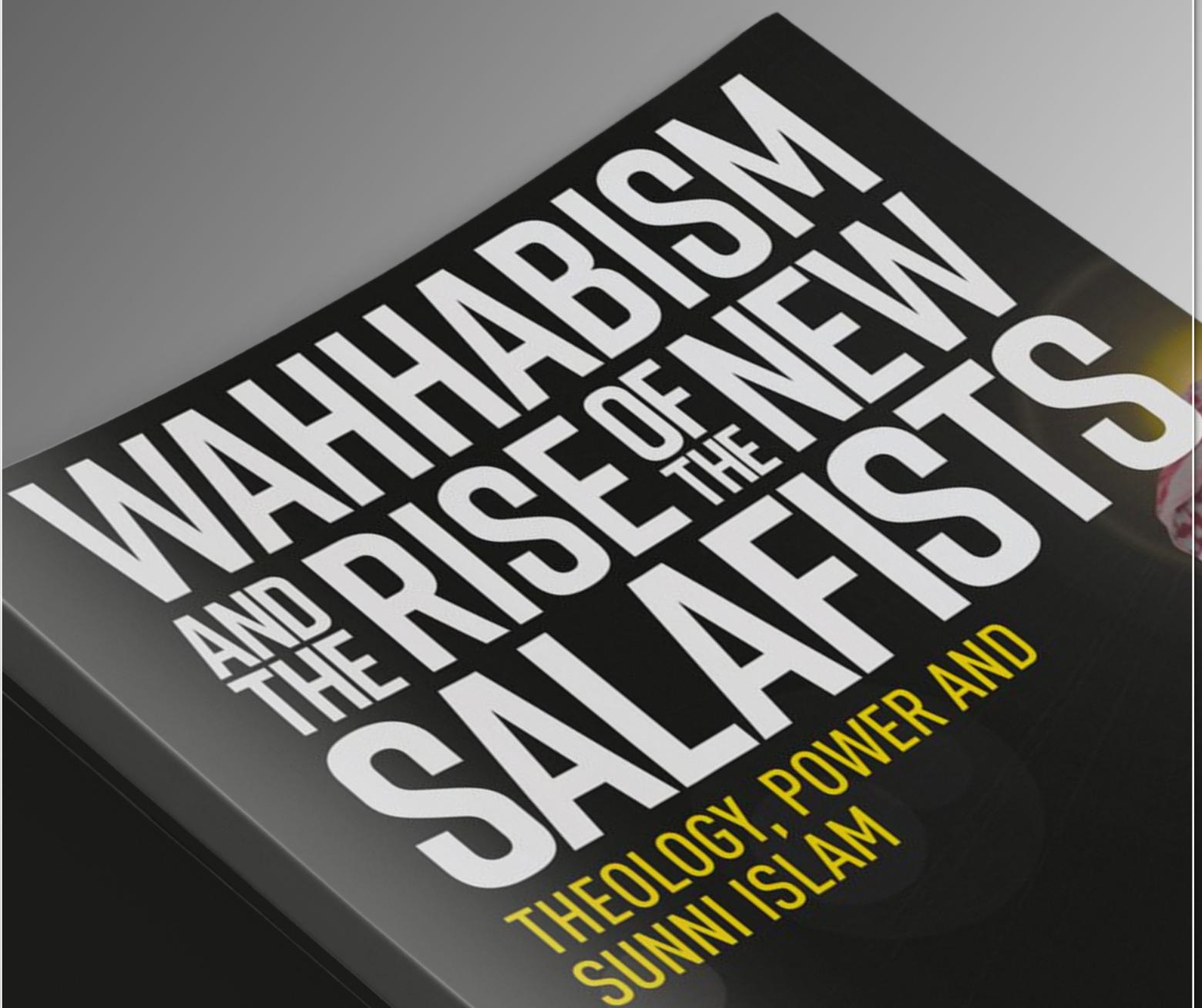


A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE BOOK



A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE BOOK
'WAHHABISM AND THE RISE OF THE NEW SALAFISTS:
THEOLOGY, POWER AND SUNNI ISLAM'¹
PART 1

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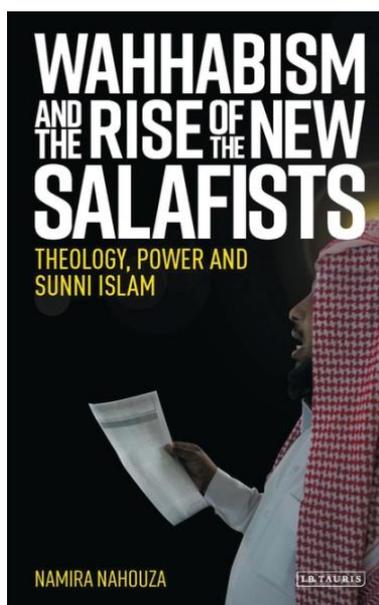
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In the Name of Allāh, the Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

Indeed all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His Aid and ask for His forgiveness, whomsoever Allāh guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allāh misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Messenger, to proceed:

INTRODUCTION

A new book, which was originally a PhD thesis submitted to Exeter University in 2009 and shrouded in a rather odd web of secrecy and mystery, has been published. Written by Namira Nahouza, a research fellow at the Cambridge Muslim College,² the book proclaims to assess the roots and theology of what she refers to as 'Wahhabism' which she deems as having been repackaged as contemporary Salafism.



Purporting to tackle the topic with reference to Islamic credo, the author embarks on a quixotic quest to debunk what she regards as a heterodox approach to the Oneness of Allaah, Allaah's

² According to the 'Unity' Newsletter of the Cambridge Muslim College, Issue 5, May 2016/Shabān 1437 it is mentioned that Nahouza's research at the college will focus on 'contemporary Salafi theories of Qur'anic interpretation', see p.5:

<http://www.cambridgemuslimcollege.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/CMC-Newsletter-2016.pdf>

Accessed 14th June 2019.

Names and Attributes and core beliefs in īmān. Yet what is actually revealed is a regurgitation of age-old arguments, obfuscation of Sunni theology as per the first three generations of Islām, justifications for innovated beliefs, blatant distortion of Salafīyyah and a cynical move to banish Salafīyyah to the margins of not only Islamic theology but also modern society and effectively criminalise Salafis. Nahouza is not the only writer whose works are of this nature as similar material has been produced over recent years by Vincenzo Oliveti (2001), Marc Sageman (2004), Anne Sofie Roald (2004), Stemmann (2006), Mitchell D. Sibling and Arvin Bhatt (2007), Jocelyn Cesari (2008), Adis Duderija (2010), Abd al-Hakim Abu Louz (2010), Tariq Ramadan (2009, 2012) and Yasir Qadhi (2013, 2018, 2019).

POOR RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING BIAS IN NAHOUZA’S RESEARCH

First of all, Nahouza’s research design appears to suffer from a number of elementary research flaws, particularly in regards to her sampling, lack of primary data in the form of interviews, impartiality and critical analysis. Secondly, the lack of first hand voices and primary data is not only a huge research limitation in Nahouza’s writing, but is also odd considering the vast numbers of British Salafis whom Nahouza could have accessed to interview directly. This would have provided a strong evidenced-based discussion wherein core themes could have been fleshed out. Yet Nahouza apparently disregarded all of that and instead opted for research which already had a preconceived notion about what it wanted to highlight. However, such an approach is fraught with a myriad of problems for any serious researcher, as rich empirical research is that which is able to note that one’s preconceived notions were not only challenged but also, in part, invalid in instances. Nahouza’s research however does not seem too bothered about the first-hand voices of British Salafis and instead charges through with its own core goal, to separate Salafīyyah from Sunni tradition.

Researchers should attempt to minimise bias in their research and when a researcher has a clear perception of potential sources of bias this can enable better critical evaluation of research findings and conclusions. Each researcher will bring to her/his study their own experiences, ideas, prejudices and personal philosophies, and so long as if this is taken into account in advance of the study, it will enhance the validity of the study and mitigate against possible research bias. Clearly articulating the rationale for choosing an appropriate research design to meet the study aims can reduce common pitfalls in relation to bias and bolster academic transparency.

Research bias is significant as bias exists in all research, across research designs and is difficult to eliminate. Bias can occur at each stage of the research process and as it impacts the validity and reliability of findings which leads to misinterpretation of data which has serious consequences in the real world. In this regard therefore, ethics committees are key in considering whether the research design and methodological approaches are either biased or appropriate for the research project. Feedback from peers, funding bodies and ethics committees are all an essential part of designing research studies, and often provides valuable practical guidance in developing robust research. However, even at this stage peers may merely endorse research on the basis of ‘belief bias’ as Koslowski notes that Koehler’s 1993 study revealed that research reports presented to a group of scientists were more likely to be perceived as high quality when the reports agreed with the scientists prior beliefs about a topic.³

A clear evidence of both poor research and sampling bias is when Nahouza on pages 164-167 relays what she considers ‘some consequences of this debate’. She makes referral to a 2007 blog by an anonymous author who goes by the pen-name “Abdul-Quddus” who presents as ‘a former convert to Islam turned apostate, ex-Muslim, freethinker, born-again atheist, and vegetarian gone wild.’ The supposed ‘ex-Muslim’ contributed a total of three posts on this blog. Nahouza suggests that the author left Islam on account of contact with the Salafi creed! Nahouza states, as per p.166 of her book:

Here, we can see that this very issue of the Attributes of God was deemed so important that he left Islam when he read literal translations of the Qur’an which did not offer a description of God which was befitting to the perfect Being. This example shows us that the issue of the Attributes of God and their meaning is still of importance today. **From his own personal account, it is understood that ‘Abdul-Quddus most probably did not hear of the Ash’aris, or of their teachings.** The creed of Islam as presented by al-Ash’ari [*sic*] and Maturidi scholars is the polar opposite of the definition that ‘Abdul-Quddus has described.

Then Nahouza states, pp.166-67:

This does not seem to be what ‘Abdul-Quddus had learned, and he does not seem aware that there are *Ash’ari* scholars who do interpret those ambiguous texts and provide explanations for them. **This is an example of how the rhetoric of the Salafists is trying to replace Sunni teachings developed by al-Ash’ari. Although ‘Abdul-Quddus says of himself that he did not belong to any**

³ Barbara Koslowski, *Theory and Evidence: The Development of Scientific Reasoning* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1996), p.54-55.

particular sect, his references and the way he describes his friends are compliant with the teaching of Salafists.

She continues:

This mean that, in his particular case, the only vision of history he was aware of was that of the Salafists. It appears that the Muslim community would benefit as a whole if there were more scholars trained in theological dialectics and other domains. In this specific case, having an *Ash'ari* scholar nearby might not have changed the outcome for ‘Abdul-Quddus, but at least he would have managed to hear a presentation of the creed of Islam which would have answered his questions.

Nahouza infers all of this merely on account of a 2007 blog of just three posts put together 12 years ago by an anonymous writer!?! Nahouza even surmises as if she knows the full reality of the nature of this blog and its intents, accepting it at face value as a trusted source for inclusion in her research although there is no way of independently verifying the veracity of the blog’s claims or of corroborating its author. Not only is this utter folly and naiveté but also demonstrates the extremely poor research and sampling utilised by Nahouza in her research and this is inappropriate for a serious critical analytical study. Also the use of such a secondary data source by Nahouza appears to have been solely on the basis of convenience.⁴ Moreover, as the sample utilised is so small, in this case one solitary untrustworthy and anonymous blog, it is extremely tenuous for Nahouza to extrapolate from a sample size this small general claims representative of the phenomenon. It is therefore apparent that there was a degree of confirmation bias within Nahouza’s research, in that she has merely selected an example which fits neatly into her thesis, despite the fact that it is very weak example to utilise in academic research. Confirmation bias is when more weight is given to data and data sources that confirm rather than disconfirm your prior assumptions and hypotheses. Willingham states in his book *When Can You Trust the Experts? How to Tell Good Science from Bad in Education*:

⁴ Convenience sampling, though readily and easily available and can allow for a large collection of information swiftly, is hampered by volunteer bias and the inability to make extrapolations from the sample to infer about the general population. See Hilary Collins, *Creative Research: The Theory and Practice of Research for the Creative Industries* (Lausanne, Switzerland: AVA Publishing, 2010), p.179.

The confirmation bias is not restricted to how we seek out information. We’re more likely to notice confirming evidence and ignore or discount disconfirming evidence.⁵

Willingham also notes:

The confirmation bias also applies to how we interpret ambiguous information: it’s interpreted as being consistent with our beliefs.⁶

Dwyer notes in *Critical Thinking*:

When deciding what to believe, we need to be careful not to focus only on reasons for accepting our beliefs; and avoid simply working to confirm our beliefs, which leads to a confirmation bias (i.e. the inclination to promote or favour information that corroborates one’s own pre-existing beliefs).⁷

This lack of impartiality may not be surprising in the writings of those who oppose Salafiyah, as this impartiality, which has been relayed with an unbroken chain over the centuries within *actual* mainstream traditional Sunni Islam (!!), is regarded as the preserve of the scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah wa’l-Hadeeth, for:

أهل العلم يكتبون ما لهم وما عليهم ، وأهل الأهواء لا يكتبون إلا ما لهم .

The People of Knowledge write what is for them and what is against them; while the People of Desires do not write except for what is for them.⁸

The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimabullāh*), noted:

لأن هذا هو الذي عليه أهل الحديث أن يذكروا الحقائق سواء كانت لهم أو عليهم, خلافا لأهل الأهواء, كما

يذكر ذلك ابن تيمية كثيرا في رده عليهم

⁵ Daniel T. Willingham, *When Can You Trust the Experts? How to Tell Good Science from Bad in Education* (San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), p.46

⁶ Ibid., p.47

⁷ Christopher P. Dwyer, *Critical Thinking* (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.79.

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah ascribes this statement to ‘AbdurRahmān bin Mahdī in *al-Jawāb as-Saheeh*, vol.6, p.343; it has also been ascribed to Wakī’ ibn al-Jarrāh (the trustworthy Hāfidh and pious worshipper) by ad-Dāraqutnī, See Imām ‘Ali bin ‘Umar ad-Dāraqutnī, *Sunan ad-Dāraqutnī* (Beirut: Dār ul-Ma’rifah, 1422 AH/2001 CE, 1st Print, eds. Shaykhs ‘Ali Ahmad ‘AbdulMajūd and ‘Ali Muhammad Mu’awwidh), vol.1, p.26, no.32, p.77-78.

Ad-Dāraqutnī’s sanad is as follows: Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Sa’eed narrated to us: Ibrāheem bin ‘Abdullāh bin Muhammad bin Sālim as-Sulūli, Abū Sālim said: I heard my father say: I heard Wakī’ say... – the narration.

...as this is what the People of Hadeeth are upon, that they mention the realities whether they are for them or against them; as opposed to the People of Desires as Ibn Taymiyyah has mentioned many times in his refutations against them.⁹

While Dr Muhammad Rashaad Khaleel (Professor of Islamic Heritage at the University of Riyadh) stated in his book *al-Manhaj al-Islāmī li-Dirāsāt it-Tārīkh wa Tafseerihī* [The Islamic Method for Studying and Interpreting History] some conditions which have to be maintained for a Muslim researcher. Of these conditions is ‘*al-Ikhlās wa’t-Tajarrud*’ [Sincerity and Impartiality], Dr Muhammad Rashaad Khaleel states about this condition:

...that is because the goal of the researcher has to be to search for the truth wherever it is and not seek proofs and evidences which merely support his own personal view or preconceived idea; or supports a particular Madhhab, belief or genus [of people]. Much distortion has thus entered Islamic history past and present from this door. In the past those who hated Islām corrupted reports and fabricated them so as to plot against Islām and defame its adherents. While presently the same thing has occurred from people of innovation and desires and the people of fanatical bias to Madhhabs, politics and racism in a similar way to which we presented prior from the words of al-Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī.¹⁰

There are also huge problems in using blogs for research, and that while blogs may provide researchers with rich personal accounts which can be seen as digital online diaries and life documents which provide benefits when developing research insights, they pose significant problems due to representativeness of the sample. They also raise concerns about authenticity and it is difficult to verify the background of those behind blogs. This has been noted by Hookway and Snee (2017) in their essay on the ‘Blogosphere’ in *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*,¹¹ yet this should be axiomatic to anyone involved in serious academic research regardless. Nicholas Hookway (2016: 182-183) notes that due to the difficulties in authenticating

⁹ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth ad-Da’eefah wa Mawdū’ah wa Atharahā as-Say’i fi’l-Ummah* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, 1425 AH/2004 CE), vol.12, p.551.

¹⁰ Dr Muhammad Rashād Khaleel, *al-Manhaj al-Islāmī li-Dirāsāt it-Tārīkh wa Tafseerihī* [The Islamic Method for Studying and Interpreting History]. Casablanca: Dār uth-Thaqāfah, 1406 AH/1986 CE, pp.122-123.

¹¹ See Nicholas Hookway and Helene Snee, “The Blogosphere” in Nigel G. Fielding, Raymond M. Lee and Grant Blank (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods* (London and Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2017), pp.380-399.

the identities of bloggers any conclusions drawn from the usage of such data will be problematic. Hookway suggests, as should have been axiomatic to Nahouza, and as I emphasised at the outset, that:

One strategy to alleviate concerns around authenticity is to supplement blog data with interviews...As the blogs were limited to what the author had chosen to record, interviews provided a means to seek clarification, to explore absences and implicit meanings, and to contextualise online representations in terms of articulations of offline experience. For these reasons, the interview material enabled a deeper and more nuanced account...¹²

While in regards to the usage of such a solitary sample, Walton (1987: 204) notes:

The important thing is that if the sample is very small, there is a very great risk of error, and if the sample is small enough, any statistical generalization may run such a large risk of error as to be virtually worthless. But a small sample, even though it may be almost meaningless from a point of view of reasonable sampling conditions, might still impress an audience that might have a tendency to exaggerate any suggestion of positive evidence because of lack of critical reflection about the size of the sample.¹³

This poses a myriad of questions as to the credibility of Nahouza’s suggestions in her book. Moreover, I am sure that with a solid sampling exercise I could robustly challenge Nahouza’s assertions by demonstrating that many Muslims have adopted the Salafī creed on account of a weak emphasis on Tawheed on ‘Aqeedah from those associated with the Māturīdī and Ash‘arī creedal systems. Nahouza however did not even conduct an interview with anyone, as she no doubt struggled to find anyone to confirm her assertions, as a result she instead relied on a 2007 blog with just three posts written by an anonymous write who claimed to be an “ex-Muslim” 12 years ago?! As a result of this concern, considerable doubt should be thrown on the validity of Nahouza’s core thesis, due to the significant difficulties there are in it actually being applicable. It

¹² Nicholas Hookway, “Archives of Everyday Life: Using Blogs in Qualitative Research” in Virginia Braun, Victoria Clarke and Debra Gray (eds.), *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide to Textual, Media and Virtual Techniques* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.181.

¹³ Douglas N. Walton, *Informal Fallacies: Towards a Theory of Argument Criticisms* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1987), p.204.

would be interesting to know what steps Nahouza took in order to minimise bias in her research and mitigate against these substantial limitations.

‘TRADITIONAL’ SUFI ISLAM JUXTAPOSED WITH SALAFIYYAH IN TERMS OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

On page 177 of her book Nahouza states:

...Salafist theology seems to create an environment that may make uneducated youth more permeable to extreme discourse, as most references from the past are considered misguided for a reason linked to their beliefs.

As for the suggestion that only Salafiyah has a monopoly on making **“uneducated youth more permeable to extreme discourse”** and violence then it would be worth highlighting the environment of France, the author’s very own country, which will be discussed shortly. It is odd how Nahouza, hailing from France, mentioned nothing at all about French society itself creating **“an environment that may make uneducated youth more permeable to extreme discourse”** considering the disaffection, discrimination, marginalisation and *frustration* faced by French Muslim youth. However, all of that seems to have been absent in the book and instead she felt it more appropriate to maintain a polemic against Salafiyah in the UK?!

Moreover, Nahouza would do well to reflect on actions around the world of adherents of so-called “peaceful” ‘traditional Islam’. In December 2018 in Bangladesh riotous violence between rival factions of Tablighi Jamaat occurred wherein two people ended up dead and 200 injured.¹⁴ While a Brailwī Sūfī political group in Pakistan (Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan led by Khadim Hussain Rizvi) in November 2017 was responsible for communal violence resulting in six people dead, 200 people injured, paralysis of Islamabad, mayhem in Rawalpindi, Lahore and other cities in the Punjab and millions of dollars worth of damage in protests against what they view as lenient blasphemy laws in Pakistan. In regards to the ‘traditional cleric’ Ali Gomaa of al-Azhar University, Seumas Milne noted:

Interestingly, Husain and the Quilliam Foundation hail another Egyptian cleric, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, as a “scholastic giant” making a brave stand against extremism. Last year, David Cameron also went out of his way

¹⁴ See story here by Raihanul-Islam Akand Gazipur in the *Dhaka Tribune*, entitled “One killed, over 200 injured in Tablighi Jamaat factional clash in Tongi” dated 1st December 2018: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/dhaka/2018/12/01/tabligh-jamaat-s-factional-clash-heavy-gridlock-on-airport-road>

to praise Gomaa and the Times called him “the wise mufti”. But as it turns out, Gomaa is also on record as defending Palestinian suicide bombings, including against Israeli civilians (as well as endorsing wife-beating in some cultures).¹⁵

The attempts to pin the blame on “insidious Wahhābis” for all things “intolerant” seems to be questionable and it appears that some of the reference points of Nahouza’s brand of so-called ‘traditional Islam’ may also have their own answering to do, as former-Azhar Mufti Ali Gomaa has been on record for supporting Hezbollah Shi’ite fighters, maintaining that there is indeed a punishment for apostasy in Islamic tradition and adhering to socially conservative Islam. Now let us turn to a manual in the English language of the ‘traditional Islam’ approach, that of Nuh Hā Meem Keller’s translation of *Reliance of the Traveller* and some of the concepts therein.¹⁶ Keller’s translation of *Reliance of the Traveller* is another good place for us to start in the issue. The work *Reliance of the Traveller* is a translation of the work *Umdat us-Sālik* by a somewhat obscure Shāfi’ī and Sūfi scholar, Ahmad ibn an-Naqīb al-Misrī (circa 702-769 AH/1302-1367 CE). Within the book, which presents just the kind of ‘traditional Sūfi-based approach’, which some adherents of the ‘traditional Islam’ movement have naively asserted is distinct from Salafī views of the “religious Other”, the following is mentioned **with no commentary, explanation or clarification**:

- A father or father’s father guardian marrying off a virgin bride **“without her consent”** where he may **“compel”** her (m3.13-3.15), as long as there is a ‘suitable match’, which excludes “a non-Arab man for an Arab woman” – in the latter case the lady can seek the annulment of the marriage contract if she wishes (m4).
- Offensive jihad (see o9.1), with the objective being to fight **“Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians...until they become Muslim or else pay the non-Muslim poll tax”** (o9.8); and “the Caliph fights all other peoples until they become Muslim” (o9.9).
- The Islamic state not retaliating against a Muslim for killing a non-Muslim (o1.2).
- It being “obligatory for Muslims to rise against” a leader of the government if he **“becomes a non-Muslim, alters the Sacred Law – (...imposing rules that contravene the provisions of the religion while believing in the validity of the rules he has imposed, this being unbelief (kufr)) – or imposes reprehensible innovations while in office”**, and **“if possible...”**, **“...install an upright leader in his place”**. See o25.3(a).

¹⁵ Seumas Milne, “All Mod Cons”, *The Guardian* (of London), April 21 2008.

¹⁶ It has not been relayed from any of the Sahābah, Taabi’een or Tābi’ ut-Tābi’een that they used the words ‘Hā Meem’ for naming.

- It is “obligatory to obey the commands and interdictions of the caliph...in everything that is lawful...even if he is unjust” (o25.5).
- **“Non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic State...are distinguished from Muslims in dress, wearing a wide cloth belt (zunnar)...[and] must keep to the side of the street”** (o11.5).

The ‘Traditional Islam’ method in action! These matters were relayed in an English language book **with no commentary, reflection, explanation or clarification** yet the book contained copious amounts of polemic against Salafiyah. Indeed, the material in English which clarify such matters and correctly contextualise such matters in the contemporary world have largely been written by the adherents of the Salafi tradition. As for Jalāl ud-Deen ar-Rūmī, upon further inspection of the writings of ar-Rūmī it is apparent that his works are not free from even *takfeer* (ex-communication). Some of ar-Rūmī’s writings suggest that he denounced his opponents as being non-Muslims. Al-Aflākī (d. 1360 CE) stated:

The respected Shaykh Awhad ud-Deen al-Kho’ī asked our master (i.e. Jalāl uddeen ar-Rūmī) “who is the kāfir (disbeliever)?” Our master responded: “Show me the believer so that the disbeliever can be made apparent!” Shaykh Awhad replied: “Yet you are a believer?” Our master responded: “At that time, all who oppose us is a kāfir (disbeliever).”¹⁷

Rūmī stated in his *Discourses* which have been translated by A.J. Arberry:

This verse was revealed when Muhammad defeated the unbelievers, slaying, plundering and taking prisoners, whom he tied hand and foot.¹⁸

Rūmī stated in discourse 12 (p.99 of Marman edit):

The Prophet raided, killed and spilled blood, but the unbelievers were the wrongdoers, and Mohammed was wronged.

Rūmī stated in discourse 30 (p.233 of Marman edit):

The Prophet said, “I laugh as I slay,” meaning he kills the unbelievers in one manner, so that unbelievers will not kill themselves in a hundred ways. So, of course, he laughs as he slays.

¹⁷ Shamsuddeen Ahmad al-Aflākī, ed. Tahseen Yāzījī, *Manāqib ul-‘Ārifeen wa-Marātib al-Kāshifeen* (Tehran: Donyaayeh Kitāb, 1362 AH/1983 CE) vol.1, p.515; transmitted from *Akhbār Jalāluddeen ar-Rūmī*, p.228. Al-Aflākī’s work was translated into English in 1881 in London by James W.Redhouse.

¹⁸ Arthur John Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi* (London: John Murray, 1961 and Routledge, 1995), p.14; Doug Marman (ed.), *Discourses of Rumi (or Fihi Ma Fihi): Based on the Original Translation of A.J. Arberry* (Ames, Iowa: Omphaloskepsis, 2000) p.5, Online, accessed March 2010: <http://www.omphaloskepsis.com/ebooks/pdf/discour.pdf>

Rūmī stated in discourse 44 (p.301 of Marman edit):

Here, faith is compared to light and unbelief to shadows, but faith could be related to a delightful shade and unbelief to a burning, merciless sun boiling the brain. What resemblance is there between the bright subtlety of faith and the light of this world, or between the sordid gloom of unbelief and the darkness we know at night?

Rūmī stated in discourse 60 (p.390 of Marman edit):

Those infidels who are fixed in unbelief—they suffer because of their unbelief. Yet looking at the matter again, that suffering is also a Divine blessing. When the unbelievers are at ease they forget the Source, so God reminds them through suffering. Therefore, Hell is a place of worship and is the mosque of infidels, for there the unbelievers remember God.

Rūmī also states in the same discourse (p.391 of Marman edit):

Since the unbelievers do not remember unless they are suffering, and since their purpose in being created was to recollect God, they are sent suffering to remember Him.

Rūmī also emphasised the significance of external religious adherence, the primacy of the Qur'ān and what he believed to be the superiority of Islām.¹⁹ A famous commentary of ar-Rūmī's work, entitled *Ma'arif e-Mathnawi* by Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb which was translated by Moulana Yusuf Karan of Cape Town, states:

Muslims are commanded to perform Jihad. In Jihad we remember that the "Kufaar" (disbelievers) are also Allah's creation and Allah's bounties in rearing them is also provided for them just as it is provided for the believers.

Then Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb, the commentator of ar-Rūmī's work, says:

When the command from Allah comes, the demand is that the necks of the Kufaar (disbeliever) should be struck in Jihad for they are enemies of Allah fighting against the Believers.²⁰

This is not from an 'insidious Wahhabist'. Additionally, there is that which indicates ar-Rūmī was sceptical of blind imitation of the European way of life for ar-Rūmī stated, as relayed on page 51 of the commentary by Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb:

¹⁹ Franklin Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), pp.407-408.

²⁰ Refer to page 46 of the Online version here: <http://yunuspatel.co.za/downloads/Ma-aarif-E-Mathnavi.pdf>

“When you do not look with proper sight, then you look upon the love and company of the saintly ones and their obedience i.e. their ship as despicable, and you look upon your imitation of the people of Europe as the high mountains of Intellect and Reason.”

Massoume Price stated in an article entitled *Is Rumi what we think he is?*:

He is regarded as liberal, one who did not distinguish between mosques, churches and synagogues. Yet his apparent stereotyping of Christians and particularly Jews as evil and dark-sided is overlooked.²¹

Therefore, upon inspection of the writings of those of the assumed ‘tolerant Sūfi-based approach’, such as ibn Naqīb al-Misrī, ar-Rūmī and other Sufis, it is apparent that their works are not even free from that which Nahouza has claimed is exclusive to Salafism in regards to the “religious Other” and other issues. It is also worth shedding light on the link that Sufism in history also has to anti-colonial rebellion and resistance. What has to be understood is that after the dissemination of Sufism, it remained amongst most Muslims until some scholars became aware of the excessive and uncorroborated practices. But many would regard it as duplicitous for contemporary adherents of a Sufi tradition to jump on them as their role models, as some have done when it suits and we shall mention shortly some reasons as to why this is the case. Many would regard such sentiments as being attempts to present the Sufis as being ‘militant’, and such views were aired more freely prior to the events of 9/11 when many were not ashamed to mention the word ‘jihād’. Indeed, Abdal Hakim Murad (aka T. J. Winter) himself stated in an article entitled *The Poverty of Fanaticism: Islamic Spirituality, the Forgotten Revolution*:

Likewise, the Islamic obligation of jihad has been borne with especial zeal by the Sufi orders. All the great nineteenth century jihadists: Uthman dan Fodio (Hausaland), al-Sanousi (Libya), Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iri (Algeria), Imam Shamil (Daghestan)²² and the leaders of the Padre Rebellion

²¹Massoume Price, *Is Rumi what we think he is?* (2002) See: http://www.iranchamber.com/literature/articles/rumi_what_we_think.php - accessed from the *Iran Chamber Society* website on Wednesday 13 January 2010.

²² He was born in the small village of Gimry which is in present-day Daghestan in 1797 CE. He studied Arabic, logic and other subjects. He was born at a time when the Russian Empire was expanding into the territories of the Ottoman and Persian empires. After the Russian invasion, the Caucasian tribes united against the oppressive Tsarist rule in what came to be known as the Caucasian War. Imam Shamil became the leader of the Caucasian resistance in 1834 CE and in June-August 1839 went to the mountains with some 4000 followers including women and children. They found themselves under siege in their mountain stronghold in Akhoulgo in a siege which lasted for eighty days and resulted in

(Sumatra) were active practitioners of Sufism, writing extensively on it while on their campaigns. Nothing is further from reality, in fact, than the claim that Sufism represents a quietist and non-militant form of Islam.²³

Imām Shamil “Sufism”, known as Muridism, was essentially a 19th century Naqshabandi Shafi’i version of today’s Afghānī Hanafi Tālibān or the contemporary Saudi Hanbalī Mutawwa’.²⁴ That is, Shamil was concerned primarily with the implementation of the Sharee’ah and by that we mean the external application of the Sharee’ah including the blessed Sunnah (hijāb, hadd punishments, beard, congregational prayer etc.) that many classical and modern Sufis reject and mock. In fact, Shamil categorically stated that the only reason he waged jihad against the disbelieving Russians is because they prevented the Muslims from implementing the Sharee’ah and that had they left the Muslims to live by the laws of Islām, he would not have declared war upon them.

Shamil viewed his struggle as part of the wider anti-imperialist jihad of the Orthodox Sunni Ummah. This is evidenced by his sending delegations to Sunnī Muslims leaders, including the Ottoman Sultan, seeking military assistance and manpower. He would even encourage his followers with promises of Muslim armies coming to their support from as far as Yemen. Some Sufi cults see the wider Sunni Ummah as ignorant heretics, rather than seek proximity to the wider Ummah. The main reason that historians give for the ultimate defeat of Shamil’s east North Caucasus resistance is because they failed to win the support of the Kabardians (i.e. the Upper Circassians) of the central North Caucasus.

In addition to the above, Shamil was famously opposed to those aspects of local cultural practice and tradition (known as the “*adāt*”) which opposed the Sharee’ah, in other words, as far as Shamil was concerned, he was fighting *bida’* (innovation). This is stark contrast *Sufis* who claim their pluralistic interpretation of Islām defends traditional cultural Muslim practices. Finally, in modern Russia “Wahhabis” is regarded as following the tradition of Shamil’s legacy to a certain

huge losses for Shamil and most of his followers were killed yet the Russians also had 3000 casualties. Amazingly, Imam Shamil and some of his closest followers were able to escape down the cliffs and cross Russian siege lines, then he re-grouped and resumed guerrilla tactics against the oppressive Tsarist Russian incursion. In 1859 however, Imam Shamil and his family surrendered and were imprisoned and then exiled to Kaluga, a small town near Moscow and then in 1869 was given permission to leave for Makkah via Istanbul. He died in Madeenah in 1871 CE and was buried at the Baqi’. Two of his sons served in the Russian army (Camaluddeen and Muhammad Sefi) while two other sons served in the Turkish army (Muhammad Ghazi and Muhammad Kamil).

²³ *The Poverty of Fanaticism: Islamic Spirituality, the Forgotten Revolution*, 2000, available Online.

