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# **‘Nothing to do with Islam’: The historical origins, ideology and strategic threat of global Salafi-jihadism**

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## Abstract

This paper examines Salafi-jihadism as a strategic issue driving the threat of Sunni Islamic terrorism globally. By tracing the genealogy of Salafism from the early centuries of Islam to the rise of Salafi-jihadism in the 1980s, it debunks the rejection of Salafi-jihadists' claims to legitimacy as members of the Islamic faith, arguing that Salafism has doctrinal credibility, based on its own scholarly exegesis of the canonical sources of Islam.

The paper cautions that denial of Salafi-jihadist claims to Muslim identity is a disavowal of Muslim agency more broadly, especially where non-Salafi Muslims identify with conservative elements of Salafism. It also warns that attempts to uncouple Salafi-jihadism from Islam may encourage rather than impede the movement of young Muslims along the extremist spectrum, while discouraging Muslim communities from examining their role in mitigation strategies.

# 'Nothing to do with Islam': The historical origins, ideology and strategic threat of global Salafi-jihadism

## Introduction

Salafi-jihadism exists as a strategic issue driving the threat of Sunni Islamic terrorism globally. In political and social responses to manifestations of this threat, whether in the Middle East or the West, a constant theme is rejection of Salafi-jihadists' claims to legitimacy as members of the Islamic faith. This paper debunks that assertion by tracing the genealogy of Salafism historically and ideologically, from the early centuries of Islam to the rise of Salafi-jihadism in the 1980s.

In structure, this paper will begin by providing a picture of the current strategic threat presented by Salafi-jihadism, and its characterisation by Western politicians. Part 2 will trace the core Islamic concepts shared between Muslims, and which Salafists hold as central to their creed. Part 3 will trace the history of traditionalist Islam from the 8<sup>th</sup> century through to its revival in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, showing the genealogy of Salafism and the emergence of Salafi-jihadism.

In doing so, the intention is not to identify all Salafists, let alone Muslims, as threats to international security. Like Islam more broadly, Salafism (*al-Salafiyya*) is a diverse creed containing many millions of adherents who observe the tenets of their religion peacefully. Thus, as others have done, this paper draws distinctions between purist Salafism as a pious quietist movement, Salafism as a political movement, and Salafi-jihadism.<sup>1</sup>

Of the estimated 50 million Salafists at present, the vast majority are either non-violent purists who reject politics as a secular distraction, or Salafis who participate in peaceful politics in one form or another. The remaining grouping of Salafi-jihadis represents a minority, estimated in 2009 to be around 250,000.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, despite the relative size of the group, their activities exist as a threat to the regional order and an enduring challenge for policy makers in the Muslim and non-Muslim world. It is this violent expression that is the concern of this essay and, in particular, the way it emerges from, hijacks and gains legitimacy through its origins within the quietist, non-violent expressions of Salafism.

Salafism is an ancestralist strand of Sunni Islamic religious observance that seeks to limit adherence to a purified form of Islam focused on the Qur'an and the example set by the Prophet Muhammad and the early generations of Islam (the ancestors or *salaf*). Salafism thus rejects or severely limits the role of additional, later sources beyond those that provide first-hand insight into the early years of Islam. In its puritanical approach, Salafism prescribes a stricter adherence to doctrinal concepts and sources already existing in Islam and that are absolutely central to the religious practice of all Muslims.

Importantly, this places Salafism on a spectrum within Islam, rather than in conceptual isolation and opposition. Salafi interpretation of central, shared doctrinal elements allows Salafists to exert influence in the rejection of engagement with other cultures and to resist and advocate against Western concepts such as democracy, freedom of speech and sexual equality. Salafism is able to achieve this level of asymmetrical influence primarily because its focus on core doctrinal concepts and sources, underpinned by credible theological exegesis, creates a degree of legitimacy that is difficult for mainstream Muslims to counter without risking reputational harm—let alone the violence that is an ever-present existential threat from Salafi-jihadists.

This is true even for mainstream clerics, who have until recently appeared reluctant, at least openly, to criticise the doctrinal basis of Salafi-jihadism, except in its worst manifestations.<sup>3</sup> This is because some key Salafi-jihadist ideologues are formidable opponents. As will be seen, the most influential ideologue in Salafi-jihadism, Abdullah Azzam, held doctoral and professorial credentials from two of Islam's most esteemed tertiary institutions, and demonstrated a jurisprudential eloquence second-to-none.

Salafi interpretation of Islamic doctrine competes with mainstream Islam because of its alignment with core mainstream concepts: influencing practice among non-Salafist congregations, limiting discussion of Islam within mainstream communities, and reversing or stifling the possibilities for reform. Salafism's reliance on universally-shared and revered precedent empowers its practitioners to redefine Islam narrowly so as to redraw the boundaries of the faith and to exclude or delegitimise orthodox Muslims. Salafi-Jihadists then draw on the same sources to dehumanise non-adherents, excommunicate other expressions of Islam and legitimise violence. It is incumbent on policy makers to grasp the difficulty in disaggregating the legitimate elements of Salafi-jihadist doctrine from the mainstream basis of Islamic belief, because only then can they fully comprehend the Sisyphean task of framing policy solutions against the pernicious influences of hard-line Salafism (specifically Salafi-jihadism) and in favour of an imagined pluralist or mainstream Islam.

## Part 1: Strategic threat and political framing

The casual viewer of mainstream or social media cannot avoid grasping that an increased transnational terrorist threat exists and that its adherents lay claim to a divine purpose on the basis of their Muslim faith. Violent acts are perpetrated on a frequent basis, aimed at soft targets in workplaces, nightclubs, on public transit and even in homes. A *New York Times* collation of ISIS attacks against targets outside of Iraq and Syria indicates that 1200 people have lost their lives between September 2014 and July 2016.<sup>4</sup> But ISIS is merely the most recent and fiercest expression of this phenomenon.

At present, organisational mapping of global Al Qa'ida groups active between 2014 and 2016 shows 26 organisations operationally active in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the West.<sup>5</sup> These organisations consist primarily of rivals, allies and affiliates of Al Qa'ida, sharing a global Salafi-jihadist ideology, with the exceptions including insurgent groups which display ultra-conservative Islamic ideology, engage in extreme violence to achieve their political objectives, and do so with the logistics and ideological support of Al Qaeda-linked organisations or splinter groups. Similar mapping for global Islamic State groups in the same period shows 21 organisations (including some overlapping with the former search) linked to or in competition with the sibling rival currently eclipsing its older brother.<sup>6</sup>

Global Salafi-jihadism, currently centred on Syria and Iraq, represents a significant threat to the security, economy and sovereignty of nation states. Recent years have seen the mass displacement of populations, gathered in refugee camps in the countries bordering Iraq and Syria, and in mass unlawful migration to Europe. Also observed has been the attempted genocide of the Yazidis and the driving out of Christians and other minorities from occupied lands.<sup>7</sup>

Concerns have also been expressed by governments and commentators at the terrorist up-skilling of nationals who travel to conflict zones in large numbers, and who present potential risks on their return due to capability, intent and experience.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Salafi-jihadists call on and inspire lone actors, or seek to direct action by proxy, and have the power to exacerbate sectarian division between Islamic communities, and foment racism against Muslims and by Muslims against others.<sup>9</sup>

### Political response – Salafi-jihadists as 'un-Islamic' and the uncoupling of *jihad*

In commenting on these events, often in response to spectacular atrocities occurring in the West, Western and Muslims leaders consistently and misguidedly assert that Salafi-jihadist groups like ISIS and Al Qai'da are not Islamic.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that these crafted responses are well-intentioned efforts aimed at social cohesion. They are designed to calm community concerns and deflect the trajectory of critical discourse from veering into prejudiced directions that might lead to harm. These claims are laudable in terms of their social agenda but problematic in terms of their historicity.

It is likely that many politicians make these claims in ignorance and are unaware of the possible negative consequences. Their ahistorical view derives from the counsel of political advisers and academics weaned on a heady cocktail of Edward Said-ian post-colonial theory, and invested cultural groups propagating an ahistorical view of *jihad* (commonly interpreted as 'holy war').<sup>11</sup>

This counsel leads politicians to assert that Salafi-jihadist groups are un-Islamic on the evidence of their use of violent *jihad*; the most confronting manifestation of their ideology. This attempt to uncouple *jihad* from Islam is clearly seen in commentators making a value-laden distinction between ‘greater *jihad*’ as an internalised spiritual struggle or the doing of good deeds, versus the idea of ‘lesser *jihad*’ as signifying militant *jihad*.

