

A CALL FROM THE TOWERS
ABOUT
THE IGNORANCE OF
YUSUF BOWERS!

تحليل نقدي للمحاضرة المسماة

تاريخ الدعوة السلفية في المملكة المتحدة



THE HISTORY OF THE SALAFI DA'WAH IN THE UK - THE BRIXTON CHRONICLES
SERIES 1
1990-1994 CE

A Call from the Towers *About the Ignorance of Yusuf Bowers!*

تحليل نقدي للمحاضرة المسماة

«تاريخ الدعوة السلفية في المملكة المتحدة»

A Critical Analysis of the Lecture Entitled
'The History of the Salafi Da'wah in the UK'
Correcting Some Historical Mistakes About the Salafi Da'wah
in the UK and the Historical Revisionism of Yusuf Bowers

Written, compiled and authorised by

Research Team from Masjid Ibnu Taymeeyah,
Brixton
[Brixton Mosque, London]¹

With a prelude derived from questions on the lecture presented to al-'Allāmah al-Muhaddith,

Shaykh Wasiullāh 'Abbās

[Teacher at Masjid al-Harām, Makkah]

¹ Names of the team mentioned on p.22

«إِنَّ أَفْرَى الْفَرَى أَنْ يُرِيَ الرَّجُلُ عَيْنَيْهِ مَا لَمْ تَرِيَا»

*"The worst of lies is for a man to claim to have seen with his eyes something which they have not seen."*²

- Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wassallam)

«إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مَا يَتَبَيَّنُ فِيهَا، يَزُلُّ بِهَا فِي النَّارِ أَبْعَدَ مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ»

*"A servant may say a word without thinking about its implications, and because of it he will plunge into the Hellfire the distance between the East and West."*³

- Prophet (sallallahu 'alayhi wassallam)

في هذا الحديث حث على حفظ اللسان فينبغي لمن أراد أن ينطق أن يتدبر ما يقول قبل أن ينطق فإن ظهرت فيه مصلحة تكلم وإلا أمسك عنه، لأنه قد يتحول الكلام المباح إلى حرام أو مكروه.

"This hadeeth exhorts to preserving the tongue. A person who wants to speak must reflect about what he says before he speaks it. If it then appears that to have some benefit he may say it, if not then he should refrain as he has changed permitted speech into impermissible or disliked speech."⁴

- *Imām an-Nawawī (rahimahullāh)*

² Narrated by Ibn 'Umar (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*), as relayed in Saheeh al-Bukhārī. Though the hadeeth is often relayed in the context of dreams and visions, Ibn Katheer (*rahimahullāh*) mentions it in his tafseer of Allāh's Words:

"And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned."

{*al-Isrā'* (17): 36}

³ Bukhārī and Muslim from Abū Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*).

⁴ Sharh Saheeh Muslim, *Bāb Hifdh ul-Lisān* [Chapter on Protecting the Tongue]. See for example vol.18, p.117 of the 1349 AH/1930 CE Cairo Print.

« كفى بالمرء كذباً أن يحدث بكل ما سمع »

*"It is sufficient as a lie for a person to narrate all that which he hears."⁵
- Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam)*

"“It is sufficient as a lie for a person to narrate all that which he hears”, meaning: that if a person begins to speak about all that which he hears without verification he will be more likely to lie. This is what happens and for this reason some people will come to you saying: “such and such happened” then if you were to research you will find that it did not occur [like that]; or a person will come to you and say: “so and so said such and such” and if you were to research you would find that he did not say that. This is all the more serious when connected to Allāh’s Rule and His Divine Legislation.”⁶

- Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen (rahimahullāh)

⁵ Saheeh Muslim, Intro, Chapter 'The Prohibition of Narrating All That One Hears'; Abū Dawood, *Kitāb ul-Adab* [The Book of Manners], Chapter 'The Severity of Lying'.

⁶ Shaykh al-'Allāmah Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen, *Sharh Riyādh us-Sāliheen min Kalām Sayyid il-Mursaleen* (Riyadh: Madār ul-Watan, 1427 AH), vol.6, pp.186-187.

«لما استعمل الرواة الكذب، استعملنا لهم التاريخ»

“When the narrators used lies, we used history against them!”⁷

- *Sufyān ath-Thawrī (rahimabullāh)*

«لم نستعن على الكذابين بمثل التاريخ»

“Nothing aided us against the liars quite like history!”⁸

- *Hammād ibn Zayd (rahimabullāh)*

⁷ Dr Akram Diyā al-'Umarī, *Buhūth fī Tārīkh us-Sunnah al-Musharrafah* (Madenah, KSA: Maktab al-'Ulūm wa'l-Hikam, 1405 AH/1984 CE), p.1192; Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad bin Ibrāheem bin Sa'dAllāh bin Jamā'ah al-Kinānī ash-Shāfi'ī, *al-Manhal ar-Rāwī fī Mukhtasar 'Ulūm il-Hadeeth an-Nabawī* (Damascus: Dār ul-Fikr, 1406 AH, 2nd Edn., ed. Dr Muhyuddeen 'AbdurRahmān Ramadān), vol.1, p.141; Abu'l-Fidā' Ismā'eel bin 'Umar bin Katheer al-Qurashī al-Basrī ad-Dimishqī, *Ikhtisār 'Ulūm il-Hadeeth* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2nd Edn., ed. Dr Ahmad Muhammad Shākir), vol.1, p.237; Abu'l-Fadl Zaynuddeen 'AbdurRaheem bin al-Husayn bin 'AbdurRahmān al-'Irāqī, *at-Taqqyeed wa'l-Īdāh Sharh Muqaddimat Ibn Salāh* (Madenah al-Munawarrāh: Maktabah as-Salafiyyah, 1389 AH/1969 CE, 1st Edn., ed. 'AbdurRahmān Muhammad 'Uthmān), vol.1, p.432 and *at-Tabsirah wa't-Tadhkirat* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1423 AH/2003 CE, ed. 'AbdulLateef al-Hameem and Māhir Yāseen Fahl), vol.2, p.294; *Mawārid al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī fī Tārīkh Baghdādī*, pp.396-402; *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm ir-Riwāyah*, p.147; Jalāluddeen as-Suyūtī, *Tadreeb ur-Rāwī*, vol.2, p.350.

The chain of narration is: Ibn 'Adiyy from 'AbdulWahhāb ibn 'Isām from Ibrāheem al-Junayd from Mūsā bin Humayd from Abū Bahr al-Khurasānī who said Sufyān ath-Thawrī said.

⁸ *Al-Kāmil*, vol.1, p.84; *al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm ir-Riwāyah*, p.911; al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmi'*, vol.1, p.131. It has been ascribed to Hassān bin Zayd in *Tadreeb ur-Rāwī*, vol.2, p.350. Ibn 'Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimishq*, vol.1, pp.54-55 noted that it is more probable to be ascribed to Hammād bin Zayd.

“...from the benefits of history is...we know from it the lies of the liars and the truth of the truthful ones.”⁹
- *Imām as-Suyūṭī (rahimahullāh)*

«فإن من علاماتهم أنهم يذكرون ما لهم ويكتُمون ما عليهم»

“...from their signs [i.e. the people of desires] is that they mention what is for them and hide what is against them.”¹⁰
-*Imām al-Albānī (rahimahullāh)*

ولكن هذا هو شأن أهل الأهواء, لا يخلصون للبحث العلمي, وإنما يتبعون منه ما يوافق
أهواءهم! والله المستعان

“This is the state of the people of desires – they are not sincere in scholarly research, indeed they only follow whatever agrees with their desires in regard to it! Allāh’s Aid is sought.”¹¹
- *Imām al-Albānī (rahimahullāh)*

⁹ Jalāluddeen as-Suyūṭī, *ash-Shamāriḥ fi ‘Ilm it-Tārīkh* (Leiden, 1312 AH/1897 CE), p.7

¹⁰ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqhihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, First Print, 1416 AH/1996 CE), vol.6, part 2, p.1200.

¹¹ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqhihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, 1422 AH/2002 CE), vol.7, part 2, p.1101.

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

*"...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."*¹²

- *Imām al-Albānī (rahimahullāh)*

¹² 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.

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Prelude

Al-’Allāmah, al-Muhaddith Wasiullāh ’Abbās **Q&A REGARDING THE LECTURE** **‘THE HISTORY OF THE SALAFI DA’WAH IN THE UK’¹³**

Question 1:

What are the conditions for the acceptance of a trustworthy historian according to Ahl ul-Hadith?

Answer from Shaykh Wasiullāh:

It is well known that with Ahl ul-Hadith the conditions for accepting any report, historical or any other report, are that the historian or the speaker, about events, has to either have been present himself and witnessed that which he knows – this is the first condition. As Allāh says

“And you were not a resident among the people of Madyan...”

{Qasas (28): 45}

And Allāh says

“And you were not with them when they cast their pens...”

{Āli Imrān (3): 44}

Allāh verifies for us that the reporter of something has to inform based on knowledge, if he was present. If he was not present, then the second condition is that he reports from a trustworthy source who knows about the report, a person who is well-known among the people as a person who does not lie. It is permitted to transmit via middle-men and that he mentions this “I transmitted this from so and so from so and so”. If the person was not present and does not transmit from

¹³ Questions posed to the Shaykh in Makkah on Thursday 3rd May 2012 CE by Dr ’AbdulHaqq Baker with Shaykh Muhammad al-Mālikī.

anyone then this is a major discrepancy and the person could be sinful; or if he transmits from a person who is not trustworthy, then he could enter into the statement of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam*): "It is sufficient as a sin for a person to relay all that he hears." So a Muslim should not speak except with verification [tathabbut],

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

{*al-Hujurat* (49): 6}

So if a report comes, then the reporter has to either inform me of something which I rely on if he is credible and trustworthy. If he is not credible and trustworthy then I am to verify his reports and without verification it is not permitted for me to speak. This is of the important conditions of a historian or the one who generally informs of anything.

Question 2:

“Do we have a Shari’ right to defend the history surrounding our Masjid specifically and our community generally? Additionally, is it permitted for us to mention the person who openly slandered us and our Salafi legacy in front of general people during Conference held at Masjid Salafi in Birmingham [Salafi Publications]?”

Answer from Shaykh Wasiullāh:

By Allāh, Allāh says

“And if you punish [an enemy, O believers], punish with an equivalent of that with which you were harmed.”

{*an-Nabl* (16): 126}

It is permitted for a person to defend himself, rather it is obligatory for a person to defend himself if he finds a harm against his honour and self. The proof for this is the action of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam*) when he was with his wife Safiyyah (*radi Allāhu 'anhā*) when he walked her home after she visited him at his Masjid. When he was with Safiyyah he saw two men on the way and then the Prophet walked fast and stated that it was his wife Safiyyah with him so that there would be no suspicions that it was a non-related woman with him. **It is obligatory for a person to defend his honour and if**

he does not then in reality false propaganda could do its damage and consume a person.

As for how this defence should be then the people, or person, who openly announced something untrue and false about you – then it is permitted for you to respond to him openly likewise. However, before this we want from you to meet with him and say to him: “you erred in these statements about me so you must announce your innocence from this via the internet or on the website just as you openly announced these inaccurate things about me.” If he does this then this is good and we praise it – and this should be the first step. **If he does not do this then it is possible to announce that you requested him to correct his open errors, however he did not respond and persisted then I have a right to announce openly as he spoke about I likewise speak about him due to him lying against me and I pronounce my correct position, na’am.**

Allāh says

“Allāh does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged.”

{*an-Nisā* (4): 148}

For you have been oppressed, yet the first step we want, even though they are opposers however they are upon Salafīyyah, if they are, the first thing we request is that they announce their retraction from these words. **If they do not announce [their retraction] you have a right to announce a refutation of them and their lies openly and publically.**

They have to be either met or corresponded with via certified mail, so that in the refutation it can be said we met, if you did meet, or you say that we sent him a letter which reached him as it was delivered via verified means, and he did not retract and for that reason I announce that this was a lie against me, deception to the Ummah and sometimes this is a must for you to do, na’am.

Question 3:

“Taking into consideration the main aim of organising Islamic conferences [i.e. to convey beneficial knowledge], is there any benefit in giving lectures regarding the very sensitive matter of the Salafi da’wah and its people in the United Kingdom, due to the precarious situation of the Salafis these days?”

Answer from Shaykh Wasiullāh:

What I understand from the question is “due to the differences among the Salafis is it permitted, or good to speak in general lectures in front of common people”? **What is apparent to me in reality is that we are patient and we do not announce these things in general lectures as there could be people who have no idea of these problems so we do not need to make them know of them.** However, there is no problem in us meeting with them and writing to them specifically so that there is correspondence between us – this is better especially because we are in the land of kufr and we do not wish for them to take us to account due to this by saying “those people are excessive between themselves and fight among themselves”. **What is accurate in this matter, insha’Allāh, is that you be patient yet this does not prevent from addressing them with other appropriate people in order to reach an understanding.** As for general lectures then these matters, even if it is with indication and not mentioning names, then it appears to me that this is incorrect in lands of disbelief especially as that will give them a bad image of Muslims that they are at war among themselves.

Question 4:

“After our analysis of the aforementioned lecture, we discovered that the brother who gave the lecture fell into the following historical errors:

- ✓ **The brother spoke about some important local events connected to the history of the Salafi da’wah in the UK despite the fact that he was not present during those times.**
- ✓ **The brother deliberately left off mentioning certain well-known details so as to present a distorted history which supports their propaganda.**
- ✓ **The brother did not verify his chains of transmission with us before he spread them among the people. Does this enter into the threat mentioned in the hadeeth: “It is sufficient a lie for a person to relay all that he hears.””?**

Answer from Shaykh Wasiullāh:

- a. The speaker could be truthful about people’s history even though he himself was not present as it is possible for him to know about reports via verified documentation or via people who can verify – he has a right in this regard. With the condition that the report is

verified about you or anyone. **However, if the speaker was not present and does not reference his statements to anyone then this is an error from the transmitter to relay in this way, there is no doubt in this.**

- b. You say that **“he deliberately left off mentioning”** yet he could have forgotten rather than having done this deliberately. You also say **“so as to present a distorted history”**. **If he really did this and was informed and then subsequently did not present an accurate and real history, and left mentioning important details worthy of mentioning, so as to distort history, then he must be corrected so that people understand and this is to be done with an accurate announcement – this has to be done bārakAllāhu feekum!**
- c. Yes, jazākAllāhu khayran! For this reason, Ahl ul-Hadith are based on the isnad. If I did not hear directly from the Shaykh I have to transmit from the one who did hear from the Shaykh, i.e. so and so narrated to us from so and so. If he does not do this, while he himself specifically is in error for transmitting these words, when he should rather be saying “I heard from so and so” or the like – this is unacceptable in our Divine Legislation and there is no doubt that when he has not verified what he says and has dishonoured and harmed others – that he enters into the statement of the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*): *“Sufficient it is as a sin for a person to relay all that he hears.”* Because we are upon what Allāh has instructed us with when He Says: **“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”** {*al-Hujurat* (49): 6} This is not the fāsiq only, this applies to any Majhūl and unknown individual who informs of something and does not give a chain of transmission then verification is to be sought. It could be correct or a lie. So you have to correct the error with wisdom and good intention insha'Allāh.

Question:

“What is the advice for those who wish to conduct a history?”

Answer:

Make it your custom that if you do not find a verified report do not spread it. However, if it reaches you from so and so that he said about 'AbdulHaqq [Baker], brother Muhammad [al-Mālikī] or Wasiullāh something then it is possible for you to go to him and say: “did you say this yourself O my brother?” A person is not to

spread all that which is said and you have to verify and if you cannot verify then do not speak so that you will be on safe ground in your religion.

My advice for these situations, *bārakAllāhu feekum*, is always that you do not begin to attack anyone and I advise you, just as I advised the brothers of Salafi Publications when I saw them, visited them and sat with them I saw that they distribute translated works of Shaykhs Bin Bāz, Uthaymeen and others and I said to them: “suffice yourselves with this and do not enter into other matters then you will be upon good. Know that if one of you was to commit zina there are other groups who if one of them fell into zina they would be quiet about it, yet you, when you find a word, even if it is light, from some brothers you spread it around.”

I advise you and all brothers who adhere to Salafiyyah that errors occur from everyone and it is not befitting to doubt if someone is Salafi due to some words. An error remains an error, a view remains a view, and the remaining issues in which we disagree with him over, then we are with him and we benefit from him. As for what the students of knowledge do during these days that when a person makes even one mistake they say “this is an innovator” – for all of this we say leave it all to the 'Ulama and do not at all indulge in them, you or others. This is what I always advise to you and those from Salafi Publications. However, those from Salafi Publications it is as if they enjoy dropping people who have righteous actions. If they are dropped they had good and reward insha'Allāh.

Also, we exhort ourselves that if we see some errors from them, those from Salafi Publications, such as in their fatāwā and so forth, so correct these. Yet as long as they cause doubts among the Salafi community in all lands such as Britain, America and France then this is something about which we fear Allāh will punish them for in this life and the next. This is why I advise them to keep quiet about some errors from some brothers and not remove [those brothers who make errors] from the realm of da'wah on account of these errors. In the past the Imāms (*may Allāh have mercy on them*) had their own views and they would critiqued each other for erroneous views but they did not used to drop each other and say that they should not be listened to. They would bring attention to the error and that the error is not to be taken yet the remainder [from him] is sound. So especially in those lands make your way among Salafis in this way and be a force against the Shi'a, Qadiyānīs etc. JazakAllāhu khayran!

LETTER FROM BRIXTON MASJID TO YUSUF BOWERS



Masjid Ibnu Taymeeyah

To: Abu Junayd Yusuf Bowers of Salafi Publications (aka Maktabah Salafiyyah)

From: Brixton Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre (aka Masjid Ibnu Taymeeyah)

Date: Monday 7th May 2012

Dear Brother Yusuf,

As salaamu alaikum wa Rahmatullah,

Based on advice we have received, it is prudent to write to you regarding your '*discourse*' last September 2011 entitled 'The History of the Salafi Da'wah in the UK'.

In view of the gross errors, inaccuracies and slanderous statements contained in your '*discourse*' we felt that you should be given the opportunity to review what you said and, thereafter, publicly retract on audio or in writing the majority of what you said about Brixton Masjid (aka Masjid Ibnu Taymeeyah) and its history.

In the event of our not receiving a retraction according to the terms stipulated above within 7 days from the date of this letter, we will proceed to take whatever appropriate action deemed necessary to resolve the matter and also address the inaccuracies contained in what can only be correctly described as '*yourstory*' about Brixton Masjid's history.

We have noted the following:

- Your defamation of the character of particular individuals from Brixton Mosque
- The serious problems we have found with the historical method deployed in your lecture
- Your errors [after 46 minutes into the lecture] regarding the details of what you have erroneously called "**the revolution**" at Brixton Masjid the day of which you claim to "**remember well**"
- Your errors regarding the historical foundation of Brixton Masjid

- Your spurious claim that "Suroorees" and "Qutbees" were kicked out of Brixton Masjid in 1993
- Your historical denial of the relationship between Abu Aaliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Shareef and Abu Sufyan Abdulkareem McDowell at Brixton during 1993, to the extent that you stated in your lecture [after 48 minutes and 20 seconds into the lecture]: **"Abu Aaliyah and those guys lived on the other side of London and weren't prepared to come over and aid..."**
- Your failure to cite your sources and name your sources for your "historical" narrations.
- Your denial of important details regarding the history of the Salafi Da'wah in the UK, hence we sincerely urge you to review and retract with immediate effect
- Your failure to corroborate specific historical details with the Brixton Mosque trustees
- Your failure to corroborate historical events with the Brixton Salafis
- Your highly biased account which we have found significant flaws with, hence our sincere advice to you to openly retract what you have uttered about Brixton Masjid.

Trustees and Management Committee

Brixton Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre [Masjid Ibn Taymeeyah]

REASONS FOR DELAY IN PUBLICATION

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness.

The reasons for the delay in the circulation of this document were due to the need to present the findings from various interviews that were conducted, and to corroborate them with the experiences of those who were actively involved in some of the events documented. In order to maintain the veracity of the various accounts that were provided, they had to be further checked and cross referenced due to each contributor's archival documents, recordings and recollection of events etc. These were then consolidated accordingly so as to accurately contextualise events without any undue bias or influence enabling the document to stand up to Shari' methods of verification, as well as a degree of academic scrutiny.

A thorough, systematic review of the contents of this document has thus been ensured. Unsurprisingly therefore, many discussions occurred throughout the process of researching and preparing the document. The objective of producing a solid historical narrative coupled with ensuring that neither oppression, revisionism, inaccuracy nor blatant lies occurred were some of the factors which contributed to the delay of this project.

INTRODUCTION

Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh, we praise Him, we seek His aid, and we ask for His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evil of our actions and from the evil consequences of our actions. Whomever Allāh guides, there is none to misguide and whoever 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 the servant and Messenger of Allāh. To proceed:

A lecture was conducted in Birmingham, Small Heath during the month of September 2011 CE entitled *'The History of the Salafi Da'wah in the UK'* by Abu Junayd Yusuf Bowers from Small Heath, Birmingham. The lecture was one of the chosen topics during a conference organised by Maktabah as-Salafiyah Birmingham. During this lecture, a number of assertions, both implicit and complicit, were made about various people, organisations, centres and Masājid in the UK - including Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah [Brixton Mosque]. These assertions call into question the voice of historical impartiality due to the libertarian approach in regard to historical accuracy and intellectual integrity. Due to the errors found within the lecture, especially regarding Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah Brixton, we have decided to dissect the lecture and assess some of the claims found therein so that a more wholesome history can be presented to aid the seeker of historical facts. Bowers committed historical oppression by suppressing the narratives of people directly involved in the history of Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah in Brixton via positioning his own narrative and version of events as the primary source on the history of the Salafi da'wah in the UK. This resulted in Bowers presenting a Revisionist historical account of the Salafi da'wah, largely based on bias and organisational associations for the purpose of propaganda.