²⁴ I gained the benefits here in regards to Imam Shamil from AR Mahdi over the years.

extent and “Wahhabism” as the natural successor or progression from Muridism. This is due to individuals emphasising a strict adherence to Islamic law who have been former “Wahhābi” graduates from the Islamic universities of Madeenah and Riyadh, or those influenced by their *da’wah*. Sufism in Dagestan is now upheld by ‘clerics’ who are patronized by those whose Muridism is confined to *dhikr* sessions. Had Shamil lived today he may have declared the contemporary Sufis as being hypocritical, at the very least.²⁵

As for Shaykh ‘Uthmān Ibn Fūdī (aka ‘Dan Fodio’) then he is known for his *tajdeed* efforts and his stance against innovations.²⁶ A number of folkloric legends and myths surrounded the personality of Dan Fodio as some people claimed that he could “walk on water” or appear in dreams. Some people even claimed that he was *the Mahdi*! All of these ideas were refuted by Dan Fodio himself during his time. In a book entitled *Tanbih ul-Fabeem*, Dan Fodio refuted the claims of a man named Hammā who lived in Maganga, Nigeria and was claiming to be the *Mahdi*, the man was later executed for heresy.²⁷ Dan Fodio however did make some comments in some of his works that were in line with the Sūfīs and Ash’arīs in some of his works, but at times he clearly said things in line with Tawheed, Sunnah and the *Salaf* (pious predecessors). He therefore was akin to Imāms an-Nawawī and Ibn Hajar, who also had teachers that were of the Ash’arī *‘aqeedah* but were not *pure* Ash’arīs.

Dan Fodio’s chain of scholars however reveals interesting facts. One of his teachers was Jibreel ibn ‘Umar of the Tuareg tribe who had made Hajj and thus lived in Makkah for a while. In Madeenah, Jibreel Ibn ‘Umar studied with Muhammad Murtada az-Zabīdī (1145-1205 AH/ 1732-1791 CE) who was originally from India but had travelled to az-Zabeed in Yemen where he lived for a while and studied before going on to teach in Madeenah himself. One of az-Zabeedī’s teachers was Shāh Waliullāh ad-Dehlawī (1702–1762 CE) of Delhi in India. Dan Fodio’s uncle who taught him *hadeeth* was Muhammad bin Rāj who had studied under Abu’l-Hasan as-Sindī also from India and a teacher of *hadeeth* in Madeenah. Abu’l-Hasan as-Sindī was a student of Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindī another great *hadeeth* scholar of India who was also teaching in Madeenah. One of Muhammad Hayāt as-Sindī’s other students was Muhammad ibn

²⁵ See: <http://www.unc.edu/~aneurysm/pre.html>

²⁶ He is Abū Muhammad ‘Uthmān ibn Muhammad ibn Fūdī, born in Marratta in northern Nigeria in 1168 AH/ 1754 CE. The name ‘Dan Fodio’ is the Hausa rendition of Ibn Fūdī. He was from a family of scholars that migrated to Hausaland from Futa Toro before the 15th century CE, bringing with it the Islamic tradition of Timbuktu. He waged a *jihād* in 1217 AH/1802 CE against clans that had violently opposed Islām and strongly repressed the Muslims. He established the Sokoto Islamic state which ruled by *Sharee’ah* in West Africa.

²⁷ See MA al-Hajj, *The Mahdist Tradition in Northern Nigeria*, A.B.U. 1973.

’AbdulWahhāb. Also see a recent study conducted in Nigeria and written in Arabic entitled *Asānīd al-Faqeer ad-Da’if al-Mutashāfi bi’l-Mushaffa’ Ahmad as-Shareef*,²⁸ also see the research of Stefan Reichmuth.²⁹ With regards to fanatical blind following of Imām Mālik, al-Misrī notes that: **“...the greatest contribution of Dan Fodio’s reforming ideas, apart from his views on Sunnah and Bid’a, was in the field of madhāhib (schools of law).”**³⁰ ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī said in his book *Hidāyat ut-Tullāb*:

Neither Allāh in His book, nor the Prophet in his Sunnah made it obligatory that one particular madhhab should be followed, nor did we hear any of the early scholars enjoining a person to follow one way. If they had done that, they would have committed a sin by not allowing people to act in accordance with ahadeeth which that particular way did not give weight to.³¹

In his book *Hisn ul-Afbām min Juyūsh il-Anbām* [The Fortification of Understanding Against the Armies of Delusion], which was translated into English as *Islam Against Illusions* by Fazlur Rahman Siddiqi, ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī says of many ‘scholars:

If such a person is not aware of the Sunnah it is not permissible to follow him...He is simply a lunatic lost in his special state.³²

‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī also says in the same book,

Some people are ignorant of the Sunnah, but they are anxious to emulate the practices of their Shaykh. If you speak to them about the Sunnah they will reply, “My Shaykh was doing this, my Shaykh was doing that,” thus contradicting the clear and open Sunnah.³³

Under delusion no. 35 Imām ‘Uthmān states:

There are people in this country who venerate stones and trees...they sacrifice animals for them symbolizing that the stones and trees are great, and they even pour flour-paste on them.

²⁸ Ms. University of Ibadan Library 82/137, Ibadan. Centre of Islamic Documentation [CAD].

²⁹ Stefan Reichmuth, “Murtada al-Zabidi (d. 1791) in Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts: Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century CE.” *Die Welt Des Islams: International Journal for the Study of Modern Islam* (Leiden, Boston and Koln: Brill, Vol. 39, No. 1, March 1999) p.70.

³⁰ From the introduction of F.H. al-Misri (ed.), *Bayān Wujūb ul-Hijrah ‘ala’-Ibād* (Khartoum University Press and OUP, 1978 CE).

³¹ Uthman Dan Fodio, *Hidāyatut-Tullāb* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1961), p.2.

³² Uthman Dan Fodio, *Islam Against Illusions* (Kano: Quality Press, 1989, trans. Fazlur Rahman Siddiqi), p.105 [Arabic text], p. 157 [Eng. Text].

³³ Ibid. p. 90 [Arabic text], p. 99 [Eng. Text].

He further stated: **“The one who indulges in such activities is considered a kāfir according to consensus.”** Dr Siddiqi stated:

Since innovations and superstitions prevailed in all parts of the country, the common people as well as the Muslim scholars of that time were involved in un-Islamic practices and the whole society changed into a corrupt and demoralized society.³⁴

Hence, there was a situation which was exactly what was prevalent during the epoch of Imām Muhammad ibn ‘AbdulWahhab, Dr Siddiqi continues:

At that time, Muslims were called Muslims only because they were born in the so-called “Muslim families” while their characters and practices were against Islam and its education. Their belief was that some trees and stones deserved respect and worship and that these could provide them with the means of subsistence or bless them with a child...Muslims of that time had totally lost their Islamic identifications because of their pagan practices. Even for a Muslim, it was difficult to recognize his Muslim brother. Even the Ulama accused the Shaykh, but they were not sincere in their remarks against him. Their attitude to the Shaykh was not based on their sincerity, but it was the result of a conspiracy against the Shaykh by the Sultān.

Dr Siddiqi also states on page 175 of *Islam Against Illusions*:

According to Muhammad Bello...the main purpose of his (Imām ‘Uthmān’s) sermons was to teach the people the fundamentals of Islam; preferably, the principles of tawheed, the other articles of faith and the essential duties of a Muslim towards Islam.

Muhammad Bello was the son of Imām ‘Uthmān. Therefore, here alone we can see a radical departure in the emphasis of Imām ‘Uthmān and the *Sufis* of the era, who refrain from calling to *tawheed* based on their claim that it causes division. Not to mention the fact that they are largely ignorant of it. ‘Uthmān ibn Fūdī also made similar statements in his books *Irsbād al-Ummah ilā Tayseer il-Milla* and *Tawqeef ul-Muslimeen*.³⁵

³⁴ *ibid.* pp.34-36.

³⁵ See Ahmad Mohammad Khani, *The Intellectual Origin of the Sokoto Jihad*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Iman Publications, Muharram 1405 AH/1985 CE), pp.85-90.

NAHOUZA AND UNDERSTANDING THE FRENCH CONTEXT

Now, a reason as to why Nahouza's book was so distant from the grassroots may in fact be due to her being a French Muslim writer quite unfamiliar with the UK Salafi experience and scene. Moreover, Nahouza may already have a variety of preconceived notions as a result of the French Muslim experience and the manners and practice of some French Muslims, let alone that of the French Salafis. So this begs the question as to why this was a major issue for Nahouza rather than the myriad of other issues facing French Muslims. Muslims in France currently live with Hijab bans in schools, Niqab bans in public places, discrimination, ghettoization, unemployment, and a rabid secular state – all contributing to huge *frustration*. Yet Nahouza opts to throw doubt against Salafiyyah with a book which reads more as a polemical tract wrapped up in the garb of academic endeavour. This may also be linked to a drive in France to promote that Salafiyyah is in fact the problem and it contravening French notions of *laïcité* and the French public discourse reveal that politicians and common people regard the open practice of a strict adherence to Islam as fanaticism and direct opposition to the values of the French republic, so then how will they regard Salafiyyah?

In this context, successive French governments have actively embarked on asserting and promoting a “French Islam” in which Salafiyyah definitely has no place and which exalts a Francophone Islam which is “moderate”, read as in full conformity to the French secular state and its republican values, and identify as French first rather than Muslim. Further to this, it has been apparent that the French also regard Jihadis and Takfiris as being Salafi, which has caused further confusion. So let's refer to what some of the French colonial leaders have stated about Muslims before in history, as it aids in providing context of Muslims in French society: Lieutenant-Colonel de Montagnac, one of the French conquerors of Algeria, wrote on 15 March 1843 in a letter to a friend:

All populations which do not accept our conditions must be despoiled. Everything must be seized, devastated, without age or sex distinction: grass must not grow any more where the French army has put the foot. Who wants the end wants the means, whatever may say our philanthropists. I personally warn all good militaries which I have the honour to lead that if they happen to bring me a living Arab, they will receive a beating with the flat of the saber... This is how, my dear friend, we must do war against Arabs: kill all men over the age of fifteen, take all their women and

children, load them onto naval vessels, send them to the Marquesas Islands or elsewhere. In one word, annihilate all that will not crawl beneath our feet like dogs.³⁶

Debra Kelly stated in *Autobiography and Independence: Selfhood and Creativity in North African Postcolonial Writing in French*:

...[the] *senatus-consulte* of 1865 stipulated that all the colonised indigenous were under French jurisdiction, i.e., French nationals subjected to French laws, **but it restricted citizenship only to those who renounced their Muslim religion and culture.** There was an obvious split in French legal discourse: a split between nationality and citizenship which established the formal structures of a political apartheid encouraging the existence of ‘French subjects’ disenfranchised, without any rights to citizenship, treated as objects of French law and not citizens”.³⁷

Olivier le Cour Grandmaison, Lecturer in Political Science at Evry-Val d’Essonne University, stated in an article entitled *Liberty, Equality and Colony*:

De Tocqueville wrote this in October 1841 after visiting Algeria. He supported colonisation in general, and in particular the colonisation of Algeria. As well as making two trips to the country, he addressed the matter in letters, in several speeches on France’s foreign affairs, and in two official reports presented to the National Assembly in March 1847 on behalf of an *ad hoc* commission. He repeatedly commented on and analysed the issue in his voluminous correspondence. In short, De Tocqueville developed a theoretical basis for French expansion in North Africa.

He collected an impressive library on the subject for he planned to write a book on India and British colonisation, comparing it with French achievements in what was then known as the Regency of Algiers. **He even studied the Koran, sharply concluding that the religion of Muhammad was “the main cause of the decadence ... of the Muslim world”.**

Le Cour Grandmaison then states:

De Tocqueville clearly approved the methods of General Bugeaud and defended them publicly on several occasions. Bugeaud’s approach consisted of laying waste

³⁶See Lieutenant-colonel de Montagnac, *Lettres d’un soldat*, (Plon, Paris, 1885) republished by Christian Destremeau, 1998, p. 153.

³⁷ See Debra Kelly, *Autobiography And Independence: Selfhood and Creativity in North African Postcolonial Writing in French* (Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 43.

to Algeria and seizing anything that might be useful for the army – “using war to keep the war alive”, as General Lamoricière put it. He drove the native population further and further back to secure complete control of conquered territory. Once these objectives had been achieved, through mass terror, settlements were established, making it impossible for the original population to return.

De Tocqueville did not rely exclusively on military might. He intended to protect and extend expropriation by the rule of law. He therefore advocated setting up special courts, based on what he himself called a “summary” procedure, to carry out massive expropriation for the benefit of French and other European settlers who would thus be able to purchase land at an attractive price and live in villages that the colonial government had equipped with fortifications, schools, churches and even fountains. De Tocqueville was apparently concerned about the material and moral welfare of the colonisers. He recommended that they should form armed militia, led by an army officer, to defend the population and their possessions. The network formed by the various villages would secure their hold on the conquered territory. The local people, who had been driven out by the army and robbed of their land by the judges, would gradually die out.

The French colonial state, as he conceived it and as it took shape in Algeria, was a two-tiered organisation, quite unlike the regime in mainland France. It introduced two different political and legal systems which, in the last analysis, were based on racial, cultural and religious distinctions. According to De Tocqueville, the system that should apply to the colonisers would enable them alone to hold property and travel freely, but would deprive them of any form of political freedom, which should be suspended in Algeria. “There should therefore be two quite distinct legislations in Africa, for there are two very separate communities. There is absolutely nothing to prevent us treating Europeans as if they were on their own, as the rules established for them will only ever apply to them”.

It could hardly be clearer. The people from glorious, enlightened Europe were entitled to rights. As for the “barbarians”, there was no question of their enjoying equality, freedom or the universal rule of law. Nor did De Tocqueville set any time limit for this arrangement. Predictably, the system that applied to the Arab and Kabyle populations

resulted in a permanent state of war, designed to keep them under the brutal yoke of the colonisers and an all-powerful government.³⁸

Up to a million Algerians lost their lives during the brutal and savage French conquest of Algeria and this is a history which up to this day the French try to cover up in order to promote a **“positive colonial influence”** of the French in Algeria!!? So are those with such a history of contempt against Islām really in a suitable position to tell Muslims about “civilisation”? All of this is pertinent as the backdrop of the French situation may serve to understand Nahouza’s context and approach. If Nahouza has witnessed, as per the French context, such negative examples from individuals who have ascribed themselves to Salafiyah in France there is little wonder why Nahouza will argue from the stance that Salafiyah is a problem. Yet even here, it is evident to English-speaking Salafis that the French context and position of Muslims in French society has been a driver for much frustration. The discrimination which is felt by many Muslims there may serve to understand why some French Salafis may be of a certain demeanour yet this is not to be conflated with *Salafiyah per se*. For instance, Post (175) in his essay “al Qaeda 2.0 and the Global Salafi Jihad” which although regurgitates the inaccurate term ‘global Salafi jihad’ and also makes the error of suggesting that radicalisation in the West occurs in Mosques, when most of the serious research in the field highlights that it takes place well away from Mosques, brings to light that:

The consensus is that while it is important to integrate and incorporate members of the Muslim diaspora into the host society, it was also imperative that their cultural and social integrity be accepted. They should not be forced to choose between their new and original cultures, as were the French Muslim girls prohibited by a new law from wearing their traditional headscarves or Hijabs, while in school. **France, which experts on the European Muslim diaspora regard as having the largest and least integrated Muslim community in Europe, experienced the fall 2006 rioting by poor, mostly well-educated but unemployed young men, alienated Islamic youth who were protesting their estrangement from the mainstream French society. To be sure, they were avowedly secular, protesting the economic inequities, but it is just**

³⁸ Refer to article here: <http://mondediplo.com/2001/06/11torture2>

frustrated youth that were vulnerable secondarily to radicalization and, ultimately, recruitment...³⁹

Post continues on p.176:

Grounded in the everyday experience of secular Muslim emigres to Western Europe, European social conditions promoted feelings of alienation among young Muslims who felt excluded from the relatively closed European social structure.

Hargreaves states in his book *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture and Society*:

These words, spoken about events which took place fifteen years before the riots of 2005, are in the light of those later disturbances a sad reflection of years of political neglect which helped to fuel the deep-seated frustration and despair in which the 2005 disorders were rooted.⁴⁰

Hargreaves also states:

In both cases, young men from immigrant families disaffected by a seemingly endless cycle of disadvantage and discrimination in France were recruited by Algerian or Moroccan Islamists engaged in armed struggles...⁴¹

Wolfreys highlights in his book *Republic of Islamophobia: The Rise of Respectable Racism in France* (2018: 156):

The rage and frustration that led youths to burn schools and job centres, which for them had become symbols of the poverty and discrimination which had excluded them from ‘republican’ society, was not confined to France’s impoverished fringes.⁴²

Rosemary Sales states in her book *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy: Contradictions and Continuities*:

The latest law was passed in the context of growing intolerance towards immigrants and in the wake of battles in the banlieux of large cities between police

³⁹ Jerrold M. Post, “al Qaeda 2.0 and the Global Salafi Jihad” in Michael T. Kindt, Jerrold M. Post and Barry R. Schneider (eds.), *The World’s Most Threatening Terrorist Networks and Criminal Gangs* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.165-179.

⁴⁰ Alec G. Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture and Society* (New York, NY and Abingdon, OXON: Routledge, 2007), p.110.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Jim Wolfreys, *Republic of Islamophobia: The Rise of Respectable Racism in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.156.

and groups of French-born young men of North African origin **who had become excluded socially and spatially from mainstream society.**⁴³

Rudolph emphasises in his book *Hot Spot: North America and Europe*:

For those “foreigners” growing up in contemporary France, rising expectations have thus given way to increased frustration. More importantly, to date it is that frustration that has led to a threat to France’s public order, not the plotting of radical Arabs to commit terrorist acts against the French state and French society. The fact of French contemporary political life was most vividly underscored by the month-long, spontaneous rioting across France by Muslim and non-Muslim youth in France’s “foreigner” communities in the fall of 2005. Although triggered by the shooting of two Muslim teenagers being chased for petty crimes by French police, the riots revealed a wide, deep, and volatile sense of alienation from native French society within the new generation of young “foreign” adults, which had previously been suspected.⁴⁴

Beaman notes, quoting from research conducted by Quillian et al in 2016, that non-whites in France experience discrimination in employment moreso than non-whites in the UK, US, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Sweden, with those of North African origin discriminated against the most in France.⁴⁵ Grassart (2007:33-37) in her research highlighted that in France the *Zones Urbaines Sensibles* are confined to housing projects with no means of mobility, and are the preserve of immigrants, single-parent families, the unemployed, the least wealthy and the least well educated. The majority of residents in such French ‘zones’ around or below the subsistence level, and crime rates in such areas of fifty percent higher than the French national metropolitan average due to high instances of theft, vandalism and violence.⁴⁶ Youth from these

⁴³ Rosemary Sales, *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy: Contradictions and Continuities* (Bristol and Chicago, IL: Policy Press, 2007), pp.113-114.

⁴⁴ Joseph Russell Rudolph Jr., *Hot Spot: America and Europe* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press 2008), p.271.

⁴⁵ Jean Beaman, *Citizen Outsider: Children of North African Immigrants in France* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017), p.119, fn.48

⁴⁶ Paula S. Grassart, *Roots of Urban Violence: A Comparative Study of the Banlieues and the Overvecht*. March 2007. MA Thesis. Canterbury Christ Church University. Police Academy of the Netherlands.

Accessed November 2018:

<https://www.politieacademie.nl/kennisenonderzoek/kennis/mediatheek/PDF/44368.pdf>

areas are thus despised and effectively pushed to the margins of French society and as the French system of *'égalité'* does not collect data on ethnic backgrounds it is hard for them to act on anything and improve conditions of those who are marginalised and stigmatised. Grassart states:

Without a job and without an education, the youngsters tend to hang around in their neighbourhoods. They have a strong degree of freedom and problems with accepting authority, thus preventing their parents or other adults from interfering. The absence of fathers in the many broken families (Chambon, 2006) adds to a shortage of supervision. **Frustrated and fighting boredom, the young men easily fall prey to alcohol and drug abuse and other undesirable behaviour, of which violence and criminality form the worst aspect.** Weapons are easily available (Bui Trong 2003a). Groups of youths bother the neighbourhoods, showing off macho behaviour and making territorial claims.⁴⁷

Kretz (2010: 61) states, in regards to the backdrop of the 2005 Paris Riots:

Many people blamed the deaths of the boys on the routinely harsh treatment by the police, which many claimed had caused the supposedly innocent boys to flee rather than talk with the officers. The general state of poor relations between the government and the largely Muslim populations of the banlieues had already been deteriorating for quite some time, and with this incident reached a breaking point. **What followed illustrates the levels of frustration and dissatisfaction that exceeded what many in France had previously considered. Riots broke out in Clichy-sous-Bois that gradually spread to cities throughout France. Anger at the injustice of the boys' deaths mixed with longstanding frustrations at the treatment of the underclass populations of the suburbs to produce the most destructive riots since the events of 1968.** Over the course of the following 20 days, rioting spread to 274 towns across France, claiming the lives of two people and injuring countless others, including 126 police and firefighters.⁴⁸

Bigea (2016: 29) states:

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.37

⁴⁸ Lauren Ashley Kretz, *Integration and Muslim Identity in Europe*. Georgia Institute of Technology. May 2010. MSc Thesis.

In the beginning, the residents were both working-class French and immigrant people. There were plenty of jobs, education was free and there was a feeling of hope for the upcoming generations. But when a government-sponsored home-buying program gave the opportunity for many native French nationals to move away, their immigrant correspondents could not afford to do the same. The factories have closed since then, leaving their children without opportunities of work, education or respectable conditions that were available for their French co-nationals. A lack of opportunities in the early 1980s, which led to a rise in delinquency among the young population, triggered a strong police presence which increased the general sentiment of suspicion between immigrants and native French. After the 1983 riots, the then-President Francois Mitterrand declared a renovation of the low-income areas: renovating the walls, repairing the elevators, establishing programs for the youth in the area and so on. But when Jacques Chirac became president, the program was quickly cancelled. Instead, his then-interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy increased the police presence around the housing projects (Wesby, 2015). **In the years afterwards, from this combination of increased police confrontations, rise of unemployment and awful economic conditions following the 2008 financial crisis, demonstrations and violence resulted. With no educational or occupational opportunities, residents turn to drugs and crime to release frustrations and make ends meet. Others have turned to religion.**⁴⁹

Wing and Nigh-Smith state (2006: 754):

The Muslim population also continues to be alienated from the rest of French society through limited education, life in urban ghettos far away from the heart of the cities, and an inability or lack of desire to become involved in French cultural and political life. The largest portions of the immigrant population are housed in the cités, which are “zones of economic and social exclusion,” and have become synonymous with “immigrant youth, violence, crime, and lately, Islamic extremism.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Georgiana Bigea, “France: The French Republican Model of Integration. A Potential Driver of Extremism.” *Conflict Studies Quarterly*, Issue 16, July 2016, pp.17-45

Accessed November 2018: <http://www.csq.ro/wp-content/uploads/Georgiana-BIGEA.pdf>

⁵⁰ Adrien Katherine Wing and Monica Nigh Smith, “Critical Race Feminism Lifts the Veil? Muslim Women, France, and the Headscarf Ban.” *U.C. Davis Law Review*, 743. March 2006.

Polonska-Kimunguyi and Gillespie (2016: 573)

The Muslim community has generally tended to be marginalised in socioeconomic terms (Camillieri, 2013). A recent study demonstrated that unemployment rates among immigrants from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey are particularly high and are even higher among the descendants of immigrants from these countries. Muslims also report higher rates of discrimination than other immigrant communities in France. **In 2005, a series of riots erupted in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities resulting in three deaths and nearly 3000 arrests. The unrest was an expression of frustration with high unemployment, police harassment and brutality among France's large immigrant population, mostly North African (Canet et al., 2008).**⁵¹

Laurence and Vaïsse note in their book *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*:

...that helps explain young people's increasing identification with all things Islam: if they are not accepted as Algerian or French, then they may see themselves as Muslims, and they may loyally (though sometimes selectively) identify with all things Muslim...⁵²

Joan Wallach-Scott states in her book *Parité! Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism*:

France's "civilising mission" consisted in bringing secular values to North Africa, reclaiming the territory that was once European and had been lost to Islam centuries before...**Islam remains for many French, if not an "eternal enemy," then at least antithetical to French republican values....Those perceived to be followers of Islam are thus, by definition, irreducibly different, outside the nation, ineligible for citizenship.**⁵³

Accessed November 2018:
https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/39/3/articles/davisvol39no3_wing.pdf

⁵¹ Polonska-Kimunguyi, Eva and Gillespie, Marie (2016) Terrorism discourse on French international broadcasting: France 24 and the case of Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris. *European Journal of Communication*, 31 (5). pp. 568-583.

Accessed November 2018:

http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/68291/1/Polonska-Kimunguyi_Terrorism%20discourse_2016.pdf

⁵² Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), p.93

⁵³ Joan Wallach-Scott, *Parité! Sexual Equality and the Crisis of French Universalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp.22-23.

In such a context, adherence to Salafiyah is even more of an issue in France and effectively renders a *triple-whammy* of marginalisation, suspicion and misunderstanding. Parvez (2013: 191) notes in his essay on ‘Representing ‘Islam in the *banlieues*’:

As a whole these associations are regretfully removed from Muslims and Salafist Muslims in the stigmatised urban periphery of Lyon.⁵⁴

Doyle (2011: 480) states:

The recent decision by the Council of State to refuse French citizenship to the Moroccan wife of a French citizen who had been living in France for eight years can be said to show how the reductive view of Islam that motivated the ban on the hijab has gained ground. After having been rejected by the national government administration in her application for French citizenship, the woman in question – Mme M. or Faiza M. as she was referred to in the press – appealed to the Council of State, as was her political right. **Rejecting her appeal, the Council of State invoked an imperfect integration into French society due to the fact that she had adopted a ‘radical practice of her religion’ that was incompatible with an essential value of the French community, ‘the principle of the equality of sexes’ (Vakulenko 2009, 145). The Council added that its decision did not violate her religious freedom as she could continue to practise her religion as a permanent resident. The ‘radical practice’ in question, it turned out, was Salafism.** The judgment did not make any explicit reference to the issue of clothing. It seems to have been careful not to appear to condemn the fact that the petitioner wore a niqab, revealing only her eyes, and concentrated on what it interpreted as an underlying problem: the rejection of the principle of equality between males and females.⁵⁵

Frank Peter stated (714-715):

It is precisely through the case-specific application of this latter policy, institutionalized in 2004 with **the nation-wide creation of “units for the fight against radical Islam” (i.e., Salafis and Tablighi Jama‘at)**, that the

⁵⁴ Z. Fareen Parvez, “Representing ‘Islam of the *banlieues*’: class and political participation among Muslims in France” in Jorgen S. Nielson (ed.), *Muslim Political Participation in Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp.190-212.

⁵⁵ Natalie J. Doyle, “Lessons from France: popularist anxiety and veiled fears of Islam.” In *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, October 2011, vol.22, no.4, pp.475-489. Accessed November 2018: <https://repository.warwick.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1/5038/Lessons%20from%20France%2C%20by%20NatalieDoyle.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

boundaries within which Islamic organizations can cooperate with the state are now defined, whereas the reference to variously defined Republican principles has receded.⁵⁶

It is clear therefore that *social frustration* and trauma are key denominators when looking at the context of young French Muslims. This frustration can impact outlook and may lead to the hardening of sentiments, positions, views and stances reflected in a coarse persona. However, in regards to the UK, Nahouza has no doubt encountered far more academically rigorous communities of Salafis which has evidently pulled the proverbial rug from underneath her feet. Hence, within Nahouza’s book there is little discussion of Salafis in France and much about the UK. This is a rather odd slant, as Nahouza, hailing from France and apparently supported by the British Council of Paris, would have been better placed to perhaps comment on French Salafi writings and da’wah, yet that was all apparently disregarded. Maybe it would have been more apt for Nahouza to have addressed in her research, as a French Muslim, the pressing issues in France regarding *Liberté, Egalité and Fraternité* and how that has led to discrimination and marginalisation in France rather than trying to undermine the traditional creed of the Salaf which has been transmitted with an unbroken chain over the centuries within *actual* mainstream traditional Sunni Islam and how this has manifested in Britain.

THE EMBARGO ON NAHOUZA’S THESIS

Nahouza’s book was based on her PhD thesis which she conducted at Exeter University and the thesis was placed on an embargo and thus students, academics, researchers and professors were recently unable to access the work. It is unclear as to why the thesis was handled in this way as it is moreorless a regurgitation of past arguments, polemic, unsubstantiated claims and, has highlighted earlier, poor research. It may have been purely that the publishers wanted to maintain exclusivity of the book upon publication in order to gain revenue. There are reasons why a student may want to place their PhD thesis on an embargo: it contains patentable intellectual property for which the student has not yet received a certificate; to avoid the research getting “scooped”; it may contain sensitive data; it could contain copyrighted work which belongs to a third party that has not given permission to redistribute it and therefore using it in the thesis

⁵⁶ Frank Peter, “Leading the Community of the Middle Way: A Study of the Muslim Field in France.” *The Muslim World*, October 2006, vol.96.

Accessed November 2018:

[https://zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/downloads/Artikel/Peter %20Muslim%20Field%20in%20France.pdf](https://zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/downloads/Artikel/Peter_%20Muslim%20Field%20in%20France.pdf)

would not be fair use; a publisher may be interested in turning the thesis into a book and have told the student not to make the thesis available online. Yet in this case the thesis was completed in 2009 and only published in 2018 so it is unlikely, though possible, that a prospective publisher would wait that long to publish a work particularly if it felt that it would be lucrative.

If the thesis was placed on an embargo on account of the contents being deemed as ‘too sensitive’ then there are a few issues in regards to this. Firstly, any serious researcher would relish an environment wherein one’s arguments can be rigorously scrutinised yet in this case the author did not afford commentators or critics of her work this honour. Yet it seems, possibly due to confirmation biases noted earlier among Nahouza’s academic peers and overseers, that the research was ‘protected’ from any critical scrutiny wherein the flaws in her research could be brought to light and hence the academic embargo. Secondly, if it is argued “the researcher was in fear”, then this is a rather feeble evasion and a mere get-out-clause to avoid thorough scrutiny and constructive academic criticism. Nahouza, and her handlers, should have had the audacity to openly pose their arguments and at the same time listen and accept amendments to the research which may have been hitherto unbeknown to her, a further indication of clear confirmation bias. It is also known that Exeter University over the years has been very apprehensive of Salafiyyah and closely associated to Shi’ite trends.

Thirdly, for a researcher to hide behind academic embargos is not only exaggeration but also reeks of a degree of misperception of the field and the arena. Moreover, if the book is mainly to undermine Salafiyyah in the UK, Salafis would not be looking to cause harm to another person on account of their writings. Nahouza, and her academic overseers, must stand up and face criticisms, rebuttals, refutations, and where necessary make amendments on account of possible sampling biases or any other research flaws, rather than pre-empt that Salafis will possibly “put her at risk”. This not only demonstrates that Nahouza has a bad perception of Salafis but also that her Tawakkul in Allāh, the virtue of which has been transmitted with an unbroken chain over the centuries within *actual* mainstream traditional Sunni Islam, is rather weak.

Moreover, as noted above in regards to the situation with French Muslims and the frustrations faced by Muslim there which can also breed extremism, this may have been the reason as to why Nahouza transferred her fears over to the UK context. However, had Nahouza had a more nuanced understanding of the Salafi da’wah in the UK she would have been aware that her concerns were unwarranted. Indeed, Nahouza must be aware that she is not the first to attempt to throw doubt on Salafiyyah within the academic realm and British Salafis would thoroughly relish in the opportunity to deconstruct her void research for future researchers and generations.

ATTEMPTS TO DIVORCE SALAFIYYAH FROM ISLAMIC TRADITION AND HISTORY

In her book, Nahouza offers scant treatment as to the origins and development of the term 'Salafi' and seeks to continue with usage of the pejorative term "Wahhabi". On pages 74-80, Nahouza offers a meagre 6 pages to accounting for the term and its origin. On page 75 when she relays the quote from Imām Bin Bāz (*rahimahullāh*), then he was merely using the term as others utilise it to describe the revival of Tawheed preached by Imām Muhammad bin 'AbdulWahhāb, not that he is accepting its usage, this is clear from the quote itself yet Nahouza feigns ignorance of this fact. On page 76 Nahouza states:

Historically, it is possible that Rashid Rida was at the course of the trend of naming the Wahhabis 'Salafis'.

While on pp.78-80 Nahouza uncritically follows Wiktorowicz's 2005 typology of Salafis, which is a flawed typology and needs a thorough review, which cannot be fully offered in this paper. On pp.117-118 Nahouza posits, under 'the 'traditional' vision of Islamic history':

Here, the term 'traditional' is used to refer to the vision of Islamic history that has been circulated widely and accepted, so far, by the majority of Sunnis. The three main points of this vision are: the importance of belonging to one of two main theological schools and to one of four main legal schools, the notion of continuity, and the significance of numeric superiority.

This appeal to supposed numerical superiority is a common misnomer and a fallacious argument. The reality, as will be explored in Part 2 of my critique of Nahouza, is that most of the Muslims simply do not adhere to Aristotelian notions of *Hudūth ul-Ajsām*, *Jawhar* and *A'rād*! Indeed, the "majority" of Muslims are entrenched in baseless practices, folklore, FGM, honour killings, forced marriages and a whole host of other customs and traditions which are not from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. As for Salafiyah, then it is not a "modern development" unless of course "modern" can be stretched to include eleven centuries! Nahouza seeks to divorce the Salafi approach from Sunni tradition and this is a pattern which has been adopted by a variety of modern commentators based on a flawed perception of not only Salafiyah but also Islamic history.

In doing so, not only is Salafiyah denied but by extension a whole corpus of Sunni tradition is also disregarded, and this is unacceptable for those who ascribe themselves to academia and an empirical research ethos. This schema effectively tries to disassociate the Salafi ethos from the Sunni heritage and erase its presence from Islamic history and has been something which we

have noticed is becoming more common of late among Western academics, some influenced by a notion of a romanticised “traditional Islam” epoch based on Sufism and speculative theological credo, and others who are somewhat uncomfortable with the prodigious growth of Salafi thought among Muslims around the globe.

Via intellectual and historical denial, there is an attempt to whitewash and re-write history to present Salafism is a newly-fangled development. It is thus somewhat ironic that self-appointed and alleged champions of “intellectualism” along with members of academia apparently lose any notion of impartiality, intellectual rigour and non-bias when it comes to writing on the Salafi tradition. Without going into an exhaustive history of the Islamic jurisprudence, it is important here to look at the suggestion that the Salafī trend has no roots within the Islamic tradition. This, and similar arguments, posit that Salafīyah only became popularised in either one of the following historical points in history:

- ❖ After the time of Ibn Taymiyyah
- ❖ the nineteenth century after the successful efforts of Muhammad bin ‘AbdulWahhāb
- ❖ or in the 1980s with the boom of “Gulf Arab-Petro-dollars” as is often claimed.

The impression given is that Salafism has concocted a new approach which has no roots in the traditionalist and juristic-classicist approach of Islamic scholarship. The detailed historical background to Salafism however is absent from Nahouza’s parody of Salafīyah. Richard Gauvin also states in his book *Salafī Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God* that other, more impartial, Western academics, such as Scott Lucas in a paper entitled ‘The Legal Principles of Muhammad Isma’īl al-Bukhari and their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam’,⁵⁷ have also noticed this without bias and thus Lucas ‘makes a convincing case for the scholarly foundations of Salafism to be traced back earlier than Ibn Taymiyyah’ and that the roots of the Salafī method in a systemised form should actually go back initially to Imām al-Bukhārī.⁵⁸ Therefore, let us turn to the Islamic traditionalist and juristic sources and the classical biographical dictionaries. We find for example Muhammad bin Khalaf bin Hayyān (also well known as Wakī’ and died in 306 AH/918 CE) the famous scholar, geographer and historian stating in his book *Akhhār ul-Qudāt* when discussing the biography of Ismā’īl bin Hammād:

قالوا: وكان إسماعيل بن حماد بن أبي حنيفة سلفياً صحيحاً.

⁵⁷ Scott Lucas, ‘The Legal Principles of Muhammad Isma’īl al-Bukhari and their Relationship to Classical Salafī Islam’, *Islamic Law and Society*, vol.13, no.3, 2006, pp.289-324

⁵⁸ Richard Gauvin, *Salafī Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God* (Abingdon, OXON and New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), p.269, ftn.11.

They said: Ismā’īl bin Hammād bin Abī Hanifah was a true Salafī (Kānā Salafīyyan Saheehan).⁵⁹

Imām Abū Sa’d ’AbdulKareem as-Sam’ānī (d.562 AH/1166 CE) relayed in his book *al-Ansāb*, vol.7, p.104:

السلفي: بفتح السين واللام ، وفي آخرها فاء، هذه النسبة إلى السلف ، وانتحال مذهبهم على ما سمعت ا.هـ

As-Salafī: with a fatha on the (letters) seen and lām. This is an ascription to the Salaf and following their ways, in that which is related from them.⁶⁰

Ibn ul-Athīr (d.630 AH/1233 CE) said in *al-Lubāb fī Tahdhīb ul-Insāb* (vol.2, p.162), commenting upon the previous saying of as-Sam’ānī: **“And a group were known by this ascription.”**

⁵⁹ Abū Bakr Muhammad bin Khalaf bin Hayyān bin Sadaq bin ad-Dabbī al-Baghdīdī (Wakī’), *Akhbār ul-Qudāt* (Beirut: Ālam ul-Kutub, n.d., ed. Sa’eed Muhammad al-Lahhām), p.342. The work was also printed by Matba’ah at-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā in Cairo with the edit of ’Abdul’Azeez Mustafā al-Marāghī in 1366 AH/1947 CE.

⁶⁰ Imām Abū Sa’d ’AbdulKareem bin Muhammad bin Mansūr at-Tamīmī as-Sam’ānī, *al-Ansāb* (Cairo: Maktabah Ibn Taymiyyah, 1396 AH/1976 CE, ed. Muhammad ’Awwāmah), vol.7, p.104.

Imām Abū Sa’d ’AbdulKareem (d. 562 AH/1167 CE) was from a well-known lineage of scholars and was the grandson of Imām Abu’l-Mudhaffar bin Muhammad bin ’AbdulJabbār bin Ahmad at-Tamīmī as-Sam’ānī al-Marwazī, who was a Hanafī and then a Shāfī’ī (426-489 AH/1035-1096 CE), the author of *al-Intisār li Ashāb il-Hadeeth*.

The work, *al-Ansāb*, was originally edited by Shaykh ’AbdurRahmān bin Yahyā al-Mu’allimī al-Yamānī who completed up to the sixth volume of it, this was printed in Hyderabad, India by Dā’irat ul-Ma’ārif al-Islāmiyyah in 1382 AH/1962 CE. Then under the supervision of Sharafuddeen Ahmad, the director of Dā’irat ul-Ma’ārif al-Uthmāniyyah, it was continued in 1396/1976 and completed in 1402/1982. In 1400/1980 Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah in Cairo printed the first six volumes of al-Mu’allimī and then Muhammad ’Awwāmah completed vols.7 and 8. Professor Riyadh ’AbdulHameed Murād edited the ninth volume of it and Dr ’AbdulFattāh al-Hilwu edited the tenth volume, while Riyadh ’AbdulHameed Murād along with Muhammad Mutī’ al-Hāfidh supervised editing the eleventh volume in 1404 /1984. Professor Akram al-Būshī edited the twelfth volume which was the completion of the entire work. The book was also published in Beirut by Dār ul-Jannān (aka Dār ul-Fikr) in 1408/1988 with an introduction and commentary by ’Abdullāh ’Umar al-Bārūdī. The work was also printed by Dār Ihyā Turāth al-Islāmī with an introduction by Muhammad Ahmad Hallāq with a signature of Muhammad ’Abdurrahmān al-Mar’ashlī. This print claims to be the first authentic edition of the work based on the manuscript of the work from Muhammad Ameen Damaj in Beirut, yet this is exactly the same manuscript which was utilised by Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah in Cairo anyway!

The historian of Islām, Imām Muhammad bin Ahmad adh-Dhahabī (673-748 or 776 AH/1274-1348 or 1374 CE) stated in *Siyar A'lām un-Nubalā'* [Biographies of Notable Figures] when presenting the biography of 'Uthmān bin Khurrazād:

قلتُ : الأمانةُ جزءٌ من الدين ، والضبطُ داخلٌ في الحدِّق ، فالذي
يحتاجُ إليه الحافظُ أن يكونَ تقياً ذكياً ، نحوياً لغوياً ، زكياً حياً ، سلفياً ،

I say: trust is a part of the religion and precision is included within meticulousness, so what the Hāfidh needs is to be: pious, intelligent, a grammarian, purified, shy and Salafī...⁶¹

Adh-Dhahabī also said in the biography of al-Fasawī:

قلتُ : هذه حكايةٌ منقطعةٌ ، فالله أعلم ، وما علمتُ يعقوبَ الفسوي
إلا سلفياً ، وقد صنَّف كتاباً صغيراً في السنة .

I say: this story is disconnected and Allāh knows best. For I did not know Ya'qūb al-Fasawī except that he was Salafī and he authored a small book on the Sunnah.⁶²

Imām Adh-Dhahabī also transmitted in *Siyar A'lām un-Nubalā'*, vol.16, p.457 (Beirut: Mu'assasat ur-Risālah, 1417 AH/1996 CE, 11th Print, critically edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt and Akram al-Būshayī), from ad-Dāraqutnī that he said

ما شيءٌ أبغضُ إليّ من علم الكلام .

...there is nothing more despised to me than 'Ilm ul-Kalām...

Then adh-Dhahabī said about ad-Dāraqutnī:

قلتُ : لم يدخل الرجلُ أبداً في علم الكلام ولا الجدال ، ولا خاض
في ذلك ، بل كان سلفياً ، سمع هذا القول منه أبو عبد الرحمن السُّلمي .

I say: the man never ever got involved in 'Ilm ul-Kalām or argumentation – **rather he was Salafī**. This statement (about the dislike of 'Ilm ul-Kalām) was heard from him by Abū 'AbdurRahmān as-Sulamī.⁶³

⁶¹ Imām Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām un-Nubala'* (Beirut: Mu'assasat ur-Risālah, 9th Print, 1413 AH/1993, eds. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt and 'Ali Abū Zayd), vol.13, p.380.

⁶² Ibid., vol.13, p.183.

Adh-Dhahabī stated in the biography of Muhammad bin Muhammad bin al-Mufaddal al-Bahrānī: “he was religious, charitable and Salafī...”⁶⁴ Adh-Dhahabī mentioned in the biography of Yahyā bin Ishāq bin Khaleel ash-Shaybānī: “He had understanding of the madhhab, good, humble, Salafī...”⁶⁵ Adh-Dhahabī stated in the biography of Ibn Hubayrah in *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, vol.20, p.426:

وَشَارَكَ فِي عُلُومِ الْإِسْلَامِ ، وَمَهَرَ فِي اللُّغَةِ ، وَكَانَ يَعْرِفُ الْمَذْهَبَ وَالْعَرَبِيَّةَ
وَالْعَرُوضَ ، سَلَفِيًّا أَثَرِيًّا ، ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ أَمَضَهُ الْفَقْرُ ، فَتَعَرَّضَ لِلْكَتَابَةِ ، وَتَقَدَّمَ ،

...he used to know the madhhab, Arabic and 'Arūdh (prosody), he was Salafī and Atharī...⁶⁶

Imām Adh-Dhahabī stated in *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, vol.23, p.118 in the biography of Ibn ul-Majd:

وَكَانَ ثِقَةً ثَبَتًا ، ذَكِيًّا ، سَلَفِيًّا ، تَقِيًّا

He was thiqah, precise, intelligent, Salafī and pious...⁶⁷

Imām Adh-Dhahabī also relayed in *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, vol.23, p.142, when discussing the life of Ibn as-Salāh:

قُلْتُ : كَانَ ذَا جَلَالَةٍ عَجِيبَةٍ ، وَوَقَارٍ وَهَيْبَةٍ ، وَفَصَاحَةٍ ، وَعِلْمٍ نَافِعٍ ،
وَكَانَ مَتِينَ الدِّيَانَةِ ، سَلَفِيًّا الْجُمْلَةَ ، صَحِيحَ النَّحْلَةِ ، كَافًّا عَنِ الْخَوْصِ فِي
مَزَلَّاتِ الْأَقْدَامِ ، مُؤْمِنًا بِاللَّهِ ، وَبِمَا جَاءَ عَنِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَسْمَائِهِ وَنُعُوتِهِ ، حَسَنَ

⁶³ Imām Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, (Beirut: Mu’assasat ur-Risālah, 1417 AH/1996, 11th Print, eds. Shu’ayb al-Arna’ūt and Akram al-Būshayī), vol.16, p.457.

⁶⁴ *Mu’jam ush-Shuyūkh*, vol.2, p.280.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.369.

⁶⁶ Imām Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, (Beirut: Mu’assasat ur-Risālah, 1417 AH/1996, 11th Print, eds. Shu’ayb al-Arna’ūt and Muhammad Na’eem al-’Arqasūsī), vol.20, p.426.

⁶⁷ Imām Shamsuddeen Muhammad bin Ahmad adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar A’lām un-Nubalā’*, (Beirut: Mu’assasat ur-Risālah, 1417 AH/1996, 11th Print, eds. by Dr Bashhār ’Awwād Ma’rūf and Dr Muhyī Hilāl as-Sadhān), vol.23, p.118.

I say: he possesses amazing glory (Jalālah 'Ajeebah), grandeur (Waqār), standing (Haybah), eloquence (Fasāhah) and beneficial knowledge ('Ilm un-Nāfi'). He was firm in religion, completely Salafī (Salafī al-Jumlah) and correct in creed (Saheeh an-Nihlah). He suffices from indulging in the slip-ups and believed in Allāh and what arrived from Allāh regarding His Names and Descriptions.⁶⁸

Imām Adh-Dhahabī also mentioned in his book *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashābeer wa'l-A'lām* (Dār ul-Gharb al-Islāmī Print), vol.10, p.202 and vol.31, p.142 (Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabī Print, 1414 AH/1994 CE, ed. Dr 'Umar Tadmurī) when discussing the obituaries of the year 463 AH and the biography of Yūsuf bin 'Abdullāh bin Muhammad bin 'AbdulBarr bin 'Āsim an-Nimrī al-Qurtubī:

قلت: وكان سلفي الاعتقاد، متين الديانة.

I say: he was Salafī in creed and firm in religiosity.⁶⁹

Imām adh-Dhahabī stated in *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashābeer wa'l-A'lām*⁷⁰ when discussion the obituaries of 551 AH, in the biography of Nabā bin Muhammad bin Mahfūdh Abi'l-Bayān:

كان كبير القدر، عالماً، عاملاً، زاهداً، قانتاً، عابداً، إماماً في اللغة، فقيهاً، شافعي المذهب، سلفي المعتقد، داعية إلى السنة. له تواليف ومجاميع، وشعر كثير، وأذكار مسموعة مطبوعة، وقبره يُزار بمقابر باب الصغير.

ولم يذكره ابن عساكر في «تاريخه»، ولا ابن خلّكان في «الأعيان».

He was of immense estimation, a scholar, practioner, ascetic, devout, a pious worshipper, an Imām in the Arabic language, a jurist, Shāfi'i in Madhhab, Salafī in creed and a caller to the Sunnah. He has writings, compilations, much in the way of poetry...Neither Ibn 'Asākir mentioned him in his *Tārīkh* nor Ibn Khallikān in *al-A'yān*.

⁶⁸ Ibid., vol.23, p.142.

⁶⁹ Al-Hāfidh al-Mu'arrikh Shamsuddeen Muhamamd bin Ahmad bin 'Uthmān adh-Dhahabī, *Tāreekh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashābeer wa'l-A'lām: Wafayāt 460-470 AH* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1414 AH/1994, ed. Dr 'Umar 'AbdusSalām Tadmurī, Professor of Islamic History at the University of Lebanon), vol.31, p.142.

⁷⁰ Imām adh-Dhahabī stated in *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashaheer wa'l-A'lām*, vol.12, p.37 (Dār ul-Gharb al-Islāmī Print); and vol.38, p.68 (Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabī Print, 1415 AH/1995 CE), ed. Dr 'Umar Tadmurī.

Imām adh-Dhahabī stated in *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashabeer wa'l-A'lām*, vol.12, p.1032 (Dār ul-Gharb al-Islāmī Print) when discussing the obituaries of 595 AH [1198 CE], in the biography of 'AbdulKhāliq bin Abi'l-Baqā' bin al-Bandar al-Harīmī:

He was trustworthy, righteous, good and Salafi.

Imām adh-Dhahabī also relayed in *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashabeer wa'l-A'lām* when discussing the obituaries of 645 AH [1247 CE], in the biography of 'AbdurRaheem ibn al-Hāfidh al-Qādī al-Qurashī az-Zubayrī:

وكان ورعاً، صالحاً، ديناً، سلفياً.

...and he was abstinent, righteous, religious and Salafi.⁷¹

Imām adh-Dhahabī stated in *Tārīkh ul-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashabeer wa'l-A'lām* when discussing the obituaries of 646 AH [1248 CE], in the biography of 'Ali bin Yahyā bin al-Makhzūmī al-Baghdādī:

وكان سنياً سلفياً أثرياً^(٢)، رحمه الله.

He was Sunnī, Salafī and Atharī; may Allāh have mercy on him.⁷²

Salāhuddeen Khaleel bin Abayk as-Safadī (d. 764 AH/1363 CE) in his book *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* noted in the biography of Muhammad bin Abī Bakr bin 'Isā bin Badrān al-Akhnā'ī:

وكان محباً للرواية سلفي الطريقة

He was a lover of narration and Salafī in method.⁷³

As-Safadī also mentioned in *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* in the biography of Ibrāheem bin Sa'dullāh bin Jamā'ah bin 'Ali bin Jamā'ah bin Hāzim bin Sakhr, az-Zāhid al-'Ābid, Abū Ishāq al-Kinānī al-Hamawī:

٧٧ - «ابن جماعة» إبراهيم بن سعد الله بن جماعة بن علي بن جماعة بن حازم بن صخر الزاهد العابد أبو إسحاق الكناني الحموي شيخ البيانية بحمة، كان صالحاً خيراً كثير الذكر سلفي المعتقد، روى عنه ولده قاضي القضاة بدر الدين محمد بن جماعة وقد تقدم ذكره في المحمدين.

⁷¹ Ibid., vol.14, p.519 (Dār ul-Gharb al-Islāmī Print); and vol.47, p.276 (Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabī Print, 1419 AH/1997 CE), ed. Dr 'Umar Tadmurī.

⁷² Ibid., vol.14, p.553 (Dār ul-Gharb al-Islāmī Print) and vol.47, p.324 (Dār ul-Kutub al-'Arabī Print, 1419 AH/1997 CE), ed. Dr 'Umar Tadmurī.

⁷³ Salāhuddeen Khaleel bin Abayk as-Safadī, *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt*, vol. 2, p.260 (Mu'assassat ur-Risālah Print) and vol.2, p.194 (Beirut: Dār ul-Ihyā Turāth al-'Arabī Print, 1420 AH/2000 CE, eds. Ahmad al-Arna'ūt and Turkī Mustafā).

...he was righteous, good, abundant in dhikr and Salafī in beliefs. His son, the head judge, Badruddeen Muhammad bin Jamā'ah narrated from him, and he his mentioned among the Muhadditheen has been mentioned prior.⁷⁴

As-Safadī also highlighted in *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* in the biography of Salāh bin Thāmir Abi'l-Fadl al-Ja'barī ash-Shāfi'i:

مليح الشكل طويلاً حسن الأخلاق خيراً عفيفاً سلفياً الطريقة

He was of pleasant form, tall, of good character, good, chaste and Salafī in method.⁷⁵

As-Safadī stated in *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* in the biography of 'AbdurRahmān bin Muhammad Abī Hāmid at-Tabrīzī ash-Shāfi'i:

وكان سلفياً قوَّالاً بالحق ذا سكينه وإخلاص

He was Salafī, a speaker of truth and a possessor of tranquillity and sincerity.⁷⁶

As-Safadī also noted in *al-Wāfi bi'l-Wafayāt* in the biography of 'AbdurRahmān bin Makhlūf bin Jamā'ah bin Rajā' ar-Rab'i al-Iskandarī al-Mālikī:

وتفرّد بأجزاء عالية سلفية، وله بصرٌ بالشروط وتقدّم فيها. سمع منه الواني وابن سيّد الناس

...he was alone in reporting lofty Salafī sections (Ajzā' 'Āliyyah Salafīyyah) and he had insight of the conditions and was prominent in regards to them.

Al-Wānī and Ibn Sayyid an-Nās heard from him...⁷⁷

As-Safadī stated in his book *A'yān ul-'Asr wa A'wān un-Nasr* in regards to 'AbdurRahmān bin Muhammad at-Tabrīzī:

كان قوَّالاً بالحق ، قوَّاماً بالصدق ، سلفي الاعتقاد ، ذا سكينه وإخلاص واجتهاد ، وَعَظَّ ذَكَرَ ، وَعَظَّ^(٢) بناجد الصدق وفكر ، وكانت له في النفوس مهابة ،

He was a speaker of the truth, an establisher of truthfulness, Salafī in creed, a possessor of tranquility, sincerity and ijtihād...⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Volume 5, p.270 (Mu'assassat ur-Risālah Print) and vol.5, p.231 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā Turāth al-'Arabī Print, 1420 AH/2000 CE, eds. Ahmad al-Arna'ūt and Turkī Mustafā).

⁷⁵ Volume 20, p.2231 (Mu'assassat ur-Risālah Print) and vol.16, p.146 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā Turāth al-'Arabī Print, 1420 AH/2000 CE, eds. Ahmad al-Arna'ūt and Turkī Mustafā).

⁷⁶ Volume 24, p.2603 (Mu'assassat ur-Risālah Print) and vol.18, p.155 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā Turāth al-'Arabī Print, 1420 AH/2000 CE, eds. Ahmad al-Arna'ūt and Turkī Mustafā).

⁷⁷ Volume 24, p.2605 (Mu'assassat ur-Risālah Print) and vol.18, p.158 (Beirut: Dār Ihyā Turāth al-'Arabī Print, 1420 AH/2000 CE, eds. Ahmad al-Arna'ūt and Turkī Mustafā).

As-Safadī also stated in *A'yān ul-'Asr wa A'wān un-Nasr* with regards to Muhammad bin Abī Bakr bin 'Isā al-Akhnā'ī:

متبسّطاً في الحلم ، محمود السيرة ، مجهود السريرة ، سلفي الطريقتين ، سلفي الحقيقة^(٢) ،
يحبّ الرواية ، ويعتني بها أتمّ عناية .

Broad in hilm, a praised biography, Salafī in method, a real Salafī, a lover of narration and he gave it the utmost importance.⁷⁹

Abū Bakr bin Ahmad bin Qādī Shuhbah (d. 851 AH) stated in *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'yyah* (ʿĀlam ul-Kutub Print), vol.2, p.161, in regards to the biography of Ahmad bin Ahmad bin Ni'mah al-Maqdisī: **"He was firm in religiosity, good in belief and Salafī in creed."** Imām Ahmad bin 'Alī bin Hajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852 AH/1449 CE) stated in *Lisān ul-Mīzān* in the biography of Muhammad bin al-Qāsim bin Sufyān:

وكان رأس المالكية بمصر وأحفظهم للمذهب مع المتقنين فن التاريخ والأدب مع الدين والورع وله احكام القرآن ومناقب مالك
والرواية عنه والمناسك والواهي في الفقه وغير ذلك وكان سلفي المذهب

He was the head of the Mālikīs of Egypt and of all of them had memorised the most from the Madhhab, along with being precise in regards to the arts of history and literature. Alongside this, he possessed religion and wara'. He authored Ahkām ul-Qur'ān, Manāqib Mālik, al-Manāsik, al-Wāhī fī'l-Fiqh and other works. He was Salafī in Madhhab.⁸⁰

Imām 'AbdurRahmān bin Abī Bakr as-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH/1505 CE) stated in *Tadhkirat ul-Huffādh* (Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah Print), p.503 in the biography of Ibn as-Salāh:

He was of the notable of the deen, one of the virtues of his era in tafseer, hadeeth and fiqh. He participated in a number of arts and was an ocean of knowledge in Usūl and Furū'. He indeed put forth an example to be followed, he was Salafī, a Zāhid, of sound creed and possessed glory.

⁷⁸ Salāhuddeen Khaleel bin Abayk as-Safadī, *A'yān ul-'Asr wa A'wān un-Nasr*, Dār ul-Fikr Print, vol.4, p.415; and Beirut and Damascus: Dār ul-Fikr, 1418 AH/1998 CE, eds. Dr 'Alī Abū Zayd, Muhammad Mu'awwid, Mahmūd Sālim Muhammad et al., vol.3, p.37.

⁷⁹ Dār ul-Fikr Print, vol.6, p.773; and Beirut and Damascus: Dār ul-Fikr, 1418 AH/1998 CE, eds. Dr 'Alī Abū Zayd, Muhammad Mu'awwid, Mahmūd Sālim Muhammad et al., vol.4, p.361.

⁸⁰ Imām Ahmad bin 'Alī bin Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān ul-Mīzān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-'Ālāmī, 1406/1986 CE, eds. Dā'irat al-Ma'arif an-Nidhāmiyyah in Hyderabad), vol.5, p.348.

’AbdulHayy bin Ahmad ad-Dimashqī (d. 1089 AH/1678 CE), well-known as Ibn ul-’Imād, stated in *Shadbarāt udb-Dhabab fī Akbbār man Dhabab* (Dār ul-Fikr Print), vol.2, p.160, in regards to the biography of Muhammad ibn Mahfūdh bin al-Hawrānī:

He was of great estimation, a scholar, a practitioner, ascetic, pious, humble, an adherent to knowledge, action and investigation. He was of abundant worship and Murāqabah, Salafī in creed and of great standing, staying away from reputation, he adhered to the Sunnah.

Ibn ul-’Imād also stated in *Shadbarāt udb-Dhabab fī Akbbār man Dhabab* (Dār ul-Fikr Print), vol.3, p.37, in regards to the biography of Abū ’Umar bin ’Āt an-Nafarī ash-Shātībī:

“He was amazing in arranging texts, knowledge of narrators and literature. He was ascetic, Salafī and chaste.”

’AbdulQādir bin Badrān ad-Dimishqī (d. 1346 AH/1928 CE) stated in *al-Madkhal liā Madhhab al-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal*:

Later he announced his creed in his book entitled al-Ibānah ’an Madhhab Ahl il-Haqq and within it he frankly stated that his Madhhab was that of the Sahābah and those who follow them in goodness. Whoever understood his intents became a pure Salafī...⁸¹

On page 492 Ibn Badrān stated:

Of his works in which he transmitted the Usūl ud-Deen which contains that which is sufficient for whoever was Salafī.

On page 494 Ibn Badrān stated:

This creed of his was pure Salafī, would that the Hanafīs after him followed this creed as the foundation of their beliefs.

Kamāluddeen Abu’l-Qāsim ’Umar ibn Ahmad ibn Abī Jarādah ibn al-’Adeem (589-660 AH/1193-1262 CE) mentioned in his book *Bughyat ut-Talab fī Tāreekh Halab* [The Ultimate Quest Regarding the History of Aleppo] when discussing the biography of Abu’l-Fath ar-Rūhāwī that:

«وكان شيخاً حسناً ديناً متعبداً، شافعيّاً سلفياً»

He was a Shaykh, good, religious, prolific in worship, Shāfi’ī and Salafī.⁸²

⁸¹ ’AbdulQādir bin Badrān ad-Dimishqī, *al-Madkhal liā Madhhab al-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal* (Beirut: Mu’assasat ur-Risālah, 1981 ed. Shaykh ’Abdullāh bin ’AbdulMuhsin at-Turkī), pp.49-50.

⁸² Kamāluddeen Abu’l-Qāsim ’Umar ibn Ahmad ibn Abī Jarādah ibn al-’Adeem, *Bughyat ut-Talab fī Tāreekh Halab* [The Ultimate Quest Regarding the History of Aleppo] (Dār ul-Fikr Print), vol.10, p.4565.

Ibn ul-’Adeem also relays in vol.10, p.4723 when discussing the biography of the jurist al-Burhān ar-Rundī:

كان من الفقهاء المفتين بجلب، وكان حنفي المذهب، ولم أعرف اسمه، ووقفت له على فتوى أفتى فيها مع علاء الدين عبد الرحمن الغزنوي وشرف الدين بن أبي عصرون في مسألة سئلوا عنها في رجل يقول: إني سلفي المذهب، ويزعم أن الله تعالى في الجهة. فأفتى وقال في أثناء كلامه: أما السلف الصالح رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين ما كانوا يثبتون لله من الصفات ما كان يستحيل في حقه من صفات المحدثات كالأجسام والأعراض والجواهر

He was one of the precise jurists of Halab (Aleppo) and was Hanafī in Madhhab. I did not know his full name but then I came across it in a religious verdict which he gave along with ‘Alā’uddeen ‘AbdurRahmān al-Ghaznawī and Sharafuddeen bin Abī ‘Asroon in regards to a man who they were asked about who says “I am Salafī in Madhhab”⁸³ but claims that Allāh is in a direction. Ar-Rundī gave his verdict saying: “As for the Salaf us-Sālih, may Allāh be pleased with them all, then they did not affirm for Allāh whatever was not possible for His Majestic Right such as newly invented terms related to bodies (Ajsām), incidental attributes (A’rād) and substances (Jawāhir)...⁸⁴

Thus, the contemporary Salafī Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī stated:

There is no doubt that the naming is clear, lucid, distinguished and apparent, that we say: ‘I am a Muslim who follows the Book and Sunnah in accordance with the methodology of our pious predecessors’ which is that you say in brief: ‘I am Salafī’.⁸⁵

Hence, Salafīyah is well-rooted within the Sunni tradition despite the efforts to divorce it from Islam in totality and thus hide the sources we have mentioned above out of academic dishonesty.

EXISTENCE OF THE MADH HAB OF AHL UL-HADITH AND THE SALAFI METHOD

⁸³ The one who says “I am Salafī in Madhhab” intends by this: ascription to the Madhhab of the Salaf us-Sālih and an adherent to their way in regards to Allāh’s Names and Attributes.

⁸⁴ It is incorrect to negate or affirm terminologies which are not corroborated in the Book and Sunnah such as Jihah [direction], Jism [body], ‘Arad [incidental attribute], Jawhar [substances] and other attributes of the creation and newly arisen objects. Likewise, it is incorrect to say that the Salaf us-Sālih used to affirm or negate these things due to the lack of transmission from them in this regard.

⁸⁵ *Majallat al-Asālah*, vol.9, p.90.

As a result, Salafiyyah, meaning the way of Ahl us-Sunnah, Ahl ul-Hadith and Ahl us-Sunan, all synonymous terms, was extant pre-10th century CE. The scholars noted above who were referred to as being “Salafi” nearly a thousand years ago were documented in the biographies as having a clear Salafi approach *in both creed and methodology*, and thus were not blind followers of a Madhhab in fiqh. This is contrary to the suggestion of Henri Lauzière (2016) that **“contemporary Salafis try to force their empirical evidence into a preconceived notion of Salafism that does not seem to have existed in the medieval period.”**⁸⁶ Hereby suggesting the contemporary Salafis project their approach on to the historical past, and that while the term ‘Salafi’ is extant, which is what Lauzière does admit, that it was in regards to *creed alone* and not a complete approach encompassing fiqh and methods of understanding the texts. This was not a line of argument presented by Nahouza, yet as at face value it appears quite convincing it is worth us briefly addressing it.

The argument by Lauzière appears solid and credible, that although the term ‘Salafi’ is extant within the classical literature the scholars of the past invariably used the term as a creedal and theological ascription but outside of that the demarcation it has no relevance, but modern Salafis have merely applied a kind of Historian’s fallacy and regarded the Islamic past from a perspective to neatly fit into modern Salafi conclusions. Despite the illusion of coherence and validity in this line of argument, the reality is that there is copious evidence to corroborate the Salafi tradition with its comprehensive features, whether known as ‘Ahl ul-Hadith’, ‘Atharī’, ‘Ahl ul-Athar’ or ‘Salafi’, within the Islamic past.⁸⁷ As not only did the four Imāms all have statements wherein they advised their students to not follow their views uncritically and to rather follow authentic transmission from the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), but there also included matters of fiqh *within* their books on theology and creed. Hence, the early scholars such as Imāms Ahmad in *Usūl us-Sunnah*, Bārbahārī, al-Lālikā’ī in *Sharh I’tiqād Ahl us-Sunnah*, al-Muzanī in *Sharh us-Sunnah*, ar-Rāzi’ayn, as-Sābūnī in *‘Aqeedat us-Salaf wa As-hāb ul-Hadeeth* and at-Tabarī in *Sareeb us-Sunnah*, Imām at-Tahawī in his *‘Aqeedah at-Tahawiyyah* – mention the *fiqh issue* of wiping over *Khuffayn* [leather socks], or other fiqh issues, which demarcated Ahl us-Sunnah from the Rāfidah and the Khawārij, highlighting the importance of following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*), and also emphasising the Qur’ān, Sunnah and Ijmā’ on

⁸⁶ Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp.16-17.

⁸⁷ I presented this argument to a professor of the Prophetic Sunnah at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University recently, Shaykh ‘Āsim al-Qaryūti. The Shaykh is Jordanian-Palestinian and a student of Imam al-Albānī, the Muhaddith of Madeenah ‘AbdulMuhsin al-‘Abbād, Shaykh Badee’uddeen Shāh as-Sindī and the Shaykhs of hadeeth from India.

the matter and therefore the authority of those sources in Sunni tradition. Furthermore, Abū Hanīfah’s book *Fiqh ul-Akbar* [The Greatest Jurisprudence] which contains Islamic jurisprudence also contains core matters of Allāh’s Names and Attributes and creed. Also ’AbdulQādir al-Jīlānī in his work *al-Ghanyab* mentioned *fiqh* issues along with *fiqh* matters, indicating that there was the matters were regarded comprehensively. This demonstrates that certain *fiqh* views were inextricably linked to creed.

The late Mauritanian Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shanqīti⁸⁸ (*rahimahullāh*) of Mauritania mentioned a valuable point his Qur’anic commentary, *Adwā’ ul-Bayān*. He noted, in the tafseer of Sūrah Muhammad:

وأما نوع التقليد الذي خالف فيه المتأخرون الصحابة وغيرهم من القرون المشهود لهم بالخير، فهو تقليد رجل واحد معين دون غيره من جميع العلماء، فإن هذا النوع من التقليد لم يرد به نص من كتاب ولا سنة، ولم يقل به أحد من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ولا أحد من القرون الثلاثة المشهود لهم بالخير، وهو مخالف لأقوال الأئمة الأربعة - رحمهم الله -، فلم يقل أحد منهم بالجمود على قول رجل واحد معين دون غيره من جميع علماء المسلمين.

فتقليد العالم المعين من بدع القرن الرابع، ومن يدعي خلاف ذلك فليعين لنا رجلاً واحداً من القرون الثلاثة الأولى، التزم مذهب رجل واحد معين ولن يستطيع ذلك أبداً، لأنه لم يقع البتة.