These categorisations are a distraction and quite wrong. As David Cook observes, the distinction originates in a ‘creative reinterpretation’ of a Qur’anic passage by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Sufi scholar al-Ghazali, which ‘turns the focus radically away from its original intent’, and which has been the subject of debate ever since.<sup>12</sup> As Cook notes (citing Alfred Morabia’s work), the ‘concept of a “greater jihad/lesser jihad” dichotomy is a fiction devised to ease the acceptance of *jihad* into Muslim society’—which has been latched upon by apologist Western academics and Muslim apologists alike—asserting that:

Attempts to rewrite history occur solely in Western-authored presentations of jihad, or those with Western audiences as the primary focus. It is ironic, but the fact remains that few Muslim scholars or even apologists writing in non-European languages have ever made the exaggerated claims [as produced by Western apologists who have sought to uncouple the concept of jihad from violence]. Perhaps because early Muslim history is heavily emphasized in the Islamic curriculum, those who write in Arabic or other Muslim majority languages realize that it is pointless to present jihad as anything other than militant warfare.<sup>13</sup>

Denial of the militant nature of *jihad*, or cherry-picking Qur’anic verses (while eliding or avoiding others) as a means to uncouple Salafi-jihadists from their faith entirely, is intellectually dishonest and has not impeded the appeal and reach of Salafis-jihadist ideology, and may have unintended consequences.<sup>14</sup> One consequence is that it discourages Muslim communities more broadly from engaging in critical examination. If Salafi-jihadism is ‘nothing to do with Islam’, then no responsibility rests with Islamic communities to monitor and address the problem. When Western politicians favour one Muslim identity over another, they risk isolation and polarisation of Muslims who share many of the conservative values of Salafism, while not subscribing to their stricter interpretations.

Ahistorical attempts to exclude Salafism from Islam are therefore a denial of Muslim agency, and risk further disenfranchisement of Muslim identity. This strategy may push some Muslims further along toward the extreme end of the Islamic spectrum. One might also question the efficacy of such statements on the basis that Western constituencies—with access to modern information resources—appear increasingly to disagree with the conclusion that there is no link, and are frustrated with the disingenuous nature of such statements.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, since a deep link exists between Islam and Salafi-jihadism, denial of its existence merely delays a sensible policy discussion on how to address the problem in a manner sensitive to the religious identity of law-abiding Muslims and to the valid security concerns of Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

## Part 2: Salafism’s Islamic genealogy

### The importance of Mohammad, and the role of the *hadith*

In order to understand how Salafism can exert influence within Islamic discourse, it is important to grasp the centrality of Mohammad to the practice of Islam in all its forms. For all Muslims, including Salafists, Mohammad is the chosen Prophet through whom God communicated to the world via the revelation of the Qur’an. Furthermore, Mohammad is identified in the Qur’an as the seal of the prophets, establishing him as the final conduit between the affairs of mankind and the demands and expectations of the divine.<sup>16</sup>

There is little useful contemporary information available regarding Mohammad’s life, with the key religious sources beyond the Qur’an (which itself developed into its present form over time), arising approximately 150 to 200 years after his death in the form of his biographies and collected anecdotal recordings of his words and deeds.<sup>17</sup> These canonical sources provide an imagined, idealised account of Mohammad that may or may not be accurate in any historical sense but that bequeath to the Islamic world a vision of Mohammad as the perfect example of humanity.<sup>18</sup> For

Muslims, and regardless of Western scholarship's inability to ascertain their veracity, these accounts operate as absolute fact, and make it incumbent on Muslims to look to the aggregated record of Mohammad's life as the key guidance in pursuit of correct spiritual and temporal existence.

This focus on Mohammad as exemplar is derived from the Qur'an, which states that '[y]ou have indeed in the messenger of God an excellent example for the one who longs for God and the last day, and remembers God abundantly'.<sup>19</sup> Further, the centrality of the Prophet to Islamic devotion is enshrined in the act of testifying one's faith (*shahada*) as one of the five pillars of Islam: 'I testify there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is his messenger'.<sup>20</sup>

Mohammad as exemplar leaves Muslims with a problem however. While the Qur'an defines Mohammad's role, it is a limited resource if believers seek to understand exactly how Mohammad lived the perfect life, particularly in the contemporary world in which Muslims find themselves. Over time, the early Muslim community would solve this problem by developing a corpus of observations and recollections of the Prophet's actions and words that would act as guidance to believers: the *hadith*.<sup>21</sup> The prophetic *hadith*—records of the sayings and actions of the Prophet—are the most important supplementary source used by Muslims to assist in the goal of emulating the Prophet.

Muslims believe that the Qur'an and *hadith* (also known as the traditions, or *Sunna*) of the Prophet are to be viewed as complementary. This is articulated, for example, in *hadith* regarding the Prophet's final sermon in which he said, 'I am leaving you two things and you will never go astray as long as you cling to them—they are the Book of Allah and my Sunnah'. This latter *hadith* is cited by Muslims—Salafists and non-Salafists alike—as evidence of the centrality of the Prophet in the interpretation of God's revelation in the Qur'an.<sup>22</sup>

The *hadith* were compiled initially on an ad hoc basis by Mohammad's early followers and then in a more systematic and thematic way by various scholars in the centuries following his death. Each *hadith* exists as a discrete text (*matn*), accompanied by a chain of transmission (*isnad*), which details the list of orators through which the *hadith* was communicated. For example, Al-Bukhari writes:

[I]t was narrated to us by Yusuf b. Musa: it was narrated to us by Abu Usama: it was narrated to me by al-A'mash, from Khaythama, from the Companion 'Adi b. Hatim, who said that 'the Messenger of God, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "there is not one among you except that he will be spoken to directly by his Lord with no translator or any barrier separating them".<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of the chain of transmission and the credibility of the narrators, each *hadith* is also graded for authenticity. The highest rating for a *hadith* is authentic (*sahih*) but lesser-rated *hadith* such as fair (*hasan*) may also be considered. In Sunni Islam, there are six major *hadith* collections, with two collections considered the most authoritative: *Sahih al Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*.<sup>24</sup> These collections are referred to as the *sahihayn*, which means literally 'the two that are authentic', and thus are compilations of *hadith* considered to be fully authenticated and therefore providing persuasive guidance regarding Mohammad's example.

Ostensibly, the *hadith* are second only to the Qur'an in terms of their canonical importance. In practice, however, they have evolved to exist symbiotically with the holy book and have had tremendous influence in the determination of custom and law in the Islamic world. Some scholars have concluded that this influence has led the *hadith* to overshadow the Qur'an in defining the observance of Islam, with Jonathan A.C. Brown asserting that '[i]n this sense, in Islamic civilization the Sunna has ruled over the Qur'an, shaping, specifying and adding to the revealed book'.<sup>25</sup> Like other Muslim scholars, Salafi scholars rely on the *hadith* in order to interpret law and to issue religious edicts advising their congregations on how to deal with all issues, from marriage to engagement with foreign powers.<sup>26</sup>

Countless examples of *fatwas* by pre-eminent Salafist scholars demonstrate the central reliance of the *hadith* in supporting legal opinions. As an example, here is a digression by Abdul Aziz bin

Abdullah bin Baz, a former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, within a longer *fatwa* ruling on the issue of whether it is permissible to shave off beards, in which he provides extensive discursive analysis regarding the binding authority of the *sahihayn*. This example is illustrative of the 'black-letter law' approach of Islamic scholars in establishing precedent:

It is known that there is a consensus among scholars on acting upon evidence authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him).... The difference between those of the Two Sahihs and others is that the Hadiths of the Two Sahihs are authentic. Thus, we are not required to investigate their authenticity. Therefore, we have to act according to them.<sup>27</sup>

The centrality of the *hadith* to Salafist identity is further underscored by their belief that a single sect will enter paradise on judgment day, with all other sects consigned to hell. The view that Salafists are this 'saved sect' (*firqa naajiya*) is based on an oft-cited *hadith* which relates that '[i]t was narrated from Anas bin Malik that the Messenger of Allah ... said "[t]he Children of Israel split into seventy-one sects, and my nation will split into seventy-two, all of which will be in Hell apart from one, which is the main body".<sup>28</sup>

Exploration of Salafist websites providing religious advice illustrates the importance of the 'saved sect' *hadith* to their adherent's sense of identity, exclusive righteousness and entitlement. In an article on the Islam Q&A site, managed by the Syrian Salafist Muhammad Al-Munajjid, the author cites extensively from the *hadith* as well as Salafist inspirational sources, such as Ibn Taymiyya who will be discussed below, in concluding that Salafists are the saved sect.<sup>29</sup>

### **Monotheism and the rejection of heretical innovation**

From the above discussion of Mohammad's role in Islam, it is important to derive two points. First, that the idea of Mohammad as role model is central to Islamic practice and the manner with which Muslims interact with the physical world—Muslim and non-Muslim. Through emulation of Mohammad's example, Muslims seek to live a pious life in the temporal plane in the hope of achieving greater rewards in the hereafter. Second, that Salafists are no different to other Muslims in this regard, with the distinction being that their emulation of Mohammad is far stricter and involves the adoption of a purist approach dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century *ahl al-hadith* movement.