Any attempts at chronicling the history of Salafi da'wah in the UK can not only be fraught with controversy but could also be something of a Pandora's Box, to the extent that some people would not even advise to open it; yet as Bowers has taken it upon himself to open this precarious box then this necessitates that his choice of action be critically assessed so that the contents of the box can at least be arranged in their correct order. We are also somewhat disappointed that some of our brothers actually support and condone such lectures and seemingly tolerate the likes of such presentations, indeed even blatant errors committed were not corrected as we shall discover. Let us note here that we were not the ones to open this box in such a public manner; rather, Bowers took it upon himself to do so, and as a result it will be

deconstructed and dissected so as to ensure a more accurate account of the historical roots of Salafiyyah in Brixton.

The reasons why we have embarked on assessing Bowers' assertions are due to the following:

FIRSTLY

Allāh says in His Book:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allāh, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is Acquainted with what you do.”

{*al-Mā'idah* (5): 8}

The great Mufassir Ibn Katheer (*rahimabullāh*) says about the noble ayah:

The Ayah commands: Do not be carried away by your hatred for some people to avoid observing justice with them. Rather, be just with every one, whether a friend or an enemy. This is why Allah said,

﴿اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى﴾

(Be just: that is nearer to Taqwa) this is better than if you abandon justice in this case. Although Allah said that observing justice is 'nearer to Taqwa', there is not any other course of action to take, therefore 'nearer' here means 'is'.

SECONDLY

Allāh says,

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾

“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned.”

{*al-Isrā'* (17): 36}

Ibn Katheer stated about this noble ayah:

'Ali bin Abī Talhah reported that Ibn 'Abbās said: “This means) do not say (anything of which you have no knowledge).” Al-'Awfī said: “Do not accuse anyone of that of which you have no knowledge.” Muhammad bin al-Hanafīyyah said: “It means bearing false witness.” Qatādah said: **“Do not say, 'I have seen', when you did not see anything,**

or ‘I have heard’, when you did not hear anything, or ‘I know’, when you do not know, for Allāh will ask you about all of that.” In conclusion, what they said means that Allāh forbids speaking without knowledge and only on the basis of suspicion, which is mere imagination and illusions. As Allāh says:

﴿اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ﴾

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin.”

{*al-Hujurat* (49): 12}

Ibn Katheer continues and mentions the hadeeth from Ibn ‘Umar (*radi Allahu ‘anhu*) as relayed in Saheeh al-Bukhārī:

«إِنَّ أَفْرَى الْفَرَى أَنْ يُرَى الرَّجُلُ عَيْنَيْهِ مَا لَمْ تَرَيَا»

“The worst of lies is for a man to claim to have seen with his eyes something which they have not seen.”

While Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-‘Uthaymeen (*rahimabullāh*) stated about the noble ayah:

Meaning: do not follow that which you have no knowledge of and do not speak except with what you know for the Prophet (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam) said:

“Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day should say good or keep quiet.”¹⁴

In regards to Allāh’s saying:

“And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned.”

{*al-Isrā’* (17): 36}

Al-Qurtubī (*rahimabullāh*) stated in his tafseer:

أي لا تتبع ما لا تعلم ولا يعينك. قال قتادة: لا تقل رأيت وأنت لم تر، وسمعت وأنت لم تسمع، وعلمت وأنت لم تعلم؛ وقاله ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما. قال

¹⁴Shaykh al-‘Allāmah Muhammad bin Sālih al-‘Uthaymeen, *Sharh Riyādh us-Sāliheen min Kalām Sayyid il-Mursaleen* (Riyadh: Madār ul-Watan, 1427 AH), vol.6, p.186.

مجاهد: لا تدم أحدا بما ليس لك به علم؛ وقاله ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أيضا.
وقال محمد ابن الحنفية: هي شهادة الزور.

Meaning: that you do not follow that which you do not know and that which you does not concern you. Qatādah said: “Do not say ‘I have seen’ when you have not seen, or ‘I have heard’ when you have not heard and ‘I knew’ when you did not know.” Ibn ‘Abbās (radi Allāhu ‘anhumā) said the same. Mujāhid said: “Do not censure anyone with that which you have no knowledge of” and Ibn ‘Abbās also said the same. Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah said: “It is to give false witness”.

THIRDLY

That some brothers from the SalafiManhaj.com team began a project to chart the history of the Salafi da'wah in the UK; however, it was decided to shelve the project due to the following considerations:

- ❖ It may have opened old wounds which, for the sake of the da'wah, are better left temporary patched up.
- ❖ The difficult task in gaining impartial accounts from various personalities in the da'wah.
- ❖ Possible refusal of certain Salafi individuals in key areas to participate in providing valuable pieces of information to form a complete account of past events and historical developments. This could possible explain why external non-Salafi researchers have been able to coordinate studies into the field of UK Salafi da'wah, while Salafis have been hitherto unable to complete such a project themselves in a professional and impartial manner.¹⁵ It would be somewhat odd for Masjid Ibn Taymeeyah Brixton for example to conduct their very own 'History of Salafi Publicatons Birmingham', this would immediately, and somewhat rightly, be deemed by many as being one completely

¹⁵ Like for example Sadek Hamid who authored a paper entitled *The Development of British Salafism* which was published in the journal *ISIM Review*, issue no.1, vol.21, Spring 2008, pp.10-11. Hamid's paper however was still far off the mark in many regards and seemed to rely too heavily on individuals who no longer ascribe themselves to the Salafi method. Furthermore, it was very brief and rather insufficient in charting the development of the Salafi approach in the UK, as a result it failed to cover further detailed nuances which are important to detail in the discussion. A doctoral study into the British Salafi ethos and its adherents is currently being completed by Anabel Inge at Kings College London, from the Theology and Religious Studies Department.

biased. Hence the significant problems we have found with Yusuf Bowers' historical narrative.

- ❖ Disclosure of highly sensitive information to a new generation of Salafis which consists of plethora of oppressive incidents committed over a period of thirteen or more years.

Yet what rekindled the investigation of this topic were the erroneous statements of Yusuf Bowers. In this study however, we will only be chronicling events which took place between the Salafis of Brixton, which leads us to the fourth point.

FOURTHLY

Based on the advice of the Prophet (*sallallahu 'alayhi wassallam*) we wish to aid the oppressed and also our brother Bowers. The noble narration reads:

انصر أخاك ظالماً أو مظلوماً ، قالوا : يا رسول الله هذا المظلوم ، فكيف ننصره إذا كان ظالماً ؟ قال
تمنعه من الظلم فذلك نصرك إياه

"Help your brother whether he is a wrongdoer or one to whom wrong is done." They said, "O Messenger of Allāh, (we know what it means to help) the one to whom wrong is done, but how can we help him if he is a wrongdoer?"

He said, "Stop him from doing wrong to others - that is how you will help him."¹⁶

Thus, on the sound footings of this authentic narration we keenly move forward to aid both the oppressed and those who oppress.

FIFTHLY

All are to be held accountable for their statements, Allāh says,

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

"Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record]."

{*Qāf (50): 18*}

While Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen (*rahimahullāh*) stated about the noble ayah:

Meaning: except that with him is an observer, meaning a watcher, watching what he says "prepared" present and nothing is absent from him. **This is a warning against a person speaking about something he does not know of as by that he will be sinful.** Then he [Imām an-Nawawī, *rahimahullāh*] mentioned in regards to that some ahādeeth: *"It is sufficient*

¹⁶ Bukhāri

as a lie for a person to relay all that which he hears”, meaning: that if a person begins to speak about all that which he hears without verification he will be more likely to lie. This is what happens and for this reason some people will come to you saying: “such and such happened” then if you were to research you will find that it did not occur [like that]; or a person will come to you and say: “so and so said such and such” and if you were to research you would find that he did not say that. This is all the more serious when connected to Allāh’s Rule and His Divine Legislation.¹⁷

This is regarding the one who speaks while no one else will be held accountable for his word, then what about if he was to speak to the masses? Thus, everyone is accountable for their statements whether the person is a story-teller, a speaker, a literary writer, a “yard man”, a “road man” or whatever else. Story-telling ability or allegedly “telling it as it is” does not grant a person freedom to say whatever he likes, rather every statement that he makes he will be held accountable for. This is especially the case if many people are influenced by his words, for his sin will affect more than just him alone as is verified in Saheeh Muslim in the hadeeth of Jareer ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Bajalī (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*) that the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “Whoever starts a bad thing in Islam, and others do likewise after him, there will be written for him a burden of sin like that of those who followed him up until the Day of Judgement, without it detracting in the least from their burden.”¹⁸

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Jumādā al-Ākhir 1433 AH/May 2012 CE

¹⁷Shaykh al-’Allāmah Muhammad bin Sālih al-’Uthaymeen, *Sharh Riyādh us-Sāliheen min Kalām Sayyid il-Mursaleen* (Riyadh: Madār ul-Watan, 1427 AH), vol.6, p.186-187.

¹⁸ The hadeeth is also reported by at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODS OF DOCUMENTING HISTORY

Initially, it has been said that the Prophet (*sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam*) instructed to document history when he arrived in Madeenah.¹⁹ Yet what is more well-known and authentic is that 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) instructed to utilise history based on a query from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) about dating systems. 'Umar gathered the Sahābah for a consultation on the issue. Some said that the dating should start from when the Revelation began while others said that it should start from the date of the migration to Madeenah as that event marked the clear distinction between truth and falsehood. 'Umar (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*) then stated that Muharram should signal the start of the year due to it being a sacred month and the time when people have returned from Hajj. Prior to that, some scholars noted that the Arabs used the death of the Prophet's ancestor, Ka'ab ibn Lu'ay, as a method of dating and then later utilised the Year of the Elephant. Abu'l-'Abbās Ahmad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Qarmānī ad-Dimishqī (d. 1019 AH/1610 CE) stated in his book *Akbbār ud-Duwal wa Athār il-Uwal* [Reports of the States and Narrations of the Previous] with regards to history and historiography:

First Chapter in Explaining the Meaning of History and its Topics:

You should know that the knowledge of history is narrating about previous happenings in the world and events...it is the way to understand reports of those nations who went before and how humiliation and anger [from Allāh] befell the stubborn and led him to destruction; and to expose the faults of the liars and distinguish the condition of the truthful.

...If it was not for history then understanding of the empire-states would have died out with the death of their kings, and the condition of the first peoples and their ways would have been hidden from the latter peoples.²⁰

Shaykh Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī from the *Markaz Imām al-Albānī li'l-Buhūth il-'Ilmiyyah wa'd-Dirāsāt il-Manhajīyyah* [Imām al-Albānī Centre for Academic Research and

¹⁹ This has been relayed by Ibn 'Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol.1, p.22 – from Imām Ibn Shihāb az-Zuhrī in marfū' form yet the narration is mursal and contains a break so it is weak. See Ibn ul-Atheer (d. 630 AH), *al-Kāmil fī Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār ul-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1407 AH/1987 CE, ed. Abu'l-Fidā' 'Abdullāh al-Qādī), vol.1, p.12

²⁰ Ahmad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Qarmānī ad-Dimishqī, *Akbbār ud-Duwal wa Athār il-Uwal fī't-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Ālam ul-Kutub, 1412 AH/1992 CE, First Edn., eds. Dr Fahmī Sa'eed and Dr Ahmad Hateet), vol.1, p.5.

Methodological Studies] in Jordan, noted in his book *Tarsikh ul-Mudkhal ilā 'Ilm it-Tārikh: Buhūth Tārikhiyyah* [Establishing the Entry to the Knowledge of History: Historiographical Research]:

The topic of history is to understand and codify the conditions of past peoples from the Anbiyā' [Prophets], Awliyā', 'Ulama, Hukamā' [wise people], Shu'arā' [poets], kings, rulers and others. It can either be transmitted via word of mouth without any chain of transmission or method of verification, as occurred before the Islamic codification, or it can be via transmission with routes of transmission and verification as utilised in the Qur'ān in regards to the narrations of past nations.²¹

Then Shaykh Akram highlights when discussing the importance of history:²²

It is possible for us to summarise the importance of history with the following points:

- 1. History helps to understand contemporary people and contributes to separating what is incorrect from that which is correct when names and associations are similar.**
- 2. Verified history establishes knowledge of the realities of events and situations and when they can be trusted.**
3. History helps to understand the history of the narrators
4. History has an importance in knowing about abrogation
5. Events and occurrences are known via history and when things happened and changes accompanied them.
6. History helps to understand the condition of nations and peoples in terms of power and weakness, knowledge and ignorance, activity and decline and the like of such features of nations and their conditions.
7. Islamic history is a picture of situations and how Islam was implemented, with understanding of this we are able to stop at positive aspects of history and benefit from their traces and we can also stop at negative aspects and try to steer clear of them.

²¹ Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī, *Tarsikh ul-Madkhal ilā 'Ilm it-Tārikh: Buhūth Tārikhiyyah* [Establishing the Entry to the Knowledge of History: Historiographical Research] ('Ammān, Jordan: Dār ul-Athariyyah, 1427 AH/2006 CE), p.32. The book itself is based on one of the lectures given by Shaykh Akram during the Seventh Conference held at the *Markaz Imām al-Albānī li'l-Buhūth il-'Ilmiyyah wa'd-Dirāsāt il-Manhajiyyah* [Imām al-Albānī Centre for Academic Research and Methodological Studies] in 'Ammān dated 10 Jumādā al-Ākhir 1426 AH/Sunday 17 July 2005 CE.

²² Ibid., pp.16-18

8. History contains lessons, signs and evidences as Allāh says: **“Travel through the earth and then see what was the punishment of those who denied.”** {*al-An'ām* (6): 11}
9. Within history is inspiration for the future in light of the Verified Sunan of Allāh which nobody can change.
10. Within history is sharp motivation, reinvigoration for the spirit and competition in goodness and righteousness.
11. **History brings forth righteous role-models from history and leaves new shining pages which are not forgotten over the years.**
12. **Of the important benefits of studying history is its use for understanding previous errors and warning from the pitfalls which were fallen into throughout history.** This is taking from the Prophetic guidance narrated by Abū Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu 'anhu*): *“A believer is not stung from the same hole twice.”*²³

Imām as-Suyūṭī stated in *ash-Shamāriḳh fī 'Ilm it-Tāriḳh* [Fireworks in Historiography] in regards to the benefit of history:

Its benefit is in taking lessons and advice from it and obtaining practical lessons from it by stopping at the changing of times so as to be protected from the harmful examples and obtain beneficial examples.

Al-Akfānī stated in his book *ad-Durr an-Nadbeem fī Aqsām il-'Ilm wa't-Ta'leem* as relayed by 'Izzaddeen al-Kinānī al-Hanbalī in *Shurūt ul-Mu'arriḳh fī Kitābat it-Tāriḳh wa't-Tarājim* [Conditions of the Historian in Writing History and Biographies], which will be discussed shortly:

History books are benefitted from in order to investigate reports of the 'Ulama and the 'Uqalā' and their realities, events, biographies and what remains of their virtues and spiritual illnesses after they have passed.

When embarking on a serious historical study of any subject it is incumbent that one makes his chronicles as impartial as possible so as not to present a biased view of past events. This impartiality is based on a quality of the scholars of Ahl us-Sunnah and Ahl ul-Hadeeth, for:

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

²³ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

**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.**²⁴

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

لأن هذا هو الذي عليه أهل الحديث أن يذكروا الحقائق سواء كانت لهم أو عليهم,
خلافاً لأهل الأهواء, كما يذكر ذلك ابن تيمية كثيراً في رده عليهم

...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.²⁵

Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, the former head of the College of Sharee'ah and Islamic Studies at Umm ul-Qurā' University stated in his book *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History] when discussing 'Sought-After Conditions for a Historian In Order for his Narrations to be Accepted', he stated under point 5:

“Leaving Personal Interests and Desire

**This is a matter which is difficult to find except in rare cases. However with the
previous condition [about avoiding suspicion], along with the sense of
responsibility and fear of Allāh and evoking this in the mind, he is able to be free of
misleading desires by Allāh's Aid.”**²⁶

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-Tārikh wa Tafseerihī* [The Islamic Method

²⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah ascribes this statement to 'AbdurRahmān bin Mahdī in *al-Jawāb as-Saheeh*, vol.6, p.343; it has also been ascribed to Waki' 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-Sulūlī, Abū Sālim said: I heard my father say: I heard Waki' say... – the narration.

²⁵ Imām Muhammad Nāsīruddeen 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.

²⁶ Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī Ma'a Darāsāt li Tatawwur it-Tadween wa Manāhij il-Mu'arrikheen Hatta Nihāyat al-Qarn ath-Thālith al-Hijri* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History With a Study of the Development of the Codification of the Methodology of the Historians Up Until the End of the Third Century After The Hijrah]. Dammām, KSA: Dār Ibn ul-Jawzī, Shawwāl 1429 AH, p.249.

for Studying and Interpreting History] some conditions which have to be maintained for the one who attempts to embark on a history. 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.²⁷

Furthermore, when one undertakes the responsibility of documenting and presenting history, one has to be prepared to also mention, if authentically transmitted, details of a sensitive nature that may challenge the mythical status surrounding historical figures. If this sensitive aspect of historical documentation is circumvented or completely ignored, this invariably will lead the commentator to present a flawed, historical narrative. By leaving out "sensitive" and "awkward" memories of the past, some historical commentators seek to present a sanitised history of events. A key factor in presenting an accurate version of events is to ensure that a variety of voices regarding a topic are heard so that one cannot be accused of bias or tailor-making the fabric of history to fit a certain agenda.

²⁷ Dr Muhammad Rashād Khaleel, *al-Manhaj al-Islāmī li-Dirāsāt it-Tārīkh wa Tafsīrihi* [The Islamic Method for Studying and Interpreting History]. Casablanca: Dār uth-Thaqāfah, 1406 AH/1986 CE, pp.122-123

THE CONDITIONS FOR A RELIABLE HISTORIAN

The conditions for a reliable historian have also been discussed by scholars of the past such as al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī and al-Hāfidh Badrudden al-'Aynī, both also being judges during their times. These fatāwā are found in al-Kutub Khānah al-Āsafīyyah in Hyderabad, India, manuscript no.44. It was written by one of the scholars possibly at the end of the 9th Century AH, and it is 11 pages with 21 lines on each page. It contains the rulings of five scholars and judges, including al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajar and al-'Aynī, regarding the conditions of a historian. The collection is entitled *Shurūt ul-Mu'arrikh fī Kitābat it-Tārikh wa't-Tarājim* [Conditions of the Historian in Writing History and Biographies] and it was edited and published by Dr Fu'ad Sayyid in the *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtūtāt al-'Arabiyyah* [Journal of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts], vol.2, part 1, Shawwāl 1375 AH corresponding to May 1956 CE. Within the fatāwā Ibn Hajar answered with:

Those who attempt to write history are of two categories: a category who intend precision [dabt] of events...however he is obligated to investigate the transmissions and he does not vouch for anything except what he has verified and he does not suffice with relaying mere widespread reports especially if that will bring about corruption such as defaming the right of one of the people of knowledge and righteousness. Even if it is in regards to defaming one who is of unknown status then one must not exaggerate in spreading that and suffice with a mere indication. The historian has to know people's estimations, conditions and levels, so that he does not raise the abased and debase the lofty.

The second category: who summarise biographies of people, generalising or specifying. Both have to traverse the aforementioned path in the right of those about whom they are writing biographies. The one who is famed for good, deen and knowledge is not to have his bad points followed up as he is not infallible and the unknown has been discussed prior with regards to his ruling. The one who is an open sinner, if it is feared that hiding what he does will bring about a greater harm, such as people being deceived by the person's status, wealth or lineage so they then follow his way – then it is permitted, with this intent [of exposing him so that people do not be deceived by him] to explain his condition...

