and ideas and in recruiting more individuals to their form of Salafism. Shehadeh draws particular attention to the *Kul al-Salafiyyin* (All the Salafists)²⁰⁷ forum and website, which is overseen by Ali al-Halaby, and which is playing a critical and major role in creating a communications network and platform for ongoing dialogue between the individuals in this current. It also offers an ongoing forum for discussion and debate on issues and current affairs that are of importance to them.

The circle of individuals who filled the first rank in the current has also changed since the life and death of its founder, Sheikh al-Albani. While al-Albani was alive, the second man in the current, so to speak, was Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra. However, after the death of al-Albani, Shaqra would enter into in a fierce battle with the rest of the Sheikh's students in what appeared, at the surface, to be a conflict over certain *fatwas* and rulings. But in reality, the struggle was over who was actually the legitimate successor to Sheikh al-Albani.

After Shaqra, the next in line in the current's "first rank" included Ali al-Halaby, Mashhoor Hassan, Salim al-Hillali, Murad Shukri, Mousa Naser and Hussein al-'Awaishah. However, the power struggle and differences that took place after al-Albani's death led to the ousting of Salim al-Hillali and Murad Shukri from the circle of the "accepted leadership", for which the Imam Al-Albani Center remains the official headquarters. Indeed, today, declarations, announcements and *fatwas* issued from the center are signed only by Ali al-Halaby, Mashhoor Hassan, Hussein al-Awaishah, Bassem al-Jawabira, Mousa Naser and Ziad al-Zu'bi. Of these leaders, Ali al-Halaby and Mashhoor Hassan never completed their higher learning in the Islamic *Sharia*, whereas Hussein al-Awaishah, Bassem al-Jawabira, Ziad al-Zu'bi and Mousa Naser all attained doctorates in the Islamic *Sharia*; and, most of them teach at universities until this day.

Inside Conservative Salafism, an academic degree is not considered a measure of an individual's level of scholarship and knowledge, or a criterion for scholarly authority. For example, Ali al-Halaby is considered the most authoritative figure in the current, and he never attained an academic degree, as was the case with the founder of Conservative Salafism itself, Sheikh al-Albani. However, an increased interest in attaining academic degrees has been noted in the Salafist ranks. Indeed, dozens of Salafists have shown an ambition to complete their higher education; this is seen as having led to a noticeable change in the outlook of individuals in the current who were not previously concerned with academic achievement.

The majority of the followers of Conservative Salafism also have a characteristic appearance that distinguishes them from the rest of the Islamist movements and currents. They claim that their appearance is the only one that strictly adheres to the Prophet's Sunna in terms of attire, behavior and in their interaction with others. They distinguish their appearance by maintaining a specific type of long beard and by wearing thawbs that fall short of the ankles – this thawb is usually an Arab thawb. They speak in classical Arabic and fanatically adhere to religious precepts, such as praying in mosques. They also forbid singing and listening to music, as well as any mixing of the sexes. They show no concern for politics or the media (excluding their leadership), and are very attentive to distancing themselves from mainstream traditions, behavior and appearances.

The matter of appearance, customs and behavior is one that is divisive and varies between one Islamist group and another in Jordan. For example, although the Muslim Brotherhood is concerned with behavior, their attention to beards and attire is not as great a concern as it is for the Salafists. It appears that Hizb ut-Tahrir is the least concerned about appearances and behavior, whereas individuals from the Jihadi Salafist movement are much closer to the Conservative Salafists in their attention and adherence to strict behavior and attire, and to maintaining

their religious precepts. The difference lies in the type of “Islamic” attire the Jihadis have adopted, which is less like that of the Conservatives and more in the vein of the Pakistani and Afghani garb, which is more like a long shirt over loose pants, and a head cover that looks more like a turban.

Although the attention that Salafists have given the media and satellite television is only quite recent, Osama Shehadeh is of the opinion that they have made great strides in this field in the past few years. Today, almost all the Traditional Salafist sheikhs make appearances on the “*Athar*” (“Influence / Impact”) satellite station, and the “*Al-Nass*” (“The People”) and “*Al-Hikma*” (“The Wisdom”) satellite stations also promote the same Conservative Salafist discourse.

7.1 What lies behind the rise of Salafism?

There is a general consensus amongst scholars and observers that money from Saudi Arabia has played a significant role in providing support and backing for Salafist activities. Indeed, Saudi Arabian money provides all the funding for Jordanian Salafists to produce, publish and distribute tapes and books. This money is also used to encourage preaching and other “missionary” activities; several leaders of this current have been “adopted” by the formal religious body in Saudi Arabia.

Certainly, there is also a large role being played by Jordanian expatriates, who live and work in the Arab Gulf states, and particularly Saudi Arabia, where expatriates number in the thousands. These expatriates are influenced by the prevailing rhetoric and discourse in Saudi Arabia – which is Salafist and, on the most part, conservative in nature and supported by the Saudi government. Furthermore, in addition to these expatriates, who have been satiated by Salafist thinking and significantly influenced by it, there are hundreds of Jordanian students studying Islamic *Sharia* in Islamic universities throughout Saudi Arabia.

When one looks at the evolution and rise of Salafism, it is clear that the period of the 1990s was a turning point for the movement. After the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, hundreds of thousands of Jordanians returned from the Arab Gulf states, which led to a significantly noticeable rise in the presence of Salafism in Jordan, in all its different forms and shapes, including the Conservative.

But, the question is, what is it in Salafism that attracts these young men in Jordanian society, especially those of Palestinian origin? And, especially those of Palestinian origin, who have a direct and immediate link to the Palestinian cause, which is an issue that has a continuous presence and is politically charged on a daily basis? Why is it that these young men adopt this religious discourse and thinking? And, why do they identify with a current that has so clearly declared its rejection of engaging and interfering in politics and political affairs?

Osama Shehadeh's answers to all these questions are summarized in one point: The idea of distancing oneself from politics is perhaps what attracts these young men most. Many of them are depressed and frustrated with the political situation, which they feel they are unable to change or affect in any way, and in which they feel the futility of their involvement. Meanwhile, all the other, more prominent Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Jihadi Salafists, are heavily involved in politics and in political affairs (including, to a large degree, the Palestinian cause). Thus, one will find that many of the young men who have become Salafists have found safe haven from their feeling of constant frustration and depression, by distancing themselves from all "political" matters. Instead, they have found an alternative and a way of thinking that makes them feel they can become agents of change, far from the emptiness and futility of the vicious cycle of political work.

Another factor that supports the previous observation presented by Osama Shehadeh is that Conservative Salafism focuses its attention, to a much greater degree than any other Islamist group or movement, on the study of Islamic *Sharia*. The latter is seen as a major factor in attracting a certain segment of young men, because this focus actually makes this form of Salafism appear to be driven by religious and not political objectives, and that Conservative Salafism is not interested in becoming entangled in the problems, crises and often, consequences and penalties that come with being active in political work and affairs.

Furthermore, being a student of “law” or of the *Sharia* can make a great impression. It gives the one who possesses this kind of scholarly ability “authority”, “information”, “knowledge” and the ability to issue “*fatwas*” on the tenets of Islamic *Sharia*. This, in itself, provides one with presence and status in society, which can make up for partisan or political activism.



Part 8:
The State and the Conservative
Salafists: A Policy of Mutual Interests
and Containment in the “Security Game”

The other Islamist groups and movements view the Conservative Salafists as the “spoiled child” of the state. The Conservative Salafists are not subject to many of the obstructions and disadvantages they face, such as being prevented from public speaking and preaching. The Conservative Salafists also are seen to enjoy better opportunities in employment and appointments in certain public sector jobs and ministries, such as the Ministry of Religious Endowments and the Ministry of Education (in departments dealing with Islamic matters and studies). And, they do not suffer from the “security clearances and bans” at universities that the great majority of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Jihadists and Hizb ut-Tahrir are subject to.

However, an official reading (by individuals from within the state) finds the afore-mentioned observations “superficial”, imprecise and lacking in depth. The security services in Jordan are in charge of the portfolio that deals with Islamist groups and movements (with the exception of the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has had their own security portfolio for almost the past ten years – before that, they were dealt with personally by the late King Hussein Bin Talal).

The great majority of Islamists are not active in direct political or parliamentary life; and, they are viewed as being more “social” rather than “political” agents (of “change”). Therefore, the relationship between the state and the various Islamist groups, including Conservative Salafism, is managed and governed from the point of view of a “security” angle.

A high-standing official involved in managing this portfolio makes it clear that the “golden rule”, which governs the relationship between the state’s security apparatuses and all the Islamist groups, is embodied by one major benchmark and criterion: that is national security and what is in the interests of the state; and, whether or not these groups serve the interests of the state and its security or harm it. Finally, he states that these criteria or benchmarks are very often defined, delineated and even amended according to the dictates of official policy.²⁰⁸

Therefore, and according to this security “perspective”, all the Islamist groups and movements, without exception – despite the fact that they may differ (tactically) from one group to another when it comes to certain issues; despite their inner struggles; despite their wide range of positions on political affairs; and, despite their varying stands with regard to the (prevailing) government and state – strategically, they all agree on the ultimate objective of “establishing an Islamic state”. The latter ultimately means, in one form or another, overturning the current form of governance, the state, the constitution and the prevailing rule of law – either by direct or indirect coup, or through a short- or long-term strategy.

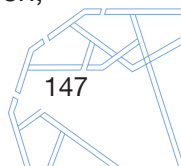
Accordingly, the state and its security apparatus will differentiate between short-term and long-term strategies when dealing with all the Islamist movements. In the short-term, these groups and movements are dealt with and differentiated from one another on the basis of which of them serve the national security and interests of the state – as it stands today. But, when it comes to long-term policy, all these groups remain under surveillance and are strictly monitored by the state so that none deviate from the redlines defined by the security interests of the state, today, and that none become a source of threat or danger to the security and the political regime, in the future.

When one places the previously stated “golden rule” in the context of state policy in terms of the Conservative Salafists, then, the state security apparatus, and particularly the general

intelligence services, is directly responsible for managing this portfolio. Also, by necessity, this relationship is subject to the same security status and criteria that all other Islamist groups or movements are – without any interference or supervision from the government. Thus, from a short-term perspective and in general, the relationship between the state and the Conservative Salafists appears fine and friendly. And, it appears negative friction rarely occurs between the security services and the Conservative Salafist leadership, in particular. Because, according to security policy, the fact that the Conservative Salafists have declared their policy of isolation and disengagement from political affairs, and the fact that they have adopted the rule of thumb stated by their renowned sheikh, Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, that is, “It is political not to talk politics”, is encouraging and reassuring – and serves the interests of the state and its security.

In the same vein, the position the Conservative Salafists have taken on several other levels has also reassured the state and its security; and these are: The Conservative Salafists openly reject the principle of partisanship and openly reject the work of political parties; they have called for “obedience to the guardian (the governor, the ruler)”; they have refused to act in public or political opposition to the regime; they have made an official stand against public demonstrations, marches or protests; and, they have had a public falling out with Islamist movements and currents that act in opposition to the government (either as a legal opposition, such as is the case with the Muslim Brotherhood or in radical opposition, such as is the case with the Jihadi Salafists). In terms of official policy, all these positions are seen as a service to the needs of state security, for now.

It also appears that the relationship between the leaders of the current and the state are quite friendly because they both realize and have a mutual “appreciation” of each other’s “interests”. Thus, the security apparatus facilitates the activities of this current and facilitates its dealings with the state; and meanwhile, the Conservative Salafist leadership issues religious *fatwas* (which,



one should note, are not necessarily in contradiction with the current's discourse and rhetoric), which can be used by the state against other Islamist parties, groups and movements.

In addition to the general political and intellectual stances of the Conservative Salafists, which serve the state's interests according to those responsible for state security, the current's leadership is also waging the "battle" for the state's religious institution against the other Islamist groups and movements – whether that war takes on the form of *fatwas* issued for that purpose, or through what is said in their lectures or Friday sermons. The latter are indeed used as a "tool", which allows the state to compete with other Islamist movements active in society, without overstepping the authority of the official religious institution – which, in general, does not enjoy much support or credibility at the popular and grassroots level.

Certainly, the aforementioned does not mean a total surrender on the part of the state's security to maintain continuously warm and friendly relationship with the Salafists. Indeed, certain causes for concerns and fears remain with regard to the Conservative Salafist's long-term goal – the "Islamization of the state". There is concern despite the fact that this goal is not clearly defined in the Salafist rhetoric and discourse. It is often hard to discern whether or not the Conservative Salafists are seriously thinking about this goal, after the "Islamization of society" – or whether it is a "theoretical pretext" in Salafist ideology, which has been placed within their "stated objectives" as a movement in order to be able to confront and compete with other Islamist groups and movements.

The other major concern, which surfaces when it comes to the way the state views the Conservative Salafists (and other groups such as the *Jamaa'at al-Tabligh wal Da'wa*, which also has declared its rejection of working in politics or engaging in any form of armed resistance), is the state's obsession with the "great fluidity" within the Islamist arena, between the various groups and particularly within the numerous Salafist currents. For, there is a

one, solid, common doctrinal and intellectual ground between all of them; and, if an individual finds himself in conflict with the political stance of the current he is in, moving from one current such as the Conservative or Reform Salafist current to another such as the Jihadi Salafist current, is quite easy. This has often taken place in the past. Indeed, this “fluidity” makes it imperative for the surveillance and monitoring of the Conservative Salafists to continue, even if the overall relationship between the current and the state’s official institutions remains and appears well and good.

The security perspective also does not take into consideration or show any great concern about the problematic contradictions inherent in the socio-religious discourse of Conservative Salafism – which is extremely antagonistic towards modernity, the arts, the new sciences and social progress – and the attempts made by the state to pave the way for combining the needs of modernity and modernization with the message of Islam. The state’s attempt at amalgamating these needs with Islam is carried out by trying to concentrate on and highlight the values of openness, tolerance and interaction with Western civilization, and in continuing an ongoing “dialogue between the religions”. Indeed, this goal of the state is far from not only the aim of Conservative Salafist activities alone but also clashes directly with a great part of the core tenets of Conservative Salafism, and its overall ideology when it comes to social, cultural and educational issues.

But, from the point of view of security, and the very clear objectives the security apparatus has to fulfill to protect national security, the concerns clearly stop there. Security, as an extension of a state institution, clearly does not have the ability to build realistic instruments on the ground that can also serve state policy in confronting these kinds of contradictions and problematic differences. However, that does not exclude other institutions inside the state from thinking about these contradictions and differences, which have clearly placed the state’s declared policies in one place and its game of balancing its security needs and interests in an entirely different one.



Future Horizons

There are numerous, interrelated and complex factors that will govern the future horizons of Salafism in Jordan and to what extent it will achieve its declared aims of “Islamization of society in the short-term and the Islamic state in the long-term”.

There are internal factors, related to the question of the internal unity of Conservative Salafism after the divisions and struggles inside the current surfaced, particularly after the death of its founding sheikh, Nasruddin al-Albani. These schisms and disagreements led to the ousting of the second man in the current, Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra and soon thereafter, Murad Shukri and Salim al-Hillali. The latter were all sheikhs of the first rank in the current whose ousting is an ominous sign for the sustainability and continuity of the current in the shadow of the absence of its institutional mind and memory, and in the framework of the relationships that directly bind individual members in the current with their sheikhs.