This purist approach is driven by two key tenets of Salafism. Bound together, these tenets project an image of Salafism as a means to achieve a pure, idealised and pious existence that has broad appeal to Muslims. First, Salafists seek to ensure Muslims adhere to the concept of monotheism (*tawhid*) by emulation of Mohammad and, second, they seek to avoid heretical innovation (*bid'a*) which might harm achievement of the former objective.

The next section explores these two interrelated concepts in more detail, since they are the bedrock of Salafism's appeal and the source of its rigidity and incompatibility with competing societies. Importantly also, they are central to the appeal of Salafism to an increasing number of Muslims confronted by globalism and the perception of the relative failures of Islamic societies in adapting to modernity.

### **Monotheism**

Monotheism (the doctrine or belief that there is only one God)—one of the pillars of Islam—is also the central doctrine at the heart of Salafist ideology, and includes three essential characteristics that Salafists believe Muslims must subscribe to in order to be truly Muslim. First, adherents accept God's creation of and dominion over the universe, a concept expressed in the *shahada* (no god but God).<sup>30</sup> Second, Muslims accept that God is unique in all characteristics, sitting above all creation and existing as the supreme legislator for humanity such that Muslims are compelled to follow Islamic law (*shari'a*) in its entirety. This injunction is derived from the Qur'an:

You do not worship besides Him but only names which you have named (forged)—you and your fathers—for which Allah has sent down no authority. The command (or the judgement) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him (i.e. His Monotheism); that is the (true) straight religion, but most men know not.<sup>31</sup>



As a result, Salafis reject the separation of the institutions of religion from those of the state, and the supremacy of secular laws over divine.<sup>32</sup> It is evident that this interpretation of *tawhid* places Salafists in contradiction with Western democratic norms and other non-Islamic models of governance and, indeed, with Muslim societies that practise those models. In his book *The Bitter Harvest: The Brotherhood in sixty years*, Ayman Zawahiri criticises the Muslim Brotherhood for straying from divine legislative sovereignty and regards anyone who practises democracy as an infidel.<sup>33</sup> Zawahiri quotes Sayyid Qutb, saying:

Sovereignty is the most exclusive prerogative of godhood. Therefore, whoever legislates to a people assumes a divine role among them and exercises its privileges. Men become his slaves, not the slaves of Allah; they accept his religion, not the religion of Allah.... Thus judgement upon this question is settled: he is an infidel whoever does not rule in accordance to what Allah has revealed.<sup>34</sup>

The third element of monotheism, central to all Muslim faith, is the exclusive right of Allah to be worshipped. Again, drawn from the expression of the *shahada*, Islam demands a rejection of polytheism. Where Salafists take this concept further than other Muslims is in forbidding any intercessionary devotion (*tawassuf*), as practised by Sufi Muslims and other sects. For Salafists, there can be no association of others (*shirk*) in the worship of God, and the total rejection of polytheism embraces the idea that every daily act, if undertaken in accordance with the examples in the Qur'an and the *Sunna*—from prayer, to ablution, to eating—is an act of devotion in and of itself.

The slightest deviation from the examples given in the canonical guidance thus becomes an act of spiritual deviation that will return mankind to the period of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), prior to the revelation of the Qur'an. It is easy to see how this rejection of intercession and *shirk* 'tends to elide with the conceptualization of God as the unique sovereign'.<sup>35</sup> It exists as a source of tension between and rejection by Salafists of other Muslim sects who have made accommodations with traditions and customs existing prior to Islam.<sup>36</sup>

### **Bid'a – the Salafist rejection of heretical innovation**

Salafists believe that sources of guidance beyond the limited canon of the Qur'an and *Sunna* lead to heretical accretions or innovations (*bid'a*) that impede adherence to Islam's monotheistic basis. This distinction, drawn from a doctrine shared with other Muslims but stricter in the observance, has the potential to place Salafists and non-Salafists on conflicting trajectories. For Salafists, complete and total rejection of *bid'a* is a key concept that exists in opposition to the other jurisprudential approaches of Sunni Islam which adopt a less restrictive approach to the concept.

Salafists believe that three of the four major Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*madhab*)—Maliki, Shafi' and Hanafi—have strayed unacceptably by incorporating human opinions and reasoning found outside the parameters of the Qur'an and *hadith*.<sup>37</sup> These schools of jurisprudence and their modern adherents are thus deemed to be 'people of opinion' (*ahl al rai'*), who rely on the opinions of scholars to arrive at a consensus (*ijma'*) in interpreting Islamic doctrine in order to determine practical application and whether particular practices are in accordance with the traditions of the Prophet.

The Shafi' *madhab* thus developed an approach to innovation which accommodates consensus into the determination of whether an innovation is acceptable or not. In this conception, 'the principle that any innovation that contradicts the Qu'ran, the tradition, the *ijma'* or the opinions of the Companions is an error. But a good *bid'a* that is not in conflict with any of these sources is praiseworthy'.<sup>38</sup>

The stricter Salafi interpretation of *bid'a* derives in particular from the fourth major Sunni school of jurisprudence, Hanbali. It was refined by the 13<sup>th</sup> century Hanbalist scholar Ibn Taymiyya, and later adopted by the 18<sup>th</sup> century ideologue, Mohammad Ibn Abdel Wahhab, active in the Nejd region of Saudi Arabia. As noted by Al-'Uthaymin:

The Hanbalites are against innovations as a whole, and they maintain that all forms of worship (*ibadat*) that are not recommended by the sources of shari'a are prohibited. To ibn Taymiyya,

the religion of Islam is based on two principles: worship is to be devoted to God alone, and it should be carried out only in accordance with His commandments and the teachings of the Prophet. It was this conservative attitude that was adopted by the Wahhabis. The Shaykh [Wahhab] condemned all forms of innovation, and rejected the views of those who maintained that a *bid'a* could be praiseworthy, basing his rejection on the words of the Prophet [that] 'Every *bid'a* leads people astray'.<sup>39</sup>

Salafism's strict focus on limited canonical guidance in the observance of monotheism thus fully rejects reason, logic and desire in determining how one should live one's life. As Wiktorowicz notes, 'Salafis [seek to] ... eliminate the biases of human subjectivity and self-interest, thereby allowing them to identify the singular truth of God's commands'.<sup>40</sup> This strict approach rejects extraneous influences as un-Islamic. It is a key source of friction between adherents of 'orthodox' forms of Islam and their Salafist critics, reaching its apogee in the anti-democratic polemical writings of Salafi-jihadi ideologues such as Ayman Zawahiri.<sup>41</sup>

Thus we see that while mainstream Muslim scholars and Salafists share an acceptance of the concept of *bid'a*, they differ in views on its application. While the former may accept innovation not explicitly contradicted by canonical sources, the latter seek explicit guidance on the parameters of observance. Mainstream Muslims might otherwise adapt their lives to modernity and globalisation, with varying degrees of success, while Salafists, in their uncompromising application of *bid'a*, seek rejection of and withdrawal from elements that contradict their absolutist interpretation of Islam.

### Part 3: The origins and histor(ies) of the Salafist movement

Salafism should be seen as a contemporary political classification for a traditionalist form of Muslim identity that has manifested itself in similar ways dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Adherents of Salafism consider themselves as true to the original concept of Islam and reject the idea that they are a modern expression of a traditionalist approach. Many adherents reject classification entirely, preferring to be designated 'Muslim'.<sup>42</sup> While being a modern expression, and regardless of the nomenclature, what is currently called Salafism has clear historical antecedents.

#### From the *ahl al hadith* to 'Wahhabism'

The 8<sup>th</sup> century *ahl al-hadith* (people of the traditions of the Prophet) movement can be seen as the first major antecedent to Salafism. This traditionalist, conservative approach to exegesis arose when scholars based in Medina sought to rely solely on the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet in resolving jurisprudential matters, and rejected the earlier rationalist approach to religious legal interpretation. Previously, Islamic science had followed an approach that tolerated practices so long as they did not contradict explicit instructions given in the Qur'an.