As-Sakhāwī (*rahimabullāh*) stated in his landmark work on historiography *al-I'lān bi't-Tawbīkh liman Dhamm Ahl it-Tārīkh* that Tāj as-Subkī stated in his book *Mu'eed un-Ni'amr*:

The historian has to be a scholar, who is credible and possesses knowledge of the conditions of those who he is writing about. There should neither be any friendship between them which can lead the one documenting the history to ta'assub [bias] for the one he is writing about, nor any enmity which can lead the one writing the history to have hatred towards the one he is writing about.²⁸

Subkī also stated in *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*, in the biography of Ahmad bin Sālih al-Misrī:

The historians can possibly debase a people or raise a people due to ta'assub or jahl, or due to merely relying on a transmission of someone who cannot be trustworthy, or any other reason.²⁹

Dr Akram Diyā' al-'Umarī, formerly of Madeenah University and the History department, states in his book *Bubūth fī Tārīkh is-Sunnah al-Musharrafah* [Research Studies in the History of the Noble Sunnah]:

They [the scholars of hadeeth] placed conditions for the historian just as they did for the narrators of hadeeth, from 'adālah [reliability] and dabt [precision]. With that it was also possible to apply the rules of hadeeth criticism to criticising the historical narrations. However, that did not manifest itself with the same precision and thus there was major leniency in the field of history. The first historians such as Khaleefah bin Khayyāt took much of their historical material from narrators who the scholars of hadeeth weakened.³⁰

These historiographical methods, however, have totally gone out of the window in Bowers' lecture and therefore render it as something which cannot be taken as a serious, reliable or credible version of events, as will be seen in this study. As Bowers history contains historical amnesia and historical erasure along with airbrushing important facts. Historical amnesia is a powerful tool which denies everyday people a way into a history that actually reflects their own experiences. Historical amnesia can be propagated in a variety of ways: such as via an apparently forward-looking approach which neglects the past completely, or a limited historical orientation

²⁸ Muhammad bin 'AbdurRahmān bin Muhammad Shamsuddeen as-Sakhāwī (831-903 AH/1427-1497 CE), *al-I'lān bi't-Tawbīkh liman Dhamm Ahl it-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Mu'assasat ur-Risālah, 1407/1986 CE, ed. Franz Rosenthal), p.122.

²⁹ Ibid., p.123; quoting from *Tabaqāt ush-Shāfi'iyyah* (Cairo, 1324 AH), vol.1 p.197

³⁰ Dr Akram Diyā' al-'Umarī, *op.cit.*, p.275

based on selective remembrance. Western psychotherapy often recommends selective remembrance for individuals who feel they have been wronged by others and as a way to forget the pain and purge guilt. Yet such opportunistic selectivity has no place when documenting serious historical research, except for those who try to hold on to a romantic and nostalgic version of history. With regards to histories which are not to be taken seriously, then this includes polemical histories which are biased. Even non-Muslim researchers maintain this, Lange notes:

Polemical histories need not be false, of course, strictly, but they are likely to be one-sided, with a vengeance.³¹

Lange then states in the footnote to the above paragraph:

The best propaganda, and the hardest to detect, as is well known, is that which tells only the truth, but tells it selectively, leaving out the qualifying truths, or the counter-truths, and spins its truths in such a way as to induce and support a particular ideological viewpoint.³²

Arnold states in his book simply called *History*:

Historians must stick with what the sources make possible...They cannot invent new accounts, or suppress evidence that does not fit with their narratives.³³

De Baets states in his book *Responsible History*:

It is history that can be abused, not the past. Sources from the past and facts and opinions about the past can be intentionally distorted. But the past itself cannot be affected by acts in the present. Abusive history is continuously confused with other types of history.³⁴

De Baets also notes:

Incompetent (or "bad") history – the product of error, imperfect insight, bias, and lack of training, can be heavily distorting and prejudiced, but it is not irresponsible or abusive as long as it does not transgress the moral boundary of dishonest or gross negligence.³⁵

³¹ John Lange, *The Philosophy of Historiography* (New York: E Reads, 2010), p.59

³² Ibid., p.60

³³ John H. Arnold, *History* (New York, NY: Sterling Publishing, 2009), p.160

³⁴ Antoon de Baets, *Responsible History* (Berghahn Books, 2009), p.11

³⁵ Ibid., p.14

De Baets then gives a typology of abuses and irresponsible uses of history which can occur at the source collection stage by a historian:

Irresponsible destruction of sources from others

Irresponsible collection of sources from others

- Deceive or blackmail informants and witnesses
- Accept money from, and give money to, informants and witnesses
- Theft: steal work of others
- Piracy: illegally reproduce or distribute copyrighted work of others (except selections used in research and teaching that are compatible with fair use if source and author are indicated).

Irresponsible use of sources from others

- **Plagiarism: Deliberately present ideas and words expressed originally by others as own work (that is, without accurate acknowledgement of source).**
- Falsification: Falsify work of others, for example, by deliberately changing colophons or data about origin or intellectual property.
- Bibliography, notes: Supplement own bibliography or notes with entirely unread works.

Irresponsible use of sources in general

- **Monopolize or keep secret information that should be publicly accessible**

Fabrication of own sources (falsification ex-nihilo)

- Invent informants and witnesses
- Fabricate sources (pseudo-originals)
- Invent provenance of sources (may include falsifying catalogs, certificates, signatures etc.)
- **Invent trustworthiness of sources³⁶**

De Baets then notes irresponsible historical research and abuse during the data analysis stage, and that such abusive historical undertakings:

- **Use invented stories and their "data"**
- **Irresponsibly select and omit data**
- **Knowingly deny or minimize corroborated data**
- Misrepresent and falsify data

³⁶ Ibid., p.19

- **Maliciously present data without any historical context or within a wrong historical context**
- Irresponsibly or defamatorily disclose privacy – and reputation sensitive- data
- Disclose confidential or embargoes data without permission
- **Falsely attribute information or ideas of others to oneself**
- **Falsely attribute information or ideas to others**³⁷

So even non-Muslim Western historians have methods when it comes to history and these methods were by and large adapted from the systematic historical approach and stringent source verification criteria of the hadeeth scholars of Islām. Dr Akram al-'Umarī, formerly of Madeenah University, states in his book *Buhūth fī Tārikh is-Sunnah al-Musharrafah* [Research Studies in the History of the Noble Sunnah]:

There is no doubt that the use of academic rules of criticism within humanities in the West was a more recent development with them in comparison to the methods of criticism employed by the hadeeth scholars.³⁸

Hence history is a serious field of research and no mere “comedy” or “story-telling exercise”, rather it contains a great responsibility which is known throughout the nations and among peoples, abuse of it therefore poses grave consequences. Reports regarding events cannot be based on mere hearsay or useless narrations from all and sundry. Yahyā ibn Maʿīn spoke about a friend of his whom he loved, and al-Husayn ibn Hibbān transmitted that Yahyā ibn Maʿeen said of Muhammad ibn Salīm al-Qādi:

" هو والله صاحبنا ، وهو لنا محب ، ولكن ليس فيه حيلة البتة ، وما رأيت أحداً قط يشير بالكتاب عنه ولا يرشد إليه " وقال : " قد والله سمع سماعاً كثيراً ، وهو معروف ، ولكنه لا يقتصر على ما سمع ، يتناول ما لم يسمع " ، قلت له : يكتب عنه ؟ قال : " لا " انتهى .
انظر " تاريخ بغداد " (325/5)

“By Allāh, he is our companion, and he is dear to us, but there is no way to praise him. I never ever saw anyone indicate that he be documented from or referred to.”
And he said: **“By Allāh, he heard a great deal and he is well known, but he does not restrict himself to what he hears; rather, he includes things that he does not hear. I**

³⁷ Ibid., p.20

³⁸ Ibid.

said to him: “Should he be dictated from [i.e. his hadeeth to narrate from]?” He said: “No.”³⁹

Dr Hasan ‘Uthman states in his book *Manhaj ul-Bahth at-Tārikhī* [The Method of Historical Research]:

The historian also has to possess the talent of critique as it is not permitted for him to accept all statements and believe all documents and sources without study, testing and investigation. He should take what is truthful or what is as near to it as possible, and put aside whatever is not like that. If the historian lacks the faculty of critique then this feature is dropped from him and he becomes a person who merely relays all what he reaches him as if it is the true reality. History is neither studied nor written in this way.⁴⁰

Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, the former head of the College of Sharee’ah and Islamic Studies at Umm ul-Qurā’ University stated in his book *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History] when discussing ‘Principles in Source-Referencing’:

The sources in relation to the historian form the greatest importance because without maintaining the sources he will be unable to write or research history. History is transmitted knowledge which relies upon taking from sources, because history is a report about an event which happened and then finished. Imagination, guessing the unseen and lab experiments do not suffice as is done by the literary writer, story-teller, poet and physiologist.⁴¹

As a result, there needs to be a detailed and critical re-examination of Bowers’ lecture about the history of Salafi in the UK so as to arrive at a more balanced and authentic account for the historical record. Hence, before we even assess what was stated by Bowers within his lecture it is initially important to note that Bowers fell into:

- ❖ Gross historical denial
- ❖ Presenting a pseudo-historical account of the Salafi da’wah in the UK
- ❖ Selective remembrance

³⁹ Al-Khateeb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād*, vol.5, p.325

⁴⁰ Dr Hasan ‘Uthmān, *Manhaj ul-Bahth at-Tārikhī* [The Method of Historical Research]. Cairo: Dār ul-Ma’ārif, 1964, 8th Print. 19

⁴¹ Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, *op.cit.*, pp.235-236

It is also a strange coincidence that Bowers feels qualified to give "history lessons" about places which he himself doubts as to their adherence to Salafiyyah?! That does not exactly sound like an impartial historical perspective.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Interviews were conducted with the Brixton Masjid community in order to gauge their memories of events. These have been a vital primary source, particularly the Brixton Masjid elders many of whom are still alive. Input from the original Brixton Salafis of 1991-1994 was constant with them making amendments and necessary changes where relevant so as to get an authentic account of history. As they actually lived through the events they are the best source for this topic and the most trustworthy in regards to what occurred during the events discussed by Bowers, for they are direct eyewitnesses. Dr Muhammad bin Sāmil as-Sulamī, the former head of the College of Sharee'ah and Islamic Studies at Umm ul-Qurā' University stated in his book *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History] when discussing 'Principles in Source-Referencing':

As long as the sources have this importance to the historian then he has to attach the utmost concern to them and arrange them in the correct order in concordance with specific standards of criticism; such as the level of verification and trustworthiness of the source and such as proximity to the historical event, whether this closeness is via association, experience or proximity due to time.⁴²

Whitling notes:

Memory can successfully come into play in historical writing only through specific uses of sources that integrate private memories in historical narratives.⁴³

Along with interviews we also make reference to audios from May-December 1993 which are still in the possession of the Brixton Salafis and fully dated. These audios have served as important primary sources in tracing the history of the Salafi da'wah in the UK, London and Brixton and provide a unique insight into the various nuances and attitudes at the time. It is doubtful whether others have in their possession such important audio material for the history

⁴²Dr Muhammad bin Sāmil as-Sulamī, *op.cit.*, p.236

⁴³Federick Whitling, "Damnation Memoriae and the Power of Remembrance: Reflections on Memory and History" in Malgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and the Politics of Remembrance* (Berghahn Books, 2010), p.94

of Brixton Masjid at the time and hence the significance of these primary sources. The importance of audios in historical research is as follows:

- ❖ Helps to support an authentic historical record.
- ❖ Without the audio material as tangible sources, all claims are mere hearsay or hypothetical.
- ❖ Having the additional audio material as historical sources helps to understand the proper historical context, rather than relying on historical revisionism and pseudo-historical claims.
- ❖ Removes any assertions of tampering with the historical record or misappropriating history for personal or organisational gain.

THE BRIXTON MASJID INTERREGNUM ERA OF MAY 1993-APRIL 1994

Before we analyse Bowers' remarks it will be of importance if some of the historical background to Brixton Masjid from 1990-1993 is given along with a discussion about some of the nuances leading up to 1993.

An 'Interregnum Era' is when one person in authority is deposed, removed, or dies, and then another takes over. However, such periods are full of disorder, upheaval, anarchy, disturbance and chaos. Such periods are usually ones of instability until one comes who can unify the disputing factions or at least stabilise the situation.

SETTING THE SCENE: THE HISTORY OF BRIXTON MOSQUE AND THE INFAMOUS 'BLACK SUNDAY' EVENT OF MAY 1993

In 1990 the current premises of Brixton Masjid was given by Lambeth Council to the Muslim community. The building was a community centre for supplementary education and after-school learning, and also used for parties and Blues Nights. The building was left derelict and people were squatting inside it to the extent that it had to be fully fumigated when the Muslims acquired it.



Brixton Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre, 1 Gresham Road, 1990
© Mehmood Naqshbandi, www.MuslimsInBritain.org



Those from the Muslim community who were the founders of it at that time were: AbdurRahmān Hāshir, Shaykh Salāh Jannah Sierra Leonī (*rahimahullāh*) who was the Imām, 'AbdulMājid 'Uthmān Ibrāheem Morrison [from the al-Murābitūn World Sūfī Movement], Shaykh Faisal Boadi al-Ashanti, Shaykh Sa'duddeen an-Nigīrī (*rahimahullāh*), Ismā'eel Hamza, Abū 'AbdulKareem Abū Bakr al-Jamaykī and Shaykh Muhammad Kamāluddeen [the latter three of these later accepted the Salafī da'wah in the mid-1990s]. The Imām was Shaykh Salāh Jannah

and the Masjid was called 'Masjidullāh'. There was no clear and defined methodology which the Masjid was adhering to and all sorts were represented in the Masjid at the time such as: Sunni, Shi'a, Sūfī, Dwight York's Ansār Cult and even a so-called 'Nation of Islam' influence. Brixton at that time was a largely black mosque due to alienation from other communities, thus Brixton was for any black person regardless. Abū Safiyyah Tālib Alexander thus stated in 1993, after 23 minutes into tape 1 of the 'Black Sunday' proceedings of Sunday 2nd May 1993, after giving the Khutbat ul-Hājāh, the only speaker to do so by the way on the day:

“We have to come out of this concept where we see ourselves coming from a black community, a white community, from an Arab community and understand that the only community in the eyes of Allāh is the Muslim community. Brixton itself is a microcosm of the whole Muslim Ummah not just a little parcel here in south-east {sic} London...”

Furthermore, the Salafis brought unity in 'aqeedah and manhaj and were the only ones to emphasise this, Tālib Alexander for example states, after 23 minutes into tape 1 of the 'Black Sunday' proceedings:

“We see groups like the Nation of Islam, Ansār ush-Shaytān, all these groups come in this Masjid and I think many of us are sick that this Masjid doesn't reflect one aqeedah, one belief, but a plurality of 'aqā'id, different beliefs.”

Meanwhile, in 1991, the Salafis were conducting their own lessons in Brixton at the Masjid with Abū Sakeenah Sirāt 'AbdulMālik al-Amrīkī (*rahimabullāh*) from New York and this is where most of the youth in South London at the time would go – those who would later form the Salafi da'wah in Brixton. Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) is, by consensus of Brixton Salafis, one of the primary founding fathers who supported, aided and bolstered the da'wah to the Qur'ān, Sunnah and Salafiyyah in Brixton, and also developed the community at Brixton Masjid. He was well liked and respected by both the younger brothers at the time and also the elders of the community. Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) later opened up his own home for classes at a time when the al-Murābitūn Sūfī Movement were trying to repress the Salafi da'wah in Brixton. He gave classes on tawheed on Sundays at the Masjid before the Murābitūn Sūfī Movement banned the classes there, more on this later. Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) was enthusiastic and encouraged the brothers to seek knowledge and he arranged 'Umrah trips for the Brixton Salafis from 1991-1993. On these visits 'Ulama would be visited such as during 1992 when Shaykh Muhammad Amān al-Jāmī, al-'Allāmah Hammād al-Ansārī, Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Jazā'irī and the Muhaddith of Madeenah 'AbdulMuhsin al-'Abbād were all visited. He had an incense factory in

West Norwood, sold incense in Brixton and helped many brothers at the time get into that trade. Sirāt would also offer advice and assistance to the young brothers in their employment, education, marital issues, and Sirāt's wife, Ā'ishah Mālik (may Allāh have mercy on her) founded Iqra School in Brixton. They had a few children including a disabled son 'Abdullāh who, after Sirāt's death in 1996, would be adopted by Tālib al-Amrīkī from Philly. Sirāt's wife died on 29th January 1995 and she was buried at Walthamstow Burial Ground. Sirāt died a year later on 12th March 1996 and was buried at the same cemetery, may Allāh have mercy on them both.

By 1992 'AbdulMājid [Uthman Ibrahim] Morrison, a law graduate and linguist from the Brixton al-Murābitūn Movement, was covertly trying to influence the direction of the Masjīd so as to push through the ideology of the al-Murābitūn World Sūfī Movement and was inviting leaders of the Murābitūn Sūfī Movement to Brixton to give talks. Idrees Mears for example would come and also another member who would teach Mālikī fiqh every Sunday. The Murābitūn Movement around this time also tried to organise events exclusively for African-Caribbean Muslims in order to encourage a "hijrah to the Caribbean" project. They also started to institute chanting after the prayers and tried to be more open with their Sufism, after a visit to Granada, Spain. It was therefore apparent that 'AbdulMājid 'Uthman Ibrahim Morrison was being 'groomed' to assume leadership of the community there. Murābitūn also placed pressure on Shaykh Salāh Sierra Leonī (*rahimahullāh*) to leave his role as Imām in order to make way for 'AbdulMājid Morrison, which by extension would allow for the gradual control of the Masjīd to fall under the Murābitūn sway. They did this initially by trying to get members of the community to pledge allegiance to them and in fact it was announced to the community that "bay'ah" should be made to them. They even placed on the notice board the ayah regarding obedience to **"...those in authority over you"** as if it applied to them. This caused uproar among the community as it was viewed that the Murābitūn Movement were trying to establish ultimate authority over the Brixton Masjīd. Thus, the Murābitūn Movement were becoming increasingly at odds with the Brixton Muslim community.

The Murābitūn Movement in Brixton, also known as 'the League of the Black Stone' (!?), adopted some strange practices wherein they tried to implement the Hudūd Punishments within Inner City London!? For example, in 1992 one individual was lifted by about four Murābitūn members up stairs with each person forcibly holding the individual in the air by his arms and legs. When the Murābitūn supporters were challenged by the Salafis over what they were doing and asked about their actions they let the individual go. When asked about that the Murābitūn followers replied that the individual was being "summoned by the Amir" who was waiting in the

upper Musalla? Around this time also, the Murābitūn imposed a boycott of the Salafis in Brixton and this led to the classes which were given by Sirāt 'AbdulMālik to be moved to Sirāt's home. After being approached and refuted by the Salafis, the Murābitūn movement revoked the 'order'.

At the same time 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī was on the scene in Brixton having arrived from Jamaica and after allegedly "graduating" from Imām Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University. We say "allegedly" as his academic credentials were never seen by, or presented to, the Brixton Salafis. Though not full-blown Takfīrī at this stage, and he was conducting lessons at Brixton and at the home of Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimahullāh*) for a few months before Sirāt finally told him to stop, Faisal's idiosyncratic beliefs and views were beginning to shine through, though not yet fully crystallised and some of the Brixton Salafis such as Tālib Alexander had already noticed these errors and did not attend any of Faisal's lessons whatsoever. Faisal suggested that al-Murābitūn be forcibly removed by a crew of Muslims from Harlesdon [North-West London] **"if the [Salafi] brothers in Brixton were not up to the job"**.⁴⁴ Hence, there was a power-vacuum, also exacerbated by the fact that 'AbdulMājid Morrison had resigned due to the turmoil of the time at the Masjid regarding his presence. His own Shurah had effectively shown no confidence in him hence his resignation.

Thus, the elders from the Brixton Muslim community at Brixton Masjid came together in order to get fully rid of the Murābitūn World Sūfī Movement and this culminated in what is known in Brixton Masjid's history as the infamous 'Black Sunday' event on Sunday 2nd May 1993 CE. On that day, 'AbdulMājid 'Uthmān Ibrāheem Morrison was in attendance and, together with the infamous 'League of the Black Stone' Murābitūn bodyguard entourage, and claimed that he did not resign and that the whole selection of new leadership was illegitimate and a farce. 'AbdulMājid 'Uthmān Ibrāheem Morrison therefore stated, as per the audio recordings of the Black Sunday proceedings which are still in the possession of the Brixton Salafis, in regards to his resignation letter wherein he stated: **"I 'Uthman 'AbdulMājid relinquish the position of Ameership in this community from this moment onwards...":**

"...there is no ambiguity in such a statement and nobody has heard such a statement from me. There are people who wished to understand that statement and rushed into the breach, I warned the community and notified the community – do not rush this matter. And I advise you again now, take clear note, of those people

⁴⁴ For more on 'Abdullāh el-Faisal al-Jamaykī refer to Abū Ameenah 'AbdurRahmān as-Salafi and 'AbdulHaq al-Ashanti, *'Abdullāh El-Faisal al-Jamaykī: A Critical Study of his Statements, Errors and Extremism in Takfeer* (London: Jamiah Media, 2009).

who rushed into a space that was not open for them, and which did not exist, and ask yourself what their intention and what their purposes were. The statement I made was at the administration of *the Mosque*, is something that I would no longer be directly involved in, and that that matter would be taken on, or should be taken on, by Luqman⁴⁵ until a new administration for the Mosque could be installed.⁴⁶ What people have failed to grasp is that Ameership is not coterminous, it does not end, with a building.⁴⁷ Now is that clear enough?⁴⁸ If that is not clear enough then let me make another statement which I hope is clear: the only legitimate conduct of this meeting is in the hands of Luqman and whoever he has asked to assist him in that matter, anything else is not legitimate. Do what you will, elect who you will, to whatever Shurah your imaginations want to dream up.”

After giving this statement Morrison then leaves Brixton Masjid with his bodyguard entourage at which point Abu Sufyan McDowell states, as on the Black Sunday tapes: **“you’re a stranger in the community that’s why you need a bodyguard!”** Indeed! The Murābitūn World Sūfī Movement was fully ousted by the community despite their contentions and to show their utter contempt, as remembered by some Brixton Mosque elders, members of al-Murābitūn in Brixton drenched the Masjid with petrol in order to set fire to the Masjid after the events of ‘Black Sunday’.