Furthermore, there are numerous political, social and cultural factors that will define the extent to which the current will spread, the extent to which its Salafist way of thinking will be accepted, and the strength of its social undercurrent and attractiveness at the grassroots level. These factors include the crisis in socio-political identity, the weakness of any enlightened-reform tendency in society and the political crisis, which is obstructing the path towards establishing a pluralistic, democratic state – in which there are peaceful transitions in power, and in which people do not feel suspicious of politics, political affairs and political work.

In the case that prevailing conditions do persist and prevail, on all its various levels – political, social, educational and cultural – then the phenomenon of Conservative Salafism will likely persist in remaining a reality, and perhaps even grow. In the case that conditions actually deteriorate, this kind of movement, as well as all the other forms of the Salafist *da'wa*, will find an excellent breeding ground within which to flourish.

The other question is one that backfires on official policy. There are vast and clear contradictions between meeting the state's security needs – a task which operates in one reality – and, meeting the needs of the state's official policy in terms of its religious and political objectives – which operate in a completely different reality!

Obviously, Conservative Salafism is like all the other Islamist currents and movements in its overall objective of the “Islamization of society” and perhaps even the state, even if it does disagree with the others on the overall strategy for affecting change and in its relationship with the state.

The important and fundamental conflict here, which is lost upon official policy, is the “significance and context” inherent in the concept of the “Islamization” that Conservative Salafism believes in and strives for, and which is the vital backbone of this current's ideology. And, here, the question remains whether this “concept” will be harmonious with the needs required for building a progressive, modern and open society, and a civil democracy; or, whether this “concept” will lead to a regression to the past, and a suspicious and paranoid view of policies of modernization and openness, democracy, and political and cultural pluralism, which may eventually be rejected outright.

This study indicates that an answer to these questions is quite simple. However, a satisfactory answer is not found amongst official circles. How can this extensive gap between the contradiction between the security perspective and the strategic political policy perspective be narrowed?

This question requires an answer from the state and its official policy circles on whether the sacrifice will be on the part of the strategic aim of enlightenment, rationality, openness and modernization at the cost of immediate considerations and needs, which require an alliance with and an exploitation of the “Traditional-Salafist current”, as was recently recommended by Western-American policy-makers. Or, is the priority an enlightened political strategy that seeks an Islamic partner, who serves the process of building a civil, modern nation and society, which is reconciled with itself, and in which there are no contradictions between the requirements of modernity and that of the religion and the faith.



Endnotes

1. **Salafist** is defined by Salafists as follows: “The Salafist *da’wa* is that of the Qur’an and the Sunna. It is the Religion of Islam - pure and free from any additions, deletions or alterations. It is to adhere to the Path of the Messenger (May Peace Be Upon Him) and of the True Believers or Righteous Predecessors (*al-Salaf al-Saleh*). As-Salaf is a collective term referring to the Pious Pioneers in Islam and all those, who follow in the footsteps of the *Salaf al-Saleh* in their belief, actions and morals.” [Reference: *The Quran and Sunna Society*; www.qss.org]

A general introduction to **Salafism** is also provided in “Women and Politics: From the Perspective of Islamic Movements in Jordan” as follows: In general and in common, Islamic (Salafist) movements have all declared through their discourse that their ultimate goal is the “resumption of an Islamic way of life”, despite differences in their various ideologies and visions of ‘change’. The movements [...] vary in their ideologies from reformatory to revolutionary and radical. However, they all meet, at some level, in their attempts at creating restorative or reformative movements – similar to that of the Traditional Salafists and *Jamaa’at Tabligh wal Da’wa* or “missionary-type” movements – in that they all seek the re-Islamization of society from its base, using tactics that will lead, in the end, to the establishment of an Islamic state. For example, the reformist political movement of the Muslim Brotherhood and its associated political party, the Islamic Action Front, seek reform through political demands and confrontation. Meanwhile, the more radical parties such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (the Islamic Liberation Party) seek to create alliances with the powers-that-be in attempt to enforce change from its ‘roots’ or at the head of the governing hierarchy. Revolutionary movements like the Jihadi Salafists seek, through violence and through the use of ‘force’ or the ‘power of jihad’, to overthrow modern states and their governments. The various positions of and instruments used by the Islamic movements differ in their tactics and in their attitudes towards the established state, and range between opposition, appeasement, collaboration and even

disregard. But, in the end, all join in the agreement of the need to establish an Islamic state. [Reference: “*Women and Politics: From the Perspective of Islamic Movements in Jordan*”, by Hasan Abu Haniyeh, published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office.] [Translators note]

2. **Da’wa** means “invitation” or “call to Islam”. It is often translated to mean “Islamic mission” although, both in theory and in practice, da’wa is different in its aims and methods from, for example, the contemporary Christian comprehension of a religious mission. Many Islamic thinkers strongly emphasize this difference. (See notation in original text referenced here). Especially for those thinkers that adhere to the broad-based Salafist ideology typical of the Muslim Brotherhood and related revivalist groups, da’wa is not simply a method for spreading a spiritual teaching or performing charitable works; it is also an inherently political activity, whose principal aim is Islamic reform and revival leading to the eventual establishment of an Islamic state. Da’wa is prescribed in the Qur’an as an obligation for all Muslims. Some Qur’anic verses describe da’wa as a form of religious proselytization. For instance, *Surat an-Nahl*, verse 125 enjoins Muslims to, “Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them [non-Muslims] in ways that are best...” Other verses concerning the notion of da’wa, frequently cited by religious scholars, emphasize *da’wa*’s role in preserving and strengthening the socio-moral character of the Muslim community and its general adherence to Sharia law (Islamic law). *Surat al-Imran*, verses 104 and 110, speak of the Muslim communal duty (*fard kifayya*) to call the whole of mankind to Islam, and to enjoin right and forbid wrong. In addition to these verses, many Islamic thinkers also derive the obligation to engage in da’wa from *Surat al-Baqara*, verse 143: “Thus, We have made of you an umma justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Messenger a witness over yourselves.” According to a common interpretation, this Sura indicates that witnessing for and propagating Islam is the primary reason why the original Muslim umma (nation of Islam, or the community of all Muslims) was created. Insofar as this positive duty to spread and implement Islam through da’wa has also been understood by Muslims as an obligation to enlarge the umma – or what modern revivalists call the “Muslim Nation” – da’wa is also an inherently political activity for Salafists. This is because the latter define Islam as a comprehensive system, regulating not only the private sphere and the relations between a believer and God, but also the public sphere and politics. [...] Since its emergence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the worldwide

Salafist movement has laid particular stress on the political dimensions of the da'wa. For example, the da'wa concepts and theories that were pioneered by Hasan al-Banna and of Abul ala al-Mawdoudi (1903-1979), the creator of the Indo-Pakistani revivalist movement Jamaa'at-el-Islam, both emphasized the importance of reforming the socio-moral character of Muslim communities. The principal aim of this outreach was to bring about the reversal of what they saw as Islam's decline in the modern era, and to prepare the way, through the systematic propagation of Islamist ideology to an ever-wider audience, for the ultimate establishment of an Islamic state ... [Reference: "Da'wa and the Islamist Revival in the West", by Nina Wiedl, published on Monday, December 14, 2009 in the article: "Current Trends in Islamist Ideology"; Vol. 9; The Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World; found on the following link:

http://www.currenttrends.org/printVersion/print_pub.asp?pubID=116
[Translators note]

3. **Sheikh** in the Oxford-Dictionary of English is defined as:

noun **1.** an Arab leader, and in particular the chief or head of an Arab tribe, family or village, *synonym:* leader; or **2.** a leader in a Muslim community or organization; *origins:* 16th century, Arabic root 'sayk ' or old man, sheikh, from 'saka' or to 'be or grow old'. For the purposes of this document and this translation of the original Arabic text, the second meaning is the one intended unless otherwise noted; or "as a religious or spiritual leader in a Muslim community or organization". There are many definitions for and connotations attached to the term 'sheikh' that carry further spiritual or social connotations; however, for the purposes of this document, the translation intends the meaning described in this footnote, or as referenced in the second part of the Oxford-Dictionary of English's definition. [Translator's note]

4. **Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani** (1914-1999) is considered the original founder of the Traditional Salafist movement in Jordan. During his lifetime, he managed to formulate a new school of Salafism, which established him as one the most prominent figureheads and symbols of the Salafist movement in the second half of the twentieth century, and which granted him an extensive popular reputation and acceptance in the Muslim world. His school of thought is distinguished by special attributes that distinguish it from other predecessor Salafist movements such as the Wahhabi Salafist movement in al-Hijaz [Saudi Arabia], the Reform Salafist movement in Egypt and the National Salafist movement

in Morocco. However, it shares with all Salafist movements (as reform movements) the call to the return to the Book (Qur'an), the way of the Prophet (*Sunna*) and the good path of the 'first three blessed generations' after the Prophet (or the Righteous Predecessors or *al-Salaf al-Saleh*). Other major objectives of these movements include rising up from the decline in scientific output, the collapse of the political systems and the colonial domination (in the Muslim world) by calling for a revival of the heritage of Islam, working to restore the pure image of Islam and ridding it of the infidel and innovative, heretical practices that have become associated with Islam over the course of history. The movement's goals include setting and strengthening authentic or original, uncontaminated Islamic moral values as summarized by the fundamental principles of the original monotheistic calling of obedience and of righteousness. [Reference: "Women and Politics: From the Perspective of Islamic Movements in Jordan", by Hasan Abu Haniyeh, published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office.] [Translators note]

5. **Muridi** is the plural of murid, meaning specifically "a student or loyal disciple of a sheikh"; the term is often associated with Sufism, although in this context it is not... "Do not call attention to yourself. You are called *murid* which means 'to will what he [the sheikh] wills, to want what he wants for you'." [Reference: *Haqqani-Naqshbandiyya Cairo website: <http://www.h2rc2.com/caironaqshbandi/pages/adabwithsheikh3.html>*] [Translators note]

6. **Fatwa** (s.); **Fatwas** (pl.) refers to an Islamic legal opinion/s usually issued on matters related to everyday life; an Islamic religious ruling; a scholarly opinion on a matter of Islamic law. A *fatwa* is issued by a recognized religious authority. [Reference: *Women and Politics: From the Perspective of Islamic Movements in Jordan, By Hasan Abu Haniyeh, published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office.*] [Translators note]

7. **Ibtida'a** linguistically means innovation, or creation, or creativity or invention, but also, in the religious sense, as implied, in this study and in the Salafist definition, it is meant in the context of innovating in the sense of originating a notion or attaching an extrinsic "innovation" to the core religion; or creating something that is additional, extrinsic to or not of the original text or religion. [al-Mawrid Arabic-English dictionary, Al-Baalbaki, Dar el-Ilm LilMalayin; Fourth Edition, 1992 [Translator's note]

8. Linguistically and in the *Sharia* (Islamic law) **al-manhaj** or *an-nahju* or

al-minhaj means the clear and manifest way... “Allah (God) the Almighty says in the Glorious Qur’an, [To each among you we have prescribed a law and a manhaj] [al-Ma’idah” (Sura 5:48)]... “Meaning a law and a way which is clearly explained; indeed, God, Almighty, prescribed for every nation a law and a clear way or, a *manhaj*. Thus, the people of the Torah had a law, and the people of the Bible had a law and the people of the Qur’an have a law. These laws differ in their rules (*ahkam*) but are united in the *tawhid* of God (the uniqueness, oneness of God)”. [Referenced and quoted from: “A Glimpse at the Way of the Companions”, *Tasfiyyah-wat-Tarbiyyah*, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qadir al-Arna’ut, Translated by Abu Taher, <http://www.sarandibmuslims.com/> (in the section on the website that discusses the Salafist understanding of the concept of *tawhid*)] [Translators note]

9. **Al-Salaf al-Saleh:** The Righteous (or Pious) Predecessors (or briefly: the *Salaf*) refers to the first and best three generations of Muslims. These three generations begin with the Companions (*Sahaba*) of the Prophet (May Peace Be upon Him), their immediate followers (*Tabi’in*) and then the followers of the *Tabi’in*. These were praised by the Prophet (May Peace Be upon Him) as follows, “*The best of people is my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them*” [Bukhari and al-Muslim]. According to Salafists today, the term *Salaf* can also apply “to the scholars of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jamaa’ah, who came after the first three “blessed” generations, and who followed the way of the Righteous Predecessors in their belief and practices”. [Reference: <http://www.qss.org/articles/salafi/text.html>] [Translator’s note]

10. He is **Issam Bin Mohammad Taher al-Barqawi**; his alias **Abu Mohammad**, and known as **al-Makdessi**, his lineage goes back to Otaiba. He was born in the outskirts of Nablus in Palestine in 1959. His family left to Kuwait when he was three or four years old. In Kuwait, he finished his high school studies and then moved on to the University of Mossul in Northern Iraq to study sciences. He had ties with various Islamic movements and groups, and in particular, the Srouriyya Salafists, who follow the teachings of Sheikh Mohammad Srour, the Juhaiman group as well as a number of Qutubian Sheikhs (followers of Qutub). Afterwards, he traveled between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia where he became learned in Wahhabi Salafism and where he studied the traditions of the Najdian (of the area of Najd in central Saudi Arabia) Imams of the Da’wa (calling/invocation). He traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan several times, at which time his Jihadi Salafist tendency began to emerge.