These earlier approaches were thus 'the logical methods of the "people of opinion (*ra'y*), analogous derivation (*qiyas*) or independent reasoning (*ijtihad* or *ijtihad ar-ra'y*)".<sup>43</sup> In practice, the rationalist approach could include reference to the accounts of the Companions and rulings of the successors of the Prophet, and precedence from the records of legal discourse that had been collected in the years following the death of Mohammad. These *Musannaf* collections are the first organised form of Islamic scholarship, and contain records of opinionated interpretation of the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet and his successors to arrive at new rulings in the first two centuries of Islam.<sup>44</sup> Brown notes that Prophetic *hadith* formed only a portion of the material in these compilations:

The earliest surviving *musannaf*, Mālik's *Muwatta'*, is thus a mixture of Prophetic hadiths, the rulings of his Companions, the practice of the scholars of Medina, and the opinions of Mālik himself. The version of the *Muwatta'* that became famous in North Africa and Andalusia contains 1,720 reports. Of these, however, only 527 are Prophetic hadiths; 613 are statements of the Companions, 285 are from Successors, and the rest are Mālik's own opinions.<sup>45</sup>

The *ahl al hadith* movement's restriction of authority solely to authenticated *hadith* of the Prophet came at a time of increasing popularity of *hadith* accounts, and thus influenced other schools, after some polemical resistance, to reluctantly adopt a similar approach. This resulted in the generation

of many new *hadith* as scholars sought to adopt a moderated version of the *ahl al-hadith* movement. In doing so, they attributed many old legal principles to the Prophet—a source of the later difficulty in determining the historical veracity of accounts of the Prophet's life.<sup>46</sup>

The influence of the *ahl al-hadith* was that it led to increasing conservatism more generally and, by the 9<sup>th</sup> century, interpretation of the Qur'an and *hadith* in Sunni Islam was reserved only for the four schools.<sup>47</sup> The movement was particularly influential to the Hanbali *madhab*, which was marked by its stricter adoption of the traditionalist approach to interpretation, resulting in lesser reliance on *ijtihad* and a greater reliance on tradition and scholarly consensus. This created a centuries-long debate more widely in Islam over the process of *ijtihad*, which led to some scholars arguing that the 'gates of *ijtihad*' may have been closed (*insidad bab al-ijtihad*) during the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup>

These scholars link this event to the stagnation of intellectual inquiry in the Islamic world, though other academics dispute the idea that *ijtihad* was excluded from mainstream Islamic discourse.<sup>49</sup> While this debate demonstrates that Islam is not immutable, and continues to be contested, the position of Salafists is fixed. The *ahl al-rai'* approach is rejected by modern-day Salafists, who view *ijtihad* as an heretical innovation corrupting the purity of Islam and representing an insidious challenge to the infallibility of the canonical sources.

The *ahl al hadith* trend was later articulated in the work of the Syrian Hanbalist scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) and his students. Although he was a *Sufi* (mystic), Ibn Taymiyya 'shared the Salafi creed' and 'ardently rejected rationalism at a time when rationalism represented Islamic officialdom'.<sup>50</sup> It is Ibn Taymiyya's strict Hanbalist doctrinal approach that all modern day Salafists are influenced by, since it rejects theological accretions that have developed in Islam over centuries, including the 'resort to philosophy, Aristotelian logic, or metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wil*), all of which distort the meanings of the scriptures'.<sup>51</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya is especially influential to Salafi-jihadists through their interpretation of what has come to be known as the 'Mardin *fatwa*'. This *fatwa* issued a ruling on the Mongol invasion of Syria and was significant in that it was a call to wage *jihad* against fellow Muslims. Salafi-jihadists have viewed this as justification for the killing of Muslims in waging *jihad* against infidels. Modern scholars have differing interpretations of this *fatwa*, with some viewing it as a deeply philosophical, personal and hypothetical legal opinion.

This is also contingent on the fact that Ibn Taymiyya was dubious about the Mongol conversion to Islam. As Yahya Michot notes, Ibn Taymiyya begins the *fatwa* with 'a reminder that the lives and possessions of Muslims are forbidden "wherever they may be, in Mardin or anywhere else"'.<sup>52</sup> However, the nature of a *fatwa* is that it is a non-binding legal opinion, open to interpretation. Ibn Taymiyya's Mardin opinion has thus been interpreted consistently by Salafi-jihadists as a positive licence to engage in *jihad* against Muslims, despite its hypothetical and contingent aspects.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Nejd ideologue and proselytiser Mohammad Ibn Abd al Wahhab, under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya, developed an austere approach to Hanbalist ancestralism that was spread in the Nejd and beyond via his political alliance with the House of Saud. This alliance saw the establishment of the first Saudi State in 1744. The alliance with the House of Saud continues in the form of the current (third) Saudi State, established in 1902. The Salafi religious/political balance in Saudi Arabia, placing Salafism at the heart of governance and foreign policy, is well known and the subject of frequent discussion in the popular press.<sup>53</sup>

Examples of the continuing influence of Al Wahhab and his Salafist ideological inheritance can be seen in the current Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullah ash-Shaykh, and in other political and government appointments, including the current Minister of Islamic Affairs, Saleh bin Abdul-Aziz ash-Shaykh.<sup>54</sup> Al Wahhab's influence on the broader development of Salafism is undeniable. Al Wahhab's doctrine is distinguished by monotheism as its fundamental tenet, with Al-'Uthaymin noting that '[a]ny belief or practice that ... [Al Wahhab] thought to be in violation of its principle was strongly denounced as polytheistic, and a person who believed in such practices declared to be an infidel, who should be killed'.<sup>55</sup>

Thus many of the associated characteristics of Al Wahhab's proselytisation flow from the observance of *tawhid* via the avoidance of *bid'a*, including the abjuration of intercession (*tawassul*); the rejection of veneration of graves, graven images and erection of domes; the act of declaring someone who fails to adhere to *tawhid* an apostate (*takfir*); and the response to such apostasy—fighting (*qital*) and *jihad*.<sup>56</sup> Examples of the application and influence of these observances include the destruction of the Jannat al-Baqi burial site in Medina, and the Jannat al-Mualla in Mecca by King Abdulaziz ibn Saud in 1925.<sup>57</sup> Similar acts of destruction have occurred in recent times, including the defacement of the Bamiyan Buddhas in the Hazarajat region of central Afghanistan by the Taliban, and the analogous destruction of antiquities in Syria and Iraq at the hands of Islamic State.

It should be noted that purist Salafists, including especially Saudi adherents, generally reject the term 'Wahhabism' and often consider it offensive since it suggests the idea of a new direction in Islam, contradicting the strict ancestralism that is at the heart of Salafism. For the same reason, Salafists generally do not identify themselves as 'Hanbalist' since this would elevate the authority of a single man over the canonical sources of the Qur'an and *hadith*.<sup>58</sup> Whether Western and Muslim commentators acknowledge this distinction or not, Al Wahhab's proselytisation of a purist ancestralist approach means that the Saudi and Qatari approaches to Islam now exist as examples of the ideology of quiescent or broadly peaceful Salafism. Nonetheless, this expression of quiescent Salafism played a role in the development of Salafi-jihadist ideology in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of its intersection with a new trend in political Islam which arose out of Egypt in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Muslim Brotherhood, the politicisation of Salafism, and the obligation to *jihad***

The Muslim Brotherhood movement and related splinter groups have played a key role in the growing politicisation of Muslim consciousness—especially amongst Salafists—and of the obligation toward a return to piousness and *jihad* in order to counter threats to Islam. Founded by Hasan al-Banna in 1928, it developed as an Islamic revivalist response to the British colonial occupation of Egypt and, in particular, what al-Banna later described as 'the wave of atheism and licentiousness' evident in metropolitan Egyptian society.<sup>59</sup>

Al-Banna was not alone in experiencing an existential crisis at the fate dealt to the Arab Muslim world. As David Cook notes, '[b]y the 1920s the only areas of the Muslim world not directly or indirectly controlled by Europeans were those that no one wanted.... For Muslims, all of this was a major shock'.<sup>60</sup> As will be discussed, al-Banna's prescription to reverse the humiliations enacted upon Islam was to have wide-reaching impact.

Al-Banna advocated the concept of Islam as a complete political system (*nizam al shamil*) and was influenced both by the totalitarian ideology of fascism, 'which was popular in nationalist and anti-British circles' in Egypt, and by the late-19<sup>th</sup> century writings of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida.<sup>61</sup> The two writers re-explored Islamic concepts in an attempt to come to terms with the existential crisis that had gripped Islam as a perceived result of the rise of the West, and advocated study of the *Salaf* as the solution:

Their Salafism, we are told, sought to reconcile Islam with the social, political, and intellectual ideals of the Enlightenment.... [They] strove to rearticulate their religion in terms that were more relevant to contemporary realities and more intelligible and appealing to the rational minds of the educated elite. They saw the pious ancestors (*al-salaf al-salih*) as paragons of ingenuity and adaptability whose example would allow modern Muslims to emancipate themselves from the shackles of tradition and join the march of civilizational progress.<sup>62</sup>

'Abduh and Rida's vision of a return to early Islamic ingenuity as a means to help Muslims adapt to modernity, and their apologetic reframing of *jihad* as defensive, was thus antithetical to the Salafism that had come before and that was to develop in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, their work stimulated an intellectual line that al-Banna and those who followed him were to take in a different direction. In his writing, and more akin to fascist ideologues than the rational innovation and reform championed by 'Abduh and Rida, al-Banna sought to address the weakness in Egyptian

society by seeking to encourage Muslims to take their identity as part of a Muslim community (*ummah*) seriously through a return to conservative Islamic values.