On ‘Black Sunday’, following the community attendees’ unanimous agreement that the Murabitūn World Sūfī movement must go, Shaykh Salah Jannah Sierra Leonī (*rahimullāh*) and

⁴⁵ Luqmān ‘Alī at-Trinidādī, he was not a key figure within Brixton at the time he was just close to ‘Uthmān ‘AbdulMājīd Morrison. Luqmān himself states to Shaykh Faisal Boadi that the resignation was ambiguous but that a new Ameer should be selected on the day, Black Sunday. Luqmān realised that he had been left to run the community which was too much for him anyway and hence he would admit that a new leader needs to be chosen. He opted for ‘AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī.

⁴⁶ ‘Uthmān ‘AbdulMājīd stepping down from Brixton Mosque was as a protest which backfired on ‘Uthmān when his own Shūrah decided that they would move on without him in the community. He thought that people would be begging for him to come back, yet rather people were happy to see the back of him. Hence Morrison and the Murābitūn Sūfī Movement were somewhat surprised at their lack of support.

⁴⁷ What ‘Uthmān Morrison is saying here is that the buck stops with him as the Ameer regardless, in other words he is saying that he still has a following who can merely move onto another location; and that indeed did happen when they moved to Norwich.

⁴⁸ Everyone present says: “no”!

Shaykh Faisal Boadi al-Ashanti chaired the meeting and, following consultation, agreed that the process would be for all of the community in attendance at Brixton Mosque to choose potential leaders.⁴⁹ This elected Shūrah would then go into one of the rooms (the current smaller room beside the main musallah upstairs) and, among them, elect a leader. The community would then abide by this. The basis of 'Black Sunday' was that the Murābitūn Sūfi Movement administration had resigned so the community came together to choose new leadership. There was no plan or strategy as such in order for the Salafis to 'take over', 'stage a coup' or make a 'revolution'. As events unfolded throughout the day the Chairmen suggested there to be elections. So at that point the Salafi attendees decided to push through as many Salafis as possible. But the election process was not initiated by the Salafis, nor did they anticipate it. The first nominees were ten individuals namely:

- Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*)
- 'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī, he will be discussed later on.
- Abū Sufyān 'AbdulKareem McDowell
- Ismā'eel Hamza
- Idrees Palmer
- 'Abdullāh el-Faisal al-Jamaykī
- Abū Safiyyah Tālib Alexander
- Abū 'AbdurRahmān Dawud
- 'AbdulHaqq Baker
- Abū 'Uthmān 'AbdulMālik
- Shaykh Faisal Boadi al-Ashanti

Then, Shaykh Faisal Boadi, Abū 'Uthmān 'AbdulMālik, Abū 'AbdurRahmān Dawud, Ismā'eel Hamza, Idrees Palmer and 'Abdullaah el-Faisal al-Jamaykī all pull out for five to go through. Thus, those remaining were chosen as the potential leaders and new Shūrah, these were the following:

- ❖ 'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī – a proponent of Takfīrī thought in the Brixton area way before 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī, and a revolutionary who believed that the UK was Dār ul-Harb. He would teach 'Divine Political Thought' at Brixton Masjid on Sunday mornings

⁴⁹ This outline of proceedings can be heard from the audios of the event which are still in the possession of the Brixton Salafis to this day.

and in 1992 he had already stated that it was permitted to take Riba in the UK. He had a lot of support in Brixton at the time and nearly seized control. He was in attendance flanked with his own bodyguards. He was being supported as the Ameer by the then Imām of Brixton Mosque Shaykh Salāh Jannah, may Allāh forgive him and have mercy on him, and by some of the elders at the time. In 1992 the Brixton Salafis visited the following 'Ulama and posed questions to them regarding some of the views of 'AbdulMalik at-Trinidādī: Shaykh Muhammad Amān al-Jāmī, al-'Allāmah Hammād al-Ansārī, Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Jazā'irī and the Muhaddith of Madeenah 'AbdulMuhsin al-'Abbād.

- ❖ Abu Safiyah Tālib Alexander – Salafī; however Tālib was young at the time and was focusing on going to study at Madeenah University
- ❖ Sirāt 'AbdulMālik al-Amrīkī (*rahimabullāh*) – Salafī; but he was ill at the time and it was not his way to go in front of the people. He was considered the most popular choice, but due to his humility he rejected any leadership positions.
- ❖ Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell – Salafī; strong personality, very active in the da'wah at the time.
- ❖ 'AbdulHaqq Baker – Salafī; strong personality and intelligent, ready to stand up to be counted.

In 1993, Tālib Alexander and 'AbdulHaqq Baker were seen as upcoming for the future while Sirāt (*rahimabullāh*) and Abu Sufyan were thus regarded as older and more established as they had been actively giving da'wah. The entire community that attended therefore chose the 5 mentioned above, which demonstrates that the Salafī da'wah had already spread to that extent in Brixton that the community by this stage had a large community of Salafī youth. The Salafis present in the Masjid on that day, when events unfolded to the selection stage, selected as many Salafī nominees as possible to get voted in so that the selected Salafis would stand a better chance - note that this was in 1993 so the da'wah was in its infancy and hence such processes were not fully understood by those involved at the time, yet this is part of the history which cannot be denied. Brixton Salafis to this day hold that the majority of Salafis wanted Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) to take the helm of leadership at the Masjid. 'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī knew it was a foregone conclusion that none would select him as overall leader when pitted against four Salafis, to the dismay of some in Brixton at the time, and though he made it through the first stage of the elections, he admitted this on the microphone. 'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī stated, as per tape 2 of the Black Sunday Proceedings of May 2nd 1993:

“The process in which you all have adopted, or which the people have adopted here, and I am not speaking to anybody else except Shaykh Salāh and Shaykh Faisal Boadi, and the other Shaykh, let me tell you something, and I am speaking to the people who have knowledge, right. The process of choosing the Ameer is a process illegitimate, a process illegitimate under our circumstances in which we exist, let me tell you why: in the time of 'Umar (radi Allāhu 'anhu) when they decided to choose the Ameer, or the leader, there was no such thing as Khawārij, there was no such thing as Shia, there was no such thing as this group, that group and every other group. There wasn't multiple interests, right. Now you come to take a situation from classical history, right, of unity, to put it on us with disunity! When we went into the room I knew, I knew before even we went into the room, I knew what was gonna happen! I knew the brothers would only express bias...”

“...we went in the room there, and we were biased, we were biased! Let me tell you why we were biased. Because when we went into the room the first thing that was expressed was that 'we have our different aqeedah', we might not have said it in those words, some of them expressed it in the former and others express it in the latter. ”

“...just like you have a group of 'Ulama who support your methodology and approach, I have a group of 'Ulama who support my methodology and approach and at the end of the day we all go back to the Kitāb and Sunnah...”

'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī then starts speaking about people judging him by his dress code to which his supporters make takbeerāt as a show of the last stand. Thus, AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī tries to put the blame of the outcome of the process on Shaykhs Salāh (*rahimahullāh*) and Faisal Boadi, as they had both studied. This leads to Shaykh Salāh to say that 'AbdulMālik Trinidādī himself also had knowledge and sat through the entire process and did not say anything at all about the selection process! Shaykh Salāh Jannah Sierra Leonī (*rahimahullāh*) grabs the microphone and says:

“My brothers, I must say, in as much as I have been very much impressed with what the last speaker has said, but I want to make it quite clear: that if we conducting this sitting have made any mistake, he has become a full part of it, because he was sitting here from the first minute to the end of it! It was his duty to

have corrected us! That is number one, but again, I cannot blame my brother because he said what he said in anger and when we say things in anger it is difficult to come out. This is not the 'AbdulMālik I know, the AbdulMālik with the knowledge is not the one I know. This is 'AbdulMālik who has come out as a human being and being a human being we all have our weaknesses."

Shaykh Salāh then says that if there were any errors in the process, then that was with the Chairman who did not announce the result, rather 'AbdulMalik at-Trinidādī stormed out of the room splurting out the result on the microphone to the people. Then Shaykh Salāh calls Shaykh Faisal Boadi al-Ashanti to come to announce the results to the community. Shaykh Faisal Boadi then announces the result. After 20 minutes, Shaykh Faisal Boadi al-Ashanti, may Allāh forgive him and us, in evidently trying to scupper and derail the process states: **"...since there is a difference of opinion about what happened in the room we cannot take it on [i.e. take on the final decision of the Masjid leadership]..."** At this Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson rejects this attempt to not accept the results and says: **"...let someone else speak [other than Shaykh Faisal Boadi]..."** After 23 minutes into Tape 2 of the Black Sunday Proceedings, Abu Sufyan McDowell then speaks and says: **"I came here today, and I had no intention in my heart to be the Ameer of this community..."**, a sister shouts out: "liar!" at which Abu Hajirah can be heard saying **"aūthu billāh"**. Then Abu Sufyan McDowell says:

"Allāh is my Judge, and Allāh will send me to Jahannam or Jannah for my words now. I am speaking now in fear of Allāh, I don't know what I am supposed to do now [a sister shouts out "step down!"]..."

"...please brothers and sisters, allow me to speak, allow me to speak, have patience, the unity of the community is more important than any one individual of us here today and you better believe it. What I am saying here today, the procedure was announced and everybody heard the procedure, names was {sic} to be put forward, from those names there should be five, and I was the one querying it all the time. They said I was wasting time but I wanted to be sure because I wanted everybody to know what they were doing. In the end it was announced, the names would be taken, but we need five names who would then go away and choose – you decided those five names, I didn't."

“...the brother said that I was biased, the brother said that I was biased and everyone in that room was biased except himself. I myself voted for Sirāt 'AbdulMālik, that was my vote. Two other brothers voted for myself, then Sirāt 'AbdulMālik said no, I am voting for you [Abu Sufyan]. That makes it three to one.”

And thus, Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell became the Ameer of Brixton Mosque with the Brixton Salafi Shūrah - fair and square. His Shūrah comprising: Abū 'Uthmān 'AbdulMālik, Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson, Abū Ilyās Idrees, Dr 'AbdulHaq Baker, Tālib Alexander, Abū Dawood Sameer and others. Yusuf Bowers however is totally incorrect to assert that the whole intent of the day was for the community to choose a Salafi. Rather the Salafis on the day worked hard and persevered to get any Salafi into the position and many of the youth began to ascribe to the Salafi da'wah. But the intent of the Brixton Masjid elders selecting a new Ameer was not in order to directly herald Salafiyyah, this was the role of the Brixton Salafi youth on the day. Abu Sufyan continues, as per tape 2 of the 'Black Sunday' audio:

“...we chose a path and none of the Shaykhs who are here who are knowledgeable including 'AbdulMālik himself, student of ilm, in the beginning raised any objection to the method that was used...the people of knowledge that was {sic} present: Shaykh Salāh, Shaykh Faisal [al-Jamaykī], Shaykh Boadi or anybody else who is knowledgeable here, raised objection to the method that was going to be used. When we left to go into the room, no one raised an objection. So what I am saying now brothers and sisters...you have two ways to go now. It's clear, you have two ways to go now: after you've agreed to something in the beginning, because it didn't come out in your favour you can turn your back on it [someone shouts that he should swear by the Qur'ān], you can turn away, you can cover your desire, your individual desire, think about something which is greater than yourself which is the community. If you speak about the community then we can sit down or stand up and work this thing out. If you wanna speak about yourself then you can mash up the place cos' that's what's gonna happen {sic}. That's what's gonna happen for your own selfish self you're gonna mash-up the place {sic}. I left my house today and came to Brixton Masjid and did not expect to become the Ameer of Brixton Masjid, if anybody with their long mouth wanna say that you did, I wait for you the Day of Judgement in front of Allāh who is All-Knowing and All-Seeing and you will have to bring your evidence, you must bring proof that you are looking into my

heart and the heart of all the brothers here and say I knew by the Book of Allāh that these people were not fearful of You [Allāh] when they made the decision. Please, that's all I want to say to you."

After 36 minutes into tape 2, when Shaykh Faisal Boadi says: **"...brother AbdulMālik brought a different decision, Abu Sufyan came with a different decision..."**, Abū 'Uthmān 'AbdulMālik can be heard saying: **"he just made a comment not a different decision!?"** Abu Sufyan says: **"...if you don't want to accept it just tell us so that we can go home!"** After 43 minutes Abu Sufyan McDowell states:

"I never asked for this position, Wallāhi, thumma wallāhi, I never asked for this position to be to come out like this."

Abu Sufyan then states that each and every person should pray two rak'ats of tawbah for the undignified behaviour within the Masjid. Note: that "undignified behaviour" was not from the Salafis, rather from the partisans of the Murabitūn World Sūfī Movement and the followers of 'AbdulMālik at-Trinidādī. The entire audios of the infamous 'Black Sunday' proceedings of Sunday 2nd May 1993, along with other audios of that period, are in the possession of the Brixton Salafis up to this day.

In December 1993 when Abu Sufyan was removed for a couple of months some members of Abu Sufyan's former Shūrah were dissatisfied with what transpired. The Committee of Elders and the arbitrators chose 'AbdulHaqq Baker, and he initially did not want the position as the other Salafis were not involved. The arbitrators responded by saying that the community did want Salafiysh because of its clarity but that they did not like Abu Sufyan's approach. The arbitrators emphasised that if 'AbdulHaqq Baker did not accept the position there would more than likely be a serious confrontation and possible violence as emotions were running high and there were people waiting in the Masjid for a decision. 'AbdulHaqq Baker's contention was that the arbitrators had selected three individuals who were not Salafi at the time. 'AbdulHaqq Baker was therefore put in a very difficult position which he had to wrestle with and also look at the bigger picture for the community based on what he held to be best at the time. Eventually the elders became more receptive, and had put aside much of their former allegiances with Trinidādī, Faisal and others, and many others returned to the Masjid when progress was being made with the community. After several months, and based on advice from some of the scholars who advised to stick with the Masjid otherwise it would be lost to Ahl ul-Bida', the remaining Brixton Salafis returned and this ushered in a new and strong era of Salafiyah wherein the wider

community came to know if its methodology through greater interaction and more elders embraced it.

So for about two or three months there was some slight tension among some of the Brixton Salafis from the community due to the process, and even considered opening up another Masjid – during which time Abū 'Aaliyah Surkheel was with Abu Sufyan, as will be seen later. However, by mid-1994 the former Shūrah of 1993 had now fully joined the Shūrah of 'AbdulHaqq Baker. The Brixton Salafis did not have a cult mentality or approach based on rallying around an individual and blindly following all that he says and orders - so they have thus worked together among themselves for the benefit of the da'wah despite slight differences over issues. When decisions were made among the Brixton Salafis it goes around and a decision is made for the benefit of the da'wah. The elders were subsequently also satisfied that the gaps between the Brixton elders and the youth had been bridged by 'AbdulHaqq Baker and that the community was unified with a clear methodology and the elders felt that they were a part of the Masjid's development and progress. This is when the intensification of Brixton Salafi da'wah began and shortly thereafter Abū Usāmah Khaleefah adh-Dhahabī joined the community as an Imām. The Masjid was vibrant and people would travel from afar to Brixton and at that time even Birmingham Salafis would travel regularly to the conferences. Yet all of this was simply “erased” from history by Bowers in his pseudo-history.⁵⁰

The era of May 1993-April 1994 was therefore a very strained period in Brixton Masjid's history, and it is folly for Bowers to give a simplistic account of it. Here are the main highlights of that period which demonstrate that there were multiple factors which have to be taken into account for any serious historical study of that time:

- ❖ The youth who were seriously practising Islam in the early 1990s in Brixton were the Salafis.
- ❖ The Salafis thus revived Islamic practice and this was very popular among the youth, due to JIMAS etc. However, the understanding and implementation of Salafiyyah at this time was very basic and at the times the brothers lacked knowledge which may have led them to make incorrect actions and decisions. This was understandable due to the formative developments at that time in 1990-1993. Hence, there was a

⁵⁰ Bowers is also known for an infamous “refutation” (!?) of Abū Usāmah Khaleefah which was full of basic spelling mistakes and atrocious grammar, it would benefit such an individual to work on his linguistic skills before gracing the arena with his “writings” and “prose”.

general absence of direct scholarly guidance coupled with zeal, passion, energy and in some cases, ignorance.

- ❖ The Murabitun Sūfi Movement's attempted takeover of Brixton Masjid did not work, but the order of their administration caused a rift when they left with nothing else in place. See 'Black Sunday' proceedings of 2 May 1993, full audios and transcripts still in possession of the Brixton Salafis. The quick removal of the Murabitun Sūfi Movement from Brixton Masjid led to upheaval while the community looked for the replacement.
- ❖ Amidst the chaos and upheaval the Salafis arose, bringing a new ethos for the community.
- ❖ However, a large percentage of the Brixton Muslim community, the elders of the day, could not yet relate to the Salafi ethos or method and thus rejected it. Of the main reasons was because the Brixton Masjid elders were of African and Caribbean backgrounds and had rallied together in Brixton to form their own community and due to racism and ignorance from the wider Muslim communities of the day which were of Asian or Arab origins. By the time the 1990s arrived, things were moving on and the youth wanted to access Islamic knowledge directly from scholars mainly from, but not exclusively, the Middle East. The Brixton elders at the time viewed this as folly and as "turning against our own people". After 1 hour and 20 minutes into the community which took place at Brixton Masjid dated Saturday 3rd July 1993, a Jamaican brother says: **"...my whole argument is this, I come here {sic} especially tonight, to ask Abu Sufyan to step down! Because Abu Sufyan is causing big fitna, within this community, him take over {sic}, as leader, fair enough, but him fail {sic} in his leadership, right, he drive away our scholars, he insult our scholars, and him a take {sic} full command, him a full dictator {sic}. And inna a Brixton {sic}, it naah go work {sic}! Dictatorship cyant {sic} work in this community. So we are asking Abu Sufyan to step down! That's all I come here tonight, to ask you to step down!"**
- ❖ It is difficult to brand the Salafis as being callous and unrelenting during the Brixton Interregnum Period, due to the circumstances in which they were put in. It can even be said that had Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimahullāh*) taken the helm at Brixton Masjid he would also have faced such opposition. Thus, due to the particular point in time back then, it was difficult to win over the hearts and minds of a large section of the Brixton

Muslim community. For example, during the community meeting at Brixton Mosque Saturday 3rd July 1993 a Jamaican brother says to Tālib Alexander, as per 1 hour 12 minutes into the audio: **“We blame you because the community is in tatters, you are trying to find a solution, you are less than 40% of the community, nobody seems to be backing you, and you’re asking us to bail this mosque out of its problems, step down! You have had three months, it is not working, we are willing to put our finances behind our respected leaders, step down! We do not want you anymore! Get out!”** [sister says: **“takbeer Allaahu Akbar”!**] While another Jamaican brother says to Abu Sufyan, on the same audio: **“Sufyan, under your leadership, this place been petrolled! {sic} Under your leadership! It go up in flames akhee! {sic} This has never happen {sic} in any Islamic community in England! It’s time to step down akhee!”** Here, Abu Sufyan is held accountable for someone trying to set fire to Brixton Masjid!? Hence, the tensions of the Brixton Masjid Interregnum Period of May 1993-April 1994. Any problem, the Masjid and the Salafis were held responsible, a method which would still continue in varying degrees up to this day by the way!

- ❖ Due to the implementation of the Salafi Manhaj, many stopped coming, not necessarily because of Abu Sufyan, though for some it was, but also due to Salafiyah being implemented which was neither fully understood nor wanted by some.
- ❖ Some Brixton elders thus joined the Murabitun Sūfī Movement and migrated with them from Brixton to Norwich, while others went with ‘AbdulMalik at-Trinidādī or ‘Abdullāh el-Faisal al-Jamaykī. Faisal al-Jamaykī during the first part of the Brixton Masjid Interregnum was tolerated for a few months. Yet when Faisal’s extremism became even more apparent by late 1993 and Faisal was stopped [as Abu Sufyan does state in his meeting with the Brixton ‘Committee of Elders’ in November 1993, which will be addressed in detail later in this study].⁵¹

⁵¹ This then triggered off Faisal’s personal vendetta against Brixton from 1994-1997 and within this period Faisal produced the appalling audio lectures *‘The Devil’s Deception of the Saudi Salafis’* and *‘The Devil’s Deception of the 20th Century House Niggers’*, wherein he makes takfeer of the Brixton Salafis and calls for their assassination and murder. Faisal would write the name “Sheikh Faisal” on his own lectures (!?) and Faisal can be credited as being the *de facto* individual who started negative propaganda against Brixton Mosque. His first approach was to simplistically claim that “Brixton Mosque supports Saudi Arabia” in order to gain financial returns and monetary gain for the “poor

- ❖ May 1993-April 1994 was therefore a very difficult period, as the Brixton elders were themselves also going through a transition and trying to understand the correct method of Islamic practice. The Brixton elders did not even want Shaykhs from Saudi or the Arab lands to come over which they felt was a silly idea and that no one would attend from the community anyway as such Shaykhs would “not be our scholars” who “know our issues”, i.e. not African and Caribbean.
- ❖ The Brixton elders had to come to a decision themselves and the key factor in the Brixton elders reviewing their approach was the number of youth turning to Salafiyyah and reviving Islam in Brixton and South London.
- ❖ The Brixton elders still wanted a part to play in the community and development, but things were moving fast, and it was 1993 now, not 1983 or 1973. The speed of the changes and shift to Salafiyyah was maybe too fast for them at the time, hence their antagonistic attitude to Abu Sufyan at the time and then cooling down towards the end of the Brixton Masjid Interregnum, ushering in the era of 'AbdulHaqq Baker.
- ❖ Despite all of the above, it can possibly be said, that Abu Sufyan's approach during May 1993-December 1993 was equally far too antagonistic with such a black revert and African and Caribbean community in South London which needed, as Shaykh Kamāluddeen indicates on one of the tapes from 1993, unification not denigration. Shaykh Abū 'AbdulKareem Abū Bakr al-Jamaykī, one of the Brixton Mosque founders, himself said in an interview for this study that he regarded Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker as being the one who did this [who brought the community together], this is also echoed by Abu 'Umar who was one of the adjudicators on the panel which presided over Abu Sufyan McDowell's removal from Brixton. Can it be said that Abu

black community”. His propaganda was far-reaching and influenced elements all over London in areas such as Tooting, Lewisham, Harlesdon, Ladbroke Grove, Stratford and Stonebridge. His negative propaganda morphed into “Brixton Masjid being an informer Masjid” – the same individuals who were propagating that Brixton was a “Saudi centre” then transferred their line of argument to Brixton being “a snitch” and “police informer” Mosque. Faisal today, not surprisingly, is still regarded as an authority by the cult followers of Omar Bakri Muhammad and Anjem Choudary. As for those elements who held him in high regard in the mid 1990s, they have suddenly denied any link to him, as in the case of Shakeel Begg from Redbridge Islamic Centre and Lewisham Islamic Centre.