As for the type of taqleed about which the later scholars differ with the companions and other from those generations whose excellence has been testified to, then it is the performing of taqleed of one particular scholar only, to the exclusion of other scholars. This type of taqleed is neither proven by the texts of the Book and the Sunnah, nor was it the view of any of the companions of Allāh’s messenger (*sallallāhu alayhi wassallam*), nor anyone else from the first three generations whose excellence has been testified to. Likewise, it opposes the saying of the four Imāms since none of them held the view that it was binding to adhere to the saying of a single person to the exclusion of all the other scholars. Rather,

⁸⁸ Muhammad al-Ameen ibn Muhammad al-Jaknī ash-Shanqīti (d. 1974 CE) a famous scholar and Mālikī jurist in his homeland, Mauritania. He taught *tafseer* in the Prophet’s Mosque in Madeenah and *Usūl ul-Fiqh* in Riyādh and Madeenah. His books are used in the college of *Sharee’ah* in Saudi Arabia. The most notable of his works is *Adwā’ ul-Bayān*.

the taqleed of one particular scholar is an innovation of the fourth century AH. Whoever claims contrary to this should specify to us one man from the first three generations who obligated [people to follow] the Madhhab of one specific man, and he will not be able to bring that whatsoever because it did not happen at all.⁸⁹

This is a clear statement from Imām ash-Shanqītī, may Allāh have mercy, on the error of obligating people to follow “one of the four Madhhabs”, which is the mantra of the contemporary ‘traditional Islam’ movement, which Nahouza upholds. Imām Shanqītī then says:

We will mention here, by Allāh’s Will, some statements from the people of knowledge showing the corruption of this type of taqleed and the proofs of those who champion it and its counter-argument. After that has all been elucidated we will clarify what is apparent to us with daleel which is the truth and the accurate view, by Allāh’s Will. Imām Abū ‘Umar bin ‘AbdulBarr, may Allāh have mercy on him, sated in his book Jāmi’ Bayān ul-‘Ilm wa Fadlihi: ‘Chapter: The Fasād of Taqleed and its Negation, and the Difference Between Taqleed and Ittibā’.⁹⁰

The historian of al-Andalus [Muslim Spain], ‘Abdullāh bin Muhammad ibn ul-Fardī (351-403 AH/962-1013 CE) also mentions other examples from Islamic history demonstrating the futility of what Nahouza argues can be observed. In the *Tārīkh ‘Ulama al-Andalus* of Ibn al-Fardī (edited by Dr Bashhār ‘Awād Ma’rūf, 2008), vol.1, p.145, under biography no.281 of Baqiyy’ ibn Makhlad where it is stated:⁹¹

With Muhammad ibn Waddāh⁹² and Baqiyy’ ibn Makhlad, al-Andalus (Andalusia) became a Dār ul-Hadeeth [an Abode of Hadeeth].⁹³

⁸⁹ Muhammad al-Ameen ibn Muhammad al-Jaknī ash-Shanqītī al-Mauritānī al-Mālikī al-Afrīqī, *Adwā’ ul-Bayān fī Īdāh al-Qur’ān bi’l-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā ut-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.), vol. 5, p.92

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Al-Hāfidh Abu’l-Waleed ‘Abdullāh bin Muhammad ibn ul-Fardī (351-403 AH), *Tārīkh ‘Ulama al-Andalus* (Tunis, Tunisia: Dar Gharb al-Islāmī, 1429 AH/2008 CE. Ed. Dr Bashhaar ‘Awaad Ma’rūf), vol.1, p.145.

⁹² Ibn Waddāh (d. 287 AH/900 CE), a Muhaddith from Andalus, wrote a famous book on innovation entitled *al-Bida’ wa Nahy ‘anhā* [Innovation and its Prohibition], it was printed on the following occasions:

- ❖ Beirut: Dār ur-Rā’id al-‘Arabī, 1982
- ❖ Cairo: Dār us-Safā, 1411 AH/1990 CE, edited by Muhammad Ahmad Dahmān. This edition can be downloaded here in pdf format Online: <http://www.mediafire.com/?ayzhmmimy2z> accessed Friday 16 July 2010.
- ❖ Riyadh: Dār us-Samī’ī, 1416 AH/1996 CE, edited by Shaykh, Dr Badr bin ‘Abdullāh al-Badr

Ibn ul-Fardī also states in his *Tārīkh* (ed. Dr Bashhār ‘Awād Ma’rūf, 2008), vol.1, p.165-166, in regards to another scholar from Qurtuba [Cordova], who was a student of Baqiyy’ ibn Makhlad, Abū ‘Ali Hasan bin Sa’d bin Idrees bin Razeen bin Kaseelah al-Kutāmī (d. 332 AH/945 CE): **“He inclined towards investigation [of the Revelatory Texts] and he abandoned taqleed.”** While Dr ‘Abdullāh Murābit at-Targhī states about Ibn Razeen in *Fabāris ‘Ulama il-Maghrib* [Indexes of the Scholars of the Western Islamic World], ending with the quote from Ibn ul-Fardi:

— أبو علي الحسن بن رزين الکنامي⁽⁶⁹⁾ (ت 332)، وهو من قدماء المغاربة الذين اخذوا عن بقي بن مخلد. وكانت له رحلتان إلى المشرق وسمع كثير ومشیخة واسعة، «وكان يذهب إلى النظر وترك التقليد»⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Abu ‘Ali al-Hasan bin Razeen al-Kutāmī (d. 332 AH/945 CE) - he was one of the early ones from the Maghāribah [Western Muslim Inhabitants and also North-West Africans] to take from Baqiyy’ ibn Makhlad. He travelled

❖ Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1417 AH/1997 CE, edited by Muhammad Hasan Ismā‘eel

⁹³ This has also been corroborated by European researchers, in following Ibn al-Faridī, such as Isabel Fierro in her paper “The Introduction of Hadith in al-Andalus (2nd/-3rdCenturies)” in *Der Islam*, Vol. 66, Issue 1, pp. 68–93. Also Fierro notes in her paper “Heresy in al-Andalus” in Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Manuela Marín (eds.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), p.895-909. Fierro notes on page 897:

Until their time, fiqh (introduced, as noted above, in the second half of the 2nd/8th century) and hadith were seen as separate and different entities, and the scholars who introduced fiqh (mainly Mālikī fiqh) are not mentioned in the sources as traditionalists. **The reception of hadith as a structured corpus of legal material, over and above the limited amount of hadith embedded in Mālikī works, aroused the opposition of the Andalusī Mālikīs because of the threat that this represented to their established doctrinal teachings and to existing legal practice in al-Andalus – an opposition which led to the accusation of zandaqa against Baqī ibn Makhlad, who was, like Ibn Waddāh, a traditionalist, but was also the introducer of Shāfi’ī’s works and an opponent of ahl ul-ra’y, whereas Ibn Waddāh was and remained a Mālikī who tried to reconcile the positions of ahl al-ra’y and the ahl al-hadith.** The amir Muhammad, however, supported Baqī, and, thanks to his intervention, the persecution of Baqī did not lead to his execution. The amir thus played the role of umpire between ahl al-ra’y and the ahl al-hadith, without, though, replacing the former by the latter, probably because he found it useful for his own policy to have the scholars divided.

twice to the East and heard much in the way of hadeeth and had a vast amount of Shaykhs. He inclined towards investigation [of the Revelatory Texts] and he abandoned taqleed.⁹⁴

Ibn Lubābah stated about Baqiyy’ ibn Makhlad, as is found in al-Qādi ’Iyyād’s *Tarteeb ul-Madārik*, vol.4, p.239:

As for Baqiyy’ then he was an ocean who used to perfect that which he relayed and he did not used to follow a Madhhab. He moved in accordance with the narrations and how they moved.

Ibn Hazm in his treatise entitled *Fadl ul-Andalus wa Dbiker Rijālihā* [The Virtue of Andalusia and a Mention of its Men], stated about Baqiyy’ on page 179:

...and he would choose and not blindly follow anyone and he was of the elite of Imām Ahmad, Abū ’Abdillāh al-Bukhārī, Muslim ibn Hajjāj, Abū ’AbdirRahmān an-Nasā’ī, may Allāh have mercy on them.

This clearly demonstrates that from the very early history of Islām scholars of Ahl ul-Hadeeth who rejected *taqleed* were extant and that there is a clear precedent for the Salafī approach from the classical scholars. It is neither an invention of early 20th century Egypt nor a new phenomena of the 1980s which has grown due to the proliferation of Gulf Arab petro-dollars, as some claim! Furthermore, the above works which we have mentioned here have been extant long before the eighteenth century, the early twentieth century or the 1980s. These sources have also been extant centuries before the proliferation of ‘Gulf Arab Petro dollars’ and are extant in manuscript libraries, so there can be no issue of “tampering”. Moreover, these classical sources have neither been critically edited by those who could be classified as being “Salafīs” nor have been printed and published by those who could be classified as Salafīs. Finally, and importantly, these classical sources have not been printed and published in Saudi Arabia.

THE SPREAD OF MADHHABS

As for the spread of the Madhhabs, and Madhhabism, then the Madhāhib and their spread, was due to power and politics as is evident from even a brief historical survey. The idea that the Madhāhib were spread around the Islamic world by a mere **“unbroken chain of transmission”**

⁹⁴ Dr ’Abdullāh Murābit at-Targhī, *Fahāris ’Ulama ul-Maghrib: Mundhu an-Nashā’ liā Nihāyat ul-Qarn ath-Thānī ’Ashara min al-Hijrah, Manhajiyatuha, Tatawwuruha, Qimatuha al-’Ilmiyah* [Indexes of the Scholars of the Western Islamic World: From the Initial Inception to the End of the 12th Hijrī Century; Their Method, Evolution and Their Academic Value]. Tetouan, Morocco: Manshūrāt Kulliyat ul-Ādāb wa’l-’Ulūm ul-Insāniyyah (AbdulMālik as-Sa’dī University), 1420 AH/1999 CE, p.109.

that was “handed down traditionally” is a romantic ahistorical reading of events. For example, al-Maqrīzī in *Khitat Misr* notes:

The people of Africa mostly used to follow the Sunnah and the Āthār. Then the Hanafī madhhab took over and then after that, the Mālīkī madhhab; the latter ones following earlier ones in the playing of the companions of desires and self-interest.

All the people of the nations which the companions conquered used to be described with the name ‘*Ahl ul-Hadīth*’, as Abū Mansūr ‘AbdulQādir ibn Tāhīr at-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī said in his book *Usūl ud-Deen* (vol.1, p.317):

It is clear that the people of the lands of ar-Rūm, al-Jazeera, ash-Shām, Adharbayjān [Azerbaijan], Bāb ul-Abwāb [Darband/Derbent]⁹⁵ and others which were conquered were all upon the Madhhab of the Ahl ul-Hadīth. Also the inhabitants of the lands of Africa, Andalus and all the countries behind the Western Sea, were from the Ahl ul-Hadīth. Also the people of

⁹⁵ Or ‘Derbent’, written and pronounced as ‘Derbent’ in Russian, it is a town in Daghestan on the Western shore of the Caspian Sea that was known to the Arabs. See Houtsma, Van Donzel (eds.) *E.J. Brill’s First Encyclopaedia of Islam: 1913-1936* (Leiden, Netherlands: EJ Brill: 1993), p.940.

Derbent is the southern most city in Russia which is thought to be the oldest city in the whole of Russia. Derbent was known as the ‘Caspian Gates’ in the West and Bāb ul-Abwāb (‘The Gate of Gates’) in the Arabic-speaking Islamic world, but its name has always been linked to ‘gates’ of a fortress.

The name “The Gate of Gates” originates in the fact that Derbent consisted of thirty north-facing towers which stretched for 40 kilometres between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. The immense wall had a height of up to twenty meters and a thickness of about 10 feet (3 m) when it was in use. It was built by Yazdegird the Second of the Sassanid-Persian Empire (in circa 440 CE) and was attacked by the Armenians and Albanians in their rebellion in 450 CE.

Kisra the First strengthened it during his reign (531-579) in order to keep out the Gokturks. Some historians have confused the fortress walls with the Gates of Alexander which he built as a barrier in the Caucasus to prevent the non-Greeks of the north attacking the south. Some historians still maintain that the fortress built by Kisra may have had earlier foundations built by the Achaemenid Persian Empire (550–330 BCE), these were later conquered by the Greeks so the fortress may have been reinforced by agents of Alexander’s empire.

Darband (Derbent) is not to be confused with the four other towns today that have the name ‘Darband’. One town/district in Tajikistan; a village next to Tehrān in Irān; a town in Western Baluchistan and the other a village in the Mansehra District in North-Western Pakistan.

the lands of al-Yaman upon the Zanj coastline [Zanzibar] were all from the Ahl ul-Hadīth.⁹⁶

Al-Maqrīzī also notes in *al-Khitat* (vol.3, p.333):

Most of Ifreeqiyyah [Tunisia] was upon the Sunnah and Āthār, until ‘Abdullāh ibn Farrookh Abū Muhammad al-Fārisi came with the Hanafī madhhab, then Asad ibn al-Furāt ibn Senān became the judge of Ifreeqiyyah, upon the Hanafī madhhab. When Sahnoun ibn Sa’id at-Tanūkhī took judgeship of Ifreeqiyyah, the Mālikī madhhab spread amongst them.

Then al-Mu’izz ibn Bādees made all of the people of Ifreeqiyyah adhere to the Mālikī madhhab and leave everything else. So the people of Ifreeqiyyah and the people of al-Andalus were turned to the Mālikī madhhab right up until today, due to the desire of the rulers and their desire for the world. So the judgements and rulings in all those towns and villages were not given except by one who had ascribed themselves to the fiqh of the Mālikī madhhab...

This is also mentioned by the historians Ibn ul-Athīr in *al-Kāmil fi’t-Tārikh* and Ibn Khallikān in *Mawāsim ul-Ādāb*. Ibn Hajar mentions in *Raf’ ul-Isr*, as does as-Sakhāwī in *ath-Thighar al-Bassām* that:

Ibn ‘Uthmān ad-Dimishqī al-Qādī was the first one to bring the Shāfi’ī madhhab into ash-Shām and he took over the judgeship of Dimishq, ruling by it. He was followed by those who succeeded him and he used to give a reward of 100 dīnārs to the ones who memorised Mukhtasar ul-Muzanī.

In *Tabaqāt as-Subkī, al-I’lān wa’t-Tawbik* and *Shadharāt adb-Dhabab* (vol.3, p.51) it is mentioned:

The Shāfi’ī madhhab was spread beyond the river (i.e. to Transoxania) by Qaffāl ash-Shāshī. He died in the year 365 AH (1005 AH).

In the *Tārikh* of Ibn Khallikān, in the second volume, under the biography of an-Nāsir Salāhuddīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, it says:

When the state of Ayyūbiyyah was set up in the 5th century AH (from circa 1010 CE) in Misr, the madhhabs were revived by building schools for its jurists and other means. The Shāfi’ī madhhab was given big favours to make it known and the judges were chosen from it because it was the

⁹⁶ See Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ad-Dehlawī al-Madanī, *A History of the People of Hadīth* (Birmingham: Salafi Publications, Ramadān 1425AH/December 2005), p.38.

madhhab of the country. Banu Ayyūb were all Shāfi'iyyah, except 'Īsā ibn al-'Ādil.

Al-Maqrīzī thus states in *al-Khitat* (vol.3, p.344):

When the naval empire of the Turks succeeded it, its authorities were also Shāfi'i. It continued judging according to the Shāfi'iyyah law until the Sultanate of Mālik adh-Dhāhir Baybaras brought in judges from all four: they were Hanafī, Shāfi'i, Mālikī and Hanbalī. This continued until the year 665 AH (1267 CE), until there remained no madhhab in all of the Muslim lands except the four madhhabs and the creed of al-Ash'arī which was all taught to its people in the schools, the Khawānik (Sūfi hospices), prayer rooms and (Sūfi) retreats in all the Islamic states.

Enmity was shown to the ones who were partisan to anything else and they were criticised. None would be appointed as judges, nor would anyone's witness be accepted, nor would their proposals be accepted, nor would they be accepted as Imāms or teachers – if they did not blindly follow any one of the four madhhabs! The jurists of these countries gave the ruling, throughout this period, that it is an obligation to adhere to these madhhabs and that anything else was forbidden. This is the state of affairs up to today.⁹⁷

TAQLEED AND MADHHAB PAROCHIALISM

Many of the 'traditional Islam' movement simplistically think that the Salafī youth make up their own *fatāwā* via sifting through hadeeth collections and then arriving at *ijtihād*. They thus think that Salafīs do not refer to scholars and merely refer to books, yet this is definitely against the *manhaj* of those who follow the way of the Salaf. This mistake of theirs emanates from their misunderstanding that if *taqleed* is to be abandoned then *ijtihād* must be the only viable alternative, and this is a gross misrepresentation of the issue. Imām Ibn 'AbdulBarr stated in his book *Jāmi' Bayān ul-'Ilm wa Fadlibi*, vol.2, p.173, in a statement which the Madhhabists are in denial of, that:

(التقليد معناه في الشرع الرجوع إلى قول لا حجة لقائله عليه، وهذا ممنوع منه في الشريعة،

والاتباع ما ثبت عليه حجة).

⁹⁷ See Shaykh Ahmad ibn Muhammad ad-Dehlawī al-Madanī, *op.cit.*, p.80-86.

The meaning of taqleed in the Divine Legislation is returning back to a statement and not the actual proof of the one who made the statement – this is prohibited in the Divine Legislation, rather [what should be applied] is al-Ittiba' of what the evidence establishes.

Imām al-Albānī stated in *Silsilah Hudā wa Nūr*, no.331:

إذا نحن نقول للمقلدين بعبارة أخرى: نحن لا ننكر مجرد التقليد، وهذه أرجو أن تكون الفكرة ظاهرة لدينا جميعاً، نحن لا ننكر مبدأ التقليد، وإنما ننكر التدين بالتقليد وجعله مذهباً وديناً لا يُعاد عنه قيد شعرة، هذا الذي ننكره، أما الاتباع لعالم نثق بعلمه سميتومه تقليداً – على الرأس والعين – هذا واجب، ما يهمنا الآن التسمية تقليد أو اتباع، نحن نسميه اتباعاً... فإذا ننكر التدين بالتقليد، ولا ننكر التقليد كضرورة لا بد أن يصير إليها أكبر عالم في الدنيا لا يستطيع أن ينجو من التقليد

Therefore, we say to the Muqallids, in another way: we do not merely reject taqleed, and I hope that this idea is manifest to us all, we do not reject the basis of taqleed. Rather, we reject taqleed as a religion and making it a Madhhab and deen...this is what we reject. As for ittibā' [following based on investigation] a scholar whom we trust in terms of his knowledge, then you call that 'taqleed' and that is fully accepted, this is obligatory. Yet what is of importance to us now is the naming: taqleed or ittibā', we call this form: ittibā'. Therefore, we reject taqleed as a religion and we do not reject taqleed as a dire necessity which cannot be escaped from, for even the biggest scholar in the world is not able to be free of [this necessity of] taqleed.

Imām al-Albānī (*rahimahullāh*) also stated:

This is a clear error according to us, because the alternative to the prohibited taqleed is the obligatory ittibā' (conformity based upon evidence) upon every Muslim, and there is a clear difference between the two. Abū 'Abdullāh ibn Khuwayz Mindād al-Basrī al-Mālikī said: "The meaning of taqleed in the sharee'ah refers to one whose statement is not a proof. He is prohibited from that (statement) by the sharee'ah, and al-Ittibā' is what is affirmed by evidence." And he said in another place,

“Everyone whose statement you follow without there being an evidence to obligate that for you, then you are his muqallid (blind-follower). And taqleed is not correct in the Religion of Allāh. And everyone whose statement you are obligated to follow with evidence, then you are his muttabi’ (follower based upon evidence). And al-Ittibā’ is correct in the Religion, whilst taqleed is prohibited.” ...And the conclusive statement is that the callers to the sunnah do not obligate ijtihād except for one who has the aptitude for it. They obligate al-Ittibā’ upon every Muslim and they prohibit – in following the salaf – taqleed, except for one who is under necessity and cannot reach the sunnah. So whoever attributes to them other than this, then this is transgression and exceeding the bounds, and whosoever attacks them, then this is only an attack upon the Salaf and from amongst them are the four Imāms...⁹⁸

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn ‘Īd al-Abbāsī, one of the students of Imām al-Albānī stated:

So al-Albānī clarified to him [i.e. at-Tantāwī] that the Salafiyyeen see an intermediate level here between ijtihād and taqleed. It is al-Ittibā’ and from its adherents are those who have knowledge of the language and sharee’ah and they are capable of understanding what is being said. However, they have not reached the level of ijtihād. So it is upon them to look into the views of the mujtahideen and take one that has the strongest evidence. And this group consists of the majority of the ummah...meaning, they are not complete ignoramus incapable of understanding the sharee’ah evidences, nor are they scholars capable of ijtihād. So this group is capable of understanding sharee’ah evidences and reading books and understanding explanations. So the Salafiyyeen make it binding upon this group – which comprises the majority of the ummah – to go with the evidences that are clear to him, and to avoid bigoted adherence to a single madhhab or scholar.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Imām Muhammad Nāsīrud-Deen al-Albānī, *Fundamentals of the Salafee Methodology – An Islāmic Manual for Reform* (Toronto: Troid Publications, 2003 CE), p.92 - quoting Ibn ‘AbdulBarr, *Jāmi’ Bayān ul-‘Ilm*, vol.2, p.117 and Ibn ul-Qayyim *I’lām ul-Muwaqqi’een*, vol.3, p.299 [also see the edit of Muhammad ‘AbdusSalām Ibrāheem published by Dār ul-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah in Beirut, vol.2, p.137].

⁹⁹ *Fundamentals of the Salafee Methodology*, p.98-99

Hence we find that many of the classical scholars differentiated between *ittibā’* and *taqleed* such as: Ibn Abi-’Izz from the Hanafī jurists; Ibn Khuwayzmindād, Ibn ’AbdulBarr and the choice of Muhammad Ameen ash-Shanqītī from the Mālikīs; Ibn ul-Qayyim and others from the Hanbalīs and Abū Shāmah from the Shāfi’īs (though Abū Shāmah was a Mujtahid in his own right).¹⁰⁰ Abū Dawūd also stated that he heard Imām Ahmad corroborate *ittibā’*.¹⁰¹ Whereas other Usūlīs such

¹⁰⁰ It has been asserted by a variety of writers and commentators that this approach however was only initiated by Ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullāh*) and that prior to him there was no such emphasis on rejecting excessive *taqleed*. However, detailed study and research demonstrates that before Ibn Taymiyyah there were a number of scholars who had the same take on the excesses of *taqleed*. It is worth highlighting the role therefore of Imām Abū Shāmah (*rahimahullāh*). Abū Shāmah was a Damascene Shāfi’ī scholar who was one of the Mujtahid scholars (according to his biographers) who emphasized returning to the Qur’ān and Sunnah; opposing *bida’* and asserting *ijtihād* for those qualified scholars. All of this was before Shaykh ul-Islām Taymiyyah who is erroneously held to be the “founder” of this Salafī trend after the epoch of the Salaf. Abū Shāmah’s famous works include *Kitāb ur-Rawdatayn fī Akhbār id-Dawlatayn*, *Mukhtasar al-Mu’ammal fī’r-Radd ilā’l-Amr il-Awwal*, *al-Muhaqqaq min ’Ilm il-Usūl fīmā yata’allaq bi Af’āl ir-Rasūl*, *al-Murshid al-Wajeez ilā ’Ulūm tata’allaqu bi’l-Kitāb il’Azeez*.

In *al-Mu’ammal* Abū Shāmah had a chapter entitled ‘Section on the Obligation of Referring Back to the Qur’ān and Sunnah’ wherein he highlighted that the Revelatory Texts have to take precedence in solving disputes in the religion. He also made reference to the statements of the earlier Imāms in regards to uncritical following of juristic views. Abū Shāmah also criticized his contemporaries for reliance on the later writings of Abū Ishāq ash-Shīrāzī (d. 1083 AH) and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 AH), hence Abū Shāmah’s emphasis on ‘the first affair’ as opposed to the developments that transpired within later generations. Konrad Hirschler states in his paper on Abū Shāmah:

Abū Shāma’s position was certainly a minority one in his time, as for him the process of *ijtihād* could never come to an end since no scholar could claim an authoritative status compared to the Quran and sunna. His position shows, contrary to the middle position discussed above, that *ijtihād* in its classical sense had not entirely come to an end in later centuries. Abū Shāma understood the term *ijtihād* as a direct return to the revealed sources. Although he certainly advanced no claims to founding a new madhhab, he refused to accept that the later authorities, such as the founders of the madhhabs, had an all-embracing hegemonic position.

Hirschler also states:

Abū Shāma, for example, delivered a sharp criticism of his period around what he perceived to be the mujtahid/muqallid dichotomy.

See Konrad Hirschler, *Pre-Eighteenth Century Traditions of Revivalism: Damascus in the Thirteenth Century* (Bulletin of SOAS, vol.68, no.2, 2005), pp.202, 203.

¹⁰¹ *Masā’il Imām Ahmad: Riwāyat Abī Dawūd*, p.368, no.1789

as al-Bāqilānī, al-Juwaynī, as-Samarqandī, an-Nasafī, al-Jurjānī and Imām ash-Shātībī did not make such a differentiation. Imām ash-Shātībī for example did not really differentiate in wording (as he used *ittibā’* and *taqleed* interchangeably when he discussed the permitted form of taqleed) yet it is evident in his writings that he differentiated between a permitted form of taqleed and an impermissible type which ash-Shātībī describes as being that form of taqleed which involves *ta’assub* [bigoted fanaticism] even upon error – which is the main form which is evident today as a result of imposing the obligation of “following one of the Four Madhhabs”.¹⁰²

In regards to a person following a Madhhab, then Imām ash-Shātībī in his *al-Muwāfaqāt* held it to be necessary for a Muqallid to adhere to a Madhhab so as to be free from following their own desires, self-interests and fiqh concessions. Imām ash-Shātībī also viewed it to be inappropriate for a person to select views from different Madhāhib, rather the person should look at which Madhhab he wishes to follow. Hence, Imām ash-Shātībī views it to be obligatory for a Muqallid to follow a specific Madhhab and stick to its well-known fiqh views so as not to follow their own desires and self-interests especially at times of weakness in deen and wara’. Those who also shared this view regarding the obligation of following a specific Madhhab included: al-Juwaynī,¹⁰³ al-Harāsī,¹⁰⁴ Ibn as-Salāh inclined to this view,¹⁰⁵ Ibn as-Subkī chose this view,¹⁰⁶ as did al-Mahallī,¹⁰⁷ al-Ansārī¹⁰⁸ and an-Nawawī said: “this is the view of the companions [of the Shāfi’ī Madhhab].”¹⁰⁹ This is also held by some of the Hanbalīs and was the choice of Ibn

¹⁰² For more on this refer to this research by a Professor from the College of Sharee’ah in Riyadh, Dr Waleed bin Fahd al-Wad’ān, *al-Ijtihād wa’t-Taqleed ‘inda Imām ash-Shātībī* (Riyadh: Dār ut-Tadmuriyyah, 1430 AH/2009 CE), vol.2, pp.706-710

¹⁰³ *Al-Burhān fī Usūl il-Fiqh* (Egypt: Dār ul-Wafā’, 1412 AH, 3rd Edn., ed. ‘Abdul’Adheem Mahmūd Deeb), vol.2, p.885.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Uthmān bin as-Salāh ash-Shuhwarwazī, *Adab ul-Fatwā wa Shurūt il-Muftī wa Sifat ul-Mustafī wa Ahkāmihī wa Kayfiyyat il-Fatwā wa’l-Istiftā’* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānājī, 1413 AH, ed. Dr Rif’at Fawzī ‘AbdulMuttalib), p.139; *al-Majmū’* (KSA, Dār ‘Ālam ul-Kutub, 1412 AH), vol.1, p.93; *al-Bahr ul-Muheet fī Usūl il-Fiqh* (Kuwait: Wizārat ul-Awqāf wa’sh-Shu’ūn al-Islāmiyyah, 1410 AH, ed. Dr ‘Abdusattār Abū Ghuddah), vol.6, p.319; Muhammad bin Bahādir az-Zarkashī, *Tashneef ul-Masāmi’ bi Jam’ il-Jawāmi’* (Maktabat Qurtuba li-Bahth al-‘Ilmī wa Ihyā’ ut-Turāth al-Islāmī, ed. Dr ‘Abdullāh Rabī’ and Dr Sayyid ‘Abdul’Azeez), vol.4, p.619.

¹⁰⁵ *Adab ul-Fatwā*, p.140

¹⁰⁶ *Jam’ ul-Jawāmi’ ma’ Sharh al-Mahallī wa Hāshiyat al-Banānī*, vol.2, p.616

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ *Ghāyat ul-Wusūl: Sharh Lubb ul-Usūl* (Egypt: Sharikat Maktabat wa Matba’ah Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1360 AH), p.152

¹⁰⁹ *Rawdat ut-Tālibeen*, vol.8, p.101

Hamdān,¹¹⁰ Ibn Rajab¹¹¹ and some of the later ones.¹¹² However, the view regarding the obligation to follow one specific Madhhab was opposed by some of the Hanafis,¹¹³ some of the Mālikīs,¹¹⁴ most of the Shāfi'īs,¹¹⁵ is the most famous of the two views with the Hanābilah and as a result it is the choice of most of them¹¹⁶ and is thus the position of the jamhūr of the 'Ulama.¹¹⁷

The evidence of the majority is as follows:

First: The Sahābah used to allow a common person to seek rulings from some of them regarding an issue, and from others from them regarding other issues. It is not transmitted from any of the Companions that they expressed any objection to the common person doing that, so

¹¹⁰ *Sifat ul-Fatwā wa'l-Muftī wa'l-Mustaftī* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, ed. Imām al-Albānī), pp.72-82; *al-Insāf* (Beirut: Dār 'Ālam ul-Kutub, 1407 AH, ed. 'Imāduddeen Ahmad Haydar), vol.11, p.194; *Sharh Kawkab al-Muneer*, vol.4, p.576.

¹¹¹ *Ar-Radd 'ala man Attaba' Ghayr Madhāhib al-Arba'* (Makkah: Dār 'Ālam ul-Fawā'id, 1418 AH, ed. Dr Waleed al-Fareedān), pp.29-30.

¹¹² For example, Muhammad al-Khadr bin Sayyidi ash-Shanqīti in his book *Qam' Ahl uz-Zaygh wa'l-Ilhād 'an at-Ta'n fī Taqleed A'immat ul-Ijtihād* (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li't-Turāth, 1415 AH), p.76.

¹¹³ See *at-Tahreer ma't-Taqreer wa't-Tahbeer*, vol.3, p.350; *Fath ul-Ghafār*, vol.3, p.42; Muhammad Ameen bin Mahmūd al-Bukhārī [Ameer Bād Shāh], *Tayseer ut-Tahreer Sharh 'ala Kitāb it-Tahreer* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), vol.4, p.253; 'Abdul'Ali Muhammad bin Nidhāmu'ddeen al-Ansārī al-Luknowī, *Fawātih ur-Rahmūt bi Sharh Muslim ath-Thabūt fī Usūl il-Fiqh* (Beirut: Copy from the Matba'ah al-Ameeriyah in Būlaq, 1325 AH), vol.2, p.406; *Sulam ul-Wusūl*, vol.4, p.618.

¹¹⁴ 'Uthmān bin 'Umar bin al-Hājib al-Kurdī, *Mukhtasar al-Muntahā ma Sharh al-'Udad*, vol.2, p.309; Ahmad bin Idrees al-Qarāfī, *Sharh Tanqeeh ul-Fusūl fī Ikhtisār il-Mahsūl fī'l-Usūl* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Kulliyāt al-Azhariyyah, ed. Taha 'AbdurRazzāq Sa'd), p.432; Ahmad bin Juzayy al-Ghranātī, *Taqreeb ul-Wusūl ilā 'Ilm il-Usūl* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah and Jeddah: Maktabat ul-'Ilm, 1414 AH, ed. Muhammad al-Mukhtār bin Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shanqīti), p.447; *al-Bahr ul-Muheet*, vol.6, p.319 and *Nadthar ul-Warūd 'ala Marāqī as-Sa'ūd* (Jeddah: Dār ul-Manārah, 1415 AH, ed. Dr Muhammad Wuld Sayyidi Wuld Habeeb ash-Shanqīti), vol.2, p.658.

¹¹⁵ See Ahmad bin 'Ali bin Burhān, *al-Wusūl ilā Usūl* (Riyadh, KSA: Maktabat ul-Ma'ārif, 1403 AH, ed. Dr 'AbdulHameed Abū Zinād), vol.2, p.368; *Rawdat ut-Tālibeen*, vol.8, p.101; Ibn Abī'l-'Izz, *Qawā'id ul-Ahkām* (Beirut: Dār ul-Ma'rifah), vol.2, p.135; Husayn bin Ahmad bin Qāwān ash-Shāfi'ī, *at-Tahqeeqāt fī Sharh ul-Waraqāt* (Beirut: Dār un-Nafā'is, 1419 AH, ed. Dr Shareef Sa'd bin 'Abdullāh bin Husayn), p.643; *Sharh ul-'Udad*, vol.2, p.309; *al-Bahr ul-Muheet*, vol.6, p.319 and 'Ali as-Samhūdī, *al-'Iqd ul-Fareed fī Ahkām it-Taqleed* (Manuscript copied from Maktabat ul-Haram al-Madanī), vol.10, p.a-b.

¹¹⁶ See *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.20, p.209; *Usūl Ibn Muflīh* (Riyadh, KSA: 'Ubaykān), vol.4, p.1562; Ibn ul-Qayyim, *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'een* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1414 AH, ed. Muhammad 'AbdusSalām Ibrāheem), vol.4, p.201; *al-Insāf*, vol.11, p.194; *Lawāmi' ul-Bahiyyah*, vol.2, p.465.

¹¹⁷ *Usūl Ibn Muflīh* (Riyadh, KSA: 'Ubaykān), vol.4, p.1562; *al-Insāf*.

they had a consensus on this. Moreover, the Salaf of the Ummah did not obligate the common person to blindly follow any of them rather the common people would follow whoever they wished from the people of knowledge.¹¹⁸

Second: None of the Four Imāms obligated anyone to follow one specific person in all that he says. A consensus was therefore reached that it is not allowed to follow any man in every ruling that he issues, and that everyone can have their statement accepted or rejected except for the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*).¹¹⁹ Hence, while following a Madhhab is *permitted* it is not *obligatory* [wājib] as the ‘traditional Islam’ Madhhab parochialists, like Nahouza and others would suggest.

As for the issues related to detailed creed that will be explored in Part 2 of my reflections on the books insha’Allāh.

¹¹⁸ See *Adab ul-Fatwā*, p.139; *Sifat ul-Fatwā*, p.72; *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'een*, vol.4, p.201; *al-Bahr ul-Muheet*, vol.6, p.319.

¹¹⁹ *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol.20, p.209; *I'lām ul-Muwaqqi'een*, vol.4, p.201; *at-Taqrer wa't-Tahreer*, vol.3, p.350 and *Tayseer ut-Tahreer*, vol.4, p.253.