Al-Banna's politicisation of Muslim historical identity had a significant influence on the later development of militant Islam by his followers and those they came to influence. This was illustrated in the change in awareness of the obligation towards *jihad* embodied in the motto adopted by the Muslim Brotherhood, 'Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our constitution. Jihad is our way. Martyrdom is our highest hope'.<sup>63</sup>

Al-Banna's aim was to ensure Muslims engaged in *jihad* for the right reasons and he was, as David Cook observes, 'concerned that Muslims are losing their desire for the next world because of their fear of death (a common theme among popular medieval Muslim preachers) and their interest in the good life of the modern world'.<sup>64</sup> This is a theme that was to have significance in the later transformation of political Salafism into Salafi-jihadism, discussed in more detail below. Cook notes that al-Banna framed the concept of *jihad* in a defensive sense:

God obligated the Muslims with jihad not as a means of aggression nor as a vehicle for their personal desires, but in order to protect the proclamation [of Islam], as a surety for peace, and as a means to fulfill the great mission whose burden has been taken up by the Muslims, which is the mission to guide people to truth and justice. Islam, just as fighting was made obligatory, celebrates peace, as 'and if they incline to peace, incline to it too, and put your trust in Allah' (Qur'an 8:61).<sup>65</sup>

This suggests that al-Banna placed a lesser emphasis on *jihad* as an offensive tool to spread Islam. This view might be challenged by al-Banna's obligatory framing and by the Qur'anic citation which, read in the light of the 'mission to guide people to truth and justice', implies a broad and heavily contingent and entirely subjective basis for peacemaking. The ambiguity here allows for some intellectual agility—a characteristic that has come to typify Islamist polemical messaging.

At the same time as he was revitalising religious obligations, al-Banna sought to head off any inconvenient parallels between his vision and the targets of his enmity. As Cook notes, writing about the apologetics of both al-Banna and the Indo-Pakistani ideologue Abu Al-'Ala al-Mawdudi, the two applied the newly-popular apologetics to the conception of *jihad* in an attempt to motivate followers by framing Islam as a liberating rather than expansionist phenomenon:

They try to de-emphasize (for the first time in Muslim history) the character of the early Muslim conquests, presenting them as a 'liberation' of oppressed peoples instead of an imperialistic venture. Undoubtedly this tone was a response to Christian missionary polemic, as well as the uncomfortable realization that the early Muslim conquests were easily comparable to the contemporary European imperialist and colonialist ventures.<sup>66</sup>

The aim for al-Banna was to influence and re-invigorate the conception of Islamic tradition, values and identity. Al-Banna recast Muslims as victims who must become steadfast in their religion in order to counter the incursion of unbelief that had degraded Islam's rightful dominance.

This argument had a significant attraction to disaffected Muslims in Egypt but also created concern amongst the ruling elites. Following al-Banna's assassination in 1949, the Egyptian authorities began a crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood movement, including the imprisonment of leaders who had initially cooperated with Jamal 'Abd al-Nasser but then were accused of attempting his assassination. The movement was also seen as a threat in Syria and other Arab nations, resulting in a diaspora in the 1950s and 1960s of disaffected and highly-politicised individuals who 'flocked to teaching and preaching jobs in Saudi Arabia and burrowed deep into its curricula and its intellectual life'.<sup>67</sup>

This diaspora was to result in the politicisation of Salafism in Saudi Arabia, and the concomitant emergence of Salafi-jihadism. However, while al-Banna's politicisation of Islam has had an enduring effect on politics in the Muslim world, it is the work of the Brotherhood's leading ideologue, Sayyid Qutb (1916-66), that had the more significant effect on the radicalisation of Sunni Islam and the trend toward Salafi-jihadism.

Qutb advocated a complete return to Islam's central tenets as a means to reverse the humiliation visited upon Muslims as a result of colonialism and the corrupting influence of Western licentiousness. This world view was heavily influenced by Qutb's experiences living in the US for two years from 1949, where he was confronted and offended by capitalism and early 1950s' Western liberalism. On his return to Egypt, he quickly assumed the mantle of the Muslim Brotherhood's chief ideologue and was active in efforts to Islamically reform Egyptian society.

It is believed that the Muslim Brotherhood played a role in the 1952 military coup and 'that Anwar Sadat, and possibly Gamal Abdul Nasser himself' had been members of the Muslim Brotherhood's 'Special Apparatus'. Qutb himself was offered a role in the Nasser government but this was rejected because the Brotherhood could not give legitimacy to a government that refused to implement *Shari'a* law.<sup>68</sup> Following a failed assassination attempt on Nasser in 1954, undertaken by a young member of the Brotherhood, Nasser saw a means to remove the influence of this competing organisation and so Qutb and other members were imprisoned and underwent hard labour and torture at the hands of the regime. As Cook notes, '[t]his experience was the anvil on which radical Islam in Egypt was forged'.<sup>69</sup>

While in prison, where he spent many years until he was executed in 1966, Qutb wrote several influential texts, outlining his concept of the world and the need for a return to pure Islamic values analogous to the early years of the religion, which have subsequently been influential in the modern development of militant *jihad*. In his writings, Qutb argued that the world existed in one of two states: the period of pre-Islamic ignorance known to all Muslims as *al-jahiliyya*, or a true Islamic existence under the sovereignty of Allah, excluding all other modes of belief and governance. As argued by Qutb, it could be:

Either Islam or *jahiliyya*. There is no intermediate state half-Islam and half-*jahiliyya* that Islam can accept. Islam clearly indicates that the truth is one, not multiple, that everything that is not truth is perdition, and that the two cannot be mixed. Either God's government or *jahiliyya* government. Either God's *Shari'a* or human caprice [*hawa*].<sup>70</sup>

This passage is significant in that Qutb's framing is a classic expression of the concept of monotheism which, as shown previously, is the central tenet of Salafism and one of the five pillars of Islam more broadly. Furthermore, Qutb's monotheistic position and its binary expression create an argument for the controversial Islamic concept of *takfir*, or the declaration of religious infidelity. It is striking to note the similarity in Qutb's position with that of Ibn Taymiyya, whose *fatwa* on the ruling Mongols (discussed earlier) has also provided Salafi-jihadists with an influential justification for *takfir* (and thus *jihad*) against modern Muslim rulers.

Despite the fact that the Mongols were publicly converts to Islam, Ibn Taymiyya had made a hypothetical case for rebellion where the exercise of governance was un-Islamic—although he advocated the view that 'life under a tyrannical ruler was better than civil strife'.<sup>71</sup> Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab followed this precedent, believing that 'obedience to rulers is obligatory, even if they are oppressive or sinful ... and their commands should be followed as long as they do not contradict the rules of religion'.<sup>72</sup> Qutb's Islamic revivalism can also be seen as a re-expression of this early ruling: according to his argument, any Muslim who subscribes to any system of governance other than that exemplified by the 'unique Qur'anic generations' (in other words Muhammad and his early followers) is an apostate and therefore an enemy of the Islamic project.

Thus, from his understanding of the comprehensive, comprehensible and rational basis of Islamic doctrine, Qutb outlines a concept of *jihad* that rejects the apologetic elements evident in al-Banna's ahistorical conception. Islam exists as a social and political system that places realistic demands on its congregation. Its jurisprudential system flows from the basis of Qur'anic exegesis to define the clear conditions, stages and authorities required to engage in and escalate the various forms of *jihad*, such that 'there is a logical progression from peaceful proclamation, to warfare on a limited scale, to revenge for wrongs done to the Muslims, to the final stage of unlimited warfare'.<sup>73</sup>

Qutb's unequivocal advocacy of offensive *jihad* in the pursuit of Islam means that he 'clearly arrogates the right to interfere anywhere in the world in which Muslims are not allowed to proclaim Islam freely', arguing that:

It is the right of Islam to move first, because Islam is not the belief of a [single] group, nor the system of a state, but the way of life of God and a system for the world. *Thus it has the right to move to destroy impediments, whether systems or circumstances, that rob the person of the freedom to choose.* It does not attack individuals in order to compel them to embrace its creed, but it attacks systems and circumstances in order to liberate the individuals from false influences that corrupt the innate nature [of man] and prevent freedom of choice.<sup>74</sup>

Qutb's conception of *jihad* in the restoration of Islamic glory is a licence to engage in war on the basis of any perceived impediment, whether to Muslim practice or Muslim dominance. In practice, however, the revolutionary *jihad* that occurred in the period between the publication of Qutb's ideas and the Russian occupation of Afghanistan had the characteristic of local, internalised conflict or terrorism in places like Egypt and Palestine. It was the later work of another Muslim Brotherhood member that was to draw together influences including Qutb, Ibn Taymiyya and canonical sources that became the touch-paper for the strategic threat of internationalised Sunni terrorism.

### The emergence of the Salafist-jihadis

Sayyid Qutb's writings and death had a powerful impact on the intellectual and political development of a Salafist scholar who was to play the key role in the transition of political Salafism into global Salafi-jihadism. Abdallah Azzam (1941-89) was a Jordanian-Palestinian scholar who had engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Israelis in the late 1960s, and was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Azzam studied twice at Al Azhar University in Cairo, obtaining a masters degree (1969) and a doctorate (1971-73) in Islamic law.