For more on 'Abdullāh el-Faisal al-Jamaykī refer to Abū Ameenah 'AbdurRahmān as-Salafī and 'AbdulHaq al-Ashanti, *'Abdullāh El-Faisal al-Jamaykī: A Critical Study of his Statements, Errors and Extremism in Takfeer* (London: Jamiah Media, 2009).

Sufyan did not have a conciliatory approach with the community at the time? From the meeting tapes this does not come across, but there did appear to be a lack of adequate communication between the elders and Abu Sufyan's administration at the time. It would not be until 'AbdulHaqq Baker that the gap between the elders and the younger Brixton brothers would be bridged, and from here on many of the elders who had been antagonistic embraced the Salafi da'wah. Abu Sufyan's method of trying to be firm with such a community of black reverts in South London did not work.

- ❖ 'AbdulHaqq Baker, in the first 3 months of assuming leadership of Brixton Masjid in January 1994 still had issues with some of the Brixton elders and not all of the Brixton Salafis had yet joined, so those first 3 months of 'AbdulHaqq Baker's leadership is included as part of the Brixton Masjid Interregnum Era.
- ❖ The short period in which Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell was at the helm at Brixton, six months, coupled with what was mentioned above regarding 'AbdulHaqq Baker's first few months, therefore clearly indicates to any serious historian that the period was an Interregnum Period in Brixton Masjid's history. The fact that there was this difficult period also proves that there was no "inheritance" of the Masjid, which Yusuf Bowers also tries to present within his pseudo-historical presentation and revisionist dialectic.

This is what can be cogently observed, based on several audios from that period and hearing the venom against which the Brixton Salafis faced. It would be unfair to palm that period all off as **"Abu Sufyan McDowell being too harsh at the time"**, just as is equally erroneous Bowers' simplistic thesis on the other hand which posits that Abu Sufyan McDowell: **"stopped all of Ahl ul-Bida' in Brixton"** as if there were no errors in his approach whatsoever.

BOWERS' REVISIONIST HISTORY VIS-A-VIS BRIXTON MOSQUE

WHERE IS BOWERS IN THIS MESS?! WAS YUSUF BOWERS EVEN THERE?! BOWERS WHERE'S THE "CLARITY" IN YOUR NARRATIONS?!

To proceed then with Bowers' comment [made after 46 minutes and 5 seconds into the lecture]:

"...and I remember the day, it was called 'the Revolution' when the Sufis who used to own the Masjid were forced out."

- ❖ Firstly, Bowers is referring to **'Black Sunday'** as it is known in Brixton Masjid's official history and which has been discussed in length prior, not **'the Revolution'** as he calls it. It was never called **'the Revolution'**. For someone claiming to have such inside knowledge of historical details of 'the Salafi da'wah in the UK', and of Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah Brixton in particular, it would be expected for him to at least get the name of such a landmark point in Brixton Mosque's history correct. 'Black Sunday' occurred on Sunday 2nd May 1993 CE.
- ❖ Secondly, this is a type of tadlees: **"I remember the day"**, when Bowers is not being forthcoming about if he was even there!? So either he is narrating this event on the authority of someone, which necessitates him to name his source, or he was not there but is making out to people that he was actually there and this is tadlees. It is for Bowers to be clear in this issue as he is narrating an event and portraying his presence. Why has Bowers not responded to the Brixton Salafis regarding his presence on the day?! Why the games and running? Even when Bowers was around in Brixton it was nowhere near to the level that he is now able to give his own running commentary of historical events at Brixton. Though Yusuf Bowers did live in Brixton in 1996 at the house of Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimahullāh*) after Sirāt died. Other than that, Bowers only made brief shuttle visits to Brixton and nowhere to the level where he can sit and present a 'history of the da'wah at Brixton'.
- ❖ Thirdly, Bowers in his lecture did not state clearly that he was there during the 'Black Sunday' proceedings, he sufficed with saying **"I remember the day"** – this is a type of

tadlees, especially if Bowers was not there, it is a sleight of hand trick to dupe the listener into thinking that Bowers was actually present on that day.

- ❖ Fourthly, if Bowers was present he can say simply that he was there.
- ❖ Fifthly, Bowers has been asked by the Brixton Salafis to clearly confirm or negate his presence on Black Sunday – a reply has not been forthcoming.
- ❖ Sixthly, most of the Brixton Salafis say that Bowers was not present, none of the Brixton Salafis can testify to his presence on that day, due to his insignificance at the time in any case for anyone to be able to confirm his presence.
- ❖ Seventhly, even Abu Sufyan McDowell would be unable to confirm or negate Bowers presence! As Abu Sufyan was involved in the main proceedings on that day with the rest of the Brixton Salafis.
- ❖ If Bowers claims to **“remember the day well”** then why all of the errors in regards to what occurred on the day? As we shall see below.
- ❖ The Sufis, namely the Murabitun World Sūfī Movement, did not **“own the Masjid”** as Bowers posits. This is historically inaccurate and Bowers should retract this error. The Masjid was not **“owned”** by anyone at this time except the council. Notice how Bowers does not even give the year of this event, not exactly an accurate history of events. The date of this event was 1993 CE and it appears that Bowers is trying to assert, as he repeats in this talk as a kind of *argumentum ad nauseam*, that the current Salafi administration of the Masjid “inherited from Sūfis” – this is what Bowers is trying to assert, that the Masjid is merely a kind of ‘hand-me-down’ from Ahl ul-Bida’. This will be dealt with later. The Masjid was purchased during the time of ‘AbdulHaqq Baker on 14th April 1998.
- ❖ For Bowers to get the above details incorrect already should signal warning signs not only about his precision in narrations but also about his approach to “history”, for what other truths may Bowers be economical with regarding anything else he says? It shows the lack of precision in relaying events which Bowers has and this is an inappropriate method for one wishing to delve into history. Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, the former head of the College of Sharee’ah and Islamic Studies at Umm ul-Qurā’ University stated in his book *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History] when discussing **‘Sought-After Conditions for a Historian In Order for his**

Narrations to be Accepted', he stated under point 6: **"dabt [precision] in what he sees and hears."**⁵²

- ❖ Moreover, Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell, who was evidently present with Bowers at this "history" lesson (!?) should know that the Sūfis did not "own the Masjid". For Abu Sufyan and Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson both went to the Lambeth Council office in Streatham in 1993 to see if they could purchase the current Brixton Mosque. Abu Sufyan said he had a Yemeni friend who could help purchase the building. The Council said no, and as a result both Abu Sufyan and 'AbdurRahmān Anderson looked for another place in Acre Lane – yet the scholars at that time advised them not to open up another place and stick with the Masjid at Gresham Road.

In any case, Bowers continues [made after 46 minutes and 42 seconds into the lecture]:

"The revolution took place in the Masjid, where they were going to put somebody new in charge, Salafi! Somebody who had to rule it with Quwwah, why? Cos' Brixton's not no *{sic}* easy place to go in there like that, and alhamdulillah they chose Abu Sufyan. Because in that time, da'wah in London was headed by the likes of Abu Sufyan, like it who like it, hate it who hate it. For those who know Abu Sufyan, he lasted six months [laughing], the reason why he lasted six months wasn't because Abu Sufyan was a horrible person, but Abu Sufyan said: "Faisal can't teach here no more *{sic}*, Faisal's wife can't teach Arabic, these guys from Muntada can't come here and do durūs, these guys can't..." and stopped all of Ahl ul-Bida', Surūriyeen and Qutbiyeen doing any type of lessons, any type of da'wah in Brixton! So after a while, the Masjid became dead. Why? Because there was no tullāb here, everyone was, no one was abroad like that, this was 95/96. This was the times *{sic}* where there was hardly no one *{sic}* there, no one to give da'wah like that. And JIMAS were refuted, and Abu Āliyah and those guys lived on the other side of London and weren't prepared to come over and aid. So the brothers lost heart and then they removed Abu Sufyan after six months and then they put in, Allah yahdeehim, AbdulHaqq Baker. And then the Masjid went downhill. But we will get onto that a bit later on. This is gonna be a long lesson insha'Allāh ikhwa

⁵² Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, *op.cit.*, p.249.

and akhawāt, but it is important that many of you understand some of these masā’il and some of these issues that took place in the past.”

Indeed, it is important to understand what took place in the past, but from the right people who were actually there. The above statement is a very fanciful figment of the speaker’s imagination, the historical reality however is more along the lines of the following observations, which is the bitter pill which some refuse to swallow:

ONE

Bowers states about the events of 1993: **“they were going to put somebody new in charge, Salafi.”** It is unclear who Bowers means by **“they”**. If he intends the community then at the time some of the community did not want Salafiyyah, some were ignorant of the da’wah while the rest, mainly the youth, were Salafi. Yet it cannot be said that proceedings on that day were in order to deliberately herald “Salafiyyah” in Brixton. It was the Salafis from the community on the day of deciding the new leadership who were the driving force for heralding Salafiyyah in Brixton, so Bowers is incorrect in his statement here.

TWO [HISTORICAL DENIAL AND ERASURE]

The above statement by Bowers reeks of historical denial and erasure. What can be derived from this is that Abu Sufyan McDowell was **“leading”** da’wah. Indeed, Abu Sufyan McDowell was from *among* those leading the da’wah in the UK in the early 1990s and he had some praiseworthy efforts, but why give the impression that Abu Sufyan was *the* actual leader of the Salafi da’wah in London in 1993? What Abu Sufyan ‘AbdulKareem McDowell can be credited for is:

- ❖ Widening the scope for others in the community to experience Salafiyyah
- ❖ Conducting da’wah and khutbahs in Peckham
- ❖ He was active and led by example, his da’wah activities at Hyde Park Speakers Corner is a case in point wherein he had an exemplary role in calling people to Allāh and to the Sunnah.
- ❖ He started a few regular classes
- ❖ Of the first, but not the only one, to be faced with an extremely hostile community of African and Caribbean reverts to whom Salafiyyah was completely and utterly strange. Abu Sufyan, having a degree of street credibility, was at the forefront of dealing with individuals who made blatant threats against a person’s life if one did not accept their

view, hence he also had to have a strong character. With the mantra of **“down Sufyan, down!”** (as stated by some of the Brixton community at the time) it could also be argued however that a hearts and minds exercise could never have been won by any of the Salafis at the time. Yet he did not do this by himself, as he had the other Brixton Salafis with him who cannot be simply erased from the historical archives. However, this attitude is not to be with all of the people all of the time and is what eventually led to difficulties when utilised at Brixton.

- ❖ He had an implacable approach, which, may have been good in particular instances, yet as we will find in this study could not adequately be utilised in Brixton for a number of reasons.

Yet why not mention the other heads of the da'wah at the time. History documents that there were others involved in the Salafi da'wah in London circa 1992/3. To say that only Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell was **“leading Salafi da'wah”** at that time contains gross inaccuracy. Moreover, Allāh says

“...and do not claim yourselves to be pure, He is most knowing of who fears Him...”

{*an-Najm (53): 32*}

Ibn Katheer stated:

Hadith from 'Abdur-Rahman bin Abi Bakrah, from his father who said, “A man praised another man before the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah said: “Woe to you, you have cut off the neck of your friend! If one of you must praise a friend of his, let him say, ‘I think that so-and-so is this and that; Allah knows best about him and I will never purify anyone before Allah,’ if he knows his friend to be as he is describing him.)” Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah collected this Hadith. Imam Ahmad recorded that Hammam bin Al-Harith said: “A man came before 'Uthman bin 'Affan and praised him. Al-Miqdad bin al-Aswad started throwing sand in the face of that man, saying: “The Messenger of Allah ordered us to throw sand in their faces when we see those who praise.” Muslim and Abu Dawud also collected this Hadith.

There were others who, as Bowers said **“like it who like it and hate it who hate it” (!?)**, who were also involved in the da'wah in London in 1993, namely:

- ❖ Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimahullāh*) from New York - conducting classes at Brixton Masjid and then later at his home in Brixton. Considered by many in Brixton as being the *de facto* individual who came with the da'wah to the Qur'ān and Sunnah to Brixton. Abu Sufyan

McDowell himself chose Sirāt to be the Ameer of Brixton as can be clearly heard on the 'Black Sunday' audios.

- ❖ Sulaymān 'AbdusSabūr (*hafidhabullāh*) – who would conduct classes circa 1991-1993 for the new younger Salafi brothers at the house of Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rabimahullāh*).
- ❖ 'AbdulHaqq Baker – conducting classes with new younger brothers in Croydon from 1992 and doing talks around the country.
- ❖ 'AbdurRaheem Green - classes at his house in Clapham along with Hyde Park Speakers Corner activity wherein he would tag-team with Abu Sufyan and this partnership in da'wah lead to people becoming Muslim in droves. For 'AbdurRaheem Green was also someone who, while articulate, was also no push-over. This is why the two of them were so successful in their da'wah at the Park.
- ❖ Abū 'Āliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Shareef - Leyton and Clapham classes.
- ❖ Abū Muntasir Manwar Ali, the head and founder of JIMAS - Balham and Clapham classes, along with doing a few lectures at Brixton prior to the Salafi takeover.
- ❖ Dawood Burbank (*rabimahullāh*) - occasionally in Clapham.
- ❖ Farhat 'Abbās
- ❖ 'AbdurRazzāq as-San'ānī as-Somālī among the Somalis.

Yet the main heads in 1993 were those who were part of JIMAS which at that time represented the Salafi da'wah:

- ❖ Abū Muntasir Manwar Ali [head of JIMAS]
- ❖ Abū 'Āliyah [JIMAS]
- ❖ Dawood Burbank (*rabimahullāh*) – who was the first to distant himself from JIMAS later on in the mid 1990s when partisanship, Qutbism and Ikhwānī methods became manifest within the organisation.

JIMAS began in order to spread Salafiyyah but then morphed into Hizbiyyah, as is the way of organisations which revolve around blind following of its heads and acceptance of all they say without question, regardless of how much they may use "Salafiyyah" as a kind of "name-brand". It can be argued that there is an issue in the adherence to Salafiyyah that several of the names mentioned above currently have, namely some of them completely disassociated themselves from Salafiyyah, adopting approaches in line with the Ikhwānī methodology [i.e. Abū Muntasir]. While others, like Abū 'Āliyah, have recently shared platforms alongside Sūfis and diluted

Salafiyyah to the extent where they no longer ascribe themselves to it. That said, there is no doubt that in the early 1990s the above names were spreading Salafi da'wah in London. Their role however cannot be merely whitewashed out of the Salafi archives and historical record. The statement of Imām as-Suyūṭī was mentioned prior wherein he stated in his book *ash-Shamāriḳh fī 'Ilm it-Tāriḳh* [Fireworks in Historiography] in regards to the benefit of history:

Its benefit is in taking lessons and advice from it and obtaining practical lessons from it by stopping at the changing of times so as to be protected from the harmful examples and obtain beneficial examples.

The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimabullāh*), highlighted a trait of the people of desires which one must be careful of not falling into:

«فإن من علاماتهم أنهم يذكرون ما لهم ويكتمون ما عليهم»

“...from their signs [i.e. the people of desires] is that they mention what is for them and hide what is against them.”⁵³

While Dr Hasan 'Uthman states in his book *Manhaj ul-Baḥḥ at-Tāriḳhi* [The Method of Historical Research]:

The historian has to be truthful, brave and sincere, he does not lie, wrongly ascribe and present a false image for the people of reputation and authority. He does not hide true events and realities which others may not know at times and which may not please him or his people...whoever goes outside of this [truth and sincerity in relaying events] is not to be deemed as a historian. There is no doubt that uncovering past shames and mistakes greatly benefits in helping to stay away from factors for error in the present. Not revealing them is misleading and far from insight...⁵⁴

What also corroborates this is the fact that Abu Sufyan McDowell was a close acquaintance of Abu 'Āliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Shareef, both residing in Leyton, with Abū 'Āliyah even accompanying Abu Sufyan to Brixton on most of the days Abu Sufyan met with those chosen to arbitrate at Brixton, yet this was not mentioned in Bowers' "history" who in fact says that Abū 'Āliyah and others **“...weren't prepared to come over [to Brixton] to aid”**. Abū 'Āliyah

⁵³ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay' min Fiqhihā wa Fawā'idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā'rif, First Print, 1416 AH/1996 CE), vol.6, part 2, p.1200.

⁵⁴ Dr Hasan 'Uthman, *op.cit.*, p.18

Surkheel Shareef’s close relationship with Abu Sufyan McDowell has been neatly brushed under the carpet as if it did not exist, another example of historical erasure and denial. Due to the severity of this brazen historical denial, this issue will be discussed in a separate section later.

Furthermore, startlingly, Bowers made no mention whatsoever of the role of Sirāt ‘AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) who is recognised by the Brixton elders and the original Brixton Salafi old school as being the *de facto* individual who not only aided and supported the da’wah of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, and the way of the Salaf, in the Brixton area, but also one of the elders who bolstered and developed the Brixton Masjid community and was one of the founding fathers of the Salafi da’wah in Brixton. Why on earth Bowers, who claimed to present a “history” and discuss Brixton within it, yet deny the role of Sirāt ‘AbdulMālik (*rahimabullāh*) and his efforts? This is indeed strange. More on this will be mentioned later.

THREE

Denial of the history of nuances at Brixton during 1993 and downplaying errors in the method of presenting the da’wah at the time. In December 1993 some of the Brixton Salafis went to Saudi Arabia and asked about the growing tension at the Masjid and what was occurring with Abu Sufyan and the issues being levelled against him. The small delegation of Brixton Salafis spoke to the student of Imām Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shinqeetī (*rahimabullāh*), Shaykh ‘Atiyyah Sālim (*rahimabullāh*) who was then a judge in Madeenah. Abū Usamah adh-Dhahabī and Faraz Farhat were present as translators. At least one hour of questions and answers were recorded on audio cassette with Shaykh ‘Atiyyah Sālim (*rahimabullāh*) related to Brixton Masjid and the behaviour of Abu Sufyan and what to do. From what Shaykh ‘Atiyyah Sālim (*rahimabullāh*) stated was that harshness does not bring people together nor does bad behaviour, but it does not take one out of Salafīyah, but are not qualities of a leader. The same questions were posed to Shaykh Muhammad Rizq in Quba, with Abu Muslimah and Abu Tahir present. Finally the Muhaddith of Madeenah ‘AbdulMuhsin al-‘Abbād al-Badr and his son ‘AbdurRazzāq were also asked, with Farhat ‘Abbas and Abu Tahir being present.

It is folly for Bowers to compare a difficult and strained interregnum period of six months in 1993 with a fifteen year tenure from 1994-2009. The testimonies of the elders of Brixton will be mentioned shortly.

FOUR [“SURŪRĪS” AND “QUTBĪS” KICKED OUT OF BRIXTON IN 1993!? WHY WAS ‘ABDURRAHMĀN ‘ABDULKHĀLIQ AND ‘ALI TIMIMI INVITED TO BRIXTON THEN?!]