During this period, he wrote his first and most famous book, “*Mullat Ibrahim*” (Abraham’s Creed). In 1992 and after the Second Gulf War, he and his family settled in Jordan where he began to actively call and recruit others to Jihadi Salafism. His position and stances were clearly articulated through another book he wrote during that time in which al-Makdessi declares the heresy of democracy, entitled “Democracy is Religion”. At this time, he entered into an open debate with those who followed the Traditional Salafist school of thought and actively worked to spread his word throughout Jordan. He was arrested in 1993 for being affiliated with the “Pledging of Allegiance to the Imam” movement; Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi was with him in the same movement. Al-Makdessi was sentenced to 15 years but released in 1999 by a royal pardon. However, he was arrested several times after his release on charges of being affiliated to various movements and was only recently released from his last arrest. His writings are a reference for Jihadi Salafism in Jordan and all over the world; his essays, letters and fatwas (opinions of a religious scholar) are numerous and include “*Mullat Ibrahim (Abraham’s Creed)*”⁴⁴, “*Al-Kawashif al-Jaliyya fi Kufr al-Dawla al-Saudia (Clear Evidence of the Blasphemy of the Saudi State)*”, amongst others. [Reference: “*The Jihadi Salafist Movement in Jordan after Zarqawi: Identity, Leadership Crisis and Obscured Vision*”, by Mohammad Abu Rumman and Hasan Abu Haniyeh, published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office] [Translators note]

11. **Nationalist Islam** is linked to contemporary national liberation movements where Islam played a major role in unifying national forces against imperialism and colonialism all over the Arab and Muslim world. Although the term for nation (*watan*) is a modern one, the classical term *umma* is used in a larger context to name a community without national geographic borders; i.e. a community of faith and of common good. This Islam is intertwined with a nation’s language, values, customs and manners. It may vary in form, but stays the same in content. The Qur’an, for example, can be read in Arabic or in a variety of other languages, except when it comes to prayer. Islam has always been carried by different nationalities: Arabs, Persians, Indians, Malays, Chinese, Turks, Mongols, some Africans, as well as by Europeans and Americans. [...] Thus, Islam is seen as one and many, identical and different, universal and particular and similar and dissimilar. Islamization has been related to Malayization, Indonesianization and Africanization. This type of radical Islam can be described as radical Muslim nationalism (or radical Muslim communitarism). [Reference: “*New Directions in Islamic Thought*”,

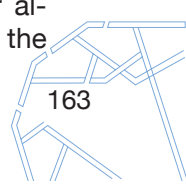
Hassan Hanafi; 2010 Center for International and Regional Studies; Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar; brief No. 4 pp. 6-7] Nationalist Islam involves the often ignored forms of radicalism which focus not really on Islam as a religion, but rather on what it means to be a Muslim (the “*umma*” or the ‘imagined community’ of the ‘Muslim nation’, the solidarity between Muslims all over the world). A phenomenon such as the Arabic European League (AEL) can be seen as a form of (radical) Muslim nationalism/communitarism. Muslim nationalism has certain aspects in common with radical-political Islam (the objective being the emancipation of Muslims) and radical-Islamic puritanism with tendencies towards exclusivism and parallelism, although often less extreme and less religiously motivated). [Reference: “*From Dawa to Jihad: The Various Threats from Radical Islam on the Democratic Legal Order*”, Published by General Intelligence and Security Service, 2500 EA The Hague; Website www.aivd.nl, Dec 2004] [Translators note]

12. **Hajj** in Islam, is the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia, which every adult Muslim of either sex must make at least once in his or her lifetime; the *hajj* is the fifth of the fundamental Muslim practices and institutions known as the Five Pillars of Islam. The pilgrimage rite begins on the 7th day of Dhu al-Hijjah (the last month of the Islamic year) and ends on the 12th day. [Reference: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/252050/hajj>] [Translators note]

13. **Umra** is an optional Muslim pilgrimage: A lesser form of pilgrimage to Mecca that is not obligatory for Muslims - unlike the *hajj* - which can be performed at any time of year. [Reference: http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_701710666/umrah.html] [Translators note]

14. For more details on the concept of and terminology used to define Salafism, see:

- Dr. Mustafa Hilmi, “Salafism between the Islamic Faith and Western Philosophy”, Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon; First Edition: 2006 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
- Dr. Mustafa Hilmi, “The Foundations of the Salafist Model in Islamic Scholarship”, Dar al Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon; First Edition: 2005 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
- Dr. Fathi Othman, “Salafism in Contemporary Societies”, Dar al-Qalam, Kuwait; Second Edition: 1981 [Title translated from the



- Arabic; available in Arabic]
- Dr. Mohammad Abed al-Jabiri, “The Contemporary Salafist Movement and the Jamaa’at al-Diniyah (Religious Jama’at) in Morocco”, in “Contemporary Islamic Movements in the Arab World”, Markiz Dirasat Al-Wihda Al-Arabiyyah (Arab Unity Research Center), Beirut, Lebanon; Fourth Edition: 1998; pp 187-236 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
 - Dr. Haidar Ibrahim, ‘The Salafist Trend’ in “Alam al-Fikr” Magazine; Volume 26, Issues 3 & 4; 1988; pp 11-36 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
 - Dr. Fahmi Jidaan, “The Meaning of Salafism: The Past in the Present”; al-Mu’assasa al-`Arabiyya lil-Dirasat wal-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon; First Edition: 1997; pp 79-104 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
 - Dr. Fahmi Jidaan, “Salafism’s Boundaries and Orientations”, “Alam al-Fikr” Magazine; Volume 26, Issues 3 & 4; 1988; pp 61-96 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
 - Dr. Rajih Abdul Hamid al-Kurdi, “The Salafist Trend between Tradition and Modernity”, Dar Ammar Publishing House, Amman, Jordan; First Edition: 1989 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]
 - Dr. Mohammed Sa’id Ramadan al-Bouti, “Salafism: A Blessed Time Period and not an Islamic Sect”, Dar al-Fikr, Damascus, Syria; First Edition: 1988 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

15. Translation taken from:

<http://www.alquran-english.com/43-az-zukhruf/>;
 and http://www.sarandibmuslims.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=234:a-glimpse-at-the-way-of-the-companions&catid=4:tawheed-&Itemid=7 [Translators note]

16. Dr. Anwar Abu Taha, “Salafism: Trends and Issues”. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic] The author of this study benefited from Dr. Abu Taha’s valuable research into the various classifications of Salafism, as he did from the valuable research by Dr. Fahmi Jidaan in his two publications: “The Meaning of Salafism: The Past in the Present”; al-Mu’assasa al-`Arabiyya lil-Dirasat wal-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon; First Edition: 1997; pp 79-104 [Title translated from the Arabic; available only in Arabic] and “Salafism’s Boundaries and Orientations”, “Alam al-Fikr” Magazine; Volume 26, Issues 3 & 4; 1988; pp 61-96 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

17. The term **umma** should not be confused with the term *watan*: The

term used today to signify “nation” or *watan* is a modern one, while the classical term *umma* is used in a larger context to name a community without national geographic borders – or a community of (Islamic) faith and of common good. *Umma* (or *al-umma al-Islamiyya*) is often translated into the Muslim nation, the Islamic community or Islamic world community. [Reference: “New Directions in Islamic Thought”, Hassan Hanafi; 2010 Center for International and Regional Studies; Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar; brief No. 4 p.7] [Translator’s note]

18. From the Prophet’s Hadith (from Sahih al-Muslim and al-Bukhari) and, the Hadith continues [... and they will be treacherous and nobody will trust them, and they will make vows, but not fulfill them...]
[References: <http://www.qss.org/articles/salafi/text.html>;
http://www.quranenglish.com/hadith/sahih_bukhari/076.htm]
[Author and Translators note]

19. **Shirk** in Islamic terminology means polytheism; or to ascribe a partner or rival or someone other than God something that belongs only to God in worship, in His Lordship (*ruboobiyyah*), His divinity (*uloohiyyah*), His divine names and attributes (*al-asma’ wa’l-sifaat*) [i.e. forms of idolatry]...
[Translator’s note]

20. Taha Abderrahman, “Religious Work and Mental Revival”; al-Markiz al-Thaqafi al-Arabi (the Arab Cultural Center), Beirut, Lebanon; Second Edition: 1997, p. 90 Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

21. **Khawarij** (The Seceders, The Rebels) are known by several names and nicknames. They came to be called the Khawarij [“the Seceders” or “the Rebels”] because of their rebellion [*khuruuj*] against Ali ibn Abi Talib (May Peace Be Upon Him). http://www.sunnah.org/aqida/ghunya/khawarij_fifteen_sects.htm [Translators note]

22. **Mu’tazila** (The Rationalists) is the name of a religious movement founded in Basra, in the first half of the 2nd/8th century by Wasil b. ‘Ata’ (d. 131/748 [q.v.]), subsequently becoming one of the most important theological schools of Islam. The origin of this term-which has the sense of ‘those who separate themselves, who stand aside’ - remains enigmatic. They are sometimes called the “Rationalists”.
<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ei2/mu-tazila.htm> [Translators note]

23. **Murji'ah** or (Those Who Postpone); English **Murjites**: The Murji'ah is one of the earliest Islamic sects to believe in the postponement (*irjā*) of judgment on committers of serious sins, recognizing God alone as being able to decide whether or not a Muslim had lost his faith. The Murji'ah flourished during the turbulent period of Islamic history that began with the murder of 'Uthman (third Caliph) in ad 656 and ended with the assassination of 'Ali (fourth Caliph) in ad 661 and the subsequent establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (which ruled until 750 AD).

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/398150/Murjiah>

[Translators note]

24. Dr. Abdel Hakim Abu Al-Lawz, "Salafist Movements in Morocco: From 1971-2004", a socio-anthropological study published by Markiz Dirasat Al-Wihda Al-Arabiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, First Edition: 2009, p. 38. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

25. **Malikiyya** is the second of the Islamic schools of jurisprudence. The sources of Maliki doctrine are the Qur'an, the Prophet's traditions (*Hadith*), consensus (*ijma'*), and analogy (*qiyas*). The Malikis' concept of *ijma'* differs from that of the Hanafis in that they understood it to mean the consensus of the community represented by the people of al-Medina. (Over time, however, the school came to understand consensus to be that of the scholars of law, known as '*ulama*.) Imam Malik's major contribution to Islamic law is his book "*Al-Muwatta*" (The Beaten Path). The Muwatta is a code of law based on the legal practices that were operating in al-Medina. It covers various areas ranging from prescribed rituals of prayer and fasting to the correct conduct of business relations. The legal code is supported by some 2,000 traditions attributed to the Prophet. The Malikiyya school of jurisprudence was founded by Malik ibn Anas (c.713-c.795), a legal expert in the city of al-Medina. Such was his stature that it is said three 'Abbasid caliphs visited him while they were on Pilgrimage to Medina. Today Maliki doctrine and practice remains widespread throughout North Africa, the Sudan and regions of West and Central Africa. <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/sunni/malik.html> [Translators note]

26. The **Hanbali** School of Islamic jurisprudence is the fourth school of law within Sunni Islam. It derives its decrees from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which places above all forms of consensus, opinion or inference. The school accepts as authoritative an opinion given by a

Companion of the Prophet, providing there is no disagreement with another Companion. In the case of such disagreement, the opinion of the Companion nearest to that of the Qur'an or the Sunna is deemed to prevail. The Hanbali school of law was established by Ahmad Bin Hanbal (d.855). He studied law under different masters, including Imam Shafi'i (who founded his own school). He is regarded as more learned in the traditions than in jurisprudence. His status also derives from his collection and exposition of the Hadith. His major contribution to Islamic scholarship is a collection of fifty-thousand traditions known as '*Musnadul-Imam Hanbal*'. <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/sunni/hanb.html> [Translators note]

27. The *Sahaba* are a reference to the "Companions of the Prophet Mohammad"; The following is an extract from a description of *Sahaba* from the **Salafist** point of view: "One of the fundamental beliefs of *Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaa'ah* that at times what distinguishes them from heretics is their belief in the Companions of the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) and all that has been mentioned about their virtues, merits and characteristics in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Prophet's Companions are all those who met the Prophet (May Peace Be Upon Him) and died as Muslims. Scholars have said that they were 114,000 in number [as stated by Abu Zur'ah, the teacher of Imam Muslim, and recorded by as-Suyootee]. They are praised in many Qur'anic verses: "You are the best of peoples ever raised for mankind, you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in Allah". [3:110] "And the first to embrace Islam of the *Muhajiroon* (the Emigrants from Mecca) and the *Ansar* (the citizens of Al-Medina who helped the Muhajiroon) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well pleased with them, as they are well pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success." [9:100] and "Indeed, God was pleased with the believers when they gave their pledge to you (O Muhammad) under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts and He sent down calmness and tranquility upon them..." [48:18]. [Reference: <http://www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=74>] [Translator's note]

28. ***Ahl al-Hadith*** or ***Ashàb al-Hadith***: The term *Ahl al-Hadith* refers to their adherents' belief that they are not bound by *taqlid* (tradition) (as are *Ahl al-Rai*, literally "the People of Rhetorical Theology or of Reason or Opinion"), but consider themselves free to seek guidance in matters of religious faith and practices from the authentic Hadith which, together with the Qur'an, are in their view the principal worthy guide for Muslims. [Translators note]

29. From “A Glimpse at the Way of the Companions”, Tasfiyyah-wat-Tarbiyyah, Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qadir al-Arna’ut, Translated by Abu Taher, <http://www.sarandibmuslims.com/> (section on Tawhid) [Translators note]

30. Here **Ahl al-Kallam** is used in a more derogatory way to refer to Ahl al-Rai’ and Ahl al-‘Aqel; with *Kallam* meaning allegorical interpretations, speculative theology – or “words”, literally, “The Talkers, or Those of Words”) [Translator’s note]

31. Separatist comes from the word *‘itizal*, from which the word Mu’tazila is also derived. Refer back to footnote 19 [Translator’s note]

32. The People of *Bida’a* (literally, “The Innovators”) or *ibtida’a* (literally, to innovate) in this context refers to those who created or innovated something that is additional, extrinsic to or not of the original texts or religion of Islam. [Translator’s note]

33. **Al-Jahmiyya** (Arabic) or the **Jahmis** (English) are considered a Sufist sect, which claims that disbelief in God (*al-kufr billah*), is but ignorance of God. This doctrine is attributed to Jahm ibn Safwan. The *Jahmiyya* claim that if a person receives knowledge, then disavows it with his tongue, he does not commit disbelief with such a disavowal. They claim that belief (*iman*) is indivisible and that its subscribers are all in one-and-the-same category. They claim that belief and disbelief can only be in the heart at the exclusion of any other member of the body ... In the words of Jahm, “Paradise and the Fire shall pass away and become extinct; that belief is only knowledge of God and nothing else; that disbelief is but ignorance of God and nothing else; that no act is anyone’s doing in reality, other than God’s alone, and that it is His doing”. Jahm used to profess the ordering of good and the forbidding of indecency. He also used to say that the *Qur’an* is created and that it must not be said that God has always been cognizant of things before they take place. (This is also what the *Qadariyya* and *Mu’tazila* profess as well.) It is also related that al-Bukhari said, “I hold as ignorant whoever does not declare the *Jahmiyya* to be disbelievers.” This was also the *Hanbali* position as shown in many places of Ibn Abi Ya’la’s “*Tabaqat al-Hanabila*” and the books of Abdullah Bin Ahmad Bin Hanbal, Abu Bakr al-Khallal and ‘Uthman Abu Sa’id al-Darimi. [Reference: <http://www.sunnah.org/aqida/alashaira4.htm>; reference edited by the translator] [Translators note]

34. **Al-Qadiriyyah**, also known as Qadri, Qadriya, Qadriyya, Qadria, (also transliterated *Kadri, Elkadri, Elkadry, Aladray, Adray, Kadray, Qadiri* or *Qadri*), is one of the oldest Sufi *tariqas* (paths) in Sunni Islam. It derives its name from Abdul-Qadir Gilani (also transliterated as “Jil lani” or “Jailani” and “Jilali” in the Maghreb) (1077-1166), a native of the Iranian province of Gilan. In 1134, he was made principal of a Sunni Hanbali school in Baghdad. [Reference: *Abun-Nasr, Jamil M. “The Special Sufi Paths (Taqiras)”. Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life”, New York: Columbia UP, 2007*] [Translator’s note]

35. Refer back to footnote 7 [Translator’s note]

36. Sunnan al-Dirami and Ibn Abi Khaythama recount this in the book, “Al-‘Ilm bi Sannad Sahih” (Scholarship Based in Righteousness), as did al-Baghawi in his exposition on the Sunna, as did al-Lalika’i, al-Hirawi and Mohammad bin Nasr al-Marwazi.