During these periods, Azzam immersed himself in Islamic activist society in Egypt, developing close connections with Sayyid Qutb's family. From 1973 to 1980, Azzam worked briefly in the Jordanian Ministry of Religious Endowments, before entering academia where his classes became increasingly politicised and critical of the government. This raised his profile amongst Islamists but brought him to the attention of the security services. Realising that his position in Jordan was untenable, he moved to a position at the King Abdul Ibn Saud University in Saudi Arabia.<sup>75</sup>

This transition coincided with the Russian occupation of Afghanistan (1979-89), an event that was to transform contemporary Muslim consciousness regarding the obligation to *jihad*. The Muslim Brotherhood played the initial role in mobilising young Saudi men to assist the Afghan *jihad* against the Russians, and it was the intersection between the Brotherhood's activism and Azzam's Islamic legal credentials that accelerated the flow from a trickle in the years before 1984 to a significant contribution to the Afghan campaign in 1989.

In 1981, Azzam had a chance meeting with the brother-in-law of Sayyid Qutb, Kamal al-Sananiri, who was engaged on a mission to explore greater Muslim Brotherhood involvement in the Afghan campaign. On transit in Jeddah to conduct pilgrimage, al-Sananiri met with Azzam and convinced him to travel to Islamabad to assist with this mission. In Islamabad, Azzam established the Services Bureau (*makhtab al-khidmāt* or MAK) to facilitate the flow of Arab jihadists to Afghanistan. It was '[t]hrough MAK ... [that a network of] fighters was built that included Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri ... [which] would later serve as the basis of what has become known as al-Qa'ida'.<sup>76</sup>

Over the next few years, Azzam engaged in teaching and activism in support of the *jihad* and wrote several articles and books that were both controversial and pivotal to the transition to a globalised form of *jihad*. In 1984, Azzam issued a *fatwa* in his book *The Defence of Muslim Territories*, arguing on a doctrinal basis that the *jihad* in Afghanistan was an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) that applied to all Muslims. At the time of the Afghan campaign, mainstream scholarly consensus was that the Afghan *jihad* was an obligation for Afghans only, and Islamic extremist legal consensus also was focused on localised revolutionary activity.

As Thomas Hegghammer notes in his history of *jihad* in Saudi Arabia, Azzam's *fatwa* 'essentially advocated universal private military participation in any territorial struggle pitting Muslims against non-Muslims.... As such Azzam's classical jihadist doctrine represented no less than a paradigmatic shift in the history of radical Islamist thought'.<sup>77</sup> To understand how this

'paradigmatic shift' came about, it is insightful to analyse the text of *The Defence of Muslim Territories*.

In Azzam's *fatwa*, there is a synthesis of the Islamic influences and doctrine discussed previously. This incorporates numerous references from the Qur'an and Prophetic *hadith*, references to Ibn Taymiyya and later Salafist scholars, such as the 20<sup>th</sup> century Albanian Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani (1914-99), and appeals to Islamic history and identity.<sup>78</sup> Using these juristic tools, Azzam points to the early glorious conquests of Islam, linking them to the singular and exemplary nature of Muhammad and his monotheistic mission, and setting up the possibility of a reversal of the humiliation Muslims had suffered at the hands of infidels, asserting that:

The Prophet said, in an authentic hadith reported by Ahmad and Tabarani: 'I was sent before Judgement Day, so that God alone would be worshipped, with no associates. He placed my livelihood in the shadow of my spear and promised humiliation to those who oppose me'.<sup>79</sup>

Azzam calls Muslims to heroism through a rejection of the restraints imposed by their trivial secular fears. In doing so, he echoes the call articulated by al-Banna and Qutb, discussed earlier, which is linked to a rejection of influences that have corrupted Islam. This is advocacy for a return to the obligation of *jihad* which, through the citation of canonical sources, has become the standard cliché echoed by modern-day jihadists that '[w]e love death more than you love life'.<sup>80</sup> Azzam explains that:

One of the most important obligations and the main duties forgotten is jihad, which has disappeared from the lives of Muslims. This is how they came to resemble detritus borne by the flood.... They said: 'What is weakness, O messenger of God?'. 'Your love of life', he replied, 'and your hatred of war'.<sup>81</sup>

Building on the cultural shame of cowardice that is written into Islamic canon, Azzam sets a rhetorical example that has been followed by Salafi-jihadi ideologues. By citing Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwas* on *jihad*, Azzam draws a link between a failure to fight and the loss of honour, of rewards in the present and penalties in the hereafter, noting that Ibn Taymiyya said:

Since the wealth of human beings in their life on earth and their religion depends on courage and generosity, God has shown (may he be exalted!) that he who turns away from jihad of the self will be replaced by someone else. Unless you go forth, He will punish you with grievous penalty, and put others in your place.<sup>82</sup>

The duty to fight for Muslim territory, even for distant Muslims, is developed logically by Azzam, flowing from local circumstances, linked to individual obligations, into a global call to arms:

As we have seen, it is clear that if a stretch of Muslim territory is attacked, jihad is an individual duty for those who inhabit that territory and those who are neighbours. If there are too few of them, or if they are incapable or reticent, then this duty is incumbent upon those who are nearby, and so on until it spreads throughout the world.<sup>83</sup>

In this *fatwa*, Azzam defines the failure of Muslims to heed the call of *jihad* as a sin, 'graver than the sin committed by former generations who allowed former Muslim territories to fall', reasoning that 'sin increases according to power, possibilities, and capabilities; so the *ulema*, leaders, and preachers who are eminent members of their societies are then considered greater sinners than the masses and the people'.<sup>84</sup> Muslims, and especially powerful Muslims in the modern age, have the capability to act—to neglect *jihad* in these circumstances becomes the basis of their apostasy.

It is a classically-constructed *fatwa* with a compelling argument built upon theological exegesis, linked to present-day realities. This is unsurprising considering Azzam's credentials and career in Islamic law. Azzam's intellectual lineage in constructing this ruling draws a straight line back through history from Sayyid Qutb, Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood, through Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab's framing of monotheism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, via the Hanbalist interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, to its origins in the traditionalist school of the *ahl al-hadith* in 8<sup>th</sup> century Arabia.



Azzam's *fatwa* remains persuasive to many Muslims because of its lucid and logical reasoning, its supporting evidences from the canonical sources, including authenticated *hadith*, and its appeal as a strong corrective to the perceived historical humiliation suffered by Muslims at the hands of the infidels. Steeped in authentic Islamic exegesis, it marks the transition point between localised *jihad* and legitimised international *jihad*. Abdallah Azzam's contribution provides the credentialed scholarship that links the political call for *jihad* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century back to its Islamic basis—and it stands as a refutation to the ahistorical assertion that Salafi-jihadism has nothing to do with Islam.

## Conclusion: Strategic value in proving the link between Islam and Salafi-jihadism

A key principle in policy formulation is to strip away impediments to honest discourse. As one scholar of comparative religion has noted, '[i]t is one thing to create a set of noble lies to correct prejudices; however, it is something entirely different to distort the manifold and diverse local traditions that have both synchronically and diachronically gone by the generic term "Islam"'.<sup>85</sup> Attempts to uncouple Salafi-jihadism from Islam are not only intellectually dishonest, they have consequences strategically. The more obvious issue is that a failure to identify the problem impedes an ability to address it.

In studying its lineage, it is clear that Salafi-jihadism has a deep Islamic heritage. Salafi-jihadism echoes the ancestralist and conservative approach adopted by the 8<sup>th</sup> century *ahl al-hadith* movement and which was mirrored by the four major *madhahibs* (schools) to a greater or lesser degree, along a spectrum of interpretation. Thus, while it is true to say that Salafists and Salafi-jihadists adopt increasingly strict approaches to Sunni Islam, the converse is true. The forms of Sunni Islam that exist on the spectrum alongside Salafism adopt a relatively less strict approach drawn from the same core theology. Like Salafists, all Sunni Muslims strive to live in a manner faithful to Islam's monotheistic precepts, viewed through the example of the Prophet Mohammad.

It is self-evident that understanding the legitimate jurisprudential sources of Salafi-jihadism is central to the shaping of counter-ideological strategies both politically, and in policing and counter-terrorism. Additionally, a failure to acknowledge the Islamic legitimacy of this ideology has the potential to further frustrate Muslims seeking to give expression to their political concerns. The issue here lies in the complementary attempts by Western political elites to favour the legitimisation of progressive expressions of Islam over traditional forms. This is done by politicians in well-intentioned efforts to calm community tensions and to favour behaviours and traditions that are considered more likely to be assimilated or tolerated. Such characterisation is also championed by Muslim apologists seeking to distance their religion from the excesses of competing sects and to privilege themselves over rival groupings.