There is the insinuation that Abu Sufyan was removed on the basis of his single-handed opposition to ‘Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī, al-Muntada al-Islāmī, the Qutbīs, Surūrīs and the Ikhwanīs!? Yet as has been noted above, this was not exactly the case. ‘AbdurRahmān ‘AbdulKhāliq, during the time of Abu Sufyan McDowell, was invited to come to Brixton to debate the Jihādīs and Takfīrīs – **not mentioned by Yusuf Bowers**. The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimabullāh*), highlighted a trait of the people of desires which one must be careful of not falling into:

«فإن من علاماتهم أنهم يذكرون ما لهم ويكتمون ما عليهم»

“...from their signs [i.e. the people of desires] is that they mention what is for them and hide what is against them.”⁵⁵

We mentioned prior what was stated by Shaykh Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī from the *Markaz Imām al-Albānī li’l-Buhūth il-‘Ilmiyyah wa’d-Dirāsāt il-Manhajīyyah* [Imām al-Albānī Centre for Academic Research and Methodological Studies] in Jordan, noted in his book *Tarsikh ul-Mudkhal ilā ‘Ilm it-Tārikh: Buhūth Tārikhiyyah* [Establishing the Entry to the Knowledge of History: Historiographical Research]:⁵⁶

Of the important benefits of studying history is its use for understanding previous errors and warning from the pitfalls which were fallen into throughout history. This is taking from the Prophetic guidance narrated by Abū Hurayrah (*radi Allāhu ‘anhu*): “A believer is not stung from the same hole twice.”⁵⁷

In the Q&A session, ‘AbdurRahmān ‘AbdulKhāliq even rolled his sleeves up at one stage in readiness against an aggressive heckler. So it was during Abū Sufyān’s time that ‘AbdurRahmān

⁵⁵ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, First Print, 1416 AH/1996 CE), vol.6, part 2, p.1200.

⁵⁶ Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī, *op.cit.*, p.18

⁵⁷ Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

'AbdulKhāliq was invited into Brixton – again missing from Bowers' "history". Why? Dr Hasan 'Uthman states in his book *Manhaj ul-Babth at-Tārikhī* [The Method of Historical Research]:

The historian has to be truthful, brave and sincere, he does not lie, wrongly ascribe and present a false image for the people of reputation and authority. He does not hide true events and realities which others may not know at times and which may not please him or his people...whoever goes outside of this [truth and sincerity in relaying events] is not to be deemed as a historian. There is no doubt that uncovering past shames and mistakes greatly benefits in helping to stay away from factors for error in the present. Not revealing them is misleading and far from insight...⁵⁸

Thus, we have seen three instances of where Bowers has not mentioned:

- ❖ 'AbdurRahmān 'AbdulKhāliq being invited to come to Brixton during the time of Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell.
- ❖ 'Ali Timimi invited to Brixton during the time of Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell.
- ❖ Abū 'Āliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Shareef's close friendship with, and support of, Abu Sufyān 'AbdulKareem McDowell and even accompanying him to Brixton when Abu Sufyan was requested to step down. Due to the seriousness of this denial, this will be dealt with in a separate section later.
- ❖ The increased connection with al-Muntada al-Islamī during the time of Abu Sufyan, as the issue of al-Muntada was not clear at the time anyway.

Yet when conducting an honest and impartial historical survey all of such details need to be relayed and accounted for and not merely brushed under the carpet in order to present a sanitised or false history of denial and revisionism. Also, the issue of al-Muntada was not clear in 1993 and it was Abū Sufyān 'AbdulKareem McDowell who accepted, though somewhat reluctantly and due to the pressure, a representative from al-Muntada as part of the panel which presided over what would later turn out to be his removal from leadership at Brixton – even though some of the Brixton Salafis advised not to accept arbitration from such a representative. A brother from al-Muntada would even lead Taraweeh at this time. Bowers statment here is very misleading. What Bowers stated above is incorrect about removal on the basis of opposition to al-Muntada al-Islāmī. This is a historical blunder on Bowers' part.

⁵⁸ Dr Hasan 'Uthman, *op.cit.*, p.18

Another important observation is that Bowers is using terminologies [such as 'Surūrī' and 'Qutbī'] which were not even popularised in the UK in 1993! This fitnah had not yet been revealed, but Bowers projects that it was! Why did Abu Sufyan invite 'AbdurRahmān 'AbdulKhāliq and 'Ali Timimi in 1993 if Abu Sufyan: **"stopped all of Ahl ul-Bida', Surūriyeen and Qutbiyeen doing any type of lessons and any type of da'wah in Brixton"** as Bowers suggests? Dr Hasan 'Uthman states in his book *Manhaj ul-Bahth at-Tāriqihī* [The Method of Historical Research]:

It is a necessity for the historian, like other people of knowledge, to possess intellect and consciousness. This is so that he is able to clearly distinguish between events and co-ordinate types of realities and benefit from them at appropriate instances; so that he can determine the relationship between historical events in time and place and connect between them with coordination and concurrence. Without that, events will be mixed around in front of the historian and its detailed explanation will also be confused and he will be unable to link the events together. He will thus lose the description of "a historian".⁵⁹

In an audio of a community meeting held at Brixton Mosque with members of the community dated Saturday 3rd July 1993 Abu Sufyan states:

"...we are also trying to bring over some Shaykh {sic} from America, Jordan, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. At the moment there was one of the Shaykh, 'Ali Timimi, from America that was due to come, but unfortunately he would not be able to come because of prior commitments. I have been told that some of the teachers in the University of Madeenah will be sent here, will come here, insha'Allāh we are hoping that we will be able to use them in this place here insha'Allāh."

Above contains reference to Ali Timimi as a "Shaykh"! After 19 minutes into the audio of a community meeting held at Brixton Mosque with members of the community dated Saturday 3rd July 1993 Abu Sufyan shows the 1993 Brixton Masjid "Objectives" to those present, which he said has been:

"...certified by Albānī and Ali Hasan, the main student of Shaykh Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, Shaykh Jibāly, Shaykh 'Ali Timimi, Shaykh Abdullāh al-Farsi, Shaykh 'AbdurRahmān 'AbdulKhāliq and Shaykh 'Abdullāh as-Sabt."

⁵⁹ Dr Hasan 'Uthman, *op.cit.*, p.19

These audios are from 1993 still in the possession of the Brixton Salafis. 'Abdullāh el-Faisal al-Jamaykī during the first few months of Abu Sufyan's administration was still tolerated. Faisal was made fully unwelcome by the end of 1993 going into 1994 when 'AbdulHaqq Baker assumed the position. Evidence for this is from the audio of the community meeting held at Brixton Mosque with members of the community dated Saturday 3rd July 1993. Herein Abu Sufyan says, after 54 minutes into the audio [Side B of Tape 2 of Proceedings]:

"...we have had talks going on, Shaykh Faisal's class, we have many talks going on...acts of deviation from the last administration were done and not prevented..."

Abu Sufyan made Faisal al-Jamaykī completely unwelcome by November 1993 when it was becoming known that Faisal was using weak and fabricated hadeeth; giving "fatwas" that it was allowed to rob from Gulf Arab tourists in London and saying that the Christians could be counted among the 73 sects. Abu Sufyan mentions this on another audio dated Friday 12th November 1993 in a meeting with the Committee of [Brixton] Elders, who at the time were not Salafi. Yet Abu Sufyan, by his own testimony, was initially very supportive of 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī – **not mentioned by Bowers!** Abu Sufyan states after 36 minutes into this audio:

"You will recall that at one time Faisal was ejected, from this Masjid, the last administration ostracized Faisal from this Masjid. Unfortunately, the large support that he had in the Masjid did not materialise to help him, in fact it was me who was one of those campaigning to get him back."

So here Abu Sufyan highlights that "the last administration", meaning those of the Murabitun Sūfī Movement, ostracized Faisal from Brixton and Abu Sufyan was of those campaigning to get Faisal back into Brixton!? Another piece of the historical record effectively erased by brother Bowers! Abu Sufyan then states after 44 minutes into the audio from 1993:

"When Faisal was kicked out of here I didn't hear too many of the voices raised that he was gone, the young people, yes. When he was accused of being a Saudi spy I don't find *{sic}* too many people running to his support, we however, by the grace of Allaah, we rallied to his support. We went to Sirāt AbdulMālik's house, established a class there. One of the first thing *{sic}* that I did when I was elected by the community to this position was to bring Faisal back. Faisal was doing a class there. Faisal, I expect respect not only from myself but from the people in here. Faisal went away, his wife had the baby, I was told Faisal was taking a couple of weeks off because his wife just had the baby, okay? I go to Speakers Corner, I find Faisal there; I go to here, I see Faisal there; to come [for] two hours or one

hour to do the class he wasn't here he was busy, I was told. Two weeks I was told, then two weeks went to three weeks, four weeks, five weeks where's Faisal? I don't know. The man's gone and never said a dickie word to me, or to anyone, he's gone."

So from the above the following can be established:

- Abu Sufyan rushed to support 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī in Brixton around 1992 when Faisal was accused by the al-Murābitūn World Sūfī Movement of being a Saudi spy.
- Abu Sufyan, and the Brixton Salafis at the time, around 1992 prior to the manifestation of 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī's Khārijīyah and extremism, allowed Faisal to do classes.
- Importantly for this study, Abu Sufyan admits that **"one of the first things"** he did was to **"bring Faisal back"**! How does this sit with Bowers open claim that Abu Sufyan was removed from Brixton based on saying **"Faisal cannot teach here no more {sic}"**? There is a discrepancy here, and it appears that some elements have not been honest in relaying the historical events.

However, Abu Sufyan on the audio then goes on to explain why 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī was stopped by the Salafis:

"Okay, then I find that he's down in Peckham. Once I managed to listen to one of his tapes in Peckham...and before this...many of the brothers and sisters was coming to me complaining: this man is doing dars and he's quoting hadeeth which is [fabricated] then you ask about this hadeeth and he's stutters coming left, right and centre.

I myself was not attending the class, I listened to one of the tape I said okay I'll put him up on it. Many times I said to him Faisal please, "when you come to the dars do your research", one minute he was supposed to do tafseer, the next minute he's doing something else, every week it's something different; [we] didn't know what the heck was going on. Okay, now when he was down in Peckham, I listened to one of the tape...I will live and die by this, okay, if I'm kicked out of here you know, I could walk out of here and my head will not be down on the ground it'd be straight ahead knowing by the grace of Allaah, I stuck through thick or thin, never mind if the peoples gathering against me, I stuck by it just to bring the haqq to the people, that's my concern, the haqq to the people, my thing is not to please everybody, it's impossible to do that. He's teaching, this is Dār ul-Kufr, Dār ul-Harb, this is Dār ul-Harb. Even worse to my face he's telling me Maggie Thatcher has a better aqeedah than me!?! Because Maggie Thatcher know this to be Dār ul-Harb!?"

Abu Sufyan continues:

“Hold on, it was not resolved. He told me to my face, to my face. I simply said to him: akh there is ikhtilāf on this issue of Dār ul-Harb. **The brothers went to Madeenah, Madeenah and some of the brothers took it there. From Brixton community took it there and one of the Shaykhs had to come running to the brothers house, running, leaving his classes, running to come to talk to the brothers on this issue telling them how dangerous this issue is; and even saying: this issue, he himself as a Shaykh, who was more knowledgeable than Faisal, 'AbdulMalik and all the others people that you've mentioned here, he said even I would not touch this question. He asked the brother a simple question to do with wudu or something to do with the salah and the brother couldn't answer it. And he [the Shaykh] said: “and yet you want to come here and talk to me about the issue? Myself I would give this issue to Shaykh Ibn Bāz.”** Then he [Faisal] said in the tape: “you don't need no Shaykh, no Shaykh to tell you that when the Arabs come from the Gulf of wherever they come from at Edgware Road, messing about with prostitutes and drinking, you don't need no Shaykh to tell you that you can find his house, break into his house and take his wealth because his wealth is your wealth.”

The Brixton opposition to Faisal, Muntada, the Ikhwānīs and Takfīrīs was much more prominent from 1994 onwards, however Bowers for some reason, failed to mention this. There were many in Brixton opposed to the da'wah of Faisal, Muntada, the Ikhwānīs and Qutbīs – **yet they were not removed or made unwelcome at Brixton.** This is the clearest proof that what Bowers has stated is questionable. Herein, Bowers has failed in providing an unbiased and dispassionate account of the history of the Salafī da'wah in the UK. If Bowers was honest, he would also mention the brothers who also opposed the da'wah of the deviants in Brixton instead of preserving the honour of one man. The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimahullāh*) stated in *Silsilah as-Saheehah*:

ولكن هذا هو شأن أهل الأهواء, لا يخلصون للبحث العلمي, وإنما يتبعون منه ما
يوافق أهواءهم! والله المستعان

This is the state of the people of desires – they are not sincere in scholarly research, indeed they only follow whatever agrees with their desires in regard to it! Allāh's Aid is sought.⁶⁰

Remember, Abu Sufyan was backed by the Brixton Salafis of the time who were:

- ❖ Sirāt 'AbdulMālik (*rahimabullah*)
- ❖ Abū Safiyyah Tālib Alexander
- ❖ Abu Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson
- ❖ 'AbdulHaqq Baker
- ❖ Abū Ilyās Idrees
- ❖ Abū Dawood Sameer
- ❖ Abū 'Uthmaan 'AbdulMālik
- ❖ Abū Yūsuf 'AbdulHakeem
- ❖ Abū 'AbdurRahmaan Dawood

The fanciful story that Bowers depicts is as if all of the above Brixton Salafis were all in collusion to get rid of Abu Sufyan or also played a role in his removal from Brixton. This serious allegation will also be discussed in a separate section later. So why did not Bowers conduct proper historical research about the da'wah in Brixton? Why did not Bowers even approach the Brixton Salafis? How many people did Bowers even approach to find out in order to get an accurate image of what occurred in Brixton during 1992-1994? Badruddeen al-'Aynī stated, and this was during his time, as is relayed in *Shurūt ul-Mu'arrikh fī Kitābat it-Tārikh wa't-Tarājim* [Conditions of the Historian in Writing History and Biographies], edited and published by Dr Fu'ad Sayyid:

As for those who write history today during our times today, then if he transmits from witnesses and A'yān [notables] or reports from trustworthy transmitters, then there is no problem with that, as within that are many benefits which are not hidden from the one who contemplates.

Shaykh Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī from the *Markaz Imām al-Albānī li'l-Buhūth il-'Ilmiyyah wa'd-Dirāsāt il-Manhajīyyah* [Imām al-Albānī Centre for Academic Research and Methodological Studies] in Jordan, stated when discussing the isnād relevance to historical verification:

⁶⁰ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay' min Fiqhihā wa Fawā'idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā'rif, 1422 AH/2002 CE), vol.7, part 2, p.1101.

The writing and transmission of history in the way of the Muhadditheen, which is the isnād, is firstly of the hallmarks of this Ummah and secondly of the hallmarks of Islamic history, rather it is of the most important features of Islamic history.⁶¹

Bowers is going to need more than one narrator if he is going to try and present a "history" on an entire community and on the Salafi da'wah. It is also as if Bowers is insinuating that after Abū Sufyān's removal from the leadership role at Brixton, Brixton in some way opposed the removal of the Takfīrīs etc., and such an insinuation is dhulm. Bowers is intimating that Brixton was so Mutasāhil that it did not even oppose Faisal, Muntada, the Qutbiyyah and the Ikhwānīs!? As a result, there is a need to rebut Bowers' intimations. Let us remind the noble reader that Bowers is the one who has initiated this, by opening up the history in the way he did.

FIVE

Bowers assertion that there were no tullāb ul-ilm in 1995/96 in the UK is also questionable, as there were some student of knowledge present as has been documented.

SIX [BOWERS POOR CHRONOLOGICAL SKILLS]

Bowers stated:

"So after a while, the Masjid became dead. Why? Because there were no tullāb here, no one was abroad like that, this was 95/96."

This is again totally wrong, which proves that this "history" is problematic. First of all, Bowers has suddenly jumped two years!? He was discussing Abu Sufyan McDowell's presence in Brixton in 1993, then Bowers skipped two years and arrived in 1995/96!? Bowers earlier spoke as if he was present in Brixton in 1993, so Bowers has a serious chronological problem here. Dr 'Alī Ibrāheem Hasan stated in his book *Istikhdam ul-Masadir wa Turuq ul-Bahth fi't-Tārikh al-Islāmī al-'Ām* [Use of Sources and Research Methods in General Islamic History]:

That chronological order is maintained in all that you write. So you take one specific point then follow in accordance with chronological order as events are

⁶¹ Akram bin Muhammad Ziyādah al-Fālūjī al-Atharī, *Tarsikh ul-Mudkhal ilā 'Ilm it-Tārikh: Buhūth Tārikhiyyah* [Establishing the Entry to the Knowledge of History: Historiographical Research] (Ammān, Jordan: Dār ul-Athariyyah, 1427 AH/2006 CE), p.32. The book itself is based on one of the lectures given by Shaykh Akram during the Seventh Conference held at the *Markaz Imām al-Albānī li'l-Buhūth il-'Ilmiyyah wa'd-Dirāsāt il-Manhajiyyah* [Imām al-Albānī Centre for Academic Research and Methodological Studies] in 'Ammān dated 10 Jumādā al-Ākhir 1426 AH/Sunday 17 July 2005 CE.

comprehended year after year. If importance is not attached to this then it is not considered an authentic history whatsoever.⁶²

Furthermore, during this period alternative activities in the Masjid were being held when Abu Sufyan was not there as he lived in East London and did not always attend the Masjid. Some from the Brixton community planned for people to stay away from the Masjid so as to force change and Abu Sufyan asked Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson and Abū Yūsuf to go and speak to people about this as the people would not listen to him. The Masjid during this time was thus paced out for Jumu'ah at times when Abu Sufyan McDowell was not there. This was in 1993 and Abu Sufyan was removed at the end of 1993. By the time Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson and Abū Yūsuf returned from Saudi Arabia in January 1994 the arbitration process had already been set in motion.

SEVEN [BOWERS' HISTORICAL DENIAL OF ABŪ 'ĀLIYAH SURKHEEL IBN ANWAR SHAREEF'S SUPPORT OF ABŪ SUFYĀN 'ABDULKAREEM MCDOWELL AT BRIXTON IN 1993, PART 1]

Bowers also states:

“And JIMAS were refuted, and Abū Āliyah and those guys lived on the other side of London and weren't prepared to come over and aid. So the brothers lost heart and then they removed Abu Sufyan after six months and then they put in, Allah yahdeehim, AbdulHaqq Baker. And then the Masjid went downhill.”

The above remark contains denial of the closeness between Abu Sufyan and Abu Āliyah Surkheel ibn Anwar Shareef. First of all, at that time JIMAS were not “refuted” so Bowers again has grossly erred in his chronological dating of historical events, and this is unbecoming of one who wants to conduct a “history”. JIMAS at that time represented Salafīyyah in the UK so it was embraced and many people during Abu Sufyan's time also went to JIMAS conferences.

Shaykh Kamāluddeen, one of the Brixton elders who at the time rallied for Abu Sufyan's removal from Brixton, has narrated that Abū Āliyah was by Abu Sufyan's side when Abu Sufyan was asked to leave Brixton, **“like it who like it, hate it who hate it” (!?)** – this historical detail is again miraculously missing from Bowers odd portrayal of “history”. The Mujaddid of the era,

⁶² Dr 'Ali Ibrāheem Hasan, *Istikhdam ul-Masādir wa Turuq ul-Bahth fi't-Tārīkh al-Islāmī al-Ām* [Use of Sources and Research Methods in General Islamic History]. Cairo: Maktabat an-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1980 CE, 3rd Edn.

Imām al-Albānī (*rahimabullāh*), highlighted a trait of the people of desires which one must be careful of not falling into:

«فإن من علاماتهم أنهم يذكرون ما لهم ويكتمون ما عليهم»

“...from their signs [i.e. the people of desires] is that they mention what is for them and hide what is against them.”⁶³

Bowers in fact suggests that Abū ’Āliyah et al “...lived on the other side of London and weren’t prepared to come over and aid”. This is not only historically inaccurate but also contains historical denial and revisionism of the historical record. The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimabullāh*) stated in *Silsilah as-Saheehah* in regards to a method employed by people of desires in their “research”:

ولكن هذا هو شأن أهل الأهواء, لا يخلصون للبحث العلمي, وإنما يتبعون منه ما يوافق أهواءهم! والله المستعان

This is the state of the people of desires – they are not sincere in scholarly research, indeed they only follow whatever agrees with their desires in regard to it! Allāh’s Aid is sought.⁶⁴

Moreover, when Abu Sufyan McDowell was removed from heading Brixton Masjid, Abu Sufyan attempted to set up and head da’wah [as Chairman] in another part of Brixton – and this was supported by Abū Aaliyah Surkheel bin Anwar Shareef at the time who acted as the ‘Vice-Chairman’! Again, amazingly absent from Bowers’ “history”! The proof of this is the following document which the Brixton Salafis still have in their possession from early 1994 [names of others have been removed]:

⁶³ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqhihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, First Print, 1416 AH/1996 CE), vol.6, part 2, p.1200.

⁶⁴ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqhihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, 1422 AH/2002 CE), vol.7, part 2, p.1101.



مجالس الدعوة إلى القرآن والسنة في بريكستن

PROPOSED BRIXTON DA'WAH & CULTURE CENTRE FUND RAISING APPEAL

NAMES

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All praise is for Allaah, Lord of the worlds, prayers and peace be upon Muhammad, his family, his companions and all those who follow in his footsteps until the Last Day.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MAJLIS AD-DA'WAH ILA QUR'AAN WAS SUNNAH FI BRIXTON

The Majlis was formed officially one year ago, by the Grace of Allaah Ta'aala to spread among the existing Muslim and non-Muslim community of Brixton the da'wah of the Sahabah - our Salaf.

Despite great opposition from some of the Muslim community and of course our shortcomings we have been able to establish this da'wah. "There is no Might or Power to do anything except by Allaah."