37. Ibn Taymiyya, Taqi al-Din Abu al-Abbas Ahmad Bin Abdel Halim, “Majmou’ Fatawi Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya”, compiled and edited by Abdel Rahman Bin Mohammad Bin Kasseem and his son, The Library of al-Nahda al-Haditha, Holy Mecca, 1404 AH, p. 10

38. **Sunna** (or **Sunnah**) in the Arabic language lexically means “road” or “practice”. In the language of the Prophet and His Companions (*Sahaba*), it denotes the whole of licit [lawful] practices followed in the religion [*al-dîn*], particularly the pristine (*hanîf*) path of Prophets, whether pertaining to belief, religious and social practice or ethics. In its technical sense, the “*Sunna*” (or *Sunnah*) has three meanings: In the terminology of the Hadith, it denotes any saying (*qawl*), action (*fi’l*), approval (*taqrîr*), or attribute (*sifa*), whether physical (*khilqiyya*) or moral (*khuluqiyya*) ascribed to (*udîfa ila*) the Prophet, whether before or after the beginning of his prophethood. This meaning is used in contradistinction to the Qur’an in expressions such as “the Qur’an and the Sunna” and applies in the usage of Hadith scholars. In the terminology of the principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), the Sunna denotes a saying (*qawl*), action (*fi’l*) or approval (*taqrîr*) related from (*nuqila ‘an*) the Prophet or issuing (*sadara*) from him other than the Qur’an. [Reference: www.sunnah.org; http://www.sunnah.org/fiqh/usul/meaning_sunnah.htm] [Translator’s note]

39. Refer to Nasser Bin Abdel Karim al-‘Aqel, “In the Creed and Doctrine of Ahl al-Sunna wal Jamaa’ah” and his other research on contemporary Islamic movements and their stances with regard to this creed and doctrine, Dar al-Watan Publishing House; First Edition, 9/12/1412 AH, pp. 40-46

40. **Wahhabism** has the goal of calling (*da‘wa*) people to restore the “real” meaning of *tawhid* (oneness of God or monotheism) and to disregard and deconstruct ‘traditional’ disciplines and practices that evolved in Islamic history such as theology and jurisprudence and the traditions of visiting tombs and shrines of venerated individuals. Such disciplines and practices are classified as *shirk* (polytheism), *kufr* (unbelief in God), *ridda* (apostasy), and *bida‘a* (innovations). Its founder Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab (1703-1792) forced his followers to adhere to a very strict and literal interpretation of “monotheism” and to fight *shirk*. His followers, who called themselves *al-muwahhidin* (the monotheists), are labeled by others as Wahhabis. While *tawhid* is the core concept of Islam, Abdel Wahhab argues that the recognition of a unique creator without a partner is insufficient for correct belief and must be joined with ‘pure’ Islamic behavior. Following in the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyya [...] [Reference: “Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who is the Enemy?” by Professor Ahmad Moussalli, American University of Beirut, Conflicts Forum: Beirut - London – Washington, January 2009] [Translator’s note]

41. **Tawhid**, *al-* (also, *tauheed*, *tawheed*, *tauhid*) refers to Islamic monotheism, unification (with God), and the oneness of God and the uniqueness of God, [“Reference: *The Life, Teachings and Influence of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab*, <http://www.sultan.org/books/wahhabism.pdf>] Also, *tawhid* means to accept and believe in the uniqueness of His Message. It means to worship God alone, and to worship Him in accordance with His legislation. [Reference: “An Introduction to the Salafi Da‘wa”, <http://www.qss.org/articles/salafi/text.html>] Also, Islam does not recognize any geographic borders or ethnic differences as it goes beyond all human particularities. The name “Islam” is not derived from the name of a prophet nor is it derived from the name of a people. Rather, Islam is derived from the name of an act of freedom not of surrender, and from a human being not a slave even of God (*Abd*). In slavery, as a psychological structure, mastership may switch from God to the Sultan, ruler, governor, head of state, leader, senior, etc., but the structure of authoritarianism remains the same. Freedom is followed by equality. A society of free men and women is a society of

equals, irrespective of ethnicity, heredity, social class, and other kinds of human differences. If social discrepancies between classes do occur, social justice will bring human beings back to a state of equality. These three principles are the outcome of *Tawhid*, or unification. [Reference: “New Directions in Islamic Thought”, Hassan Hanafi; 2010 Center for International and Regional Studies; Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar; brief No. 4 p.7] [Translator’s note]

42. **Hulul:** As an Abrahamic religion, Muslims respect the great Jewish prophets including Jesus of Nazareth whose virginal birth they accept. In fact, the Qur’an refers to Jesus as ‘a word from God’ and ‘God’s Word committed to Mary’. However, orthodox Islamic theology has no place for divine incarnation (*hulul*) in the Christian sense of the *Logos doctrine*. Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), considered the greatest Muslim theologian, stated that God “is not *halul* in anything and nothing is *halul* in him”. (19) The ‘I am’ sayings of the Gospels need to be understood in purely metaphorical terms. Likewise, the Word/*Logos* of the Fourth Gospel reveals the essence of the Creator in various ways but does not impute to Christ any divine, pre-existent status. (20) Nor in orthodox Islamic theology does any human figure incarnate divinity in this way.

Islamic rejection of Incarnation is based on its powerful sense of the utter transcendence of Allah who is One and without attributes. Nonetheless, as with Judaism, this does not preclude God’s involvement in human history. Revelation occurs. It needs to be noted that, for Islam, the greatest revelation and true Word of God is not the Great Prophet Muhammad, but the Holy Qu’ran. Any other divine mediation or representation must take second place to the Qu’ran. Christians, with their faith in the incarnation of Christ, have often failed to appreciate that the Muslim equivalent (21) to Christ is not Muhammad but the Holy Book, the Qu’ran. [Reference: *Interreligious Perspectives on Incarnation*, Dr. Gerard HALL, Head of School of Theology, Published in *The Australasian Catholic Record* lxxvi: 4 (October 1999), 430-440. link: http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/staffhome/gehall/hall_article_1.htm] [Translator’s note]

43. **Ittihad:** [In metaphysical (and especially Sufist) doctrines] Major ideas in Sufi metaphysics have surrounded the concept of *wahdat* or “Unity”. Two main Sufi philosophies prevail on this controversial topic. *Wahdat al-wujud* literally means the unity of creation. *Wahdat al-shuhud* (Apparentism, or Unity of Witness), on the other hand, holds that God and his creation are entirely separate. Some Islamic reformers have

claimed that the difference between the two philosophies is only in semantics and that the entire debate is merely a collection of “verbal controversies” which have come about because of ambiguous language. However, the concept of the relationship between God and the universe is still actively debated both among Sufis and between Sufis and non-Sufi Muslims. Meanwhile, *al-Ittihad* as “unity of being” – explained in a Sufist site as follows: “There is no innate opposition, as in schools of philosophy, but complementary forms that reveal the same essence. All doctrine, as already stated, is essentially the distinction between the real and the apparent, the absolute and relative, or substance and accidents. Its cardinal teaching is that only God is absolutely, “real”; and consequently this world in which man lives is contingent. Between God, who transcends Being and whose first determination is Pure Being, and this world, which is farthest away from It, there are located a number of other worlds each standing hierarchically above the other in the scale of universal existence. Together they comprise the multiple states of being, which all receive their being from God, while before Him they are literally nothing. Man thus stands before this vast number of worlds above him, and beyond them before the Divine Presence Itself [...] The central doctrine concerning the ultimate nature of reality has usually been called *wahdat al-wujûd* or the (transcendent) unity of Being. This cardinal doctrine, which is not pantheism, or pan-entheism nor natural mysticism as Western orientalists have called it, is the direct consequence of the *Shahâdah*. It asserts that there cannot be two completely independent orders of reality or being which would be sheer polytheism or *shirk*. Therefore, to the extent that anything has being it cannot be other than the Absolute Being. The *Shahâdah* in fact begins with the *lâ*, or negation, in order to absolve Reality of all otherness and multiplicity. The relation between God and the order of existence is not just a logical one in which if one thing is equal to another the other is equal to the first. Through that mystery that lies in the heart of creation itself, everything is, in essence, identified with God while God infinitely transcends everything. To understand this doctrine intellectually is to possess contemplative [intuitive] intelligence; to realize it fully is to be a saint who alone sees ‘God everywhere’.” [Reference: Intellect, Reason and Unity Of Being, by S H Nasr, from Living Islam: Islamic Tradition; link: http://www.abc.se/~m9783/k/ird_e.html] [Translator’s note]

44. *Ijtihad* is a term used in Islam that refers to the use of personal reasoning (or rationalization) to determine what is correct from the point of view of the Islamic Sharia (Islamic law). [Reference: *The Life, Teachings*

and Influence of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab, <http://www.sultan.org/books/wahhabism.pdf>] Also [...] In Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *ijtihad* has evoked the meaning of free and independent efforts of *mujtahidun* (those who practice *ijtihad*), undertaken for the purpose of advancement and expansion of the Islamic sciences. [...] By practicing *ijtihad*, a *mujtahid* deduces the *ahkam* (laws) of the Sharia for issues and problems where there is no specific express text (*nass*), by relying on legal sources and principles and by benefiting from the ideas of other *mujtahidun*. [Reference: <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/ijtihad/1.htm>] [Translator's note]

45. Refer back to footnote 38

46. **Jihad** is the Arabic for what can be variously translated as “struggle” or “effort” or “to strive” “to exert” “to fight” depending on the context. In the West, the word is generally understood to mean “holy war” and the terms are given, inaccurately, exclusively military connotations. The Qur’an does call for “jihad” as a military struggle on behalf of Islam. But the Qur’an also refers to jihad as an internal, individual, spiritual struggle toward self-improvement, moral cleansing and intellectual effort. It is said that Prophet Muhammad considered the armed-struggle version of holy war “the little jihad”, but considered the spiritual, individual version of holy war--the war within oneself--as “the great jihad”. Including the “jihad” as one of the five pillars of Islam is another common Western misunderstanding. Jihad is not among the five pillars of Islam (the profession of faith, prayer five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, alms for the poor and performance of the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in each Muslim’s lifetime). Still, “jihad” is considered to be every Muslim’s duty--be it the struggle to improve society, preventing the exploitation of the poor or vulnerable, or improving oneself before the Day of Judgment. Several militant or political Islamic organizations have adopted the term in their monikers. [Reference: <http://middleeast.about.com/od/religionsectarianism/g/me080122a.htm>] [Translator's note]

47. **Al-Hakimiyya** is the idea that divine governance and sovereignty was the ideal form of governance versus the contemporary state of ignorance, which the Salafists call “**al-Jahiliyya**”; [Reference: “The Jihadi Salafist Movement in Jordan after Zarqawi: Identity, Leadership Crisis and Obscured Vision” by Mohammad Abu Rumman and Hassan Abu Haniyeh, published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office] “God made *al-Hakimiyya* a matter of *kufr* [disbelief] or *iman* [belief] or *kufr*

and Islam or *Jahiliyya* [ignorance of divine authority]. There is no middle way in this command and no *solh* [truce]. Believers govern according to God's laws and do not change or replace a single letter or word of them; *kuffar* [infidels] are those who do not govern according to God's laws," Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (in an indirect utilization of Qutub's idea of Divine Sovereignty (or al-Hakimiyya) [Reference: "The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global" by Fawaz A. Gerges, published by Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, September 2005] [Translator's note]

48. Ibid. [Translator's note]

49. After the attempted coup that was planned by the organization at the Military Technical Academy in Egypt in 1974, Saleh Sariyyah (and Kareem al-Anadouli) received death sentences and various sentences were issued against others. After that, Engineer Ahmad Saleh was elected from among those who were acquitted as the general leader of the organization, which was then reshaped. The security apparatus dealt a blow to the organization in 1977 and a large number of its leaders and members were tried in what was known in the media as the 'Jihadi Organization Case'. Ahmad Saleh was sentenced to ten years in prison, while the others received different sentences. [Reference: "History of the Jihad Group in Egypt: A Summary", by Abdel-Mon`em Moneeb Islamist Writer; http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1201958066022&pagename=Zone-English-Living_Shariah%2FLSELayout] [Translator's note]

50. The **Hanafiyya (Hanafi)** school is the first of the four Sunni schools of law or Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). It is distinguished from the other schools by placing less reliance on mass oral traditions as a source of legal knowledge. It developed the exegesis of the Qur'an through a method of analogical reasoning known as *qiyas* (see Sunni Islam). It also established the principle that the universal concurrence of the *umma* (community) of Islam on a point of law, as represented by legal and religious scholars, constituted evidence of the will of God. This process is called *ijma'*, which means the consensus of the scholars. Thus, the school definitively established the Qur'an, the Traditions of the Prophet, *ijma'* and *qiyas* as the basis of Islamic law. In addition to these, Hanafi accepted local customs as a secondary source of the law. The Hanafi school of law was founded by Nu'man Abu Hanifah (d.767) in Kufa in Iraq. It derived from the bulk of the ancient school of Kufa and absorbed the ancient school of Basra. Abu Hanifah belonged to

the period of the successors (*Tabi'in*) of the *Sahaba* (the Companions of the Prophet). The privileged position which the school enjoyed under the 'Abbasid caliphate was lost with the decline of the 'Abbasid caliphate. However, the rise of the Ottoman Empire led to the revival of Hanafi fortunes. Under the Ottomans, judgment-seats were occupied by Hanafites sent from Istanbul, even in countries where the population followed another *madhhab*. Consequently, the Hanafi *madhhab* became the only authoritative code of law in the public life and official administration of justice in all the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Even today, the Hanafi code prevails in the former Ottoman countries. It is also dominant in Central Asia and India. [Reference:<http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/sunni/hanb.html>] [Translators note]

51. Mohammad Bin Ibrahim al-Shaibani, "The Life of al-Albani, His Influence and the Praise of Scholars upon Him", Manuscripts and Heritage Center, Kuwait; Second Edition, 2004, 1/400 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

52. Issam Mousa Hadi, "Imam Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani as I Knew Him", Dar al-Saddiq, al-Jubail, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; First Edition, 2003, p. 11 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

53. During the colonial period of the French mandate, a great number of charitable organizations were formed in Syria, the most prominent of which was the Al-Hidayya Association, founded in 1930, the Islamic Civilization Society, founded in 1931, and the Society for Islamic Awareness, the Islamic Welfare Organization, the Welfare and Morals Society, in addition to numerous other organizations – all of which assumed similar names and titles that showed their protestation of the Western colonial model. [Refer to Dr. Habib al-Jinhani, "The Islamic Awakening in Greater Syria: The Syrian Example" in "Contemporary Islamic Movements in the Arab Nation", Markiz Dirasat Al-Wihda Al-Arabiyyah (Arab Unity Research Center), Beirut, Lebanon; Second Edition, 1998, pp. 105-154] [Names of organizations and titles translated from the Arabic; study available in Arabic]

54. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "The Sermon of Need", The Islamic Library, Beirut, Lebanon; Fourth Edition, 1400 AH, p. 6; this treatise was just one of the essays that al-Albani published in the "Islamic Civilization" magazine as referred to in this chapter of the study.

55. Prior to the establishment of the Charitable Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, several other organizations were established, such as “Dar al-Arqam” in Aleppo in 1936, The “Rabitah al-Diniyya” in Homs, and “Ansar al-Haq” in Deir al-Zor in 1939. The latter were all fronts for the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood and were united under the umbrella of “Shabab Mohammad” (“(The Prophet) Mohammad’s Youth”; [Refer to Dr. Is’haq Mousa al-Husseini, “The Muslim Brotherhood: The Largest of the Contemporary Islamic Movements”, Dar Beirut Printing; First Edition, 1952, pp. 122-124]

56. Mohammad Jamal Barout’s essay, “Syria: The Origins of the Ongoing Struggle between the Traditional and Radical Schools” in the book, “A View into Islamic Parties, Movements and Groups”, edited by Dr. Faisal Darraj, Markiz al-Arabi lil Dirasat al-Stratejiyya (The Arab Center for Strategic Studies), Damascus; Fourth Edition, 2006, pp. 255-256

57. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Removing the Veil from the Falsities and Fabrications of Abi Ghudddah’s Words”, unpublished; First Edition, 1975 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

58. Ibrahim Mohammad al-Ali, “Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani: The Speaker of Our Times and Champion of the Sunna”, Dar al-Qalam, Damascus; First Edition, 2001, p. 26. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

59. **Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya**; (al-jamàah al-’islàmiyyah) (Arabic for “the Islamic Group”; also transliterated as Gamaat Islamiya or al Jamaat al Islamiyya) [Translator’s note]

60. Al-Albani was accused of being the mastermind behind the Juhaiman rebellion. Letters and books written by several Salafists in Saudi Arabia were published which accused al-Albani of exporting his political ideas. See the writings of Dr. Mousa al-Dweish, and especially his book, “The Political Activism Espoused by Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani”; and see Dr. Abdul Latif Bashmil, “A Religious Response to the Errors in al-Albani’s Da’wa (Calling)”; also relevant to this context are the writings of Abdul Aziz al-’Askar. [Titles translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

61. Al-Albani wrote over 216 different works, including volumes of essays and independent booklets, the majority of which were related to the study of the Prophet's Hadith. [Refer to Samir Bin Amin al-Zuhairi, "Al-Albani: The Speaker of Our Times", Dar al-Mughni Publishing and Distribution, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Second Edition, 1421 AH; also refer to Ibrahim Mohammad al-Ali, "Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani: The Speaker of Our Times and Champion of the Sunna", Dar al-Qalam, Damascus; First Edition, 2001. [Titles translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

62. The emirate of Jordan was declared in 1921 [Translator's note]

63. **Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami** (Islamic Party of Liberation) is a radical Islamic movement that seeks 'implementation of pure Islamic doctrine' and the creation of an Islamic caliphate in Central Asia. The group's aim is to resume the Islamic way of life and to convey the Islamic *da'wa* to the world. The ultimate goal of this secretive sectarian group is to unite the entire umma, or Islamic world community, into a single caliphate. The aim is to bring the Muslims back to living an Islamic way of life in 'Dar al-Islam' [the land where the rules of Islam are being implemented, as opposed to the non-Islamic world] and in an Islamic society such that all life's affairs in society are administered according to the Sharia rules. [Reference: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hizb-ut-tahrir.htm>] [Translator's note]

64. **Jamaa'ah** or **jamaa'at** means 'groups' in Arabic, '**tabligh**' and '**da'wa**' are terms that both indicate the meaning behind a 'religious calling' 'missionary' or 'invocation' in Arabic; for more information on the Jamaa'at al-Tabligh refer to "Women and Politics: From the Perspective of Islamic Movements in Jordan, by Hassan Abu Haniyeh published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office. [Translators note]

Another source calls Jamaa'at al-Dawa wal Tabligh the "Tablighi Jamaat" (or "Proselytizing Group"). The source proclaims that they are trained missionaries who have dedicated much of their lives to spreading Islam across the globe. The largest group of religious proselytizers of any faith, they are part of the reason for the explosive growth of Islamic religious fervor and conversion. Despite its size, worldwide presence and tremendous importance, Tablighi Jamaat remains largely unknown outside the Muslim community, even to many scholars of Islam [...] Tablighi Jamaat neither has formal organizational structure nor does it publish details about the scope of its activities or about its membership or its finances. [Translator's note]

65. Ali al-Halaby made great efforts in trying to establish historical evidence to support and explain the presence of Salafism in Jordan; however, he only arrived at weak links. [See his article: “On Da’wa Salafism in Jordan”, al-Ghad daily newspaper, Jordan; on the following link: <http://www.alghad.com/?news=189686>]

66. See Mohammad Abu Rumman, “The Muslim Brotherhood in the 2007 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections: A Passing ‘Political Setback’ or Declining Popularity” published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Amman Office, 2007.

67. **Shura** Council (Arabic for “Consultative Council”) represents, in early Islamic history, the board of electors that was constituted by the second Caliph (head of the Muslim community), Omar I (634–644), to elect his successor. Thereafter, in Muslim states, **shūrā** variously designated a council of state, or advisers to the sovereign, a parliament (in modern times), and—in certain Arab states—a court of law with jurisdiction over claims made by citizens and public officials against the government. The word **shūrā** provides the title of the 42nd chapter of the Qur’an, in which believers are exhorted to conduct their affairs “by mutual consultation”. [Reference: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/542358/shura>] [Translator’s note]

68. See Mohammad Ra’fat Sa’id Saleh, “Advice and Guidance”, in “The Advice and Guidance of Islamic Thinkers and Scholars for Islamic Groups and Parties”, edited by Nitham Salameh Sakihijah, Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Amman; First Edition, 1993, p. 378 [Titles translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

69. Refer to a review of the administrative decisions taken by the Muslim Brotherhood in Zarqa, in 11/6/1975, with regard to the notice of caution, circulated to all Brotherhood members, about invitations to attend al-Albani’s lessons in the unpublished study on “The Text and the Sunna in Relation to Islamist Movements” by Salim al-Hillali and Ziad al-Dabeej; Second Edition, 1981, pp. 101-104 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

70. The Islamic Library (Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya), which was owned by Sheikh Nitham Salameh Sakihijah, undertook the task of transcribing taped recordings of al-Albani’s *fatwas* (scholarly opinions and rulings) over ten year ago. Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani’s scholarly opinion and

rulings (*fatwas*) were documented in more than 18 volumes, which are due to be printed shortly after publication of this study. Al-Albani's scholarly opinions and rulings represent an important source for the research and study of al-Albani's life and his tendencies because the books he wrote were particularly specialized in the study of the Prophet's Hadith, with the exception of some small essays. But, through his books, it is not possible to deduce and track his overall outlook and approach in a comprehensive manner. The same is true of the majority of the literature that his students transcribed, which are also concerned with and deal directly in the study of the Hadith, or the objections and criticism that al-Albani was subject to on this matter. Thus, one cannot benefit from the latter literature in attempting to shed light upon Sheikh Albani's *da'wa* (calling) and *manhaj* (approach/way/paradigm). In the end, a conflict erupted between al-Albani and Abu Leila over the rights and financial royalties of the publication of al-Albani's material, which led to a distancing and a cooling off in the relationship between the two men.

71. The Second Gulf War revealed the emergence of several forms of Salafisms in Salafism itself: The first was Wahhabi Salafism, which had managed to maintain its historical relationship with the authorities. This relationship was embodied by the Council of Supreme Scholars, under the leadership of Sheikh Ibn Baaz, which made a *fatwa* (or ruling) that using foreign troops was sanctified (in expelling Iraq from Kuwait). The second was Jihadi Salafism, which adopted the mission of expelling "the idolaters from the Arabian Peninsula", under the leadership of Sheikh Osama Bin Laden. And, the third was Harakiyya Salafism, which had reservations about the subject of using foreign troops and demanded reform in the institution of the state and in society, under the leadership of Sheikh Safar al-Halawi, Salman Odeh and Nasser al-Amer. Finally, there was Traditional Salafism, which was identified with the state, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Aman al-Jammi and Sheikh Rabih al-Madkhali.

72. Refer to the letters that were written and distributed by Sheikh al-Albani's student, Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, during the Gulf Crisis in "This is a Declaration for the People"; [Reference: anonymous]

73. The "**dar**" (pl. **diyaar**) in the Arabic language has numerous meaning such as the halting place (*mahallu*), the house, abode, residence and the land (*balad*). According to Sharia terminology, *Dar al-Islam* is defined as the land which is governed by the laws of Islam and whose security

(*aman*) is maintained by the security of Islam, i.e. by the authority and protection of Muslims inside and outside the land, even if the majority of its inhabitants are non-Muslims. ***Dar al-kufr*** is the land which is governed by the laws of *kufr* (unbelief – see footnote 76 for a more detailed explanation of *kufr*), and whose security is not maintained by the security of Islam, i.e. by other than the authority and security of Muslims, even if the majority of its inhabitants are Muslims. [Translator’s note]

74. That Jordan would become a “surrogate homeland” for Palestinians as a proposed long-term solution to solving the Palestinian refugee problem and other issues in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflict. [Translator’s note]

75. Listen to the text of this *fatwa* on cassette tape recording, number 1/730, dated: the 29th day of Shawwal, 1413 AH. There were several responses to this *fatwa* in the Jordanian newspaper “al-Liwa”; refer to the newspaper issues dated from 27/7/1993-11/8/1993. Finally, refer to Sheikh al-Albani’s student, Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, who came to the Sheikh’s defense in his book entitled, “What They Resent in the Sheikh” [Translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

76. ***Kufr*** is unbelief (in Islam); literally, it means ingratitude; in its different forms ***kufr*** is the root for ***kaffir*** (singular) (pl. ***kuffar*** or ***kaffirin***) which means an infidel/s, unbeliever/s (or non-Muslim); and ***takfir*** means excommunication – or declaring a person or group of people infidels or unbelievers (or non-Muslim). In mainstream Sunni Islam, it is considered wrong to engage in *takfir*. Sunni Islam has a general reluctance to spread *fitna* (sow dissension) or ‘backbite’. Furthermore, to declare *takfir* is to pre-empt Allah’s judgment. The Muslim who considers another’s actions to be wrong may say so, but will stop far short of declaring that person an apostate from the faith. Similarly, there is a reluctance to resist a leader, who prays and does not restrict the observance of the faith. Even qualified mainstream religious scholars are reluctant to declare *takfir* except in particularly egregious cases. Some radical groups have broken this taboo. And, ***takfiri*** refers to those who excommunicate, or ‘declare *kufr*’, mainstream Muslim individuals, societies and leaders. Although nominally Sunni *takfiris* reject major aspects of mainstream Sunni religion, they are also apt to reject components of society, culture and law in Muslim countries, which they consider to have slipped back into a pre-Islamic state of pagan ignorance (*al-Jahiliyya*). Unsurprisingly, *takfiris* often support militancy against their regimes. [Reference: *Perspectives*

on World History and Current Events (PWHCE): The Middle East Project;
<http://www.pwhce.org/takfiri.html>]

[Translator's note]

77. See examples of these debates in the books, letters and responses found in “Ahkam al-Takrir li Ahkam Mas’alat al-Takfir” (“Rulings on the Question of *Takfir*”) by Murad Shukr and introduced by Ali al-Halaby; and, “Al-Tahtir min Fitnet al-Takfir” (“A Warning of the Dissension Caused by *Takfir*”) by Ali al-Halaby, which presented research on different schools of thought by different Islamic scholars, speakers, jurists and theologians; also by Ali al-Halaby’s “Al-Ta’arif wal Tanbih bi Ta’selat Ulama al-Sheikh Imam Assad al-Sunna al-Hummam Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani fi Masa’il al-Iman wal Rad ‘ala al-Murji’ah” (“Defining and Highlighting the Firm Foundations Presented by the Ulama and Lion of the Sunna, Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani with regard to the Issue of Faith and the Response to the Murji’ah”). Also refer to “Al-Tabsir bi Qawa’id al Takfir” (An In-Depth Look at the Fundamental Rules of *Takfir*”); and “Fitnet al-Takfir” (“The Dissension Caused by *Takfir*”) by Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, edited by Ali Bin Hassan Abdel Hamid, Dar Ibn Juzaima Publishing; Second Edition; and, “Sayhat Nathir Bi Khatar al-Takfir” (A Call Made by A Scholar on the Dangers of *Takfir*”) Ali al-Halaby.

78. Of the most important Traditional Salafist sites based out of Jordan are:

- The Islamic Menhaj site: <http://www.almenhaj.net>
- The Albani Center site: <http://www.albani-center.com>
- The “All Salafists” forum, moderated by Ali al-Halaby:
<http://www.kulalsalafiyeen.com>
- Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani’s site:
<http://www.alalbany.net>
- Sheikh Ali al-Halaby’s site: <http://www.alhalaby.com>
- Sheikh Mashhoor Hassan Salman’s site: <http://www.mashhoor.net>
- Sheikh Salim al-Hillali’s site: <http://www.islam-future.com>
- Sheikh Mohammad Mousa Naser’s site: <http://www.m-alnaser.com>

79. See the summary of accusations fielded at Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra published in two issues of the magazine “Al-Asala”, which was published by the Conservative Salafists. See issue numbers 25 and 26, dated 15th of Muharram and 15th of Rabi’i al-Awal, 1421 AH.

80. See Issam Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra's "Al-Rudoud al-'Ilmiyya al-Sunniyya" ("Scholarly Sunni Responses"), unpublished; 2001.

81. For more on this debate between the Traditional Salafists over Sayyed Qutub, see Wael Ali al-Batiri's "Kilmat al-Haq lil Muhadith al-Albani fi al-Ustath Sayyed Qutub" ("A Word of Truth Put Forth By the Scholar Al-Albani With Regard to the Teacher Sayyed Qutub"), introduced by Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra and Dr. Salah al-Khalidi; Al-Barq Library, Zarqa, Amman; First Edition, 2005. See also Wael Ali al-Batiri's "Rad al-Aqwal al-lati Naqalaha Salim al-Hillali a'n Kutub al-Shahid Sayyed Qutub illa Mithanaha al-Sahiha wa Taswibaha" ("To Correct the Suppositions of Salim al-Hillali with regard to the Writings of the Martyr Sayyed Qutub and To Put Them in Their Proper Place").

82. See Ali al-Halaby's "Manhaj al-Salaf al-Saleh fi Tarikh al-Masaleh wa Tatwih al-Mufasid wal Qaba'ih fi Ussoul al-Naqd wal Jurh wal Nasa'ih" ("The Way of the Righteous Predecessors...") on the following link: <http://www.alhalaby.com/play.php?catsmktba=1342>

83. See, for example, a sampling of the allegations, which accused Ali al-Halaby of being affiliated with Qutubian Salafism in Ahmad Bin Omar Bazmoul's "Siyanat al-Salafi min Woususat wa Talbisat Ali al-Halaby" ("Repairing' the Salafi from the Hearsay and Fabrications of Ali al-Halaby") on the following link: <http://www.alhalaby.com/play.php?catsmktba=13421>; and Abu Abdul Rahman Bin Hassan al-Zundi al-Kurdi in "Tali'at al-Tankil bimma fi Aqwal al-Halabi min al-Abatil", ("A Review of the Manipulative Statements and Falsehoods by al-Halaby") on the following link: <http://vb.alaqsasalafi.com/showthread.php?t=1010>

84. Refer to some of this documentation in the following publications and letters regarding the theft of intellectual rights:

- Ahmad al-Kuwaiti, "Al-Kashf al-Mithatli a'an Siriqat Salim al-Hillali" ("The Ultimate Revelation of Salim al-Hillali's Thefts"), unpublished; First Edition, 1993;
- Ra'ed Sabri's "Kashf al-Mastour a'an Siriqat Mashhoor" ("Removing the Veil off (Sheikh) Mashhoor's Thefts") and "Qara'a al-Tanbour li Siriqat Mashhoor" ("Ringing the Tambourine on Mashhoor's Thefts") on the following link: <http://www.addyaiya.com/TitleView.aspx?refId=194>;
- Bin Hamad al-'Athari, "Muthakara fi al-Rudoud ala Jahalat al-Halaby was Siriqatahou al-'Ilmiyya" ("A Memo on the Reactions to

al-Halaby's Ignorance and His Intellectual Thefts") on the following link: www.alathary.net

- Abu Abdul Rahman Sa'ad Bin Fathi al-Zu'aitari, "Tanbih al-Fatin Li Tuhafat Ta'isilat al-Halaby al-Maskin" ("A Warning of the Rifts Created by the Ridiculous Fabrications about the Poor al-Halaby") on the following link: <http://bayenahsalaf.com/vb/showthread.php?t=176>;
- Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Faisal al-Rajihi, "Al-Fariq bayn al-Muhaqiq wal Sariq" ("The Difference between the Inquisitor and the Thief"); on the following link: <http://www.ahlalhdeeth.com/vb/showthread.php?t=36017>.

85. Refer to the following link: <http://g5g5.net/xzfiles/WzP58688.pdf>.

86. Refer to the article written by Mohammad Mousa Naser, on the following link: <http://www.ajurry.com/vb/showthread.php?t=2796>.

87. Refer to the article written by Akram Mohammad Ziadeh on the following link: <http://www.almenhaj.net/makal.php?linkid=994>.

88. Linguistically in Arabic, ***haram*** refers to a sanctuary, a sacred territory. Mecca has been considered a *haram* since the time of Abraham. All things within the limit of the Haram are protected and considered inviolable; al-Medina al-Munawwara was also declared a Haram by the Prophet. [Reference: www.islamicemirate.com/index.php]

In Islamic *fiqh*, this term (***haram***) describes a deed which is absolutely forbidden for Muslims to do (such as eating pork, drinking alcohol, etc.) When performed, it is considered a sin, while not performing such a deed is a good work. It is also applied to things which are ritually unclean, ruled as "forbidden or prohibited" by Islamic *Sharia* (or Islamic law) or applied to things which are ritually unclean [Reference: www.studytoanswer.net/myths_glossary.html] [Translator's note]

89. See Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "A Description of the Prophet's (PBUH) Prayer from *Takbir* (Praising God as the Greatest "*Allahu Akbar*") to surrender, as if you are witnessing it taking place now", published by the al-Ma'arif Library, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition (of the reprint), 1992, pp.43-35. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

90. In this context, Sunna is meant to identify: (n) **Sunna**, Sunna, Hadith (in Islam) is the way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims, on the basis of the teachings and practices of Muhammad and on the interpretations of the Qur'an. [Reference: WordNet home page <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=sunnah>] [Translator's note]

91. **Qibla** (n) literally means the direction of the Kaaba toward which Muslims turn for their daily prayers, [<http://www.definitions.net/definition/qibla>]; but in this context, it is also a reference to the holy city of Mecca. [Translator's note]

92. Refer back to footnote 71 [Translator's note]

93. **Tashbih**: (Arabic: "assimilating"), in Islam, anthropomorphism, comparing God to created things. Both *tashbih* and its opposite, **ta'til** (divesting God of all attributes), are regarded as sins in Islamic theology. The difficulty in dealing with the nature of God in Islam arises from the seemingly contradictory views contained in the Qur'an. On the one hand, God is described as unique and not similar to anything that the mind can imagine; on the other hand, he is referred to in the language of anthropomorphism. [Reference: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/583839/tashbih>]

or *tashbih* In Islam is the comparison of God to created things or the practice of attributing human characteristics to the divine, which is regarded as a sin. [Translator's note]

94. Those who "assimilate" or practice *al-tashbih* or compare God to created things or practice of attributing human characteristics to the divine. [Translator's note]

95. Muhammad al-**Jabiri**, (1936-2010) was a Moroccan intellectual, writer, and professor of Arab and Islamic philosophy, who wrote over a dozen books and numerous articles focusing on contemporary Arab thought, education, sociology, and Arab and Islamic philosophy. He is attributed with contributing a novel contextual analysis of Ibn Khaldun's ideas. He viewed Arab and Islamic philosophy as having evolved in relation to other philosophies, particularly Greek, which Muslim philosophers used for ideological objectives to reconcile reason and text, religion and philosophy, and the temporal and the spiritual. He was critical of contemporary Arab thought for being ahistorical and unable to reconcile

the dichotomy of traditions and modernity. [Reference: *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, link: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1147?_hi=0&_pos=6]

Another source: The epistemology of Muhammad ‘Abid al-Jabiri’s Islamic philosophy, which is deemed to have been put forward new ideas within the framework of a major project for the revival of Islamic thought through “Critique of Arab Reason”. The definition of Critique of Arab Reason is the Arab mind in its capacity as an instrument of thought and understanding as a product shaped by a particular civilization. Al-Jabiri assesses the growth of “Arabich” thought which he called as the disciplines of analogical reasoning (*al-al-bayyani ‘aql*). This thought is presented by Arabic language, usul fiqh and kalam science. After that, al-Jabiri enters two other reasonable thinking in the Arab world that is disciplines of intuitive reasoning (*al-irfani*) and disciplines of demonstrative reasoning (*al-burhani*). Intuitive reasoning (*‘irfani*) is emphasizing on social maturity skills (empathy, sympathy,) while demonstrative reasoning is emphasizing the adjustment of the formulas that were created by human reason with the laws of nature. If these three approaches can be used, interlinked, netted and etched in a single unified system, the diversity of styles and models of Islam is more comprehensive (according to Jabiri). [Reference: *from the English abstract of “Filsafat Epistemologi Islam”, Mohammad Abid al-Jabiri, by Nur Lailatul Musyafa’ah*] [Translator’s note]

96. See, for example, Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani’s “Al-Tahawi’s Creed: An Explanation and Commentary”, Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; Second Edition, 1993. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

97. Doctrinally, **al-Ash’ariyyah** theology represents a reaction against the extreme rationalism of the Mu’tazilah. It holds that human reason should fall under the authority of divine revelation. Human reason is incapable of discerning good and evil; the goodness or evil of a particular action depends upon God’s declaring it so. Humanity can only acquire religious truths through revelation. A second aspect of Ash’ariyyah theology concerned the nature of the divine attributes. Contrary to the Mu’tazilites, who understood Qur’anic references to God’s physical attributes metaphorically, Ash’ari theology argued for the veracity of these attributes while rejecting all crudely anthropomorphic conceptions of God. Thirdly, contrary to Mu’tazilah theology, Ash’ariyyah taught that the Qur’an was eternal and, therefore, uncreated. Human actions,

however, are entirely dependent upon God's providing the means and power to act. This teaching had the purpose of preserving the doctrine of divine omnipotence, but gradually led to the formation of a deterministic outlook. History: The systematization of Sunni theology in the tenth century was done in reaction to the emergence of heterodox schismatic groups in previous centuries, particularly Mu'tazilah. The founder of Ash'ariyyah, Abu al-Hasan (873-935), was formerly a Mu'tazilite. He wrote a number of important books which became the foundation of Ash'arite theology such as the Kitab al-Ibanah (The Book of Elucidations) and also an extensive work on the views of various Islamic schools and sects called Maqalat al-Islamiyyin (Doctrines of the Muslims). Another major figure in the development of Ash'arite theology was the Sufi theologian and jurist al-Ghazzali (1058-1111). Through al-Ghazzali and other prominent theologians - such as Al-Baqillani (d.1013), al-Baghdadi (d.1038), al-Djuwayni (d.1085) and al-Shahrastani (d.1153) - Ashariyyah spread throughout the Sunni Islamic world. It is now dominant in Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Northwest Africa, and has a strong presence in Central Asia and Anatolia and to a lesser extent in India and Pakistan. Along with the Maturidiyyah school of theology, Ashariyyah remains the dominant source of theology in the Sunni world.

[Reference: Part of Philtar (Philosophy, Theology and Religion Project); Division of Religion and Philosophy, University of Cumbria <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/sunni/ash.html>] [Translator's note]

98. The **al-Maturidiyyah** doctrine: along with al-Ash'ariyya, forms the basis of orthodox Sunni theology. Maturidi theology can best be understood in comparison with that of Mu'tazilah and Ash'ariyyah. One of the principal theological questions with which each of these schools engaged concerned the role of human reason in the development of religious faith. Unlike the school of al-Ash 'ari, which claimed that knowledge of God derives from revelation through the prophets. Al-Maturidiyyah argues that knowledge of God's existence can be derived through reason alone. Another major issue that concerned all three schools was the relationship between human freedom and divine omnipotence. Maturidiyyah claims that although humanity has a free will God is still all-powerful and in control of history. It is humanity's ability to distinguish between good and evil that means that humanity is responsible for whatever good or evil actions are performed. The third major issue concerned God's attributes. Ash'ariyyah teaches that what the Qur'an says about God's attributes must be accepted as correct even though we do not properly understand the meaning of

many of the statements about God. History: Al-Maturidiyya is a Sunni theological school named after its founder Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d.944). In the Mamluk age, the school came to be widely recognized as the second orthodox Sunni theological school beside Ash'ariyyah. Resident in Samarqand in Central Asia, al-Maturidi had little impact on mainstream Islamic intellectual life during his lifetime. Maturidiyyah only came to be important because of its acceptance by the Turkish tribes of Central Asia. The Maturidi school of theology gradually came to prevail among the Hanafite communities everywhere. Because the Turks were mostly Hanafite the Turkish expansion through the Ottoman empire enabled the Hanafite and Maturidite schools to spread throughout western Persia, Iraq, Anatolia, and Syria [Reference: *Part of Philtar (Philosophy, Theology and Religion Project); Division of Religion and Philosophy, University of Cumbria* <http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/islam/sunni/matur.html>] [Translator's note]

99. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Purification and Education and the Need of Muslims for Both", al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library); First Edition, 1421 AH, p. 30 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

100. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "A Scholarly Debate between the Venerable Imams al-Izziddin Bin Abdul Salam and Ibn al-Saleh", al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library); First Edition, 1405 AH, p. 12-13 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

101. Refer back to footnote 36: "The use of personal reasoning to determine what is correct from the Sharia's point of view. [Translator's note]

102. See Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani's "Purification and Education and the Need of Muslims for both", al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library); First Edition, 1421 AH, p. 30-31

103. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Su'al wa Jawab Hawl al-Fiqh al-Waq'i" (Questions and Answers with regard to Fiqh Today"); al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library); Second Edition, 1422 AH, pp. 40-44

104. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Da'ifa" ("The Weak Hadith"); Maktabat al-'A'raf, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Fifth Edition

105. Ibid

106. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Mukhtassar al-‘Ilou lil Ali al-Ghafar”, (“The Heights of the Merciful AlMighty”) authored by al-Hafith Shamsiddine al-Thahabi, Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; Second Edition, 1991, p. 58

107. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Al-Tariq al-Rashid Nahwou al-Kayan al-Islami” (“The Responsible, Righteous Path towards Building the Islamic Entity”), Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; pp. 378-379

108. Mohammad Bin Ibrahim al-Shaibani, “The Life of al-Albani, His Influence and the Praise of Scholars upon Him”, Manuscripts and Heritage Center, Kuwait; Second Edition, 2004, p. 436 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

109. Taken directly from: <http://www.islamawakened.com/Quran/30/32/> or, another translation: “Those who split up their Religion, and become Sects, each sect exulting in its tenets”. (7) Surat Al-Nissa (4:115) [Translator’s note]

110. Taken directly from the Yusuf Ali translation of the three offered translations of the English Quran of the same verses in Surat al-Hud 011: Verses 118; 119, [Reference: “English Translations of the Quran”; <http://www.alquran-english.com/11-hud/>] [Translator’s note]

111. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Jamaa’ah Wahida bil Islam La Jamaa’at” (“One Group in Islam Not Groups”), Maktabet al-Furqan, Ajman, United Arab Emirates; Second Edition, 2003, pp 10-11

112. Saleh Sariyyah’s presented his opposition to al-Albani’s *manhaj* in his publication, “Risalet al-Iman” (“A Message of Faith”), as did Mohammad Abdul Salam Faraj in his book, “Al-Farida al-Gha’iba” (“The Missing Obligation”); and, al-Zawahiri singled him out in his essay entitled, “Al-Rad ala Shubha Khatira lil Sheikh al-Albani bi Sha’in al-Sukout a’an al-Hukam al-Murtadin” (“A Response to Sheikh Al-Albani’s Dangerous Misguidance with regard to Keeping Silent about the Apostate Leaders and Regimes”), as did Abu Busir al-Tartusi in his book “Madhahib al-Nass fi al-Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani” (“The Sects of People in Al-Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani”); and, Abu Qatada al-Falastini, in his “Rasa’il al-Juruh wal-Ta’adil” (“The Wounds of Moderate Essays”), amongst others.

113. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Rafi’i al-Astar a’an Adillat al-Qa’ilin Bifina’al Nar” (“Unveiling the Evidence Covered up by of Those Who Deny that There is a Hellfire”) from Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; First Edition, p. 5

114. **Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya** is also pronounced al-jam`àah al-’islàmiyyah, which is Arabic for “the Islamic Group”; also transliterated as Gamaat Islamiya or al Jamaat al Islamiyya. [Translator’s note]

115. Sheikh Al-Albani was accused of being the intellectual mastermind behind the Juhaiman revolt. Letters and articles were published by several Salafists in Saudi Arabia all of which accused al-Albani of exporting his political ideas. See the writing of Dr. Mousa al-Duwaish, and particularly his book entitled, “Al-Tawajuh al-Siyyassi al-Haraki ‘ind al-Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani” (“Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin’s Political and Movement Tendencies”); also see Dr. Abdul Latif Bashamil publication, “Al-Fateh al-Rabbani fi al-Rad ala ‘Akhta’a Dawat al-Albani” (“A Godly Perspective in Response to the Errors in Al-Albani’s Da’wa”); also, within this context, refer to the writings of Abdul Aziz al-‘Askar.

116. Reference: <http://www.2muslims.com/directory/Detailed/224102.shtml>: Sahih al-Muslim, related by Malik as *mursal/mu’allaq/balaghat* (depending on choice of terminology), and related twice as *musnad* by al-Hakim. The meaning of the Hadith is contained in the Qur’an, in the mention of the Book and Wisdom (2:129, 2:151, 2:231, 3:164, 4:113, 33:34 & 62:2); to which al-Shafi’i says, “I have heard the most knowledgeable people about the Qur’an say that the Wisdom is the Sunnah” (Al-Risalah, Eng. trans., p. 111) [Translator’s note]

117. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “A Description of the Prophet’s (MPBUH) Prayer from *Takbir* (Praising God as the Greatest “*Allahu Akbar*”) to Surrender, as if You are Witnessing It Taking Place Now”, published by the Al-Ma’arif Library, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition (of the reprint), 1992, pp.43-35. [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

118. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Mukhtassar al-‘Ilou lil Ali al-Ghafar”, (“The Heights of the Merciful AlMighty”) authored by al-Hafith Shamsiddine al-Thahabi, Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; Second Edition, 1991, p. 58

119. Ibid, p. 45

120. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Silsalat al-Huda wal Nour” (“Guidance and Enlightenment Series”); taped recording, cassette number 347.

121. Abi Obeida Mashhoor Hassan al-Salman, “Al-Siyyasa al-lati Yudirahou al-Salafiyoun” (“The Politics of the Salafists”), Dar al-‘Athriya, Amman, Jordan; First Edition, 2004, p. 33

122. Ibid, p. 32

123. Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, “La Difa’aan a’an al Salafiyya, bal Difa’aan ‘Anha” (“Not in Defense of the Salafiyya but Rather Defending It”), unpublished, p. 3

124. Mohammad Ibrahim, Shaqra “Hiyya al-Salafiyya: Nisbatan wa ‘Aqidan wa Manhajiha” (“This is Salafiyya: In its Origins, its Faith and in its *Manhaj* (clear and manifest way)”, unpublished; Second Edition, 2000, p. 173

125. Ibid, p. 179

126. Ibid, p. 185

127. Ali al-Halaby, “Hawl al-Da’wa al-Salafiyya Marra Ukhra wa Laysat Akhira” (“About the Salafist Da’wa Once Again, but not for the Last Time”); al-Ghad daily newspaper, Amman, Jordan; Friday, May 25th, 2007, Issue Number 1017, p. 7

128. Refer back to footnote 57 [Translator’s note]

129. Mohammad Mousa Naser, “Matha Yanqamoun min al-Salafiyya” (“What They Resent About Salafism”), Dar al-Imam Ahmad, Cairo, Egypt; First Edition, 2004, p. 54

130. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Al-Tariq al-Rashid Nahwou al-Kayan al-Islami” (“The Responsible, Righteous Path towards Building the Islamic Entity”), Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Beirut, Lebanon; pp. 1/377

131. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Questions and Answers”, “al-Asala” magazine; issue no. 18, Muharram 15th, 1419 (AH), p. 71

132. **Al-Taghout** means: That which is worshiped without God [Translator’s note]

133. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, Muqbil Bin Hadi al-Wadi’i and others in “Masa’el ‘Asriyya fi al-Siyyasa al-Shari’yya” (“Contemporary Questions about Legitimate Politics [that is in Accordance with the Sharia]”), “al-Asala” magazine, Jamadi al-Akhira, 1413, issue number 2, p. 17

134. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, Muqbil Bin Hadi al-Wadi’i and others in “Masa’el ‘Asriyya fi al-Siyyasa al-Shari’yya” (“Contemporary Questions about Legitimate Politics [that is in Accordance with the Sharia]”), “al-Asala” magazine, Jamadi al-Akhira, 1413, issue number 2, pp. 18-19

135. Ibid, p. 22

136. Abdel Malek Bin Ahmad Bin al-Mubarak Ramadani al-Jazairi, “Madarik al-Nathar fi al-Siyyasa Bayn al-Tatbikat al-Shar’iyya wa al-Infir’alat al-Hamasiyya” (“Insightful Perspectives on Politics between that which is Religiously Legal Applications and that which is Overzealous Action”); read by and edited by the Ulama (Scholar) and Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani; Dar Ahl al-Hadith; Second Edition (revised and expanded version), 1418 (AH), pp. 240-241

137. Refer back to footnote 38 [Translator’s note]

138. Salim al-Hillali, “Kulkum Ra’in” (“You are all Shepherds”), “al-Asala” magazine, 15 Jamadi al-Akhar, 1414 (AH), Issue Number 8, p. 39

139. This is in the feminine plural form of grammatical conjugation in the original Arabic text and in the Holy Qur’an; the English language does not have gender-based plural forms that are used in conjugation as in Arabic. [Translator’s note]

140. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, a comment in the endnotes of the book, “Huqouq al-Nissa’ fi al-Islam: Nidaa’ illa al-Jins al-Latif” (“Women’s Rights in Islam: An Appeal to the Fairer Sex”), authored by Mohammad Rashid Rida, Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library); 1975, p. 11

141. Surat al-Nissa [4:34] the remainder of this translation, which is used in the body text of this study, is: [... with the bounties which God has bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, and with what they may spend out of their possessions. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy which God has [ordained to be] guarded. And as for those women whose ill will you have reason to fear, admonish them [first]; then leave them alone in bed; then beat them; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek to harm them. Behold, God is indeed most high, great!]

Another translation: [Men have charge of women because Allah has preferred the one above the other and because they spend their wealth on them. Right-acting women are obedient, safeguarding their husbands' interests in their absence as Allah has guarded them. If there are women whose disobedience you fear, you may admonish them, refuse to sleep with them, and then beat them. But if they obey you, do not look for a way to punish them. Allah is All-High, Most Great]

Please refer to <http://www.islamawakened.com/Quran/4/34/default.htm> for other compared translations of this text

[Translator's note]

142. Surat al-Baqara [2:228] The whole verse is [And the divorced women shall undergo, without remarrying, a waiting-period of three monthly courses: for it is not lawful for them to conceal what God may have created in their wombs, if they believe in God and the Last Day. And during this period their husbands are fully entitled to take them back, if they desire reconciliation; but, in accordance with justice, the rights of the wives [with regard to their husbands] are equal to the [husbands'] rights with regard to them, although men have precedence over them [in this respect]. And God is Almighty, Wise.... And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Almighty, Wise.]

Another translation: [Women who are divorced shall wait, keeping themselves apart, three (monthly) courses. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah hath created in their wombs if they are believers in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands would do better to take them back in that case if they desire reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a degree above them. Allah is Mighty, Wise.] *Please refer to <http://www.islamawakened.com/Quran/2/228/default.htm> for other compared translations of this text* [Translator's notes]

143. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Adab al-Zafaf fi al-Sunna al-Mutahira” (“The Ethics of Marriage in the Purifying Sunna”); Dar Ibn Hazem, Beirut, Lebanon and Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya, Jubaiha, Jordan; Third Edition, 1996, pp. 279-289

144. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Jilbab al-Mara’a al-Muslima fil Kitab wal Sunna” (“The Proper Cover for the Muslim Woman in the Book and in the Sunna”); Dar Ibn Hazem, Beirut, Lebanon and Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya, Jubaiha, Jordan; Fourth Edition, p. 37

145. See Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “A Description of the Prophet’s (MPBUH) prayer from *Takbir* (Praising God as the Greatest “*Allahu Akbar*”) to Surrender, as if You are Witnessing It Taking Place Now”, published by the al-Ma’arif Library, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition (of the reprint), 1992, pp.43 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

146. A religious doctrine based on the separation of matter and spirit and of good and evil that originated in 3rd-century Persia and combined elements of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Gnosticism (Encarta Dictionary, English) [Translator’s note]

147. Refer to the women’s committee’s “Ma’an ala Tarik al-Najah wal Tafawuk lil Fard wal Usra wal Taleb wal Madrassa” (Together on the Path of the Success and Excellence of the Individual, the Family, the Student and the School”); Dar al-Athiriyya, Amman, Jordan

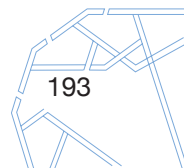
148. Refer back to footnote 130 [Translator’s note]

149. Mashhoor Hassan Salman, “Hukum ‘Amal al-Mara’a fil Fiqh al-Islami” (“Rulings on Women’s Work in Islamic Jurisprudence”), authored by Adnan Bin Daif Al al-Shawabka, Dar al-Ithriyya, Amman; First Edition, 1428 (AH), p. 5

150. Ibid, p. 6

151. Here the speaker is making a play on words, where ‘Mu’amarat’ is conspiracies and Mu’tamarat’ is conferences. [Translator’s note]

152. Mohammad Mousa Naser, “Huqouq al-Mara’a fil Islam” (“The Rights of Women in Islam”); taped recording, cassette number 14



153. Here, the speaker is inferring to a woman being willing to shake hands with a male, who is not related (or “forbidden”) to her (or a *muharram*), instead of recoiling her hand, and keeping her hands ‘clean’, as required to maintain her sanctity and ablution (as believed by the stricter interpretations of Islamic jurists and all Salafists) [Translator’s note]

154. Mohammad Mousa Naser, “Huqouq al-Mara’a fil Islam” (“The Rights of Women in Islam”); taped recording, cassette number 14

155. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “The Muslims’ Newspapers”, 5/5/1416 (AH), issue number 2556, p. 7

156. With regard to issues related to the Jihadi Salafists and domestic and external terrorism, refer to, for example: Mohammad Mousa Naser, Salim al-Hillali, Ali al-Halaby, “Sad al-Adwan ‘an Amman” (Countering the Aggression against Amman”), publications issued by the Imam Al-Albani Center and “Kilma Manhajiyya Hadiyya fi Ba’ad al-Ahdath al-Jariyya” (“A Methodological and Guiding Word with regard to Certain Current Events”); the Imam Al-Albani Center for Scholarly Studies and Methodological Research; 24 Muharram, 1431 (AH) (10/1/2010) by Sheikh Mashhoor Bin Hassan Al Salman, Dr. Bassem Faisal al-Jawabira, Dr. Mohammad Bin Mousa Al Naser, Dr. Ziyad Bin Salim al-Abadi, Sheikh Ali Bin Hassan al-Halaby. And for issues related to Iraq, see “Al-Fatawi al-Shamiyya fi Masa’il al-Nazila al-Iraqiyya” (“Levantine Fatwas about Current Iraqi Affairs”) by Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, Mashhoor Hassan Salman, Ali Hassan al-Halaby, Salim al-Hillali, compiled and edited and commented on by Abu Humam Hareth bin Abdel Karim al-Shami; unpublished.

157. The politics of alliance between the Traditional Salafists and the state was also used in several other Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco to confront Jihadi and other political Islamist movements. Refer to the Algerian case, in particular, in “Salafism and Radical Politics in Post conflict Algeria”, Amel Boubekour Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2008, (available in English and Arabic) <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=22293>] As for Morocco, it amended this policy after the events of May 16, 2003 when it uncovered a connection between the Traditional Salafists and the Jihadi and Harakiyya Salafists. After which, the authorities worked to restrict the

activities of the Traditional Salafists there who were led by Sheikh Abdel Rahman al-Maghrawi; [See: *Dr. Abdul Hakim Abu al-Lawz, "Al-Harakat al-Salafiyya in Morocco"*, p. 361-388]

158. Salim Bin Eid al-Hillali, "Wa Fihee Dukhun" ("And It Will Be Tainted"), "al-Asala" magazine, 15th of Thou al-Qu'ada, 1414 (AH), issue number 11, p. 12

159. **Franj** in Arabic is a reference to the Franks, or more explicitly in this context the Crusaders [Translator's note]

160. Salim Bin Eid al-Hillali, "Wa Fihee Dukhun" ("And It Will Be Tainted"), "al-Asala" magazine, 15th of Thou al-Qu'ada, 1414 (AH), issue number 11, pp. 13-15

161. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Silsalat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah" ("The Right Hadith"), Maktabat al-Ma'arif, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; 1995, 4/507

162. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Fiqh al-Waqi'i" ("A Scholarly Understanding of Reality"), Al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya, Amman, Jordan; Second Edition, 1422 (AH), pp. 39-40

163. Ibid, p. 43

164. Ali Hassan Ali Abdul Hamid al-Halabi al-'Athary, "Ru'yyat Waqi'iyya fil Manhaj al-Da'awy" ("A Realistic Outlook on the Da'wa Manhaj", Dar al-Sawab lil Kitab, Amman, Jordan and Dar al-Imam Ahmad, Cairo, Egypt; First Edition, 2006, p. 49

165. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Questions and Answers", "al-Asala" magazine, Year 4, Issue number 22, 15th of Jamadi al-Akhar, 1420 (AH), p. 77

166. Refer to the editorial written by its editorial committee, "Ahwal al-'Alam al-Islami" ("The State of the Islamic World") in "al-Asala" magazine; Issue Number 8, 15th of Jamadi al-Akhar, 1414 (AH), p. 79

167. Abu Hurairah, also known as `Abd al-Rahman ibn Sakhr Al-Azdi, or Abu Hurayrah, or Abu Horaira, (603 – 681) was a companion (of the *Sahaba*) of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the narrator of Hadith

most quoted in the *isnad* (the *sanad* and *matn* are the primary elements of a Hadith. The *sanad* is the information provided regarding the route by which the *matn* has been reached. It is so named due to the reliance of the Hadith specialists upon it in determining the authenticity or weakness of a Hadith. The term *sanad* is synonymous with the similar term *isnad*. The *matn* is the actual wording of the Hadith by which its meaning is established, or stated differently, the objective at which the *sanad* arrives at, consisting of speech) by Muslims. Abu Hurairah was born in Baha, Yemen into the Banu Daws tribe from the region of Tihamah on the coast of the Red Sea. His father had died, leaving him with only his mother and no other relatives. His name at birth was *Abd al-Shams* (servant of the sun). However, as a child, he had a cat and became known as “Abu Hurairah” (which literally means “Father of the Kitten” or more idiomatically “Of the kitten”). In speeches and lectures, in Friday *khutbahs* and seminars, in the books of *Hadith* and *sirah*, *fiqh* and *ibadah*, the name Abu Hurairah is mentioned in this fashion:” On the authority of Abu Hurairah, may God be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said ...” [The information in this footnote was gathered from more than one reference, including islam.net; quraan.com and abuhuraira.org,] [Translator’s note]

168. English translation quoted from “Tasfiyyah and Tarbiyyah”: “Who is the Victorious Group?” By the Sheikh Salim al-Hillali, in “Al-Ibaanah”, Issue No.2, Rabi’ul-Awwal 1416H / August 1995; Al-Ibaanah Online; http://www.sunnahonline.com/ilm/ibaanah/vol2_o.htm [Translator’s note]

169. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Jamaa’ah Wahida bil Islam La Jama’aat” (“One Group in Islam Not Groups”), Maktabat al-Furqan, Ajman, United Arab Emirates; Second Edition, 2003, pp 10-11

170. Ibid, p. 13

171. Salim Bin Eid al-Hillali, “Man Hiyya al-Ta’ifa al-Mansoura” (“Who is the Victorious Sect”), “al-Asala” magazine; Issue number 2, 15th Jamadi al-Akhar, 1413, p. 38

172. Salim Bin Eid al-Hillali, “al-Muqallat al-Salafiyya fi al-‘Aqida wal Da’wa wal Manhaj wal Waq’i” (“Salafist Sayings Regarding the Faith, the Da’wa, the Manhaj and Reality”), Maktabat al-Furqan, Ajman, the United Arab Emirates; Second Edition, 2002, p. 83

173. Mohammad Mousa Naser, “Min Ma’alem al-Manhaj al-Nabawi fil Da’wa illa Allah” (“From the Milestones of the Prophetic Manhaj in the Da’wa of God”), Dar al-Imam Ahmad, Cairo, Egypt; First Edition, 2004, p. 35

174. The concept of ***al-walaa’ and al-baraa’*** are explained, from a Salafist point of view, in “The Islamic Concept of al-Walaa’ wal-Baraa’”, by Khalid El-Gharib [Article ID: 487] from the Islamic Awakening site (a Salafist site), as follows:

“Firstly, that the concept of *walaa’ and baraa’* is one of the greatest fundamentals of the Islamic creed (*‘aqidah*).

Shaykh Ahmad ibn ‘Atiq (May Peace Be Upon Him), said:” *There isn’t in the Book of Allah the Exalted - after the issue concerning the obligation of tawhid and the forbiddance of its opposite - any issue which has as so many proofs, nor so clearly explained, than the issue of walaa’ and baraa’.*” As regards *walaa’* (allegiance), it is manifesting sincere love and help for God, and for His Prophets, and for the Believers. Whereas *baraa’* (enmity) is manifesting enmity and dissociation from falsehood and its people. And these matters are actually from the most fundamental issues of faith (*iman*).

Secondly, that the Muslim live in a very crucial time in which many of the basic and vital Islamic concepts have either been forgotten, misunderstood or neglected; and from such basic concepts is the concept of *walaa’ and baraa’*. The consequence of this is that many Muslims are no longer aware of those qualities that distinguish a believer from an unbeliever; which has in turn caused the faith of many Muslims to be severely weakened and has led many of them to take the unbelievers as intimate friends and allies - imitating their manners, ways and aspirations. Thirdly, that because the concept of *walaa’ and baraa’* is so central to the meaning of: *laa ilaaha illallaah* (there is no God but God), then any errors concerning it, actually means an error in understanding the very *kalimah* (the word) itself.” [Reference: <http://www.islamicawakening.com/viewarticle.php?articleID=487>]

For more on the Salafist position on the concept of *walaa’ and baraa’*, see also “*al-Walaa’ wal Baraa’*, The Allegiance and Association with the People of Islam and Iman and Disassociation and Enmity with the People of Falsehood and Disbelief in Islam” by Shaykh Saleh

Bin Fawzan al-Fawzan, The Calgary Islamic Homepage, Manhaj of the Salaf al-Saleh, January 1997 (AD) / Sha'aban 1417 (AH); on the link.: [<http://www.calgaryislam.com/imembers/pdf/manhaj/16.pdf>] [Translator's note]

175. Mohammad Mousa Naser, "Min Ma'alem al-Manhaj al-Nabawi fil Da'wa illa Allah" ("From the Milestones of the Prophetic Manhaj in the Da'wa of God"), Dar al-Imam Ahmad, Cairo, Egypt; First Edition, 2004, pp. 35-39

176. Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra, "Muqademat al-Da'wa illa Allah Bayn al-Tajamou' al-Hizbi wal Ta'awon al-Shari'" ("An Introduction to God's Da'wa: The Difference between Partisan Affiliation and Grouping and Legitimate Cooperation"), Maktabat al-Sahaba, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Third Edition, 1993, pp. 14-15

177. Ali Bin Hassan Bin Ali Bin al-Hamid, "Muqademat al-Da'wa illa Allah Bayn al-Tajamou' al-Hizbi wal Ta'awon al-Shari'" ("An Introduction to God's Da'wa: The Difference between Partisan Affiliation and Grouping and Legitimate Cooperation"), Maktabat al-Sahaba, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Second Edition, 1993, pp.103-104

178. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Hathihi al-Jamaa'at min al-lthnayn wa Sab'ain Firqa" ("These Groups are of the Seventy Two Sects"); Maktabat al-Furqan, Ajman, United Arab Emirates; Second Edition, 2003, p. 12

179. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Maqalat al-Sunniyya fi Hizb ut Tahrir wal Jamaa'at al-Takfiriyya" ("Sunni Reviews on Hizb ut Tahrir and the Takfiri Groups"); authored by Mousa Bin Abdullah Al Abdul Aziz, Kitab al-Salafiyya, Dar al-Bahouth wal Dirasat al-Mu'asira wal Tarajum (Center for Contemporary Research, Studies and Translations), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition, 2006, p. 70

180. Mohammad Bin Ibrahim al-Shaibani, "The Life of al-Albani, His Influence and the Praise of Scholars upon Him", Manuscripts and Heritage Center, Kuwait; Second Edition, 2004, 1/401-402 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

181. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, "Rai al-Sheikh fil Jamaa'at al-Islamiyya" fi "Hayat al-Albani" (The Opinion of the Sheikh in Islamic

Groups” in Mohammad Bin Ibrahim al-Shaibani, “The Life of al-Albani, His Influence and the Praise of Scholars upon Him”, Manuscripts and Heritage Center, Kuwait; Second Edition, 2004, 1/395 [Titles translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

182. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Questions and Answers”, “al-Asala” magazine; issue no.13, Muharram 15th, 1415 (AH), p. 71

183. Ibid, p. 70

184. Qur’an: Sura 30 (The Greeks); verses 30 and 31, taken from <http://i-cias.com/textarchive/koran/030.htm> [Translator’s note]

185. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Questions and Answers”, “al-Asala” magazine; issue no.13 , p. 71

186. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Hathihi al-Jamaa’at min al-Ithnayn wa Sab’ain Firqa” (“These Groups are of the Seventy Two Sects”); Maktabat al-Furqan, Ajman, United Arab Emirates; Second Edition, 2003, p. 12

187. Ali Bin Hassan Bin Ali Bin al-Hamid, “Muqademat al-Da’wa illa Allah Bayn al-Tajamou’ al-Hizbi wal Ta’awon al-Shari” (“An Introduction to God’s Da’wa: The Difference between Partisan Affiliation and Grouping and Legitimate Cooperation”), Maktabat al-Sahaba, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Second Edition, 1993, p. 101

188. [From a Salafist perspective on **al-Tawhid**]: Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim asserts that, “the entire Qur’an is about *Tawhid*”, since it is made up of the following:

* Information about God and His Names and His Attributes - This is the *Tawhid* that we are to have knowledge of, called *Tawhid ar-Ruboobiyyah*.

* Commands to worship God alone with no partners and prohibitions of worshipping other than Him - This is the *Tawhid* that we must put into action, called *Tawhid al-Uloohiyyah*.

* Commands to obey God and His Messenger; and the prohibitions of disobeying God and His Messenger - These are the ways that *Tawhid* is actualized and completed.

* Information about what God has prepared for the people of *Tawhid*, the delights, success, salvation, and triumphs in this life

and the Next, and the punishments that are in store for the people of *shirk* in this life, and the eternal torture prepared for them upon their one-way entrance into the Hellfire - the first is for those who actualize *Tawhid*, the latter is for those who do not.” [Reference: “The Importance of Tawhid and the Evil Result of Neglecting It” by, Sheikh Saalih Ibn Fawzaan Ibn ‘Abdillaah Al-Fawzaan; from: <http://www.turntoislam.com/forum/showthread.php?t=107>] [Translator’s note]

189. [From a Salafist perspective on *al-‘aqida*]: ‘*Aqidah* linguistically is derived from the term *aqada*. In Arabic, one states, “‘*aqada* the rope”, when a rope is tied firmly; and, “‘*aqada* the sale” or “He settled the sale” when the person ratifies and contracts a sale or agreement. And God says in the Qur’an, “And as for those whom your right hands have made a covenant (Ar., *aqadat*)” [Al-Nisa 33]. And God says, “But He will take you to task for the oaths which you swear in earnest (Ar., *aqadtum*)” [Al-Maida, 89] which means “asserted and adhered to”, as proven in the verse, “And break not oaths after the assertion of them” [An-Nahl, 91]. If one says, “*Aqadtu* such and such”, it means his heart is firm upon such and such. Therefore, *al-‘aqidah* or *al-itiqad* according to the scholars of Islam is, “The firm creed that one’s heart is fixed upon without any wavering or doubt. It excludes any supposition, doubt or suspicion”. [Reference: “The Importance of Aqidah (Matters of Faith), By Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Qari, from: <http://www.turntoislam.com/forum/showthread.php?t=106>] [Translator’s note]

190. Mohammad Bin Ibrahim al-Shaibani, “The Life of al-Albani, His Influence and the Praise of Scholars upon Him”, Manuscripts and Heritage Center, Kuwait; Second Edition, 2004, 1/401-402 [Title translated from the Arabic; available in Arabic]

191. Ibid, 1/395

192. Hasan Abu Haniyeh, “Ishakilyyat al-‘Ilaqa bayn al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin wal Sulata fil Urdun” (“The Problematic Relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian Authorities”); unpublished, p. 16

193. Abu al-Ashbal Ahmad Salem al-Masri, “Fatawi al-Ulama al-Kibar fil Irhab wal Tadmir wa Dawabit al-Jihad wal Takfir wa Mu’amalat al-Kufar” (“The Fatwas of Great Scholars [Ulama] in Terrorism, Destruction and

the Conditions for Jihad, Declaring Others Apostate [Takfir], and Dealing with Unbelievers [Kuffar]”), Dar al-Kitab; First Edition, 2005, pp. 423-424

194. Definition of **al-bay’aa**: Linguistically, in Arabic *al-bay’aa* means to reach an agreement with respect to matters of trade or on obedience and following (i.e., a covenant). But, in its Islamic meaning (*al-istilah*), *al-bay’aa* means the covenant on obedience. It is as if the one who pledges allegiance gives the covenant to his amir (leader), assigning him the ability to conclude matters concerning himself and the Muslims at large; this amir cannot be disputed with in any way. Similarly, the Muslim agrees to obey the amir in what he assigns from certain tasks, whether it is in times of ease or difficulty, in that which he likes, and that which he dislikes. [Reference: Saleh As-Saleh, *al-Bay’aa wal Hizbiyyah (Allegiance and Partisanship)*, 18-5-1427 (AH) / 15 June 2006 (AD), published on the following link: http://islamic-knowledge.com/Books_Articles/Contemporary_Issues__Al-Bay3aa_wal_Hizbiyyah__Dr_As-Saleh.pdf] [Translator’s note]

195. Ali Hassan Ali Abdul Hamid, “Al-Bay’aa Bayn al-Sunna wal Bida’a ‘ind al-Jamaa’at al-Islamiyya” (“The Difference between the Allegiance of the Sunna and that of Innovation amongst Islamist Groups and Movements”, Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Library), Amman, Jordan; First Edition, 1406 (AH)

196. Salim al-Hillali and Ziad al-Dabeej, “Al-Jamaa’at al-Islamiyya fi Daw’ al-Kitab wal Sunna” (“Islamic Groups from the Perspective of the Book and the Sunna”); Third Edition, 1981, p. 108-133

197. Several books were published criticizing Sayyed Qutub, including several books by Rabih al-Madkhali, Ali al-Halaby and Salim al-Hillali, amongst others.

198. The Islamic Library (Al-Maktaba Al-Islamiyya), which was owned by Sheikh Nitham Salameh Sakihijah, undertook the task of transcribing taped recordings of al-Albani’s fatwas (scholarly opinions and rulings) over ten year ago. Sheikh Nasruddin al-Albani’s scholarly opinion and rulings (fatwas) were documented in more than 18 volumes, which are due to be printed shortly after publication of this study. Al-Albani’s scholarly opinions and rulings represent an important source for the research and study of al-Albani’s life and his tendencies because

the books he wrote were particularly specialized in the study of the Prophet's Hadith, with the exception of some small essays. But, through his books, it is not possible to deduce and track his overall outlook and approach in a comprehensive manner. The same is true of the majority of the literature that his students transcribed, which are also concerned with and deal directly in the study of the Hadith, or the objections and criticism that al-Albani was subject to on this matter. Thus, one cannot benefit from the latter literature in attempting to shed light upon Sheikh Albani's da'wa (calling) and manhaj (approach/way/paradigm). In the end, a conflict erupted between al-Albani and Abu Leila over the rights and financial royalties of the publication of al-Albani's material, which led to a distancing and a cooling off in the relationship between the two men.

199. Mousa Bin Abdullah Al Abdul Aziz, "Al-Maqalat al-Manhajiyya fi Hizb ut-Tahrir wal Jamaa'at al-Takfiriyya", ("Articles in the Methodologies of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Takfiri Groups"), in the Salafist magazine of the Imams Ibn Baaz and al-Albani in "Kitab al-Salafiyya" (The Book of Salafism), Dar al-Bahouth wal Dirasat al-Mu'asira wal Tarajum (Center for Contemporary Research, Studies and Translations), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition, 2006, pp. 74-89

200. [From a Salafist perspective] **al-tazkiyya** (purification of the Soul) in Islam has three dimensions or levels, which in Arabic are called *Islam*, *iman* and *ihsan*. *Islam* (submission) refers to having the correct actions, that is, ones that are in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunna. *Iman* (faith) refers to having the correct knowledge (*aqidah*). *Ihsan* (intentions and diligence) refers to having the correct motivations. Much attention is given to *Islam* and *iman* and to matters of *Sharia* and *aqidah*. But *ihsan* is important too. Having the correct motivations means purifying ones soul from hypocrisy, caprice, heedlessness, and everything else that keeps us from serving God for His sake alone. This purification of the soul is called *tazkiyya*. [Reference: <http://www.muhababah.com/tazkiyyah.htm>] [Translator's note]

201. Another understanding (and a more Sufist one at that) of the term *tazkiyya* in Islam is that the path to God is only illuminated when a person recognizes the central place of God in his life and strives to develop his self accordingly. The Messenger of God said, "If someone wants to know what position he enjoys in the eyes of God, he has only to look at what place he gives to God (in his heart and life)" (Hakim). The term nearest

in meaning to self-development in the Qur’anic vocabulary is tazkiyya. Tazkiyya means purification, and refers to the cleansing of the human self from all that is unwholesome, undesirable and unwelcome. It also refers to the nurturing and strengthening of all the qualities within the human self that are essential for growth and development, for blossoming and flowering. Success and happiness in this world and the Hereafter depend on tazkiyya, the purification and nurturing of our personality. The Qur’an states that true success is only reserved for those who seek to purify themselves: [Reference: ‘*The Process of Self Development (The Goal in Life)* by Khurram Mur, Chapter One”, found on the following site: <http://kitaabun.com>] [Translator’s note]
Refer to footnote 120 [Translator’s note]

202. **Al-Qaeda**, Arabic for “The Base” is an international terrorist network founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. It seeks to rid Muslim countries of what it sees as the profane influence of the West and replace their governments with fundamentalist Islamic regimes. After al-Qaeda’s September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States launched a war in Afghanistan to destroy al-Qaeda’s bases there and overthrow the Taliban, the country’s Muslim fundamentalist rulers who harbored bin Laden and his followers. Like his predecessor George W. Bush, President Barack Obama has committed U.S. strategy to destroying al-Qaeda’s safe haven in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, and limiting the group’s ability to strike U.S. targets. Al-Qaeda grew out of the Services Office, a clearinghouse for the international Muslim brigade opposed to the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In the 1980s, the Services Office – run by bin Laden and the Palestinian religious scholar Abdullah Azzam – recruited, trained and financed thousands of foreign *mujahadin*, or holy warriors, from more than fifty countries. Bin Laden wanted these fighters to continue the “holy war” beyond Afghanistan. He formed al-Qaeda around 1988. [Reference: “*al-Qaeda (a.k.a. al-Qaida, al-Qa’ida)*” by Jayshree Bajoria and Greg Bruno, Staff Writers at the Council on Foreign Relations, December 30, 2009; background brief found on the following link: http://www.cfr.org/publication/9126/alqaeda_aka_alqaida_alqaida.html#p2] [Translator’s note]

203. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Fitnat al-Takfir” (“The Divisive Nature of Takfir”); edited by Ali Bin Hassan Abdel Hamid, Dar Ibn Juzaima; Second Edition, 1997, p. 13

204. Ibid, p. 20

205. Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani, “Maqalat al-Sunniyya fi Hizb ut Tahrir wal Jamaa’at al-Takfiriyya” (“A Sunni Review of Hizb ut Tahrir and the Takfiri Groups”); authored by Mousa Bin Abdullah Al Abdul Aziz, Kitab al-Salafiyya, Dar al-Bahouth wal Dirasat al-Mu’asira wal Tarajum (Center for Contemporary Research, Studies and Translations), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; First Edition, 2006, p. 31

206. From an interview conducted with Osama Shehadeh for the purposes of this study

207. <http://www.kulalsalafiyeen.com/vb/>

208. Interview with this individual for the purposes of this study