Islam is and has always been contested. This is illustrated by the influence of the *ahl al-hadith* movement, the controversy over *ijtihad*, and the development of Sunni Islam. It is illustrated by the ownership claims made by Salafists and progressive Muslims alike, springing as they do from similar justifications. Even in these attempts to exclude Salafism from Islam, we see a shared genealogy, as Muslims seeking to derive Western liberal concepts from the same canonical sources make 'the pretty standard claim of progressive Muslims more generally, namely, that there was a pristine and egalitarian message preached by Muhammad that was somehow corrupted by later generations'.<sup>86</sup> This is again an expression of an ancestralist ideal, no different from the conceptual starting point of peaceful Salafism, and from which Salafi-jihadist ideology also derives its legitimacy.

This does not mean that politicians should not champion progressive, Western liberal interpretations of Islam. Rather, they should do so in a manner that is fully informed. They should do so knowing that they are advocating reform, not orthodoxy. Policies that advocate for a revisionist, subjective view of history will always lack credibility—especially regarding the history of a religion of which the authors have no membership or apparent knowledge. Policy, if it is to have any chance of success, must be informed by reality. The unfortunate reality now faced by Western political strategists is that Salafi-jihadism has a great deal more to do with Islam than they had previously claimed.

## Notes

- 1 See Quintan Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 29, 2006, pp. 207-39; also Joas Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi: The ideology and influence of Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 2012.
- 2 National Geographic, 'Inside the world of Egypt's Salafist Muslims', *National Geographic* [website], 25 November 2015, available at <<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/11/151124-salafists-muslims-egypt-photography0/>> accessed 12 July 2016. The unattributed author of this piece, an interview with a photographer who lived among purist Egyptian Salafists, draws this figure from an Institute for National Strategic Studies paper published in 2009, noting that more recent figures are unavailable.
- 3 See, for example, Baladas Ghoshal, 'Arabization: the changing face of Islam in Asia', *India Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 2010, p. 88, asserting that '[t]here is also an urgent need for moderates to break their deafening silence against the tyranny of the small minority who are bringing shame and bad name to the religion and shed their inertia and fear of being branded as "not good Muslims" by their perverted radical minority'.
- 4 Karen Yourish, Derek Watkins, Tim Giratikanon and Jasmine C. Lee, 'How many people have been killed by ISIS attacks around the world?', *New York Times* [website], 1 July 2016, available at <<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/03/25/world/map-isis-attacks-around-the-world.html? r=1>> accessed 3 July 2016
- 5 The full list from the search is as follows: 313 Brigade; Abu Sayyaf Group; Al Jama'a Al-Islamiya; Al Murabitoun; Al Qaeda; Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent; Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb; Al Qaeda Kurdish Battalions; Al Shabaab; Boko Haram; Haqqani Network; Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen; Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan; Islamic State; Jabhat al-Nusra; Jaish-e-Mohammad; Jemaah Islamiyah; Lashkar-e-Jhangvi; Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al Alami; Lashkar-e-Taiba; Lashkar-e-Zil; Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group; Mujahideen Army; Tehreek-e-Taliban; and The Taliban: Stanford University, 'Stanford University's Mapping Militant Organizations Project', *Stanford University* [website], available at <<http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/>> accessed 10 July 2016.
- 6 The full list from the search is as follows: Abu Sayyaf Group; Al Qaeda (core); Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb; Ansar al-Islam; Ansar al-Shariah (Tunisia); Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters; Boko Haram; Caucasus Emirate; Free Syrian Army; Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan; Islamic State - Sinai Province; Jabhat al-Nusra; Jemaah; Anshorut Tauhid; Jemaah Islamiyah; Jund al-Khilafah; Jundullah; Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan; The Islamic Front; The Islamic State; and The Taliban: see Stanford University, 'Stanford University's Mapping Militant Organizations Project'. Note that Hizbollah is included as a militant rival of ISIS, as is the Free Syrian Army.
- 7 Al Jazeera, 'UN: ISIL committing genocide against the Yazidis', *Al Jazeera* [website], 17 June 2016, available at <<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/isil-committing-genocide-yazidis-160616112202399.html>> accessed 13 July 2016.
- 8 See, for example, Andrew Zammit, 'Australian foreign fighters: risks and responses', *Lowy Institute* [website], April 2015, p. 4, available at <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/australian-foreign-fighters-risks-and-responses.pdf>> accessed 13 July 2016.
- 9 See, for example, Middle East Media Research Institute video, 'ISIS spokesman calls on Muslims in the West to kill Americans, Europeans, Australians, Canadians', 23 September 2014, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGxPYTcBOnI>> accessed 13 July 2016; also Paul Maley, 'Neil Prakash, ISIS terrorist, "tried to crowd source my murder"', *The Australian* [website], 12 March 2016, available at <<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/neil-prakash-isis-terrorist-tried-to-crowdsource-my-murder/news-story/1a2a4e4452769fd0dbf3801116e41234>> accessed 13 July 2016.
- 10 See, for example: Ashley Killough, 'Strong reaction to Obama statement, "ISIL is not Islamic"', *CNN* [website], 11 September 2014, available at <<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/09/10/politics/obama-isil-not-islamic/>> accessed 13 July 2016; also Geoff Dyer, 'ISIS is not about Islam, says Obama', *Financial Times* [website], 19 February 2015, available at <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d2977822-b85c-11e4-b6a5-00144feab7de.html#axzz4EFWwD0Yv>> accessed 13 July 2016; and Lauren Markoe, 'Muslim scholars release open letter to Islamic State meticulously blasting its ideology', *Huffington Post* [website], 24 September 2014, available at <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state\\_n\\_5878038.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/24/muslim-scholars-islamic-state_n_5878038.html)> accessed 16 July 2016.

- 11 Irfan Khawaja, 'Essentialism, consistency and Islam: a critique of Edward Said's orientalism', *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 4. October 2007, pp. 689-713; Herbert S. Lewis, 'The influence of Edward Said and orientalism on anthropology, or can the anthropologist speak?', *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 4, October 2007, pp. 774-85; and Aaron W. Hughes, 'Prisoners of Said', in Aaron W. Hughes (ed.), *Islam and the Tyranny of Authenticity: An inquiry into disciplinary apologetics and self-deception*, Equinox: Sheffield, 2015, pp. 37-55.
- 12 David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, University of California Press: Berkeley, 2005, p. 38.
- 13 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 43.
- 14 Adam Walker, 'You only need to read these passages from the Koran to realise that there's nothing "Islamic" about the Islamic State', *The Independent* [website], 20 February 2015, available at <<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/you-only-need-to-read-these-passages-from-the-koran-to-realise-that-theres-nothing-islamic-about-the-10056772.html>> accessed 16 July 2016.
- 15 There are countless examples available in the news media. The following, by an Australian Muslim academic, is representative of a more measured call for honesty in the public debate: Milad Milani, 'Islam, actually: telling the truth about religion and violence in the wake of the Sydney siege', *ABC* [website], 29 December 2014, available at <<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2014/12/29/4155401.htm>> accessed 16 July 2016.
- 16 Muhammad Muhsin-Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, Darussalam: Riyadh, 2011, p. 757.
- 17 While Muslims believe there is only one Qur'an, published variations differ and discoveries of aberrant fragments—including the Sanaa manuscript, a palimpsest showing textual variation—suggest the Qur'an developed over time: see, for example, Toby Lester, 'What is the Koran?', *Atlantic Monthly* [website], January 1999, available at <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/01/what-is-the-koran/304024/>> accessed 10 July 2016.
- 18 Aaron W. Hughes, *Theorizing Islam*, Acumen: Durham, 2012, p. 15.
- 19 Muhsin-Khan and Al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, p. 750.
- 20 The *shahada*, as per Al-Bukhari, reads 'Narrated Ibn 'Umar: Allah's messenger said: "Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that *La ilaha ill-Allah wa anna Muhammad-ar-Rasul Allah* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah). 2. *Iqamat-as-Salat* [to offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly]. 3. To pay *Zakat* (i.e. obligatory charity). 4. To perform *Haji* (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca) 5. To observe *Saum* [fasts (according to Islamic teachings)] during the month of Ramadan": The Book of Faith, entry 1, as interpreted by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Darussalam: Riyadh, 1994, p. 59.
- 21 *Hadith* derives from the root verb ha-da-tha, literally 'a thing done'. The *hadith* are thus the record of the Prophet Mohammad's actions and utterances, his implied or explicit approvals and disapprovals.
- 22 See, for example, 'He [the Salafist] adheres to the Prophet's, peace be upon him, way in his life and the way of his Companions after him. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "I am leaving you two things and you will never go astray as long as you cling to them—they are the Book of Allah and my Sunnah": quoted by Al-Haakim-Sahih, 'The principles of Salafiyah', *salafipublications.com* [website], <<http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=SLF02&articleID=SLF020001&pfriend>> accessed 5 July 2016. Writing for *Huffington Post*, and in contrast to Salafism, an imam from Duke University interprets the same *hadith* in support of modern liberal values: see Abdullah Antepli, 'The last sermon of the Prophet Muhammad', *Huffington Post* [website], 4 April 2012, available at <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-abdullah-antepli/the-last-sermon-of-prophe\\_b\\_1252185.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/imam-abdullah-antepli/the-last-sermon-of-prophe_b_1252185.html)> accessed 05 July 2016.
- 23 Quoted in Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's legacy in the medieval and modern world*, Oneworld: Oxford, 2009, p. 7.
- 24 Shia Islam interprets the injunctions in the Qur'an via four major *hadith* collections: see, for example, Brown, *Hadith*, p. 131. However, this paper focuses on the strategic threat of Salafism, a Sunni movement. See also Khan, *Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p. 18
- 25 Brown, *Hadith*, p. 3.
- 26 Brown, *Hadith*, pp. 1-3.
- 27 Portal of the General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta', 'Fatwas of Ibn Baz: 126 - Ruling on letting the beard grow and Hadith-ul-Ahad', *General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Ifta'*