The Majlis is made up of dedicated brothers and sisters who have been working very hard with very little financial aid - (and we complain only to Allaah of our grief).

After reading the works of Shaykh-ul-Islaam ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, Shaykh bin Baz and others - (May Allaah be pleased with them all), we realize that the Muslims have to return to the correct understanding and practice of Islaam and the non-Muslims would more readily accept pure Islaam; hence we have adopted the following principles and objectives agreed by the Shaykhs.

The above document from the beginning of 1994 indicates the following:

- Remember, Yusuf Bowers stated: **"...Abū Āliyah and those guys lived on the other side of London and weren't prepared to come over and aid."**
- The above document therefore proves that Abū Āliyah was indeed **"prepared to come over and aid"** Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem at Brixton even after Abu Sufyan was removed from Brixton! This is in stark contrast to what Yusuf Bowers has posited.
- The document proves the close proximity between Abu Sufyan and Abū Āliyah at the time, contrary to what Yusuf Bowers attempts to portray.
- This demonstrates that Yusuf Bowers has either grossly erred in his narrations [based on false reports presented to him]; or Yusuf Bowers has not been 'truthful' (!) in his narrations, reports and historical account.

EIGHT [BOWERS' HISTORICAL DENIAL OF ABŪ 'ĀLIYAH SURKHEEL IBN ANWAR SHAREEF'S SUPPORT OF ABŪ SUFYĀN 'ABDULKAREEM MCDOWELL AT BRIXTON IN 1993, PART 2]

Bowers stated:

"And JIMAS were refuted, and Abū Āliyah and those guys lived on the other side of London and weren't prepared to come over and aid. So the brothers lost heart and then they removed Abu Sufyan after six months and then they put in, Allah yahdeehim, AbdulHaqq Baker. And then the Masjid went downhill."

It will be of benefit to discuss the issues around the actual arbitration and the account of one of the actual arbitrators who presided over the allegations against Abu Sufyan at the time and his subsequent removal: Abū Umar.⁶⁵ Around 1993 Abū 'Umar was passing through the UK to change his visa to a work visa so as to go to Saudi. He had a friend from the Caribbean in London at the time that he was staying with. He knew other people in the UK but he knew 'AbdulMalik Trīnidādī as he was before him in Madeenah University.

⁶⁵ Interview conducted with him by 'AbdulHaq al-Ashanti on Monday 9th April 2012.

Trinidādī then spoke about the problems at Brixton to Abū 'Umar. Abū 'Umar was invited to Brixton by 'AbdulMalik Trinidadī himself and introduced him to the Shūrah at that time. During this time Abū 'Umar met Abu Sufyan and during these meetings Abu Sufyan asked Abū 'Umar if he would be prepared to help at the Masjid. Abū 'Umar helped with khutbahs, this was supposed to be a one-off thing as Abū 'Umar only expected to be in the UK for two weeks while Dr Ahmad Bahafzhallah, the Director of Minarat International School at the time, was arranging his visa to Saudi. As a result, Abū 'Umar started hearing from the issues with Abu Sufyan from both sides: from 'AbdulMālik Trinidadī and Abu Sufyan. As Abū 'Umar was staying at 'AbdulMālik's home there were disagreements and Abū 'Umar was even told to join Abu Sufyan's Shurah. Abū 'Umar remained in London for a few months longer as he put on hold going to Saudi.

The COE made allegations about the then Shurah and thus an arbitration committee was set up to resolve the problem along with: Professor Noibi and Abū Usāmah from al-Muntada. There were many meetings which would go on from Asr to way beyond Maghrib and Īshā! Those making the allegations, the COE, stated what their gripes were such as for example "the Shūrah have harassed people" – the adjudicators asked for proofs and witnesses to be brought. This went on for a process of months. 'Abdullāh Faisal al-Jamaykī was brought, sat down and his allegations were assessed. One of the adjudicators, Abū 'Umar, stated in an interview we conducted with him on Monday 9th April 2012:

"...most allegations were far-fetched; the admin was guilty of some things, they were making some mistakes, some small and some major; but none which merited the allegations from the COE which warranted removal. Everyone was interviewed, all sides were heard and we analysed their statements points by points I still have the diaries of this and the tapes, as the sessions were taped. Charges were from A-P in my diary! There were subsidiaries of these points and there were at least 70 charges and from what I remember 10 were serious, but this did not warrant what the COE's stances. There were mistakes which needed to be corrected such as the loss of goodwill in the community as a sizeable portion had gripes with the administration of the time. We recognised that there was need for a change, the committee [i.e. the Shūrah] was not happy with this. It was a kind of clique behaviour. When 'AbdulHaqq Baker's name was suggested the COE were happy with this name coming up. We also spoke to the Salafi brothers but they did not want to oppose the Shūrah. The problem was how to remove the existing Salafi Shurah. I was in the Masjid but the other two adjudicators were not from the community. I would ask:

would it be better for the whole Shurah to be removed and allow the Khalafīs come and take over? I would say that we need to protect the Salafis of this Masjid and thus take the lesser of the evils rather than the Salafis lose the Masjid. We wanted to choose someone who we thought had some education and was level-headed, some people were enthusiastic and love the da'wah but we needed level-headedness. When 'AbdulHaqq Baker's name was suggested I also said that this was a good choice. But the other brothers from the Shurah did not want to accept and compromise, the compromise being that a Salafi take the helm of a new administration, the majority of which would be Salafi anyway."

The reason for this was so that the COE would be influenced by the Salafis, and hence the elders did all eventually accept Salafiyah. Abū 'Umar continues:

We selected three COE members who were more open, older, mature, not bent in their ways – from my personal dealings with them. Shaykh Kamāl was willing to listen and was not aggressive, he was more rational from the COE. He would not oppose us, as we did acknowledge where the Shurah made mistakes. We were impartial. Faisal Jamaykī at the end of the arbitration publically conceded that due to these discussions he was convinced that his teachings were wrong and he said this openly in the Masjid and made a retraction and open repentance. I hugged him for this and said that I think this was sincere and we should accept his apparent words. Shortly after that his true colours resurfaced with a bang! His popularity and being led by his followers was too big for him."

Abū 'Umar continues:

"Abu Aaliyah was a key figure in those days and major player and considered of the more knowledgeable."

Abū 'Umar notes with regards to the issue of Abu Sufyan and the issue of harshness that was raised:

"When we investigated it was not exactly like that, it would be because they would come with aggression to him that's why he would react like that. We left nothing unturned, we were meticulous and thorough and detailed system. Abu Sufyan was aware of the whole system and was aware of it. However, I know at the beginning he was not happy with the process. Abu Sufyan was taking most of the heat and pressure as he was the Imam. The COE levelled the allegations against the whole Salafi Jamaa'ah and the da'wah. This would then fall back into his lap, this put Abu Sufyan in more pressure than anyone else, he was under a lot of pressure. However,

Abu Sufyan’s way of doing things did not generate goodwill. We listened to the community and all of the Salafis agreed that Abu Sufyan at times had been overly aggressive, acted without hikma and had been unapologetic.”

Abū ’Umar, one of the main adjudicators of 1993, also testified that:

“AbdulHaqq did not want to take the position. The problem was about dismantling the existing Shurah. ’AbdulHaqq was very reluctant and we had to convince him to take the position. There were small pockets of resistance from some Salafis who were not happy with the process but eventually realised that they had to work with it. The COE dismantled the Shurah and replaced it – all parties adhered to the process and the results which would occur.”

WHO WERE “THEY” WHO “LOST HEART” IN BRIXTON IN 1993 AND REMOVED ABU SUFYAN MCDOWELL?

Bowers stated:

“So the brothers lost heart and then they removed Abu Sufyan after six months and then they put in, Allah yahdeehim, AbdulHaqq Baker. And then the Masjid went downhill.”

Again the reality from the Brixton Salafis who actually there at the time is completely different from the version of events from what Bowers, the armchair historian (!?) has asserted. Bowers makes out as if the Brixton Masjid community removed Abu Sufyan McDowell, notice the sleight of hand trick. **Anyone listening to what Bowers stated would immediately think that it was the Brixton Salafis who removed Abu Sufyan McDowell from Brixton** yet it was neither the community who directly removed Abu Sufyan nor anyone from the Shūrah of Abu Sufyan which included:

- ❖ Abū Safiyyah Tālib Alexander
- ❖ Abu Hajirah ’AbdurRahmān Anderson
- ❖ Abū ’Uthmaan ’AbdulMālik
- ❖ Abū Dawood Sameer
- ❖ Abū Ilyās Idrees
- ❖ Abū Yūsuf ’AbdulHakeem
- ❖ Abū ’AbdurRahmaan Dawood

Rather, it was the recently formed Committee of Elders after consultation and arbitration. Bowers therefore made no differentiation whatsoever and did not distinguish as to the main players in all of these events. This is yet another case of Bowers questionable historical approach. The Brixton Salafis did not remove Abu Sufyan like that, it was the Committee of Elders while the community was split over what was the best course of action. As some 'Ulama had told us to guide Abu Sufyan about his behaviour and others said that better qualified people should lead such as a student of 'ilm or a graduate from Madeenah University. The Committee of Elders made arrangements with Abu Sufyan to have arbitration. When it was decided that 'AbdulHaqq Baker should lead, the community was split for a while then we asked the scholars from Jordan what to do and they advised to stick with the Masjid before it gets lost if islāh is not made.

Furthermore, Bowers says: **“the brothers lost heart”**. **“Lost heart”** in what though and what “brothers”?! This again is very general and not the way of one wishing to conduct a “history”, it is upon Bowers to specify. Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, the former head of the College of Sharee'ah and Islamic Studies at Umm ul-Qurā' University stated in his book *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History]:

From that which is necessary for the historian to observe in his presentation is that he does not use the approach of generalisation and his expressions have to be restricted indications which are also clear in meaning. He should not apply a general ruling upon a people of a land or time, or upon a type from a genus, or negate a specific actual event before he obtains complete investigation [of the topic].⁶⁶

If Bowers means by **“losing heart”** that the “brothers” [i.e. who formed part of the Shūrah with Abu Sufyan at the time, mentioned above] **“lost heart”** with Salafiyah then this is a clear error and a blatant distortion of history. But if Bowers means “losing heart” that some “lost heart” with the approach of Abu Sufyān at the time – then this is true, for reasons which have been indicated prior. The Brixton Salafis did not remove Abu Sufyan like that it was the Committee of Elders at the time while the community was split over what was the best course of action. Some 'Ulama had told the Brixton Salafis to rather guide and advise Abu Sufyan McDowell about his

⁶⁶ Dr Muhammad bin Sāmīl as-Sulamī, *Manhaj Kitābat it-Tārikh il-Islāmī Ma'a Darāsāt li Tatawwur it-Tadween wa Manāhij il-Mu'arrikheen Hatta Nihāyat al-Qarn ath-Thālith al-Hijri* [The Methodology of Writing Islamic History With a Study of the Development of the Codification of the Methodology of the Historians Up Until the End of the Third Century After The Hijrah]. Dammām, KSA: Dār Ibn ul-Jawzī, Shawwāl 1429 AH, p.271.

behaviour while other 'Ulama said that better qualified people should lead. When 'AbdulHaqq was put in charge there was a split for several months [in which Abū Aaliyah Surkheel was with Abu Sufyan as evidenced by the documentary evidence relayed above, contrary to Bowers claim]. Then some other scholars from Jordan were contacted who advised the brothers to work with the new Shurah at the Masjid. As noted prior the Brixton Salafis did not possess a cult mentality based on rallying around an individual and blindly following all that he says and orders - so they have thus worked together among themselves for the benefit of the da'wah despite slight differences over issues. This is what the Brixton Salafis of the time who were actually there remember about these incidents.

So brother Bowers has totally conflated not only dates and chronology, but also details regarding individuals and the main protagonists in all this.

NINE

In regards to the Masjid "going downhill" after the time of Abu Sufyan McDowell then this requires some impartial investigation. First of all Bowers needs to qualify what he means by "downhill". What Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker can be credited for, in maintaining justice, is the following:

- ❖ An amicable character and non-confrontational except when necessary, as a result those who opposed the Salafi da'wah later accepted it. This is a strong indication of his efforts and the importance of using manners with the people and using harshness its proper place and gentleness in its right place.
- ❖ Spread of the da'wah among youth and elders
- ❖ The Masjid was fully purchased during the tenure of Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker in April 1998.
- ❖ Women's side of the Masjid was separated off.
- ❖ Increased visits from Shaykhs and co-ordination of conferences
- ❖ Good administrative and organisational skills
- ❖ Standing up to be counted in the Muslim community to warn against the rise of extremists trying to utilise impressionable young Muslim converts for their own Takfirī-Jihādī aims. Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker was the first to out this after a member from the Brixton Muslim community himself, AbdurRaheem [Richard] Reid, tried to detonate an

explosive device concealed in his shoe in December 2001. Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker stood firm and clarified this, though there may have been some errors in some statements he made at the time,⁶⁷ generally he endured much harm for that while others in the Muslim

⁶⁷ What needs to be clarified here is that as for merely running to the police or the media when one happens to not agree with the particular views of another and then conjure up a premise that necessitates running to the police, then this is nothing but a farce which even the police would discredit for wasting their time! Furthermore, it must be said that in any case it is very hard for any Muslim to know the full whereabouts, movements, actions, beliefs and plans of others as they are not with them all the time to know. As happened in the case of 'AbdurRaheem Richard Reid for example, the so-called 'shoe-bomber' – for he disappeared from Brixton for years unbeknown to the Muslim community and the Salafis of Brixton. In any case, Dr 'Abdul-Haqq Baker gave evidence for the defence of Zacarias Moussaoui during his trial so that firstly he would not achieve any martyrdom status and also so that he would not become a scapegoat for 9/11 in the US merely on account of his erroneous beliefs which he gained from the extremists, listen to Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker's BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme on Thursday 4th May 2006.

A particular issue which seems to cause concern to some (of the contemporary Khawārij persuasion) is the issue of reporting extremists (who are planning terrorist operations) to the authorities and the police. Even though this issue has been affirmed by the Salafi scholars of the era as being something obligatory due to the benefits in warning about any possible terrorist attacks, many have somehow deemed this as being negative. In weighing up the benefits (*masālih*) and harms (*mafāsīd*) it is evident that it is incumbent to report any terrorist plots to the police, hence the scholars' allowance of it. hence, it must be noted here that Abdul-Haqq Baker (the former chairman of Brixton Mosque) warned against well-known callers and individuals and not the average Muslim who may disagree with him on some things. It has been simplistically asserted by the *takfeerees* and their sympathisers that Abdul-Haqq Baker was some sort of "informer", "grass" or "snitch" yet it must be stressed that it is not possible for a Muslim to merely inform without any evidence or on the basis that one does not like the views of another. Rather, the main callers and their beliefs have to be warned about for what they call to.

If any Muslim is sure that a terrorist incident is going to take place then they have to warn and inform the authorities about that, as the Salafi scholars have clearly mentioned. Shaykh Sālih al-Fawzān was asked, in regards to Muslim countries:

Is informing about any corrupt individual who wants to destabilize the security of the country or who wants to spread corruption and mischief considered to be spying (tajassus) which Allāh has forbidden?

Answer from Shaykh Fawzān:

This is not spying, because spying is going to the enemies from the kuffār with the secrets of the Muslims in order for the enemies to discover these secrets. But this (informing) is just following up on the people of evil in order to prevent their evil

community generally were burying their heads in the sand. Indeed, the Muslim Council of Britain called Brixton Mosque trying to "advise" Brixton Mosque not to speak! While they at the same time said nothing of the rise of the Takfīrī-Jihādī intelligentsia among the Muslim youth in the UK.

❖ An active role in the community up to this day where he is still an active trustee.

This demonstrates the folly of trying to compare six months with work in the community which spanned a decade and more.

TEN [ABU USĀMAH COMING TO "HELP THE BLACK COMMUNITY"]

Bowers also claims in his lecture that Abū Usāmah Khaleefah adh-Dhahabī came to Brixton to "help the black community". Bowers has to be careful here in what he is insinuating and he should neither use simplistic racial slurs nor play the race card, which he did throughout his lecture. We hope that Bowers, due to his own African-Caribbean ethnicity, does not believe he can make such statements as "help the blacks". Brixton in 1993 was not what it is like in 2012, wherein now there are communities of Algerians, Moroccans, Somalis, Eritreans, Albanians and

and in order to purify the society from their filth. The spy (jāsoos) he is the one who the fuqahā have said should be executed, he is the one who spies for the kuffār against the Muslims. As for the one who keeps tabs on corrupt people in order to expose their evil, then such a person is not a spy.

See Shaykh, Dr Sālih bin Fawzān al-Fawzān, *al-Ijabāt al-Muhimmah fī'l-Mashākil al-Mumilah* (Riyadh: Matābi' al-Humaydī, 1425 AH/2004 CE, Second Edition, ed. Muhammad bin Fahd al-Husayn), pp.99-100.

Shaykh 'AbdulMuhsin al-'Ubaykān was also asked after the horrific London bombings if it was allowed for Muslims to inform the police if they are aware of such terrorist plots and replied:

Yes (he can). We say this is considered forbidding an evil. We already know that Islām has judged this type of act to be impermissible, and the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wassallam) said: *"Whoever amongst you sees an evil then let him change it with his hand. If he is unable then let him change it with his tongue (i.e. by speaking out against the evil). If he is unable to this then let him hate it with his heart and that is the lowest level of imān."* **This act (i.e. terrorism) is evil, it is a crime and it is forbidden. Therefore, it is obligatory upon the one who can change an evil in the way he is able to, and one of the ways is to inform on those criminals.**⁶⁷

Shaykh Fawzān however does not view it as appropriate for a Muslim to merely go to non-Muslim authorities at the drop of a hat and give over information. This in itself was implemented by Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker who has always been frank that though he began youth projects he did not hand over names of people when requested.

Kurds. It was not the case in 1993 wherein the Muslim community was predominantly of African and Caribbean origin, along with some white converts.

ELEVEN

Even if Bowers' historical depiction was true, and as we have seen there are such serious discrepancies in it which render him to retract openly, for him to boast of who did this and who did that is not only al-Mann but also Riyā'. What is the benefit of saying so and so **"was leading da'wah"** or so and so "brought such and such"! Allāh says:

"O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allāh and the Last Day."

{*al-Baqarah* (2): 264}

Ibn Katheer states in his tafseer:

The boasting person pretends to give away charity for Allah's sake, but in reality seeks to gain people's praise and the reputation of being kind or generous, or other material gains of this life. All the while, he does not think about Allah or gaining His pleasure and generous rewards...

Allāh also says:

"...and do not claim yourselves to be pure, He is most knowing of who fears Him..."

{*an-Najm* (53): 32}

THE HISTORICAL TESTIMONY OF THE ELDERS OF BRIXTON VERSUS YUSUF BOWERS’ CLAIMS

In order to test the validity of the assertions of Yūsuf Bowers, interviews were conducted with some of the elders of Masjid Ibn Taymiyyah Brixton in November 2011 CE, all of them first-hand reports and eyewitness accounts. The findings are astounding, in that they totally rebuff the odd and biased view presented by Bowers in his petite “history”.

INTERVIEW NO.1

Name: Shaykh Kamāluddeen

Born: 1937 CE

Age [on date of interview]: 74 years of age

Embraced Islam: 1974

Embraced Salafiyyah: 1992 ⁶⁸

Date of Interview: Monday 7th November 2011 CE

Question: “How do you feel about people who are neither from Brixton, nor have been here for thirteen or so years, giving their own historical version of events about the history of Brixton Masjid?”

Answer:

“The Masjid developed from a set of new Muslims to where it is now and this is itself a blessing from Allāh, that the Salafi da’wah is what the current administration is upon since 1993. Though before that time there was a degree of trial and error.⁶⁹ The Masjid in its present form, I must say that I am happy with it

⁶⁸ This is according to the Shaykh’s recollection, some of the Brixton Salafis have disputed this date however.

⁶⁹ What Shaykh Kamāl is indicating here is that among the elders many issues were not clear to them due to the lack of knowledge at the time. Remember at this time Faisal’s deviation was not fully clear to some of the elders and they were still hopeful for him as he was still within the confines of Brixton and had not manifested his full enmity, though it was clear to second *tabaqa* of Brixton who brought the Salafi da’wah such as: Sirāt ‘AbdulMālik (*rahimahullāh*), Sulaymān ‘AbdusSabūr, Dr ‘AbdulHaqq

and I praise Allāh for letting me be a part of this community, and I hope to die upon this way. I am sad that our brothers, in creed and manhaj, have made such historical errors. Some brothers from Birmingham came to London and sat with us (circa 2001) and we tried to reach an understanding yet Shaytān destroyed this. Most of this was due to taqleed on their part. I feel sorry that ignorant people have been allowed to make comments without knowledge, and this is more so considering that they have people who know the truth. As we are not a people of argumentation we leave it to Allāh to judge. We hope that we can return to the situation in the early days. They are our brothers and we hope that we can return to the relationship we had in the past.”

Question: “Is it accurate to say that the Masjid went downhill after the appointment of Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker?”