- [website], available at  
 <<http://www.alifta.net/Fatawa/fatawaDetails.aspx?language=en&View=Page&PageID=5021&PageNo=1&BookID=14>> accessed 3 July 2016.
- 28 Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', p. 209; also Sunan Ibn Majah, '36 – Tribulations: (17) Chapter, The division of nations', *sunnah.com* [website], available at  
 <<http://sunnah.com/ibnmajah/36/68>> accessed 10 July 2016.
- 29 *Islam Question and Answer* [website], available at <<https://islamqa.info/en/90112>> accessed 10 July 2016.
- 30 Khan, *Summarized Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p. 59.
- 31 Muhsin-Khan and Al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, pp. 426-7.
- 32 Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', p. 209
- 33 Ayman al-Zawahiri, *The Bitter Harvest: The Muslim Brotherhood in sixty years*, translated by Nadia Masid, Cairo: 1991.
- 34 Raymond Ibrahim (ed.), *The Al Qaeda Reader*, Doubleday: New York, 2007, p. 128. The passage Zawahiri quotes is from Qutb's *In the Shade of the Koran*.
- 35 Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', p. 209
- 36 Baladas Ghoshal, 'Arabization: the changing face of Islam in Asia', *India Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1, 2010, p. 72.
- 37 Hassan Mneimneh, 'The spring of a new political Salafism?', *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, Vol. 12, 2011, p. 28.
- 38 'Abd Allah Salih Al-'Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab: The man and his works*, I.B.Taurus: London, 2009, p. 136.
- 39 Al-'Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab*, p. 137
- 40 Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', p. 207
- 41 See, for example, Ibrahim, *The Al Qaeda Reader*, pp. 130-6.
- 42 'Believing that labelling believers in different ways only leads to unwelcome divisions within Islam, some Muslims I call Salafis have argued that they should really be seen as followers of *al-salaf al-salih*, the *ahl-al-Sunna wa-l-jamā'a* (the people of the Sunna and the community) or simply as Muslims': Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, p. 7. As Wagemaker notes, this all boils down to the same thing—emulation of the earliest Muslim community (*al-salaf al-salih*), leaving Salafism as an accurate term for scholarly analysis of this movement and the one adopted in this paper.
- 43 Hans Küng, *Islam: Past, Present & Future*, Oneworld: Oxford, 2009. p. 265
- 44 *Musanna* literally means 'classification'. The collections were to become characterised by their thematic drawing together of various elements: legal discourse, prophetic *hadith*, rulings of companions and so on.
- 45 Brown, *Hadith*, p. 25.
- 46 Küng, *Islam*, pp. 265-7
- 47 Brown, *Hadith*, p. 25.
- 48 Harold Rhode, 'Can Muslims reopen the gates of Ijtihad?', *Gatestone Institute* [website], 5 June 2012, available at <<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3114/muslims-ijtihad>> accessed 17 July 2016.
- 49 Wael B. Hallaq, 'Was the gate of Ijtihad closed?', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 1984, pp. 3-41.
- 50 Wiktorowitz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi movement', p. 211.
- 51 Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism – Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, Columbia University Press: New York, 2016, p. 7.
- 52 Yahya Michot, *Ibn Taymiyya: Muslims under non-Muslim rule*, Interface Publications: London, 2006, p. 27.
- 53 Article 45 of the Saudi constitution sets the Qur'an and the *Sunna* as the basis for legal rulings; Article 48 sets the same basis for court rulings, and the implementation by the courts of laws not in conflict with the Qur'an and *Sunna*: University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, 'Basic Law of

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- Governance – the constitution of Saudi Arabia, *University of Minnesota Human Rights Library* [website], available at <<http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/saudi-arabia/saudi-constitution.html>> accessed 6 July 2016; see also Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*, Penguin: London, 2004.
- 54 The full tribal designator ‘Al ash-Shaykh’ indicates the person is a member of the ‘clan of the shaykh’, a reference to Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab. Along with other tribes who form lesser known alliances with various elements of the Al Saud, the it is very common, up to the present day, to encounter members of the Al ash-Shaykh in senior positions in a range of ministries, not merely those with religious responsibilities: see, for example, Ben Hubbard, ‘A Saudi morals enforcer called for a more liberal Islam. Then the death threats began’, *The New York Times* [website], 10 July 2016, available at <[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/11/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam-wahhabism-religious-police.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/11/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam-wahhabism-religious-police.html?_r=0)> accessed 17 July 2016.
- 55 Al-Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab*, p. 114.
- 56 Al-Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab*, pp. 121-47.
- 57 ‘History of the Cemetery of Jannat al-Baqi’, *al-islam.org* [website], available at <<https://www.al-islam.org/history-shrines/history-cemetery-jannat-al-baqi>> accessed 17 July 2016.
- 58 Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism – Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, p. 7.
- 59 Ana Belen Soage and Jorge Fuentelsaz Franganillo, ‘The Muslim Brothers in Egypt’, in Barry Rubin (ed.), *The Muslim Brotherhood: The organization and policies of a global Islamist movement*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2010, p. 39.
- 60 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 93.
- 61 Soage and Franganillo, ‘The Muslim Brothers in Egypt’, p. 40.
- 62 Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism – Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century*, p. 5.
- 63 Ghaffar Hussain, *A Brief History of Islamism*, Quilliam: London, 2010, p. 2, available at <<http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/brief-history-of-islamism.pdf>> accessed 10 July 2016.
- 64 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 98.
- 65 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 98.
- 66 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 102.
- 67 Thomas W. Lippman, *Saudi Arabia on the Edge*, Potomac Books: Dulles, 2012, p. 180.
- 68 Soage and Franganillo, ‘The Muslim Brothers in Egypt’, p. 41.
- 69 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 102.
- 70 Sayyid Qutb’s *Milestones*, cited in Soage and Franganillo, ‘The Muslim Brothers in Egypt’, p. 42.
- 71 Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, p. 60.
- 72 Al-Uthaymin, *Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab*, p. 144.
- 73 Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, pp. 103-4.
- 74 Sayyid Qutb in Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, p. 105. This is Cook’s translation of a passage from *Milestones*. Note that the freedom to choose here [emphasis mine] is not the Western concept of freewill but a Muslim idea of predestination. People liberated from the impediments of *jahiliyya* will naturally ‘choose’ to submit to Islam.
- 75 Thomas Hegghammer, ‘Abdallah Azzam, the Imam of Jihad’, in Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli (eds.), *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, Belknap Harvard: London 2008, pp. 81-9. Regarding Azzam’s relationship with Qutb’s family, Hegghammer reveals that Azzam’s interest in Qutb predates Qutb’s execution, saying that ‘[w]hile he was in Cairo, Azzam also attracted the attention of the Egyptian security forces, in part because of his relations with Egyptian Islamists and in part because the authorities were investigating him as the possible author of an anonymous telegram sent from Palestine to the Egyptian government in 1966 deploring the execution of Sayyid Qutb. They were right: Azzam had sent such a telegram but the Egyptian authorities were unable to prove it, and he was never detained in Egypt’.
- 76 Wagemakers, *A Quietist Jihadi*, pp. 14-5.
- 77 Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia – Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979*, Cambridge University Press: New York, 2010, pp. 39-42.

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- 78 The latter including Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Husayn al-Bayhaqi (d. 994), Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (d. 889), Abu al-Qasim Tabarani (d. 971) and Ahmad (Ahmad ibn Hanbal), among others.
- 79 Kepel and Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, p. 103.
- 80 See, for example, BBC News, 'Islamic State "We love death as you love life"', 23 May 2015, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlfagPS6490>> accessed 12 July 2016.
- 81 Kepel and Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, pp. 105-6.
- 82 Kepel and Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, p. 104.
- 83 Kepel and Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, pp. 106-7.
- 84 Kepel and Milelli, *Al Qaeda in its Own Words*, p. 107.
- 85 Hughes, *Islam and the Tyranny of Authenticity*, p. 3.
- 86 Hughes, *Islam and the Tyranny of Authenticity*, p. 65.



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