Answer:

“(laughs) I don't know what is meant by this. 'AbdulHaqq Baker's contribution is known around the Islamic world, with the scholars, students of knowledge and the Muslims. Great developments took place to understand Islam correctly and invite students of Shaykhs and 'Ulama who visited us from Saudi, Jordan and Dammāj during 'AbdulHaqq's leadership. By virtue of the legacy which these scholars left us, we feel we are on safer grounds from an Islamic perspective. As we live in a non-Islamic country there were new controversies during 9/11. We do not say 'AbdulHaqq Baker is without mistakes. We are not infallible, mistakes were made and corrected. The path which Allāh has chosen for us [i.e. Salafiyyah] led us to have many enemies from the Muslims and non-Muslims. Those from the Muslims are the people of innovation. Those brothers in Birmingham however are not our enemies. As 'AbdulHaqq Baker was at the forefront, many things have been attributed to him, we ask Allāh to forgive us our mistakes.”

Question: “Did AbdulHaqq Baker take the Masjid downhill after Abu Sufyan's time at the Mosque?”

Answer:

Baker, Abū Dawood Sameer, Abū Hajirah 'AbdurRahmān Anderson, 'Abū 'Uthmān 'AbdulMālik, Tālib Alexander, Abū Yoosuf 'AbdulHakeem, Abū Ilyās Idrees, Abū 'AbdurRahmān Dawood and others.

“This is not true...prior to that we had Faisal, al-Murābitūn, 'AbdulMālik Trinidādī – all of whom had misguidance with Faisal being the most prominent. Faisal was removed. When we heard of the Salafi da'wah we invited Abu Sufyan and Abū Āliyah. We hoped that Abu Sufyan would have aided the Muslims in the Masjid at the time to understand Islam correctly. Instead he would warn against the community and call them “black people.”⁷⁰

Question: “what would he say for example?”

Answer:

“Things like: ‘these ignorant West Indians’ there were racial overtones in his sermons. A load of letters came to me (around 1993) as many of us were not made welcome at the Masjid. The elders wanted Abu Sufyan out, and interestingly Faisal Bodi and Shaykh Salāh (rahimahullāh) did not want him removed. A later panel was set up to preside on Abu Sufyan’s leadership and at this meeting Abū Āliyah was with Abu Sufyan in that meeting and Abu Sufyan was advised to step down. Sirāt 'AbdulMālik was suggested to assume leadership of the Masjid, yet as he was American I felt that he did not have sufficient knowledge of the community. 'AbdulHaqq Baker was seen as being clean, a lover of Islam and da'wah and he got on with all, thus he was seen was a potential leader of the community so we suggested 'AbdulHaqq Baker.⁷¹ 'AbdulHaqq Baker was announced and he himself was shocked at that decision as he was not expecting it. A new Shūrah was drafted including the elders and members of the former Shūrah.”

Question: “was the Mosque inherited?”

Answer:

⁷⁰ It is unclear as to what Shaykh Kamāl means here, but it appears as if Shaykh Kamāl is saying that Abu Sufyan denigrated the African and Caribbean community at Brixton Masjid at the time. This allegation against Abu Sufyan however is not corroborated by the primary sources according to our knowledge and we are not aware of any instances of this. Though it is known that Abu Sufyan held odd and uncorroborated views regarding the origin of black people in the Caribbean. Abu Sufyan holding the rather bizarre and fringe historical view, not evidenced at all by any historical evidence or research, that black people in the Caribbean have no link whatsoever to Africa?! This he would even openly pronounce at Hyde Park Speakers Corner in the 1990s.

⁷¹ Dr 'AbdulHaqq Baker’s selection was not solely in the hands of Shaykh Kamāl in this way, the arbitrators were the main ones who assessed the situation and decided upon it.

“From whom though?! There are people in Birmingham who know much better than what this boy has said in his “history”!”

INTERVIEW NO.2

Name: Shaykh 'AbdurRahmān at-Trinidādī

Born: 1936 CE

Age [on date of interview]: 75 years of age

Embraced Islam: 1993, aged 57

Embraced Salafiyyah: 1995

Date of Interview: Tuesday 8th November 2011 CE

Question: “Is it accurate to say that after Abu Sufyan McDowell left Brixton after his six months at Brixton, the Masjid went downhill after that?”

Answer:

“I was not there during the turmoil, due to travelling and so forth but I have been frequenting Brixton for the past eighteen years and this is my base. According to what 'AbdulHaqq Baker and others have stated to me, it is totally contrary to this report [by Bowers]. 'AbdulHaqq Baker has confided with me as his father, though he cannot be always 100% correct. The fact that the Masjid has remained on the Salafi da'wah is due to 'AbdulHaqq and co being a contributory factor. I met Sulaymān 'AbdusSabūr and Muhammad Haneef in Plaistow E15, I was living in Stratford at the time and I was with the Tablighis. Sulaymān invited me to Brixton and I believe this is where I saw real Islām. I saw an integrated community of whites from Europe; blacks from Africa and the Caribbean; Asians and I even met Chinese and Jews. This was a total contrast to the ignorant Asians I had met. I brought books upon books and kept on reading. Allāh blessed me in that my mother embraced Islam at the age of 81 in Trinidad and she died in the UK on her way to 'Umrah.”

Question: “why such enmity and frustration with Brixton Masjid you think?”

Answer:

“This place is central and eventually they want to come back to Brixton to settle and establish themselves. One thing which cannot happen is for anyone to come and take over the Masjid. The scholars advise that when ignorant people speak, stay away from them. The success of the Salafi da'wah in Gambia which I have been involved in, I have to give Brixton some credit for that.”

INTERVIEW NO.3

Name: Shaykh Mūsā al-Jamaykī

Born: 1946 CE

Age [on date of interview]: 65 years of age

Embraced Islam: mid 1990s

Embraced Salafiyyah: mid 1990s

Date of Interview: Tuesday 8th November 2011 CE

Question: “Is it accurate to say that when Abu Sufyan was removed from Brixton, the Masjid went downhill after that?”

Answer:

“This cannot be the case, 'AbdulHaqq Baker is one man, if a place went downhill, the attendance would have also gone downhill. The people in authority have nothing to do with the attendance, the quarrels have nothing to do with it. Whoever says this is looking for self-praise and it is a terrible statement. The argument is empty and means nothing, there is no argument in that. What did 'AbdulHaqq Baker do to the community to make it “go downhill”? What do they mean by this? Sirāt 'AbdulMālik was the first to introduce the Salafi da'wah in Brixton, they should not be saying these things and slandering their brothers, is this Salafi da'wah? All praise is due to Allāh.”

Question: “was the Mosque inherited?”

Answer:

“The current brothers took control before, and before that a whole heap of mistakes were made due to lack of knowledge. There was no ‘inheritance’ which is when someone dies and then leaves something to someone else, this did not happen in regards to the Masjid. Do these people even know when the Masjid was

bought?! Such claims are not the way of a practising Muslim, they claim to know better but really they're bitter! This is not right and this behaviour is out of order. Here we have no time for that. They ran themselves out of the Masjid, this Masjid is upon the Salafi da'wah! These are the Shaykhs we listen to in here, who are they to come and tell us who to listen to?! We are struggling but we are getting there, and Allāh has blessed us. This is neither a Caribbean Masjid nor a Somali Masjid, this is Allāh's Masjid. Are these people looking audience {sic}!? They plan, but Allāh is the Best of Planners. They are lying in what they are saying, they must repent and behave themselves.

People have had grievances before because we did not support their political protests and the like. Because we did not support certain Pan-African and Pro-Black nationalist politics they would demonise us for that. The Salafi da'wah is not for such politics and because we do not publicise what we do they feel say {sic} that we are not doing anything."

Question: "Why do you think there is so much enmity towards Brixton?"

Answer:

"They should not blame and label the whole Masjid if they have beef with one particular brother. We are all prone to mistakes, if a man makes a mistake go to him and put it to him. The Prophet said: "love for your brother what you love for yourself."⁷² People can misjudge things. If you have a problem with a particular person, fear your Lord and rectify before you die. Don't carry these harmful feelings against your brother. We would welcome them with open arms if they were to come to Brixton, go on the Minbar and apologise for what they have done, before they can be allowed back into Brixton. As for trouble-makers, we don't want them unless they change. The whole community in Brixton need to hear them repent and the community do not even know you, yet you're speaking!? This is not the way of the Salaf, to create problems among the brothers. Going around talking rubbish about Brixton!?"

⁷² Narrated by Abū Hamza Anas ibn Mālik and relayed in Saheeh Muslim.

INTERVIEW NO.4

Name: Shaykh Muhammad Murtaza al-Jamaykī

Born: 1938 CE

Age [on date of interview]: 73 years of age

Embraced Islam: 1983

Embraced Salafiyyah: 1995

Date of Interview: Tuesday 8th November 2011 CE

Question: "Who bought the Salafi da'wah to Brixton?"

Answer:

"Sirāt 'AbdulMālik bring {sic} the Salafi da'wah to Brixton. Sirāt a bring it {sic}! He used to bring incense and travel to Saudi."

Question: "Is it accurate to say that when the Masjid went downhill after the appointment of AbdulHaqq Baker?"

Answer:

"Rather, since 'Abdulhaqq Baker went it has gone worse!"

INTERVIEW NO.5

Name: Shaykh Abū 'AbdulKareem Abū Bakr al-Jamaykī

Born: 1951 CE

Age [on date of interview]: 60 years of age

Embraced Islam: 1979

Embraced Salafiyyah: 1994

Date of Interview: Friday 11th November 2011 CE

Question: "what were the circumstances at Brixton Mosque which led to the selection of Abu Sufyan 'AbdulKareem McDowell?"

Answer:

"AbdulMājid was from al-Murābitūn, and I suspect that he was al-Murābitūn before he came to Brixton. 'AbdulMālik Trinidādī had a different vision and made people more aware of Islām though he had a Dār ul-Harb viewpoint. He gave a broader understanding of Islam. Murābitūn had control of the Masjid and we wanted to oust them as there was a lot of confusion being caused by them and they used to bring their Sūfī Shaykhs from Norwich such as AbdulQādir al-Murābit. It was almost as if Norwich was having more influence in the Masjid than anything else. This created a power-vacuum and we formed a 'Council of Elders' to get rid of Murābitūn and set up an election to bring about new leadership. Faisal al-Jamaykī also jumped in on this and tried to come early with his supporters ready to take control. Al-Murābitūn faced a bitter end and they were completely gutted, they drenched the Masjid with petrol to set fire to the Masjid.⁷³

When Abu Sufyan assumed position it started okay and then he became very extreme.⁷⁴ Both Salafis and non-Salafis did not really check for him and because of his harshness mediators were called in: Professor Noibi, Abū 'Umar al-Guyānī and Abū Usāmah [an Arab brother] from al-Muntada. These were the best people we could find at

⁷³ We cannot corroborate the veracity of this claim but some people in the community have made this assertion.

⁷⁴ It is incorrect to say that Abu Sufyan "became very extreme". Maybe it can be said that there were issues with his approach and lacking hikma in instances, but not to say that he was "extreme" especially at that point in the history of the Salafī da'wah in the UK.

the time to mediate. Abu Sufyan acted as if he wanted to fight everyone, it was either his way or nothing.⁷⁵ I was kept out of everything and regarded as a deviant. It was just him and his crew. I saw that he had an ego problem and that a leader of the community has to teach people if they don't know, not using the minbar to beat down people as Abu Sufyan was doing."

Question: "who was with Abū Sufyān at that time?"

Answer:

"Those who were with 'AbdulHaqq Baker at the time. I did not see a clear administration. It was just him [i.e. Abu Sufyan McDowell]. **He [i.e. Abu Sufyan McDowell] tried to establish the Salafi da'wah but his methodology was all wrong, this is why we called in mediators. The mediators re-elected a committee of people, Kamāl and myself put 'AbdulHaqq Baker in the position as one who had potential and was not a trouble-maker. 'AbdulHaqq Baker did his best and he was good for the community, he brought the different factions together and purified them and so that Salafi da'wah was being taught. People of knowledge started coming and we gained a better understanding of the deen and the correct understanding was emanating out of the community.**"

Question: "when did you first hear about Salafi da'wah?"

Answer:

"During the time of Sirāt 'AbdulMālik. I also remember 'AbdurRaheem Green downstairs in the Masjid outside, and also 'AbdulHaqq Baker explained to me the Salafi da'wah and that it is to have a clear understanding of the religion based on the first generations. This made sense to me and this was during the time of Abu Sufyan, **but I did**

⁷⁵ This statement is inaccurate as evidenced by the comments of one of the arbitrators of December 1993, Abū 'Umar. Also in light of the COE and Shūrah meeting dated Friday 12 November 1993 it is clear that Abu Sufyan was under much pressure and in fact aggression was being shown towards him. Abu Sufyan was only reacting to those who themselves showed hatred, stubbornness and aggression this was especially during that period. While, it is apparent that Abu Sufyan could have had better wisdom in his approach it would also not be accurate to say that "it was either his way or nothing" and that "he wanted to fight everyone".

not hear this clearly from Abu Sufyān. Anyone Abu Sufyan did not agree with he would be violent with,⁷⁶ I viewed myself as being Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah."

Question: "did Brixton Masjid 'go downhill' when 'AbdulHaqq Baker assumed control after Abū Sufyān Mcdowell?"

Answer:

"This is not correct and not my view at all. I am not really fond of 'AbdulHaqq Baker, neither is he of me, I found him to be condescending and he talked down to us, it must be his way even if this is without consensus, just his way. I was kicked off the Shūrah. **In saying that, 'AbdulHaqq Baker was a hundred times better than Abu Sufyan. 'AbdulHaqq was a dynamic and motivational speaker. Not only that, but if anything happened in the community he would lead a posse down there. Also against the police it was the same, they respected him as he had knowledge of law. The Masjid and the community went up-hill, there was a clear understanding without confrontation.** In regards to Faisal al-Jamaykī, I did not agree with him, but I did not view that it was right to put him down just then. Yet after Suhaib Hasan at the time clarified some things to us, things became clearer, he was a man in the UK [at that time] we could consult and respect. Sulaymān 'AbdusSabūr, may Allāh bless him, was one of the most sincere people I have met. Where 'AbdulHaqq Baker would fall down, 'AbdusSabūr would pick up. His khutbahs were good. When Sulaymān left I do not think that there was anyone there to advise 'AbdulHaqq Baker."

Question: "was the Mosque inherited?"

Answer:

"Every administration inherit from the previous – so if this is what they mean then yes. The people who founded the community are still around anyway, even though they are not really listened to, they are around in the shadows, but they do not oppose the administration. The Masjid is owned by the current trustees so no one can take over this place, if they do not like you, whether you are Salafi or not, you cannot get in."

Question: "how do you feel about the current state of the Masjid?"

⁷⁶ Refer to above footnotes.

“The manhaj of the Masjid is still correct and I feel sakeenah when I come here, in comparison to other places.”

CONCLUSION

The Mujaddid of the era, Imām al-Albānī (*rahimahullāh*) stated in *Silsilah as-Sabeehah*:

ولكن هذا هو شأن أهل الأهواء, لا يخلصون للبحث العلمي, وإنما يتبعون منه ما
يوافق أهواءهم! والله المستعان

This is the state of the people of desires – they are not sincere in scholarly research, indeed they only follow whatever agrees with their desires in regard to it! Allāh’s Aid is sought.⁷⁷

The presentation by Yusuf Bowers under the banner of “history” as we have seen was replete with:

- ❖ Historical omissions
- ❖ Revisionism
- ❖ Blatant denial in some instances
- ❖ Lack of verification
- ❖ Bias

The above problems with Bowers “historical” piece therefore render his account as not only unreliable but also disingenuous, his disregard of certain details, either intentionally or due to what he has narrated from unknown and unmentioned individuals, has been seriously called into question here and it is suggested that he retract much of his statements in this regard. It is unlikely that he will heed this advice and so it should suffice that he simply desist speaking on affairs about which he clearly lacks knowledge - empirical or otherwise.

Unsophisticated, polemical and somewhat simpleton approaches to what is considered among the more serious branches of learning and knowledge only expose the reality of the narrators of such accounts. Many are all too aware of various existing narrative accounts that have sought to rewrite history in order to either erase the reality of the past or portray an altogether different and biased perspective of the narrator. Orientalist accounts regarding the growth of Islam and flagrant distortions about 18/19th century slavery in the West are a few examples that can be cited in this instance. This particular Critical Analysis is by no way equal to

⁷⁷ Imām Muhammad Nāsiruddeen al-Albānī, *Silsilah Ahādeeth as-Saheehah wa Shay’ min Fiqhihā wa Fawā’idihā* (Riyadh: Maktabat ul-Mā’rif, 1422 AH/2002 CE), vol.7, part 2, p.1101.

exemplary accounts that have sought to redress the imbalance of the two above mentioned examples but suffice it to state, for the record, it is significant insofar as it relates to a predominantly Muslim convert community that has developed against all odds since the mid-1970s. Any outsider or visiting wayfarer would, therefore, do well to think carefully about assuming any position where s/he feels obliged, entitled or otherwise to posit themselves as historians over the community of Brixton Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre (aka Masjid Ibnu Taymeeyah). It would be better for them to examine their own reality and beginnings before assuming an illusory mantle and claiming they are qualified to speak about affairs unrelated and divorced from their own reality.

Appendix 1

BOWERS ADMITS TO BEING PART OF THOSE WHO NAMED A SALAFI DA’WAH PROJECT “AFTER THE OASIS ROCK BAND, BECAUSE IT SOUNDED GOOD”?!

After 34 minutes into his “history” brother Bowers states, with regards to a former Salafi da’wah organisation:

“...and yes, we did name it after the Rock group because it sounded good!”

[laughter from the audience]

Why did this ridiculous detail have to even be mentioned?! Surely it is unbecoming to mention such foolery in a lecture purportedly charting the “history of the Salafi da’wah in the UK”. This comment was uttered in a talk in front of a few hundred people, and in a Masjid who asserts to champion Salafiyah. How could such a nonsensical statement be tolerated without anyone having the nerve to even raise a whimper?! Al-’Allāmah Sālih al-Fawzān states in regards to those so-called “Du’aat” [preachers] who utilise comical novelties and jokes to call people to Islaam:

These things do not enter into issues of the deen, religious issues are serious, firm and [of] clarity, comedies and entertainment are not to enter into them. This is what some people who claim they are preachers [Du’aat] have newly-introduced, yet it is not so. The Messenger (sallallaahu ’alayhi wassallam) did not call people via these matters, he used to recite the Qur’an unto them and call them, instruct them and forbid them. He did not use to bring them comedies and such foolish things which are used now by those who ascribe themselves to da’wah. Yes.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ From www.alfawzan.ws/node/12894 and dated 1431-08-21/1 August 2010 CE.

Appendix 2

ADVICE TO BOWERS, PLEASE LISTEN!

Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah stated:

Many of those who ascribe to a specific group of knowledge or religion from the Mutafaqqihah, Mutawsawwifah, or others like a leader who they venerate in the deen other than the Prophet have been tried by this; for they do not accept in the religion a view or narration except that which their group comes with.⁷⁹

Ibn ul-Qayyim stated:

Allāh, glory unto Him, instructs establishing justice and this is towards everyone be they an enemy or an associate.⁸⁰

Imām Muhammad bin Sālih al-'Uthaymeen stated:

It is obligatory for the student of knowledge to free himself from sectarianism or partisanship wherein he has allegiance or disavowal for a specific group or party – there is no doubt that this opposes the manhaj of the Salaf. The Salaf us-Sālih are not parties they [were] one party under the statement of Allāh, 'Azza wa Jall:

“He is the one who named you Muslims beforehand...”

{*al-Hajj (22): 78*}

There is to be no partisanship, no multiplicity, no allegiance and no disavowal except based on what has arrived in the Book and Sunnah. For example, among the people are those who are partisan to a specific group...and take as a basis “whoever is not with me is against me!” This is a vile principle...⁸¹

⁷⁹ Shaykh ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtidā' Sirāt ul-Mustaqeem*, vol.1, p.86.

⁸⁰ Ibn ul-Qayyim, *ar-Risālah at-Tabūkiyyah*, p.34

⁸¹ Imām Muhammad bin Saalih al-'Uthaymeen, *Kitāb ul-'Ilm*, p.81.

Appendix 3

ARABIC TEXT OF KHUTBAT UL-HĀJAH, BOWERS: MEMORISE IT PROPERLY FIRST!

خطبة الحاجة

[إن] الحمد لله [نحمده ، و] نستعينه ، ونستغفره ، ونعوذ بالله من شرور أنفسنا ، [ومن سيئات أعمالنا] .

من يهده الله فلا مضل له ، ومن يضلل فلا هادي له ، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله [وحده لا شريك له] . وأشهد أن محمداً عبده ورسوله .

[يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَموتن إِلَّا وَأنتن مُسْلِمُونَ]

[يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَتَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا .]

[يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَ يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا]
[أ ما بعد] ، ((ثم يذكر حاجته)) .

ملحوظه / ما بين القوسين وردت في روايات ثابتة .

وهي نقلا من رسالة بعنوان خطبة الحاجة

التي كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

يعلمها أصحابه

تأليف محمد ناصر الدين الألباني

Bowers however states, with no one even having the audacity to correct him, after 49 seconds after confusing himself:

وبث هم رجالاً

When he should have recited Allāh's words as:

﴿وَبَثِّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا﴾

What happened to the principle of “**correcting the opposer regardless of the error**”?! Goes out of the window when faced with the errors of friends and close associates!

And all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds