

**THE KHAWAARIJ AND THE CREED OF TAKFEER:  
DECLARING A MUSLIM TO BE AN APOSTATE AND ITS  
EFFECTS UPON MODERN DAY ISLAAMIC MOVEMENTS**

by

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the subject

Islamic Studies

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF Y DADOO

February 2009

## **Summary**

Islaam as a world religion is most often associated with terrorism and numerous bombings and conflicts around the globe.

While, Islaam does not encourage these actions there exists movements within the Muslim community which use violence as a means of political expression similar to the early extremist *Khawaarij* sect who abused the concept of *takfeer*.

Many modern day ideologues seem to adopt the main tenets of the *Khawaarij* creed and as a result exhort and carrying out actions of violence under the guise of Islaam.

In addition, Western media, secularists, and United States policy also appears to have a direct role in fostering the growth of these movements. Therefore, there is a need for further study into the ideological roots of these groups, their actions, and how societies can look for solutions to combat their ideals before they evolve into terrorist actions.

### **Key terms:**

Islaamic creed, *takfeer*, *Khawaarij*, Qur'aan, *hadeeth*, extremism, terrorism, *Wahhaabee*, *Salafee*, sectarianism

## **Acknowledgements**

In the name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad. I would like to extend my gratitude to those who have assisted me in my effort to complete this dissertation:

- My supervisor, Professor Yousuf Dadoo for his continual support, advice, and patience throughout this effort.
- My family for their encouragement, support, and patience in my long absence away from them during my dissertation.
- My close friend and former colleague, Mr. Taalib Alexander who encouraged me to begin this dissertation and assisted me in gathering resources for this work.
- My colleagues, Dr. Jamal Hamed, Dr. Jamal Jazeri and Dr. Hasan Hussayn who helped with advice and proof reading.
- Dr. Muhammad Hashim, Eihab Nadir, Shaikh Sa'eed al-'Amr, Shaikh Muhammad al-'Aqueel and many other scholars who advised me and assisted me with resources and answered my questions.

## Declaration

Student number: 3595-594-5

I declare that **“THE KHAWAARIJ AND THE CREED OF TAKFEER: DECLARING A MUSLIM TO BE AN APOSTATE AND ITS EFFECTS UPON MODERN DAY ISLAAMIC MOVEMENTS”** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

Mr. Craig Anthony Green

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DATE

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# System of Transliteration

## Consonants

ء	'		ذ	<b>d</b>
ب	<b>b</b>		ط	<b>t</b>
ت	<b>t</b>		ث	<b>th</b>
ج	<b>th</b>		ح	'
خ	<b>j</b>		ج	<b>gh</b>
ح	<b>h</b>		ف	<b>f</b>
ك	<b>kh</b>		ق	<b>q</b>
د	<b>d</b>		ك	<b>k</b>
ذ	<b>dh</b>		ل	<b>l</b>
ر	<b>r</b>		م	<b>m</b>
ز	<b>z</b>		ن	<b>n</b>
س	<b>s</b>		ه	<b>h</b>
ش	<b>sh</b>		و	<b>w</b>
ي	<b>s</b>		ي	<b>y</b>

## Vowels

ا	<b>a</b>		آ	<b>aa</b>
و	<b>u</b>		و	<b>oo</b>
ي	<b>i</b>		ي	<b>ee</b>

## Diphthongs

او	<b>aw</b>
اي	<b>ay</b>

Transliteration Chart from the book The Exorcist Tradition in Islaam (Philips1997:iv)

**Note:** The reader may at times find some inconsistency in the transliteration system and this is due to the researcher's reliance at times on previously translated material, and when making direct quotations the language was quoted as it was in the original text.

# THE KHAWAARIJ AND THE CREED OF TAKFEER: DECLARING A MUSLIM TO BE AN APOSTATE AND ITS EFFECTS UPON MODERN DAY ISLAAMIC MOVEMENTS

By Craig Green

## Introduction

In contemporary times Islaam in the minds of some has become synonymous with terrorism and terrorist acts like the heinous bombing of the World Trade Center (9/11), the USS Cole in Yemen, the Bali bombing in Indonesia, and the recent bombings in Saudi Arabia. Many of these terrorist acts have been perpetrated in the name of Islaam, and Muslims and non-Muslims both find themselves victimized.<sup>1</sup> Many of the present day ideologies often attributed to these acts have a link with early Islaamic sectarianism. This research asserts that the fundamental creed of the original *Khawaarij* is present in many of the modern day Islaamic groups and sects, and forms the ideological root of many contemporary terrorist organizations.<sup>2</sup> In addition, this research claims that the radicalization of these groups is in part a reaction to secularist thought, and U. S. government policy toward Muslim states.

This research analyzes the creed of the first sect in Islaam, the *Khawaarij*, and its influence on contemporary Islaamic movements and thinkers, and contrasts it with the orthodox Islaamic creed.<sup>3</sup> In addition, it attempts to show how the media, U.S. policy makers, and many contemporary writers misconstrue core Islaamic beliefs and misconceive public opinion about Islaam, thus further alienating Muslims and contributing to the radicalization of many contemporary Islaamic movements.

There are many misconceptions about Islaam that stem from the creed of the original *Khawaarij*, the modern day groups that follow their creed, and the media

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<sup>1</sup> America has unilaterally attacked and devastated two Muslim nations: Afghanistan and Iraq and as a result of these two wars non-Muslim countries feel increasingly vulnerable to acts of terrorism.

<sup>2</sup> As the research will show, terrorism is alien to the orthodox Islaamic creed.

<sup>3</sup> The term orthodox as referred to throughout this research is a reference to the creed and practices of the Prophet as understood by his companions and it is frequently used in this research to denote contemporary *Salafee* ideology which will be discussed in further detail in chapters two and three.

(Oliver 2005:1). These misconceptions entail investigation in order to determine if there is indeed a link between terrorism and radical ideologues.

## **Research Objectives**

The problem being investigated arose from the need to explain contemporary trends in Islaamic extremist activities and violent terrorist acts world wide. The aim of this study is to investigate what effect, if any, these popular Muslim ideologues, which often are associated with radicalism, have upon violent extremist thought and to what extent their ideologies share common characteristics with the original *Khawaarij*. In addition, this study looks at the role secular ideology, United States foreign policy, and Western media contribute to the rise in contemporary extremist thought and violence.

In order to determine the extent in which *Khawaarij* thought, secularism, and US foreign policy effect contemporary Islaamic thinkers and increase their propensity to encourage violence, analysis will be given to their texts and speeches to highlight statements and ideologies contrary to orthodox Islaam.

## **Significance of the Research Problem**

This study can assist in filling a gap in contemporary English literature contributing to a much clearer understanding of the causes of modern day Islaamic extremism. This topic was chosen for two reasons primarily. Firstly, it is viewed in Islaam as an obligation to clarify the orthodox creed to distinguish it from sectarianism, and to provide scholarly refutation of deviant ideologies. Secondly, this study tries to offer the theoretical tools to pinpoint the cause and refine the debate around Islaamic extremism, so that the world may have warning signals before extremist action in the name of Islaam is perpetrated, and this knowledge is a first step towards prevention. The current study is important because it:

- (a) Offers insight into some of the causes of extremist Islaamic ideology,
- (b) Serves as a tool to understand, identify, and assist in curbing trends in violent extremism, and
- (c) Contributes to the literature base that attempts to explain the causes of

radical ideologies to assist policy makers, governments, and the general Muslim population to come up with viable solutions.

## **Research Theory**

The underlying assumption in this study is that contemporary *Takfeeree* movements share a common set of traits with the original *Khawarij* creed and in turn contribute to extremist behavior and violence. In other words, ideology and creed have a causal effect upon violent extremist activities and actions. In addition, many "contemporary acts of violence are often justified by the historical precedent of religion's violent past. Yet the forces that combine to produce religious violence are particular to each moment of history" (Juergensmeyer 2003:6). Creed combined with historical, social and political changes all contribute to extremist, reactionary behavior leading to violence, primarily because many perpetrators of terror often react to a perceived threat or violation of their particular group or community, and attempt to rectify their situation by both preemptive and reactionary measures. Juergensmeyer concludes that many religious extremists see the world in absolute terms and the social tensions and political shifts combined with the need to restore lost prestige give these groups a sense of urgency in trying to find solutions (Juergensmeyer 2003:248).

## **Methodology**

This study is exploratory in nature and comprises both classical and contemporary text analysis for theory and historical background, and it makes use of the books of contemporary scholars to highlight the misconceptions around *takfeer*, the *Khawarij*, terrorism, and *Islaam*. This research relies heavily upon document analysis by surveying a variety of literary sources, both primary and secondary, such as published books, unpublished conference papers, internet sources like periodicals, articles, and statements and lectures of contemporary *Islaamic* thinkers.

Additionally, this study involves a comprehensive literature review by surveying contemporary Arabic and English literature as well as classical *Islaamic* texts which will be used in a historic development approach in order to trace the origin of the ideology of *takfeer*.

Most classical texts offer either a historical analysis of the *Khawaarij* sect while detailing their creed, or a general synopsis of a particular group which holds similar beliefs. However, there is very little literature that makes the connection between contemporary groups and their historical counterparts in the context of current events. There are a few texts that attempt to bridge this gap in Arabic, which completely elude the English reader therefore remaining outside of Western discourse. This study brings together various studies and disciplines redefining the problem in a contemporary setting.

Most of the texts which attempt to investigate the relationship between the *Khawaarij* and contemporary thought are in Arabic. One particularly useful work was taken from a lecture by 'Ubaykaan (2004), and transcribed into a small booklet. In this work he speaks about the origins of the *Khawaarij* with brief reference to classical Islaamic texts as well as the rulings pertaining to this sect. He then gives the reasons for the reappearance of this sect and makes a very brief reference to the contemporary *Khawaarij's* core belief. Unfortunately, this work is in Arabic, so it remains inaccessible to non-Arabic readers.

One of the most useful texts regarding contemporary *Khawaarij* and their relationship to the original sect was written by Qurayshee (1992). His book offers one of the most complete links between one of the most famous contemporary groups; *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra*, and the original sect. Although this work is monumental, and surveys many important issues related to the issue of *takfeer*, it still leaves the reader with a gap in the link between the original *Khawaarij* and modern day activists, groups, and events. Qurayshee's research was not meant as a complete survey of the contemporary groups and thinkers, but instead an exploration of the creed of *takfeer* itself.

After the 9/11 terrorist attack there has been a rise in the amount of English literature produced in the West to describe the events of 9/11. In addition, there is an increasing body of literature which links the *Khawaarij* and some contemporary Islaamic thinkers. A particularly insightful text used in this research is that of Delong-Bas (2004) which compared the thought of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab with contemporary expressions of extremism. Her analysis was particularly perceptive as it

challenged many previously held assumptions made about Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and his movement by a thorough investigation into his creed and thought.

Finally, the method of historical analysis is used in this study to provide background and insight into the theology of the original *Khawaarij* sect and its evolution into the political thought of contemporary thinkers.

## **Limitations and Scope**

Primarily the ideologues surveyed in this research are from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt or have received Islaamic educational training and generally adhere to the ideological creed espoused in the region. All of the ideologues examined in this study are in some way associated with contemporary radical ideals and share fairly common theories regarding *jihad* and *takfeer*. This dissertation sets out to study a particular set of characteristics from the original *Khawaarij* sect and compare these characteristics with the ideologues discussed in this study. This dissertation does not attempt to address, and provide resolutions to the problem, nor does it look into the various socio-economic conditions that may provide the background conditions which lead to marginalization, thus creating an ideal situation for the recruitment and dissemination of extremist thought.

Another limitation of this study is that it focuses primarily on the views of contemporary *Salafee* scholars in Saudi Arabia and Yemen as they claim to adhere to the orthodox creed and view Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab as a revivalist, not extremist, and espouse many of his views which are considered controversial. In addition, in recent times *Salafee* clerics, particularly from Saudi Arabia, have come under scrutiny and many accuse them of being advocates of *takfeer*, terrorist ideology, and feeble and often compromised scholarship, so this dissertation highlights the views of those scholars regarding matters of creed, *takfeer* and extremism.

## Contents of Study

This study is comprised of five chapters, beginning in chapter one with an introduction to the *Khawaarij*, and the creed of *takfeer*. This chapter defines the *Khawaarij*, and entails a brief historical analysis of the sect citing both Prophetic traditions, and statements of classical Islaamic scholars. The chapter ends by outlining the fundamentals of their creed. Chapter two contrasts the Islaamic creed regarding *takfeer* with the foundations of the *Khawaarij* belief. This chapter gives the reader the tools to distinguish the *Salafee* creed from that of the *Khawaarij's*. Chapter three introduces contemporary groups and thinkers, detailing their relationship with the *Khawaarij* creed, and contrasts their beliefs with the orthodox Islaamic one. This analysis of the contemporary groups uncovers the main misconceptions about Islaam. Finally, chapter four expounds upon the misconceptions about Islaam by contemporary writers and the Media with a clarification of their doubts and confusion. Chapter five concludes the research with an analysis of the researcher's findings.

## Definition of Academic Terms

**The Khawaarij:** This is a general term the author of this study uses to describe the original and contemporary Muslim sects, that declared apostasy of other Muslims due to major sins they are supposed to have committed. This term also signifies the foundation of the creed of *takfeer* and its misuse.

**Takfeer:** This term denotes the declaration of apostasy of a Muslim, or group of Muslims, or society as a whole. Throughout the study, the creed of *takfeer* is explored, detailed, and its conditions are laid out in order to give an accurate meaning of the term and its usage.

**The Companions:** The term is used to refer to those closest to the Prophet Muḥammad specifically. The term has a more general usage as well, and that is to describe all of those who met the Prophet Muḥammad, and died as Muslims. In this study the more specific meaning is referred to as it references the first generation of Muslim scholars: those who knew the Prophet and were close to him during his

judgments, arbitrations, and when he received revelation, so they were able to understand the context and get the meaning directly from the Prophet.

**Orthodox Scholars:** Throughout the study, this term is used to describe those who hold the orthodox belief, meaning they take their creed from the Qur'aan and the authenticated traditions, actions and sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the practice and understanding of his companions.

**Classical Scholars:** This is a general reference used in the study to describe the companions, their students, and those who came after them for the first twelve hundred years of Islaam. This term distinguishes early orthodox scholars from their more contemporary counterparts.

**Salafee Scholars:** This term is used to describe a particular group of scholars who claim to adhere to orthodox traditional scholarship which is derived from the Qur'aan, authenticate *hadeeth* traditions, and the creed and jurisprudence of the companions of the Prophet. This research tends to focus primarily on contemporary *Salafee* scholars from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

**Sunna:** This term is used frequently throughout this study and it is "adherence to what the Prophet ... was upon, and his rightly guided caliphate, in belief, actions, and sayings..." (cited in al-Suḥaymee 2005:27). This was a statement of Ibn Rajab, a classical scholar who lived in the fourteenth century. His statement provides one of the most useful definitions applicable to this study.

**Takfeeree:** This term refers to Muslims who declare others to be apostates without adhering to established orthodox principles.

**Jihaadee:** This term is used to describe those who call to *jihad* or participate in fighting under the guise of *jihad* without adhering to orthodox principles and classical interpretations of *jihad*.

# Chapter One

## The Khawaarij the First Sect in Islaam

### 1.1 Introduction

The *Khawaarij* was the first sect in Islaam according to most scholars, both classical and contemporary. Their history, creed, and characteristics are of great importance if one is to know and understand the Islaamic position regarding them. In this chapter they will be defined and introduced as the main subject of analysis, with a particular focus upon certain aspects of their creed, and its foundations.

### 1.2 Definition of the Khawaarij

According to al-‘Aqal, the *Khawaarij* can be defined as "those who declare Muslims to be disbelievers for their sins and rebel against the leaders of the Muslims dividing their unity" (1998:21). This also includes those who hold some of these ideas, as well as follow their way of thinking, or actions. This is one of the more comprehensive definitions of the *Khawaarij*; however the sectarian scholars disagree between themselves on a precise definition. ‘Awaajee a contemporary scholar of Islaamic sectarianism divides the various definitions into three. The first view being that the term *Khawaarij* refers to any Muslim group that rebel against the rightful Muslim leader. The second view refers to those individuals who rebelled against the caliphate of ‘Alee Ibn Abee Taalib or hold a similar opinion to them. The third definition of the *Khawaarij* ‘Awaajee cites refers to those who rebelled against the Muslim leader after the time of ‘Alee (2002:23). For the purpose of this research the definition of al-‘Aqal was chosen as it is the most inclusive and accepted view from contemporary scholars.

The *Khawaarij* are associated by many names and sects which reveal some of their history and origins. Many of the names make reference to their various splits, and the particular creed of a sectarian leader. Some of the names they are associated with are the *Khawaarij*, the *Muhakkima*, the *Mukaafira*, the *Azaariqa*, the *Ibaadeeya*, and the

*Saba`eeya*.<sup>4</sup> One reason for the sectarianism amongst the *Khawaarij* is that the leaders amongst them often quarreled over points regarding their creed, and thus split and declared *takfeer* of one another (‘Awaajee 2002:25).

### 1.2.1 The **Khawaarij**

The name *Khawaarij* is derived from the Arabic word *kharaja*, which means to leave, or exit. This association refers to the sect splitting from the main body of Muslims, and rebelling with the sword against the Muslim rulers. This is a general name which encompasses those Muslims who rebel, or incite rebellion against the Muslim leader, and declare other Muslims to be apostates for committing major sins (al-Shahrastanee 1984:107).

### 1.2.2 The **Muhakkima**

The *Khawaarij* were also known as the *Muhakkima*. The word *Muhakkima* originates from the Arabic word *hakama* which means to judge, or rule. The *Muhakkima* refers to their rebelling against the judgment and rulership of ‘Alee the Prophet Muhammad's cousin. The *Muhakkima* claimed that ‘Alee did not rule justly by the Qur’aan in a judgment, but instead he deferred his arbitration to knowledgeable men in a dispute he had with Mu'aawiya, another companion; for this reason the *Khawaarij* declared ‘Alee a disbeliever. The *Muhakkima* also believed that it was permissible to choose someone to be their religious leader, as long as he ruled by their ideas of justice and equity. However, anyone who opposed him would be disposed of, and at the same time if they thought the leader was oppressive, corrupt, or deviant, they considered it obligatory to fight or kill him (al-Shahrastanee 1984:108).

### 1.2.3 The **Mukaafira**

The *Khawaarij* also earned the term *Mukaafira* meaning the ones who declare others to be apostates. This is because they declared other Muslims to be apostates for major sins they committed, and they declared those who differed with them to be

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<sup>4</sup> All classical scholars mention *Saba`eeya* as the beginning of the Shee'a sect. Al-'Aqal, a contemporary scholar, mentioned them as a sect of the *Khawaarij* as they rebelled against ‘Uthmaan and declared *takfeer* upon some of the companions of the Prophet. The *Saba`eeya* was included to show that many of the sects contain overlapping traits, and often a group or individual may not be easily classified into one sect or another.

disbelievers as well (al-Shahrastanee 1984:116). This characteristic is inherent to both the original sect and modern groups and it forms an integral part of their belief.

#### 1.2.4 **The Azaariqa**

The *Azaariqa* were the followers of Aboo Raashid Nafee Ibn al-Azaaraq. This was one of the famous leaders amongst the *Khawaarij* who held that 'Alee the Prophet Muhammad's cousin was a disbeliever, and he praised his killer. Furthermore, he held 'Uthmaan, Talha, Zubayr, Ibn 'Abbaas,<sup>5</sup> and 'Aa'isha one of the wives of the Prophet, and all those who were with them, to be disbelievers (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). All of these people were companions of the Prophet and beloved to him during his lifetime. Aboo Raashid held that whoever stayed behind in battle was also an apostate, and that it was permissible to kill the women and children of their opponents. In addition, he abolished the punishment of stoning to death as it is not a punishment prescribed in the Qur'aan, although it is well known from the traditions narrated on the Prophet. One of the most unorthodox beliefs he held was that Allah's Prophets may fall into disbelief or that they could have been disbelievers before becoming prophets (al-Shahrastanee 1984:102).

Finally, the *Azaariqa* like their counterparts declared major sinners to be disbelievers, and they supported their claim by saying the devil committed a major sin by not prostrating to Aadam (as he was commanded by Allah) and at the same time he acknowledged the oneness of God. In other words, the devil out of sheer arrogance disobeyed Allah, thus committing a major sin, which in turn nullified his belief in Allah's oneness (al-Shahrastanee 1984:103).

#### 1.2.5 **The Ibaadeeya**

The *Ibaadeeya* are named after 'Abd Allah Ibn Ibaad one of the leaders of the *Khawaarij* during the caliphate of 'Abd al-Maalik Ibn Marwaan, who died during the 86<sup>th</sup> year of the *Hijra* calendar. The *Ibaadeeya* are a sect that originated from the *Khawaarij*, and their beliefs are essentially the same, except the *Ibaadeeya* when fighting Muslims did not regard them as disbelievers and therefore judged their

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<sup>5</sup> These were some of the most well known and favored companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Muslim foes as rebels instead of disbelievers. However, al-Shahrastaanee quoted their leader ‘Abd Allah Ibn Ibaad as saying, "Those who worship in the direction of the qiblah (Holy Mosque in Makka) but oppose us are disbelievers, not polytheists" (1984:114). So, on one hand the *Ibaadeeya* treated their Muslim foes as rebels, but on the other hand it has been attributed to their leader that he regarded them as apostates: he applied Islaamic judgments and rulings applicable to Jews and Christians to his Muslim foes during warfare. The *Ibaadeeya* believed major sinners are Muslim, but not true believers, and according to their paradigm the world was divided into two categories *Daar al-Islaam* (Muslim rule lands in accordance with Islaamic law) and *Daar al-Kufr* (lands ruled by un-Islaamic laws). There will be a more detailed discussion of this in the section on *Daar al-Islaam*. The *Ibaadeeya* considered the rulers, their administration, and soldiers of the Muslim land that disagreed with them as disbelieving rebels, and treated them as such if they conquered them.

### 1.2.6 The Saba’eya

Another name of importance referring to the *Khawaarij* is *Saba’eya*. The origin of this name is derived from the leader Ibn Saba who was of Jewish origin and claimed to embrace Islaam, but in reality did so only to cause division and rancor between the Muslims.<sup>6</sup> Thaheer said concerning Ibn Saba that “he was a Jew, a hypocrite that exhibited Islaam outwardly, and we already mentioned the evidence for that from al-Kashee and al-Nubakhtee and other than them” (2005:22). So Ibn Saba was known for treachery and he is considered as the originator of the Shee’a sect, but due to his rebellion against the caliph some have classified him as *Khawaarij*.

### 1.3 Brief History of the Origins of the Khawaarij

The *Khawaarij* as a sect first appeared during the time of great discord and trials for the Muslims. After the assassination and martyrdom of ‘Uthmaan Ibn ‘Affaan, the third of what is known as the "rightly guided caliphate" by orthodox Muslims, ‘Alee the cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad became the caliph. From the very beginning there were those who cast suspicion upon his ascendancy to rulership. Rumors were spread by some people that he had been a part of the plot to assassinate ‘Uthmaan,

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<sup>6</sup> This is agreed upon by all orthodox Sunni sources.

and there was widespread rebellion throughout the Muslim world. Several of the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad wanted ‘Alee to take revenge for the killing of ‘Uthmaan immediately after his ascendancy, however he felt it was first necessary to establish stability before pursuing the killers of ‘Uthmaan. Ibn Saba and the killers of ‘Uthmaan began to sow discord between the ranks of the Muslims and the various factions, which resulted in the death of about ten thousand Muslims.<sup>7</sup> The killers of ‘Uthmaan found this discord to be to their advantage as it detracted ‘Alee from holding them accountable for ‘Uthmaan's assassination.

As a result of this confusion, Mu’aawiyah Ibn Abee Sufyaan another companion of the Prophet refused to take allegiance to ‘Alee as the killers of ‘Uthmaan were amongst the supporters of his caliphate, and he demanded that they be held accountable immediately. In 37 AH,<sup>8</sup> amidst the confusion, a bloody battle known as the Battle of Siffin took place resulting again in heavy casualties for the Muslims until a ceasefire was declared (al-Shahrastanee 1984:106). During the cease fire ‘Alee's army began to divide, and a group amongst them began to praise ‘Alee excessively, and later became known as Shee’a. The other group began to slander and sow seeds of rebellion amongst the ranks and they became known as the *Khawaarij* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:109). This initial split in ‘Alee's army according to some historians is the beginning of the *Khawaarij* sect.

The *Khawaarij* continued to show malice toward ‘Alee until they finally split outright from him, settling in a place known as Haroora` where they declared the caliph's authority nullified and claimed that legitimacy was for Allah alone. So, the *Khawaarij* distanced themselves from what they considered tyranny and disbelief. The *Khawaarij* declared both ‘Alee and Mu’aawiyah to be wrong (‘Awaajee 2002 73-80). In their eyes, ‘Alee was wrong because he accepted a ceasefire from Mu’aawiyah, who according to them should be killed for revolting and killing Muslims, and appointing arbitrators was useless and against injunctions of the Qur’aan. They became so excessive in their insistence upon war that they declared ‘Alee a disbeliever and called him to repent and reaffirm his faith in Islaam (al-Shahrastanee

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<sup>7</sup> Majority of orthodox scholars consider speaking out against the leader in public as undesirable as it fosters hatred towards the rulers and can encourage rebellion. There will be further discussion of this issue in chapter three.

<sup>8</sup>After the *Hijra* means after the migration to Madina from Makka thus begins the Islaamic calendar.

1984:109). According to the *Khawaarij* he had become an apostate by using men as judges between the parties instead of the divine injunctions of the Qur'aan.

Finally, after being urged to come back to their senses by both 'Alee, and Ibn 'Abbaas, some of the *Khawaarij* repented and rejoined 'Alee. 'Alee then launched a massive assault upon the remaining *Khawaarij* almost completely wiping them out. The *Khawaarij* leaders that escaped spread throughout the Muslim world sowing seeds of discord until finally they assassinated 'Alee himself ('Awaajee 2002:88).

#### 1.4 The *Khawaarij* in Hadeeth Literature

In the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad there are many references to the *Khawaarij*, describing their worship, piety, and general characteristics. Many narrations describe the *Khawaarij* and how they should be dealt with if encountered. In a *hadeeth*, a man accused the Prophet of being unjust in dividing the spoils of war. The Prophet replied to his companions saying, "There would arise a people from the progeny of this (man) who would recite the Qur'aan, but it would not go beyond their throats; they will pass through religion just as the arrow passes through the prey" (al-Nawawee 1997/7:159). The Prophet also mentioned that "they are the worst of my nation and the best of my nation will fight them" (al-Nawawee 1997/7:161). From these narrations it seems that some of the characteristics of the *Khawaarij* are that they are excessive in their religious practices like prayer, and reading of the Qur'aan, but that these acts of worship would not affect their hearts. The *Khawaarij* were known for their pious appearance and ritualism, but these outward acts of worship only served to lead them further astray. Ibn al-Jawzee reported that the Prophet said, "The *Khawaarij* are the dogs of the people of the (hell) fire" (2002:96). In another authentic narration collected by Ibn Abee 'Aasim the Prophet Muhammad said, "There will come from my nation a people who read the Qur'aan, your reading won't be anything compared to their reading, and your prayer to their prayer won't be anything, and your fasting to their fasting won't be anything. They will read the Qur'aan thinking it is for them, but instead it will be against them..." (1998:436). The *Khawaarij* were known for their excessive worship and their distortion of the meanings of the Qur'aan to support their ideology. These are just some of the

narrations from the traditions of the Prophet that make reference to the *Khawaarij* and their characteristics.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.5 Statements of Classical Scholars Relating to the *Khawaarij*

From the time of the Prophet and his companions until present, the scholars of Islaam have made mention of the *Khawaarij*, and commented on their effects upon the Muslim community. Al-Aajooree a ninth century scholar states, "The scholars (both) classical and modern agree that the *Khawaarij* are an evil people, disobedient to Allah, the Almighty, and his Messenger-may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him-even if they pray and fast, and strive hard in their worship, none of that is of any benefit to them" (1999/1:320). Ibn Hanbal transmitted a narration by Ka'b a *Taabi'ee*,<sup>10</sup> who said, "Whoever fights the *Khawaarij* will receive ten lights, which is more beneficial than the eight lights for other than him amongst the martyrs" (1996/2:638). This narration shows how the early scholars perceived the *Khawaarij* as a threat to the people of Islaam, and considered it commendable and necessary to fight them.<sup>11</sup> According to report narrated by Sa'd Ibn Abee Waqqaas who said when mentioning the *Khawaarij* that "they are a people who deviated, so Allah turned their hearts away" (Ibn Hanbal 1996/2:638). In the same collection it was reported by Ibn 'Umar,<sup>12</sup> "that he viewed fighting the *Harooreeya*"<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It is well known to *hadeeth* scholars that the aforementioned *hadeeths* refer to the *Khawaarij*, Imaam al-Bukhaaree mentioned the above narrations under the chapter entitled 'Fighting the *Khawaarij* and Apostates after Establishing the Proofs against Them' (al-Bukhaaree 2001:1225).

<sup>10</sup> A *Taabi'ee* is someone from the second generation of Muslims who met a companion of the Prophet as a Muslim and died as a Muslim.

<sup>11</sup> This narration refers to a matter of the unseen world (lights for those who kill the *Khawaarij*) which according to the orthodox creed is only known to Allah except the things He revealed to His prophets.

<sup>12</sup> He was the son of 'Umar Bin al-Khattaab the second caliph.

<sup>13</sup> This is another name for the *Khawaarij* who rebelled against 'Alee and settled in a place called Haroora`.

Many of the early orthodox scholars maintained that the *Khawaarij* should be fought and killed, and they drew their conclusions from the many authentic narrations upon the Prophet which spoke of the evil of the *Khawaarij*, and the benefit of fighting them. The question then arises are the *Khawaarij* Muslim or not?

The companions of the Prophet, and most of the early scholars did not make *takfeer* of the *Khawaarij*. Instead they prayed behind them and dealt with them as Muslims. ‘Alee Ibn Abee Taalib invited them to come back to the truth as well as Ibn ‘Abbaas and neither of them declared the *Khawaarij* to be disbelievers. ‘Alee was once asked after fighting the *Khawaarij* if they were *mushrikeen*.<sup>14</sup> He replied by saying they did not commit shirk. Then he was asked if they were hypocrites, and he said that hypocrites did not remember Allah often, and mention his name. Then he was asked further about them. He then replied, "They were a people who rebelled against us, so we fought them" (cited in al-Mashaabee 1997/1:306). From this narration of ‘Alee we understand that he did not view the *Khawaarij* as disbelievers, nor did he see them as hypocrites, but instead he saw them as Muslim rebels who should be fought.

As for those scholars who declared the *Khawaarij* to be disbelievers, their central argument was based upon the statement of the Prophet, that they would leave Islaam obligatory upon the Muslims" like the arrow moves through its target, and that the *Khawaarij* made lawful the believing women as war captives and concubines, and declared Muslim blood which is sacred to be lawful. Also, according to *hadeeth* literature the *Khawaarij* should be fought and killed so those who hold them to be apostates use this as the strongest evidence of their disbelief. Amongst those who held this view were al-Hasan, the son of ‘Alee Ibn Abee Taalib, Imaam Shaafi’ee, Imaam Maalik, and al-Qurtubee and some of the *hadeeth* scholars also declared them to be disbelievers (‘Awaajee 2002:528).<sup>15</sup> Prophet were in concordance that the *Khawaarij* should be fought, their evil avoided, and that they would affect the Muslim nation until the end of time.

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<sup>14</sup> The word *mushrikeen* is plural for *mushrik*. This refers to the one who worships other than Allah or someone or something with Allah, and it is a general reference to polytheism.

<sup>15</sup> Imaam Shaafi’ee and Imaam Maalik were two of the major jurists from amongst the four major schools of thought in Islaamic jurisprudence. Al-Qurtubee (died in 671 *Hijra*) was a major scholar noted for his explanation of the Qur’aan.

## 1.6 Characteristics and Creed of the Early Khawaarij

There are many characteristics of the *Khawaarij*, and as they form no unified sect this research will attempt to discuss some of the most important traits relevant to this study.

### 1.6.1 Believing Faith to be Constant

One of the main points of disagreement between the creed of the *Khawaarij* and the orthodox creed is regarding faith. Almost all *Khawaarij* sects with the exception of the *Ibaadeeya* believe that faith does not fluctuate. This belief is not in accordance with the orthodox creed which holds that faith increases with good deeds and obedience to Allah's commands, and that it decreases with sin and disobedience (al-Faasee 2003/1:8). To the *Khawaarij*, major sin or disobedience to Allah deletes all previous good deeds, and removes all traces of faith, therefore making the one who sins a disbeliever. In addition, they believe that there is no forgiveness for the major sinner. In the next sub-chapter there will be more details regarding the relationship between faith and *takfeer*. For the *Khawaarij*, faith and Islaam are the same in meaning, and either complete or nonexistent, so if one's faith decreases with committing a sin, his Islaam is nullified, meaning he is no longer a Muslim.

Regarding faith the *Ibaadeeya* do not differ from the orthodox creed: that faith increases and decreases, but to them major sins are *kufri ni'ma* which means to be ungrateful for Allah's favors or blessings. So they believe ungratefulness is hypocrisy and major disbelief and "those who worship Allah alone from amongst the major sinners and die upon their sin, will be in the hellfire forever" (al-'Aqal 1998:81). Some *Ibaadeeya* hold beliefs similar to other *Khawaarij* sects, however they all believe that major sinners who die without repenting will be eternally in the hellfire. In contrast, according to the orthodox creed, only Allah can destine someone to the hellfire or grant them pardon for their sins (al-Faasee 2003/1:75).

## 1.6.2 Takfeer for Major Sins

The central component of the *Khawaarij* creed is making *takfeer* upon those who commit major sins. The *Khawaarij* declared major sinners and those who disagreed with them, to be disbelievers. Some of the major sins in Islaam are associating partners with Allah, suicide, magic, abandoning the prayer, committing adultery or fornication, oppression, and drinking alcohol or using intoxicants. In this regard, Muslim related that the Prophet said, "Avoid the seven deadly sins." He was asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What are they?" He said, "Ascribing partners to Allah, sorcery, taking the life which Allah has forbidden except through justice, devouring *riba* (usury), devouring an orphan's wealth, defecting from the battlefield, and accusing and libeling chaste and pious believing women" (al-Nawawee 1997/2:273). Although the Prophet mentioned seven deadly sins in this narration, there are many more which are mentioned in the Qur'aan and other *hadeeth* traditions. According to the practice of the Prophet and his companions, it is clear that except for *shirk*<sup>16</sup> and sorcery the above sins do not take one outside the fold of Islaam.<sup>17</sup> However, the *Khawaarij* made *takfeer* of those who were guilty of major sins. There are many examples in Islaamic history where the *Khawaarij* declared other Muslims to be disbelievers. For example, the killing of 'Uthmaan the third caliph was at the hands of the *Khawaarij*, who felt he was an unjust ruler. In addition, they killed the fourth caliph 'Alee due to his opposition to them, as they felt he committed a major sin by using men as arbitrators, and they accused him of not adhering to the Qur'aan in his dispute with Mu'aawiya ('Awaajee 2002:129).

The *Khawaarij* used Qur'aanic verses to prove that major sinners were disbelievers. Allah says in the Qur'aan, "Whosoever earns evil and his sin has surrounded him (is immersed in his sin), they are the dwellers of the fire (i.e. hell); they will dwell therein forever" (Qur'aan 1996:2:81). The *Khawaarij* explained that this verse refers to the major sinner, whose good deeds will not be accepted, and as a result he will spend eternity in the hell-fire. Al-Sa'awee said, "Disbelief and (*shirk*) associating partners with Allah are the only sins that nullify a person's deeds and causes him to

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<sup>16</sup> *Shirk* as an Islaamic term means to associate a partner in worship with Allah or worship someone or something besides him.

<sup>17</sup> There will be a more in depth analysis of the major sins, and the Islaamic view regarding the one who commits them in the chapter on the Islaamic creed.

spend eternity in the fire" (al-Sa'awee 1996:94). Al-Baghawee reports that, "the view of Ibn 'Abbaas, Attaa, Ad-Dahaak and Aboo 'Aaliya and Rabee'a and the majority of scholars is that he dies in a state of *shirk*" (al-Baghawee 2002:46). This shows that many of the early scholars viewed that this verse applied to the one who dies upon *shirk*, and does not repent before he dies. Unlike the *Khawaarij*, who believed the major sinner was destined to the hell-fire eternally regardless of whether he committed *shirk* or not.

Another Qur'aanic verse the *Khawaarij* used as a proof to expel the major sinner from Islaam is, "Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are *Al-Muttaq'un* (pious) (1996:5:27). Al-Sa'awee states, "They say (*Khawaarij*) the major sinner is not one who is pious. So, therefore Allah the Almighty does not accept his deeds, so he is a disbeliever" (1996:97). The *Khawaarij* use inductive reasoning to apply this verse to the major sinners instead of the classical interpretations of the verse. The *Khawaarij* begin by concluding that the major sinner has lost all piety, therefore his deeds will not be accepted and he becomes a disbeliever. However, the orthodox creed holds that a major sinner may still have some faith even though he is in sin, and that faith increases with obedience to Allah's commands, and decreases with disobedience.<sup>18</sup> Ibn 'Abbaas explains that this verse was in specific reference to two brothers, Cane and Abel. When one brother killed the other, his sin was not forgiven due to his insincerity in repentance (Ibn 'Abbaas 1992:121). Many classical scholars like Ibn Katheer, and some of the companions like Aboo Darda'a, explained that this verse shows the importance of sincerity in one's worship of Allah, and furthermore that one who is sincere will have his worship and repentance accepted (Ibn Katheer 1997/2:43). In contrast, the *Khawaarij* interpreted the verse to mean that those who committed a major sin, like killing another Muslim, are expelled from the religion, and will have a painful torment in the hereafter for all eternity.

Still another proof the *Khawaarij* used to support their creed is the *hadeeth* narration transmitted by Muslim, where the Prophet said, "A fornicator at the time he is committing adultery, is not a believer; and a thief, at the time of stealing, is not a believer; and a drunkard, at the time of drinking alcohol is not a believer" (al-

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<sup>18</sup> There will be further discussion of faith in the section on the orthodox creed.

Nawawee 1997/1:230). Al-Nawawee, a major scholar who died in 676 on the *Hijra* calendar, explained the *hadeeth* by saying:

According to the statement of Allah the Glorified and Exalted, 'Verily Allah does not forgive that partners are associated with him, but he forgives other than that from who he pleases.' In accordance with the consensus of the people of the truth [scholars] the fornicator, the thief, and the murderer, and anyone who commits major sins, except shirk, are not expelled from the religion due to the sin they have committed. Rather they are believers who have deficiency in faith. If they repent, their punishment is remitted, and if they continue in their sin until death, then they are at the mercy of Allah. So if Allah the Almighty wishes, He will pardon them, and they will enter paradise first, and if He wants He will punish them, then admit them into paradise (1997/1:230).

Imaam al-Nawawee explained this narration by using a verse from the Qur'aan. It is apart of the methodology of the orthodox scholars to use the Islaamic texts to explain and interpret one another. This methodology is used to extract the correct meaning of a given text, its context and the legislative rulings pertinent to it. This is in direct contrast with how the *Khawaarij* and other sects interpret the texts: they begin with a conclusion, and use the texts to support their paradigm. Al-Nawawee's statement also illustrates the orthodox Islaamic creed by showing that faith fluctuates, and his claim is supported by textual evidence. Still another benefit from his statement is that it highlights the belief that Allah is most forgiving, which contradicts the *Khawaarij's* belief that the major sinner is a disbeliever destined to eternal damnation. A third benefit that can be extracted from the explanation given by al-Nawawee is that the Muslim who enters the hellfire, but has some faith remaining in his heart will not remain there indefinitely. In contrast, the *Khawaarij* use this evidence to support their *takfeer* of the major sinners, by carefully selecting Qur'aanic verses and *hadeeth* to strengthen their position. The *Khawaarij* methodology is different from that of the orthodox scholars who derived their conclusions from the companions understanding of the Islaamic texts regarding belief and legislation ('Awaajee 2002:258).

### 1.6.3 Rebellion against Muslim Leadership

Another component that forms the foundation of the *Khawaarij's* belief is rebelling against the Muslim leadership. Scholars differ as to when the *Khawaarij* first rebelled against Muslim leadership. Some classical scholars like Ibn Hazm, and al-

Shahrastaanee<sup>19</sup> refer to the man who accused the Prophet of being unjust when dividing the war booty as an example of rebelling against the leader. Other scholars like Abee al-‘Azza and Ibn Katheer<sup>20</sup> say that it began with the killing of the third caliph ‘Uthmaan Bin ‘Affaan and the taking of Muslim wealth from the treasury. Still some say that it began with the rebellion against ‘Alee, the fourth caliph, the splitting of the main body of Muslims, and disagreement between some of the companions (‘Awaajee 2002:37-43).

Some classical scholars classified rebellion into two types: by speech and by the sword; however they make distinction between rebels and the *Khawaarij* (al-Barbahaaree 1997:113).<sup>21</sup> Rebels can be defined as those who rebel for worldly benefits such as unequal wealth distribution, under representation, or isolation from the political system or process. On the contrary, the *Khawaarij* fought and rebelled due primarily to what they observed to be a religious obligation: they felt it was a religious duty to overthrow an unjust ruler, or one who disagrees with their ideology.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibn Hazm died in 456 on the *Hijra* calendar and was one of the leading jurists of his time.

Al-Shahrastaanee, a major scholar of sectarianism in Islaam, died in 548 on the *Hijra* calendar.

<sup>20</sup> Abee al-‘Azza Ibn ‘Abd al-Salaam was a major judge and scholar during his time who died in 792 on the *Hijra* calendar.

Isma'eel Ibn Katheer was a major scholar whose works comprised of Qur'aanic exegesis and history, and he died 774 on the *Hijra* calendar.

<sup>21</sup> This is probably because the one who supplicates against the leader or publicizes his faults encourages others to reject the ruler.

<sup>22</sup> The *Khawaarij* hold a particular set of beliefs based on *takfeer* which distinguishes them from rebels who may or may not declare the governing authority to be apostate. There is a lengthy discussion on the concept of *khurooj* in the section 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahmaan on rulership and *Takfeer*'.

Scholars deduce from this command from the Prophet that it is an obligation to fight the *Khawaarij* at all times.<sup>23</sup>

Ibn Taymeeya a 13<sup>th</sup> century scholar who wrote extensively about the sects in Islaam, detailed the distinction between the *Khawaarij* and rebels, arguing that rebels are not fought until they rebel against Muslim leadership (*khurooj*), whereas the *Khawaarij* are to be fought at all times. His evidence for this was the Qur'aanic verse, "And if two parties (or groups) among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which transgresses till it complies with the command of Allah" (1996/49:9). He used this proof to show that the rebels are to be fought only during rebellion. As for the *Khawaarij* they are to be fought at all times according to the following *hadeeth* transmitted by al-Bukhaaree in which the Prophet said, "... fight them wherever you meet them. For verily, whoever fights them will receive a reward on the Day of Judgment from Allah" (Ibn Hajar 1996/14: 268).

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<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that fighting the *Khawaarij* is a duty of the Muslim government or authority: it is not for every individual to mete out punishment or fight them, as this might produce a state of lawlessness.



### 1.6.5 Splitting from the Main Body of the Muslims

Along with religious extremism, the *Khawaarij* were also known by their splitting from the main body of the Muslims. Many of the contemporary *Khawaarij* in their zeal and extremism would abandon the compulsory congregational prayers, thus splitting from the main body of Muslims. Ibn al-Imaam states about the modern day *Khawaarij*, "They don't pray in the Muslims' Mosques because the prayer leader and followers are disbelievers according to their beliefs" (2003:65). According to a narration transmitted by Muslim the Prophet said:

Verily, the most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the *'Isha* and the *Fajr*. Were they to know the rewards for these two prayers they would come to them even if they had to crawl. I was about to order the prayer to start and command a man to lead the people, so I would go with some men with bundles of wood to the people who have not attended the congregational prayer and burn their homes with them in it (al-Nawawee 1997/5:156).

Three important benefits are derived from this statement. Firstly, that it is hypocritical for men to avoid the congregational prayer. Secondly, that the command to pray in congregation is a serious one that should be heeded. Finally, those who refuse to pray with their fellow Muslims are guilty of the very sin they accuse others of possessing: hypocrisy. Excommunication is a common trait of the *Takfeeree* groups as will be illustrated in chapter three.

### 1.6.6 Ill-treatment of Enemies

There are numerous narratives by classical scholars that recount the *Khawaarij's* treatment of the general Muslim population, and how they separated themselves from them. They were known to plunder, pillage goods, and take slaves and concubines from conquered Muslim peoples. In their eyes the people were disbelievers and their blood, property, and wealth became lawful for them, and this is a basis for how the *Khawaarij* viewed their Muslim foes. Al-Ash'aree said about them, "As for the sword, then all the *Khawaarij* believe in using it (against Muslims), except that the *Ibaadeeya* do not rebuke the people with the sword. But instead they view it necessary to remove the oppressive leaders, and prohibit them from leading by any means ..." (al-Ash'aree 1999:204). Most of the *Khawaarij* sects made it permissible to fight the general Muslim population, and removal of an oppressive leader was deemed absolutely

necessary. To the *Khawaarij*, those Muslims who disagreed with them became disbelievers and their land became *Daar al-Harb*. *Daar al-Harb* refers to a non-Muslim land where there is no truce with a Muslim land. The *Khawaarij* believed it was obligatory to fight and subdue this land, and its occupants. According to the *Khawaarij*, a Muslim land can change to a disbelieving one if major sins become rampant, even if it was controlled by Muslims and Islamic law is implemented ('Awaajee 2002:486). Orthodox scholars differ over an exact definition of *Daar al-Harb*. However, this researcher will attempt to highlight the most inclusive definitions and characteristics. According to most jurists *Daar Al-Islam* is the land where majority of the inhabitants are Muslim, and they are safe to practice their religion, whereas some scholars like Ibn Taymeeya, and Ibn al-Qayyim, say that it is the land where Muslims reside and the laws of Islam are applied. *Daar al-Kufr* is the land where most of the laws are un-Islamic, and the ruler presiding over the land is a disbeliever. *Daar al-Kufr* is further divided into *Daar al-Harb* and *Daar al-Ahd* or *al-Sulh*. *Daar al-Harb* refers to the land of disbelief where there is no treaty, or agreement with the Muslims, and *Daar al-Ahd* or *al-Sulh* is the land of disbelief where there is a treaty or agreement with a Muslim state (al-Ahmadee 2003/1:233-251).

Some of the more extreme sects of the *Khawaarij* like the *Azaariqa* believe that if they themselves are amongst disbelievers, in the same land, and are not rebelling against the leadership, then they "consider themselves (*mushrikeen*) disbelievers, due to their mixing with those who disagree with them and living amongst them, until they rebel against them, and affirm their Islam" ('Awaajee 2002:486). Ibn al-Jawzee recorded a saying of some of the *Azaariqa*, "We are mushrikeen (*polytheists*) as long as we stay in *Daar al-Shirk* (land of *polytheism*). So when we separate we will be Muslims" (2002:108). The *Azaariqa*, in their extremism, deemed it necessary to emigrate from any land they believed was un-Islamic, and mixing with the disbelievers was considered disbelief.

### 1.6.7 Extremism

Extremism and excessiveness in religious matters are also amongst the main characteristics of the *Khawaarij*. Extremism as a religious term can be defined as

transgressing the religious boundaries (al-Lawayhiq 1999/1:21). Although this is a very broad definition it sums up some of the differences amongst religious scholars. Some scholars define extremism as going beyond the limits set by the religious texts by making things that are permissible in the religion unlawful, or obligatory. Still other scholars say that it is extremity in the interpretation of the religious texts, and strictness with regards to practicing things commanded in the religion upon oneself and others. (al-Dawsree 2005:19). Al-‘Aqal relates, "The extremism of the *Khawaarij* results from their fanaticism in the religion and its rulings, and their separating themselves from those who differ from them and their harsh stance towards them" (1998:12). The original *Khawaarij* were known for being excessive and obsessive in worship. Al-Sa’awee says, "... the *Khawaarij* are people who are obedient, and devoted. They were extremely keen on adhering to the principles of the religion, fully practicing its verdicts, and staying far away from what Islaam has prohibited" (1996:182). The *Khawaarij* were known for their earnest prayers, having full concentration, and elongated prostrations. They were also known for the marks upon their foreheads due to their many prostrations, and they used to shave their heads believing it an act of worship, a sign of piety and asceticism. In addition, they were known to have black marks under their eyes due to excessive crying (al-Shahrastanee 1984:107).

The second characteristic of extremism apparent in the *Khawaarij* was in belief. Due to their extremist belief the *Khawaarij* were known for declaring anyone who held a position contrary to them, or who fell into major sin as apostates (al-Lawayhiq 1999/1:24). For example, the *Khawaarij* were known for their truthfulness and hatred for lying and they made *takfeer* of those who lied.<sup>24</sup> They declared ‘Alee, the cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad and leader of the Muslims to be an apostate because he differed with them and this was due to their fanaticism. Al-Bukhaaree related that the Prophet said, "They fight the people of Islaam and leave the people of idolatry" (Ibn Hajar 1996/9: 21). The *Khawaarij* were eager to apply their judgments upon the Muslims, even going as far as fighting and killing them and this was a result of their extremist interpretation of Islaam and zeal to implement its orders.

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<sup>24</sup> The original *Khawaarij* were so meticulous about telling the truth that although they were considered deviant their *hadeeth* narrations were accepted. This is unlike the modern groups who often conceal their *Takfeeree* principles and intentions and incite acts of terror as will be shown in chapter three.

### 1.6.8 False Interpretation of Qur'aanic verses

Due to the *Khawaarij's* lack of understanding of the Qur'aan, and rejection of the orthodox interpretation of its verses, they committed grave errors in belief and practice. The Qur'aan is to be explained by reference to other verses, then as understood and practiced by the Prophet and his companions. The *Khawaarij* on the other hand explained the verses using only their apparent meanings, and their opinions, instead of using the methodology prescribed by those before them. The *Khawaarij* were known for their strict adherence to the Qur'aan in accordance with their understanding, and outward exemplification of the Prophetic Sunna (al-Sa'awee 1996:176). Because the *Khawaarij* abandoned the main group of Muslims, the leadership and scholars, they in essence abandoned the Prophetic Sunna making "what is not evil, evil, and what is not good, good, and this was evident during the time of the Prophet when Dhu Khawasira al-Tamimee said, 'Be just for you have not been just!'" (al-Sa'awee 1996:176). Ibn Taymeeya explained that when Dhu Khawasira commanded the Prophet to be just he believed he was commanding something good, but he was in fact making something good (dividing the war spoils), bad, by rebuking the Prophet and thus contradicting the religion (al-Sa'awee 1996:176). This example illustrates how from the very beginning the *Khawaarij* based their belief upon their personal opinion and their sense of justice, instead of the sound dictates of the Qur'aan and Sunna.

Another blatant example of the *Khawaarij's* misinterpretation of the Qur'aan is the verse in which Allah says, "And whosoever does not rule by what Allah has revealed then they are disbelievers" (1996:5:44). Ibn 'Abbaas, also known as the explainer of the Qur'aan, which was a title given to him by the Prophet himself, explained the verse by saying, "The one who renounces what Allah revealed is a disbeliever, and the one who believes in it but does not rule by it, then he is an oppressive sinner" This was related by Ibn Katheer (1997/2:61). This verse was understood by the *Khawaarij* to mean that all sinners are disbelievers because they are not following divine law when they commit a sin. The correct understanding is that the sinner is not ruling by man-made laws but "instead he is committing that which Allah has prohibited because the one who rules by human legislation commands or legislates other than divine law, and he judges by it, and refers to it" (al-Hilaalee 2001:188). In sum, the one who

commits major sins is not legitimizing his acts, or legislating by them, but instead is failing to fulfill an obligatory act of worship or doing something which is prohibited by the religion, which according to the *Khawaarij* constitutes apostasy. ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Umar a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad said, "Verily they (the *Khawaarij*) rush to apply the verses that were revealed about the disbelievers and apply them to the believers" (Ibn Hajar 1996/9:20). The *Khawaarij* are known for their misinterpretation of the Qur’aanic verses to support their paradigm of *takfeer* and rebellion.

Misinterpretation of the divine texts by the *Khawaarij* led to their going astray in practice, although they possessed a strong sense of virtue. Ibn Taymeeya said that "They are not from those who deliberately lie; instead they are well known for truth. Even it is said their narrations of *ḥadeeth* are among the most authentic *ḥadeeth*. However, they are ignorant and misguided due to innovation. So, their sinfulness is not due to apostasy and disbelief, instead it is from their ignorance of the meanings of the Qur’aan" (1989b/1:68). This trait is common to both the neo-*Khawaarij* and the original sect: interpretation of the religion based upon their opinions. However, whereas the original sect was known for its truthfulness, the *Takfeerees*, as will be observed in chapter three, are not. Ibn Taymeeya also described the original sect by saying that "they pretend to follow the Qur’aan based upon their opinions and they leave the Sunna, which they claim contradicts the Qur’aan" (1989/28:491). The *Khawaarij* seem to contradict themselves: on one hand they strictly adhere to the Qur’aan, and at the same time, if it appears to them that the Sunna does not agree with the Qur’aan, or their interpretation, they discard the Sunna, and this illustrates their deviation from the orthodox methodology regarding Qur’aanic interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

Explaining the verses of the Qur’aan based upon one’s unqualified opinion is a major sin the *Khawaarij* fell into. After mentioning several of the major sins like illegal sexual intercourse (sodomy, homosexuality, and fornication), oppression, and polytheism, Allah mentions that it is hateful to say "things about Allah of which you have no knowledge" (Qur’aan 1996/7:33). He also says in another verse "And say not

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<sup>25</sup> The orthodox belief holds that the Qur’aan and the Sunna are both divine revelation from Allah, but the Qur’aan is the speech of Allah, and the Sunna is revelation transmitted through the sayings, actions and things accepted by the Prophet.

concerning that which your tongues put forth falsely: 'This is lawful and this is forbidden.' So as to invent lies against Allah, verily, those who invent lies against Allah will never prosper. A passing brief enjoyment (will be theirs), but they will have a painful torment" (Qur'aan 1996/16:116). Here Allah explains that those who speak without knowledge, or lie about Him, and make things that He made lawful, unlawful, or vice versa, will have an extreme punishment in the hereafter. It can be deduced from this verse that lying about Allah or attempting Qur'aanic exegesis without proper knowledge is a grave sin and the *Khawaarij* were guilty of this. Ibn al-Qayyim says regarding the first verse:

So Allah ranked the prohibited things on four levels. He began with the lightest of them and that is (*al-Fawaahish*) illegal sexual intercourse. Then secondly, with that which is a greater prohibition: sin and oppression. Thirdly, that which is even more serious: associating partners with Allah the Glorified. Fourthly, that which is even worse than all of the above sins and it is speaking about Allah without knowledge (2002/1:73).

Although, the *Khawaarij* interpreted the Qur'aanic verses based upon their apparent meanings, most classical scholars did not accuse them of being apostates. This was in part based upon the view that ignorance and misinterpretation are sometimes excusable and impediments to *takfeer* as will be shown in the section on *takfeer*, nonetheless Qur'aanic misinterpretation is considered sinful and an innovation.

### 1.6.9 Religious Innovation

The notion of innovation (*bid'a*) was a key concept inherent in the *Khawaarij* doctrine as most of the core tenets they espouse are a deviation from the orthodox creed. Innovation in religious matters (beliefs, actions or sayings), is an extremely controversial principle in Islaam and majority of orthodox scholars tend to hold it as sinful (al-Faasee 2003/1:131-132). To innovate is defined as to "bring in new ideas etc.; make changes" (Waite 1994:329). In this research innovation is used to describe practices, sayings or beliefs that have no basis in the sharee'a or that have an origin in the sharee'a but have been altered as a means of worshipping Allah, either by adding to an established act of worship or deducting from it. For example, a person may sing or even use musical string instruments as a form of release and consider it as a means of praising Allah. Such actions have no basis from the Sunna and using string

instruments as an act of worship would be considered sinful, not an act that nullifies one's faith. This does not include innovations in technology or practices outside of the religion. However, some scholars divide *bid'a* into the five different sharee'a categories: obligatory, recommended, permissible, disliked, and impermissible. "The first scholar to develop this classification was al-'Azza Ibn 'Abd al-Salaam when he said, 'Innovation is an action that was not practiced during the time of the Prophet of Allah and it is divided into obligatory, impermissible, recommended, disliked, and the permissible *bid'a*'" (cited in al-Rahaylee 2001/1:110). Imaam al-Qaraafee, a student of al-'Azza expounded upon his classification of *bid'a* explaining that the obligatory innovation is that which is done for the preservation of Islaam and the sharee'a, such as the collection and recording of the Qur'aan. The forbidden innovation is that which contradicts the established sharee'a principles. The third type of *bid'a* is that which is recommended which coincides with the sharee'a like the congregational Ramadan night prayer. The fourth category according to Qaraafee refers to those actions which are not altogether prohibited but are disliked according to the Islaamic texts. The final category he mentioned referred to those actions which are permissible in the sharee'a but were not practiced by the Prophet (al-Qaraafee 1999:202-205). Those scholars that disagree with these classifications of innovation argue that many of the examples used by al-Qaraafee were in fact not innovations but were necessary to preserve the religion and fit under accepted jurisprudential principles and did not alter any acts of worship. Also, they claim al-Qaraafee's example of the congregational night prayer during Ramadan did not support his argument because the Prophet prayed this prayer in congregation on more than one occasion (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:111). There is a plethora of evidence and statements from the Prophet and his companions that support the opinion that all religious innovation is sinful. On one occasion a man came to Ibn 'Abbaas, a companion, and requested advice. He replied, "Fear Allah, be upright, and follow [the Sunna] and avoid innovations" (al-Marwazee 1989:24). Ibn 'Umar, another companion known for his strict adherence to the Sunna, said, "All innovation is misguidance, even if people hold it to be good" (al-Marwazee 1989:24). The Companions, *Taabi'een* and major Imaams of jurisprudence, Maalik, Shaafi'ee, Aboo Haneefa, and Ahmad, all agreed that innovation was sinful and that it can be inferred that the person who knowingly innovates in a matter of creed or worship is suggesting that he has superior comprehension of Islaam to that of the Prophet (Baazmool 2008:50-63). Finally, the evidence seems to suggest, according to the Prophet's

statement and that of his companions, that all religious *bid'a* is a form of misguidance (acts of worship or belief unknown to the Prophet), and this is why the *Khawaarij* are considered unorthodox in creed as they introduced the concept of accusing the major sinner of heresy.

#### 1.6.10 Denial of Punishment in the Grave

In addition to their unorthodoxy and absence of knowledge based conclusions, the *Khawaarij* also denied the punishment of the grave. The orthodox creed holds that after people die they will be questioned in the grave about their religion, their prophet, and their lord. According to classical scholars, the one who answers with Islaam as his or her religion, Muḥammad as his or her prophet, and Allah as his or her lord, will receive comfort in the grave. The one who is unable to answer these questions will receive punishment and this is what is affirmed by the Qur'aan and the authentic *hadeeth* narrations. The Prophet said, "When a faithful believer is made to sit in his grave, then (the angels) come to him and he testifies that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and Muḥammad is Allah's Messenger" (al-Bukhaaree 1970/2:254). According to orthodox scholars this verifies that the testimony of faith will take place in the after life of the grave (Ibn Abee al-'Azza 1988:396). In another narration collected in al-Bukhaaree, the Prophet after hearing a noise left his dwelling suddenly and said, "The Jews are being punished in their graves" (1970/2:255). This narration confirms for orthodox scholars that there is a punishment of the grave, and the orthodox belief is founded upon authentic traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad, who also used to invoke Allah in his prayers saying, "O Allah I seek refuge with you from the punishment of the grave" (al-Bukhaaree 1970/2:255). Imaam Aboo Haneefa said, "And the return of the soul to its body in the grave is real, and all disbelievers are deserving of its discomfort and punishment as well as the sinful amongst the believers" (al-Khumees 1999:65).

Most of the *Khawaarij* denied the punishment of the grave, although some of the *Ibaadeeya* affirmed it. 'Awaajee states, "As for the punishment of the grave, then the worst of the *Khawaarij* deny it, and they claim that it is not real and they do not use the authentic *hadeeth* narrations that affirm it" (2002:200). The *Khawaarij* did not look to the authentic narrations to form the basis of their creed, but instead inclined to

Qur'aanic interpretation without the affirmation of authentic *hadeeth* literature, thus denying the authentic Sunna of the Prophet and methodology of the early scholars.

### 1.6.11 Reviling the Companions

Another belief which the early *Khawaarij* held was reviling the companions of the Prophet: challenging their legitimacy to authority, and declaring them disbelievers. The *Khawaarij* declared 'Uthmaan, 'Alee and Mu'aawiya to be disbelievers because they differed with them in judgment, and in the case of 'Uthmaan they declared him an apostate because they felt he was unjust and illegitimate as the ruler of the Muslims (al-Shahrastaanee 1984:110). The *Khawaarij* accepted the rulership of the first two caliphates Aboo Bakr and 'Umar, and rejected that of 'Uthmaan, and 'Alee. Some of the *Khawaarij* historians have used fabricated narrations to substantiate their hatred for 'Uthmaan. In a book called Exposing the Hidden News of the Community the author known only as *Ibaadee*<sup>26</sup> brings numerous fabricated narrations slandering 'Uthmaan, depicting him as a greater trial for the Muslims than the Anti-Christ ('Awaajee 2002:466).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The name *Ibaadee* probably refers to the author's affiliation with the *Ibaadeeya* sect.

<sup>27</sup> The Islaamic creed holds that one of the signs that the Day of Judgment is approaching is the coming of the Anti-Christ.

## 1.7 Conclusion

The preceding chapter provided a cursory glimpse of the *Khawarij* sect, their origin, and statements of the classical scholars regarding them. Also, *hadeeth* traditions were introduced to illustrate their characteristics. It can be deduced that the prevailing orthodox view regarding the *Khawarij* is that they were, and remain, a real test that will exist within the Muslim community for all time. Keeping that in mind, the following chapter will detail and contrast the orthodox creed with that of the *Khawarij*'s and provide additional analysis and scrutiny of their core beliefs.

In a fabricated saying attributed to the Prophet he depicts 'Uthmaan as a great evil to the community, and regarding that 'Awaajee says, "Then this narration attributed to Ibn Mas'ood is slanderous and it is a lie against the testimony of the Messenger of Allah ... for 'Uthmaan to enter paradise. And it is falsifying the love of the Messenger for him, and his history in serving Islaam" (2002:466). The *Khawarij* like the Shee'a, another unorthodox sect, have volumes of falsified sayings regarding the Prophet Muḥammad in which they slander and ascribe major sins to his family, and companions "...and they make it a part of their worship to come closer to Allah by cursing them day and night" ('Awaajee 2002:431). These actions are considered heretical according to the orthodox creed and contradict the authentic narrations upon which Islaam was built.

## Chapter Two

### The Islaamic Creed according to Salafee Scholars

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the Islaamic creed will be defined and contrasted with the *Khawaarij* belief. In addition, the concepts of the orthodox belief<sup>28</sup> will be explored and its outlook regarding monotheism (*tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed*), the companions of the Prophet, extremism, rebellion and *takfeer* will be detailed. Finally, the edicts of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, a controversial figure whose beliefs are often associated with *takfeer* and terrorist ideology, will be scrutinized.

#### 2.2 Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed

The basis of the Islaamic religion is monotheism according to the Qur'aan, the Sunna, and the general consensus of Muslims (al-Faasee 2003/1:15). *Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* as a concept involves recognizing the lordship of Allah. His right to be worshipped, and His divine names and attributes (Philips 2002:2). This categorization of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* is somewhat controversial and many sects differ over the very concept of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed*. The different theories propounded by many of these groups have caused some of them to make *takfeer* of those who differ with them (Ibn Hazm 2002/1:321-329).

The above categorization of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* is supported by evidence from the Qur'aan, the Sunna, and early scholars. The division of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* into three categories is not explicitly mentioned by the textual evidence; however this division is substantiated by a vast number of proofs. Philips states, "The division of *Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* into its components was not done by the Prophet... nor by his Companions, as there was no necessity to analyze such a basic principle of a faith in this fashion. However, the foundations of the components are all implied in the explanatory statements of the Prophet... and his companions..." (2002:2). The scholars of Islaam have deduced and derived principles and conditions for acts of worship and understanding matters of creed since the time

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<sup>28</sup> This term implies an understanding of the practices of the Prophet and the early generation of Muslims particularly as visualized by scholars like Ibn Taymeeya, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and present day *Salafee* clerics like Bin Baaz.

of the first generation of Muslim scholars,<sup>29</sup> this is why many of the early books of jurisprudence list the conditions for prayer and its pillars, the matters that nullify fasting, and the obligations of pilgrimage (al-Faasee 2003/1:629).

There are numerous verses of the Qur'aan that support the categories of *tawh̥eed* as mentioned above. Allah says, "All praises be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)" (Qur'aan 1996/1:2). This verse proves Allah's sovereignty and lordship over all creation and is an evidence for *tawh̥eed al-ruboobeeya* (lordship). In the same verse Allah says, "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help" (Qur'aan 1996/1:5). To single Allah out alone for worship is the essence of *tawh̥eed al-uloheeya* (worship) and this is what all the prophets and messengers were sent with, as Allah affirms by saying, "And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger (proclaiming): Worship Allah (alone) and avoid worshipping all false deities" (Qur'aan 1996:16:36). Allah is "the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful" (1996/1:3), and both of these characteristics are from His *al-asmaa wa- al-sifaat* (divine names and attributes) which is the final category of *tawh̥eed*.

The Sunna of the Prophet is also filled with evidences that support this categorization of *tawh̥eed*. The Prophet mentioned in an authentic narration that "our Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, descends each night to the lowest heaven during the final third of the night and He says: Who is invoking me, so that I may answer him? Who is asking something of Me that I may give it to him? Who is asking forgiveness of Me that I may forgive him?" (al-'Asqalaanee 1996/12:413). This *h̥adeeth* is evidence exhibiting all the categories of *tawh̥eed*. Firstly, *al-ruboobeeya*, implying that there is no other God worthy of worship and Allah is the Lord of all creation, and there are numerous *h̥adeeth* and verses that confirm this. Secondly, *al-uloheeya*, seeking absolution from sin and invocation are both acts of worship and are sought only from Allah. Thirdly, this *h̥adeeth* shows that Allah descends to the lowest heaven and this is a divine attribute that He possesses (*al-asmaa wa- al-sifaat*). In another *h̥adeeth* collected in Tirmidhee the Prophet said, "Supplication is worship" (1996/5:194). This *h̥adeeth* is evidence for *tawh̥eed al-uloheeya* and it shows that

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to *Sharh al-Fiqh al-Akbar li Abee Haneefa Nu'maan* by Muḥammad al-Qaaree (1977) which explains many issues of creed: *tawh̥eed* and the pillars of faith.

supplication to other than Allah is a type of polytheism as the Prophet defined supplication as an act of worship.<sup>30</sup>

*Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* as a concept was also known to the companions and their students. Although it may not have been categorized in the same way later scholars like Ibn Taymeeya, Ibn Qayyim, and Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab classified it, the general concept was still known. Maalik Ibn Deenaar, a *Taabi’ee*, said, “The people of the world leave this life without tasting the most important thing in it. He was asked: ‘What is that Aboo Yahyaa?’ He answered, ‘knowing Allah the Almighty’” (Taaṣ 2005/1:221). Ibn Mubaarak, another *Taabi’ee*, said, “For everything there is a reward, and the reward of knowledge is coming closer to Allah the Almighty” (Taaṣ 2005/1:222). Both of these narrations demonstrate the importance of acquiring correct knowledge of Allah and His divine names and attributes, and practicing that knowledge by worshipping Allah alone (*al-ulooh $\ddot{e}$ eya*). Imaam Aboo Haneefa<sup>31</sup> said, “The foundation of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* and the sound creed makes it obligatory for one to say, ‘I believe in Allah, and His angels, messengers, resurrection after death, and divine destiny, the good and evil of it which is from Allah the Almighty...’” (al-Qaaree 1997: 15). He also said, “Allah the Almighty is one, not just in number, but rather from the perspective that He has no partners” (al-Qaaree 1997:15). This affirms Allah’s lordship and that He is to be worshipped alone without any partners, which indicates that the early scholars held these concepts of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* as they are derived from the Qur’aan and the Sunna of the Prophet.

Many of the early scholars emphasized *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed al-asmaa wa al-sifaat* in their writings as they lived in a time where many sects began to appear and challenge the orthodox concept of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Polytheism is the concept of attributing partners in worship with Allah or besides Him (Ibn Abee al-’Azza 1988:77).

<sup>31</sup> Aboo Haneefa Nu’maan Bin Thaabit, a *Taabi’ee* known for his jurisprudence, was the first imaan of the four schools of jurisprudence in Sunni Islaam.

<sup>32</sup> Refer to *Kitaab al-Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* by Ibn al-Khuzaymah (223-311 *Hijra*), *Kitaab al-Tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* by Ibn Munda (died 395 *Hijra*), *Kitaab al-Asmaa wa al-Sifaat* by Bayhaqee (died 458 *Hijra*).

upon him, until the deviance of Waasal Bin ‘Aṭaa’ the leader of ‘*Itizaaal*’<sup>33</sup> (al-Bayhaqee 2007/1:5). Both Imaam Aboo Ḥaneefa and Imaam Maalik have made declarations that illustrate the emphasis and place of *tawḥeed al-asmaa wa al-sifaat* in the Islaamic faith. Imaam Aboo Ḥaneefa said, “There is nothing in His creation that resembles Him, nor is there anything that He resembles from His creation. His divine names and attributes exist and will continue to exist as actions in and of themselves” (al-Qaaree 1997:15). This is an important principle that is drawn from the Qur’aan and the Sunna regarding Allah’s names and attributes: they are perfect and do not resemble anything in creation nor should anything be compared to them. Imaam Maalik was asked about how Allah could be above His throne and he replied, “It is known that He raised Himself above it, how [He raised above it] is incomprehensible, and belief in it is an obligation. Therefore, asking about it is unorthodox and I consider you to be a sinner” (al-Bayhaqee 2007/2:306). During the time of the *Taabi’een*<sup>34</sup> *al-asmaa wa -al-sifaat* was written about extensively as many new sects arose to challenge this conceptualization of *tawḥeed*.

Although there was less emphasis placed upon the other two categories they were still mentioned during the time of the *Taabi’een*. The concept of *tawḥeed al-uloohiyya* and *al-ruboobeeya* were not challenged until later generations so there was little emphasis during the first four centuries after the death of the Prophet, and it was generally accepted that all worship and devotion should be directed to Allah. “So, it is accepted that this issue was not mentioned explicitly by the *Salaf*. Therefore, they did not write books unless they felt there was a need to address an issue that might cause contention or confusion affecting the common people” (al-Ja’eer, al-‘Ulyaane, and al-Juhane 2007:121). From amongst the statements of the early scholars is that of Saalim Bin ‘Abd Allah Bin ‘Umar Bin al-Khattab, “The Islaamic community used to take their religion in creed, worship, transactions, and manners from the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah’s peace and blessings be

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<sup>33</sup> Waasal Bin ‘Aṭaa’ al-Gazaal (80-131 *Hijra*) was a student of Ḥasan al-Basree, a famous *Taabi’ee*, who allegedly broke from Ḥasan’s study circle forming his own where he taught that the major sinner is neither a disbeliever nor a Muslim and after death he resides in the hellfire eternally (al-Juhane 2003/1:65).

<sup>34</sup> *Taabi’een* is the plural of *Taabi’ee*.

obedience was tested by their ability to continue worship which includes their sayings, actions, and restraining themselves from the things that they are prohibited from” (2005:108). Imaam Aboo Haneefa said, “Do not swear except by Allah with absolute *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed* and sincerity” (al-Kanaasi 1981/8:3). These sayings of Imaam Aboo Haneefa and Imaam Shafi’ee both are in accordance with the notion of *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya* which shows that these concepts were not alien to the classical scholars as they are based upon principles and beliefs taken from the Qur’aan and the Sunna. Some of the early scholars referred directly to *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya* and *al-ruboobeeya* and this is evidence that the classification of these concepts began during the second century of Islaam. Imaam Aboo Haneefa (died 105 *Hijra*) states, “When one supplicates to Allah he raises his hands upward not down, because lowliness is not one of the attributes of *al-ruboobeeya* and *al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya*” (al-Khumees 2007:25). This statement of Imaam Aboo Haneefa illustrates that the categorization of *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed* began with the *Taabi’een* as all three categories were mentioned by him. Imaam Tahaawee commenting on the beliefs of *Ahl Sunna wa al-Jamaa’a*, and specifically those of Imaam Aboo Haneefa, said, “We say regarding the *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed* of Allah while believing in the guidance that He has bestowed upon us: Allah is one Who has no partners, there is nothing that resembles Him, and He can do all things, and there is no other God worthy of worship besides Him” (Ibn Abee al-‘Azza 1988:77). Ibn Abee al-‘Azza (died 779) commentated saying Tahaawee’s statement encompasses all three categories of *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed* (Ibn Abee al-‘Azza 1988:77). There are countless statements by classical scholars that show that the categorization of *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed*,<sup>35</sup> into at least two separate categories, began in the time of the *Taabi’een* and has evolved until the present time.

### 2.3 Respecting the Companions and Family of the Prophet

The Islaamic creed with regard to the companions and family of the Prophet other than Allah” (al-Ja’eer, al-‘Ulyaanee, and al-Juhanee 2007:121). His statement Muhammad is in direct contrast with that of the *Khawarij*. According to the Islaamic emphasizes the importance of total reliance upon Allah and the significance of belief they are the best of creation after the prophets and messengers sent by Allah to supplication, which are both acts of worship and part of *tawh<sup>h</sup>eed al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya*:

directing all acts of worship to Allah alone. Imaam al-Shaafi’ee said, “And their

<sup>35</sup> Imaam Ibn Hibbaan (died 354 *Hijra*) states, “All praises and thanks be to Allah, the only one to be singled out in *al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya*, the Exalted One, possessor of *al-ruboobeeya*” (Ibn Hibbaan 2005:8). Imaam al-Tabaree commented on the verse “Know! Verily, no one has the right to be worshipped except for Allah, and seek forgiveness for your sins.” (1996:47:19) saying, “Then know O Muhammad that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah. Nor is it permissible for you or anyone in creation to worship or ascribe *al-ulooh<sup>h</sup>eeya* except to Allah, Who is the owner and creator of everything, and He is the possessor of *al-ruboobeeya*” (al-Tabaree 1966/11:317-318).

mankind. Also it is considered a major sin to revile them or to criticize them even if they fell into error. According to a report transmitted by Tabaraanee the Prophet stated, "If my companions are mentioned then keep silent" (cited in al-Barbahaaree 1997:112). Al-'Abbaad states regarding them that "they became the connection between the Messenger of Allah-may peace and Allah's blessing be upon him-and those who came after them. So, whoever insults them, insults the connection and firm link that ties the Muslims to the Messenger of Allah" (al-'Abbaad 2002:15). It can be deduced from this statement that the companions are to be revered because it was through their striving, and perseverance that we have the religion of Islaam today: they preserved the narrations of the Prophet which form the beliefs and rituals of Islaam, and they collected and memorized the Qur'aan, which is the Holy book for all Muslims. In a narration transmitted by Muslim the Prophet said, "Whoever calls to guidance will have a reward similar to all those who follow him without their reward diminishing in any way, and whoever calls to misguidance, he will carry a sin similar to all those who follow him without their sins decreasing in any way" (al-Nawawee 1997/4:2060). The scholars of Islaam refer to this narration to show the place of the companions of the Prophet in Islaam because they were the ones who called the people to guidance by spreading Islaam, and it was them, their students, and scholars after them, who maintained and preserved the orthodox creed.

Although the companions are revered according to the orthodox creed, it should not be excessive. Ibn Taymeeya said, "In spite of this, *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*"<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The next subsection details and defines this term.

This statement exemplifies how the classical scholars took great care not to exaggerate beyond the limits of the Islaamic sharee'a with regards to the companions of the Prophet. Emphasis was placed upon loving them but not exalting them in a manner that contradicts what was expounded upon in *hadeeth* literature. In addition, this statement serves as a refutation to those who over-exalt the companions as the Shee'a sect does with 'Alee the fourth caliph and it refutes the *Khawaarij* who denigrated and degraded the companions. The Prophet said, "Do not revile my companions, for if any one of you gave the size of Uhud Mountain in gold as charity, he would not even reach a handful of theirs, nor half of that (in reward)" (Ibn Hajr 1996/7:370). According to the orthodox creed, the companions are to be revered, their faults should not be discussed, and they hold the most honorable station in Islaam after Allah's Prophets and Messengers (al-Barbahaaree 1997:120-131).

## 2.4 Adhering to Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a

The orthodox creed holds that the Islaamic community would divide into sects and groups after the Prophet's time, even though it is deemed unacceptable, un-praiseworthy, and sinful (al-Barbahaaree 1997:128). It is apparent from *hadeeth* literature that only one sect is legitimate and will be successful in the life of the hereafter. The Prophet said:

The Jews divided into seventy one sects, one in paradise, and seventy are in the fire. The Christians divided into seventy two sects, so seventy one are in the fire and one in paradise. And I swear by the one whose hand my soul is in, my do not believe anyone of the companions to be infallible from major or minor sins. Rather, it is possible that they may have sins, yet they have past virtues that necessitate forgiveness of what occurred from them, if anything" (cited in al-'Abbaad 2002:30). An integral part of the Muslim's creed is to love the companions and refrain from criticizing them, and at the same time, not be excessive by glorifying them in a manner contradicting the orthodox creed. Al-Tahaawee (born 239 *Hijra*) said: righteous. Imaam al-Barbahaaree<sup>37</sup> said, "And the foundation upon which the *Jamaa'a* was built is the companions of Muhammad, and they are the people of the Sunna, and the (victorious) group. So, whoever does not take from them, is misguided and has deviated." (1997:65). Al-Breakaan said, "The Group refers to the loving them, nor do we renounce any of them. We hate whoever despises and speaks ill of them, and we only mention them with good. Loving them is part of the religion; faith and righteousness, and hating them is disbelief, hypocrisy, and transgression (Ibn Abee al-'Azza 1988:468).

<sup>37</sup> Imaam al-Barbahaaree, was known as the leader of the Sunna (those who adhere to the Prophet's traditions) in the year 329 after the *Hijra* (emigration) of the Prophet.

companions, their students, and those who followed them in righteousness” (al-Breakaan 1997:20). The victorious group which begins with the companions of the Prophet will exist throughout time according to *hadeeth* literature.

The victorious group is made up of those who hold fast to the commandments of the Qur’aan and the Prophet's traditions, and orthodox scholars are agreed on this. The Prophet said, “There will not cease to be a party from amongst my community clearly upon the truth, no one who betrays them will harm them until the commandment of Allah comes and they will remain like that” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/9:209). Classical scholars like Yazeed Bin Haroon and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal stated regarding the above *hadeeth* that, “If it is not the People of *Hadeeth* (*Ahl al-Sunna*, the *Salaf*) then I do not know who they are” (al-Reemee 2000:27). On another occasion the Prophet Muhammad said, "The best of you is my generation, then those who came after them, then those that came after them" (Ibn Hajr 1996/5:587). This shows the importance of the early scholars of Islaam and their interpretation and understanding of the texts, especially the companions, and the first two generations who followed them. Orthodox scholars agree upon the esteemed position of the companions, and refer to them as the foundation of the *Jamaa'a* referred to by the Prophet Muhammad.

The scholars in Islaam agree that insulting the companions is a major sin and that cursing them, especially for religious reasons, is disbelief. Imaam al-Maymoonee said, “Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said to me, ‘O Aboo al-Hasan, if you see a man mention any of the companions with evil then question his Islaam’” (cited in al-'Abbaad 2002:32). It appears that the classical scholars considered it blasphemous to speak ill of the companions and regarded the one who did so as heretical. Abee Zur'a al-Raazee said:

If you see a man defaming any of the companions of Allah’s Messenger...then know that he is a heretic, because we believe in the Messenger of Allah... and in the Qur’aan as being true. It is the companions who have conveyed this Qur’aan and the Prophetic guidance to us. Yet they seek to criticize our witness (to the revelation), so as to nullify the book and the Sunna. They are more deserving to be refuted and they are heretics (al-'Abbaad 2002:32).

The companions of the Prophet Muhammad preserved Islaam and helped to spread it around the world. Therefore, the one who disrespects or reviles them is considered blameworthy, and they call into question Allah's revelation and the Prophet's traditions which form the foundation of the religion. Also the above narration

illustrates how the classical scholars hated innovative practices, so they refuted them in defense of the religion and for its preservation. The Prophet said, "And beware newly invented matters for every innovation is misguidance" ('Aasim 1998:46). This narration shows that innovation in matters of worship is considered sinful. Ibn Taymeeya said about the one who curses or reviles the companions, "then he deserves an extreme punishment by agreement of the scholars of this religion. The scholars differed as to whether this person is punished by execution or by a lesser punishment" (cited in al-'Abbaad 2002:46). In Islaam one's honor is considered sacred and slander is a punishable crime. Therefore, according to the orthodox creed the companions, who are the greatest people in creation after the prophets and messengers, have even a greater right to be respected and held in high esteem (al-Faasee 2003:103). So, cursing them related to matters of faith or making *takfeer* of any one of them expels one from the religion (al-Nawawee 2002: 1728). On the other hand, to be excessive in one's love for them, declaring them to be infallible or divine, also is a type of extremism which can lead to disbelief.

## 2.5 Shunning Extremism

As has been previously mentioned extremism is transgressing the religious boundaries and it should not be confused or compared with adherence to the textual evidences which form the basis for Islaamic law and belief. Al-Khareef says, "The companions-may Allah be pleased with them-were the strictest people in adhering to the sharee'a and in this they did not exhibit any extremism or harshness..." (al-Khareef 2005:9). In the West terms like 'fundamentalism' and 'extremism' are often used when describing those who practice and adhere to the Islaamic faith, as Said states, "The deliberately created associations between Islam and fundamentalism ensure that the average reader comes to see Islam and fundamentalism as essentially the same thing" (Said 1997:xvi). Said was describing how the media, particularly in the West, describes and covers Islaam. However in the Islaamic context the term fundamentalism denotes those who practice the fundamentals of the religion like regular prayer, charity, and adherence to the principles of the Qur'aan and Sunna in action and creed (al-Khumees 1996:147).

There are two types of extremism in Islaam: extremism in belief and extremism in actions. Extremism in belief is "more dangerous, more slanderous and harmful to Muslims than extremism in actions because all the misguided groups began with extremism in belief" (al-Khareef 2005:11). Al-Khareef goes on to point out that the extremism of groups like the *Khawaarij* began with deviance in creed by making *takfeer*, and then they began to rebel and commit acts of violence.

As for the second type of extremism, this entails both actions and extremist speech according to orthodox scholars (al-Lawayhiq 1999a/1:70). Acts of terrorism fall under this category and although they are regarded as heinous in Islaam, they mostly have an origin in deviant belief, and this is why Islaam views extremism in action less dangerous and heretical than extremist belief. For example, extremism can be seen in "the thought of the early *Khawaarij* and it was extremely harmful to the Muslims throughout different times. So it is this subversive terrorist thought which contradicts the reality of the authentic religion of Islaam" (al-Suḥaymee 2005b:91). The *Khawaarij* began with deviant thought and creed and this deviance from the orthodox creed manifested itself through violence and rebellion. Al-Barbahaaree said, "If you see a man that is a wicked transgressor upon misguidance, straying from the path or way, but he is a person of the Sunna, then be his companion and sit with him for his sins will not harm you" (1997:120). This illustrates how the one who fell into error and strayed from guidance in deeds and actions should be given advice and not cut off from the Muslims if his foundation in creed is intact and his harm can be avoided. However, al-Barbahaaree said regarding the one who "...strives hard in worship by exhibiting asceticism but he is a person of desires [unorthodox in creed] then do not sit with him or go with him and do not listen to his speech" (al-Barbahaaree 1997:120). It becomes apparent from the aforementioned statements that unorthodoxy and extremism in belief are a much greater harm and sin than sinful actions, because the one who commits sins is able to repent and leave his sinful action much easier than the one who believes he is correct in his unorthodox practices, thus refusing to abandon it. Sufyaan al-Thawree, a *Taabi'ee*, was quoted as saying, "Innovation is more beloved to Iblees (the devil) than sin. Sin can be atoned for but deviation is not repented from" (cited in al-Atharee 1997:218). Finally, it can be deduced from the above statements that the danger inherent in extremist belief is the root cause of extremist action and this is in accordance with the orthodox belief. Al-Suḥaymee

states, "One of the reasons for these terrorist acts is the effect of the *Takfeeree* thought upon some of the youth of Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Egypt " (al-Suḥaymee 2005b:91).

The most commonly cited reasons for extremism according to *Salafee* scholars are ignorance of religious principles, unorthodoxy, and blind following of religious personalities. Although there are other reasons attributed to the phenomena of extremism, like socio-economic conditions, this research concentrates on violence and those factors which help explain the *Khawaarij* creed (al-Lawayhiq 1999/1:37-40).

Firstly, ignorance of religious matters is a main cause for religious extremism. Many perpetrators of extremism go beyond the limits set by the religion because they are unaware of its boundaries or misled due to their ignorance. Ibn Taymeeya said, "It was narrated on the *Salaf al-Saalih* (righteous predecessors) that whoever worships Allah out of ignorance, corrupts more than he does good" (cited in al-Khareef 2005:9). In a narration transmitted by Muslim the Prophet described how ignorance would increase and killing and extremism would appear as a result of this. The Prophet said, "Time will pass rapidly, knowledge will be decreased, trials and afflictions will appear...and there will be much *al-Harj* (killing)" (al-Nawawee 1997/16:439). According to classical scholars, knowledge will decrease because of the death of religious scholars and this is in accordance with the Prophet's statement when he said, "Allah will not decrease knowledge by removing it from the people, but He will decrease knowledge by the death of the scholars, and when no knowledge remains, people will take the leaders of ignorance who will be asked (to give verdicts) and will give no true answers, or verdicts which, in turn, misguide themselves, and therefore they will misguide the people" (al-Nawawee 1997/16:441). According to the statement of Prophet Muḥammad, there is a strong correlation between ignorance, the spread of trials, and extremism.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> A common characteristic of the neo-*Khawaarij* is that they criticize contemporary religious clerics who do not share their ideology and at the same time they issue their own verdicts, or seek consultation from those clerics that agree with their ideology regardless of their level of knowledge; this will be explored further in chapter three.

Secondly, initiating unorthodoxy: initiating practices or sayings which have no basis in the sharee'a, also leads to extremism in religious affairs. The groups that profess Islaam and possess extremist thinking all have one thing in common and that is "they twist the meanings of the religious texts and evidences to agree with their sinful practices" (al-Khareef 2005:22). The Prophet said regarding unorthodox practices, "Whoever innovates in this affair of ours that which is not from it will have it rejected" (al-Nawawee 1997/3:1344). Al-'Abbaad mentioned that this "*hadeeth* shows that whoever innovates an unorthodox practices that does not have a root in the sharee'a will have it rejected and the innovator deserves punishment" (2003b:39). Therefore, extremism in religion by its very nature is linked to unorthodoxy because to transgress the limits is to add an act of worship that was not previously in the religion or exaggerate in religious affairs. A prime example is the *Khawaarij's takfeer* for major sins which exhibits how unorthodoxical beliefs led to an extreme practice that caused harm, disunity, and killing between Muslims (al-Lawayhiq 1999:96).

Thirdly, blind following (*taqleed*) of religious scholars and personalities also fuels extremism. *Taqleed* as an Islaamic principle at times is permissible and at other times impermissible. It is allowed for the person who does not have the knowledge and ability to research the religious texts to gain the proper understanding and religious rulings, then this person must follow trustworthy religious scholars known for their knowledge and piety. "*Taqleed* of the truth is following [the Qur'aan and Sunna], and in reality not *taqleed*. Therefore, we find from the foundation of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* the statement, 'follow but do not innovate' and 'we follow what the righteous predecessors were upon [Qur'aan and Sunna]!...' (al-Khareef 2005:29). The impermissible *taqleed* is following blindly anyone in religious affairs regardless of whether they contradict the textual evidences or not. Allah says in the Qur'aan, "And when it is said to them; Come to what Allah has revealed and unto the Messenger (Muhammad for the verdict of that which you have made unlawful), They say: statement extremism will increase with the decrease of sound knowledge, because Enough for us is that which we found our fathers following, even though their fathers without proper knowledge of how to practice the religion its boundaries cannot be had no knowledge whatsoever or guidance" (Qur'aan 1996/5:104). As a result of following their ancestors they fell into the extremism of disobeying Allah and his Messenger, thus resulting in their misguidance, punishment and transgressing the religious boundaries. In another verse Allah says, "The Jews and Christians took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords" (Qur'aan 1996/9:31). According to a *hadeeth*

in the Sunan Tirmidhee, the Prophet was asked about this verse from the Qur'aan by one of his companions, 'Adee Bin Hatim, who said, "O Allah's Messenger! They do not worship them (i.e. the rabbis and monks)." The Prophet then replied, "They certainly do. They made lawful things as unlawful and unlawful things as lawful, and they (Jews and Christians) followed them; and by doing so, they really worshipped them" (1996/5:259). This type of *taqleed* is the most severe according to the orthodox creed because it involves indirect worship of other than Allah by blindly following religious figureheads when they openly contradict the Qur'aan and Sunna. Although in general the *Khawaarij* did not reach this level of misguidance: worshipping their leaders, it is one of the underlying roots of extremism. Blind following of religious personalities is a common trait amongst many of the sects and this is both true of the *Khawaarij* and *Takfeeree* groups who often require an oath of allegiance from their members (al-Suhaymee 2005:126).

The Prophet detailed the Islaamic creed and position regarding *taqleed*, and offered a prescription to the problem of extremism when he said, "There will be some people who will rule by other than my Sunna. You will see their actions and disapprove of them. I (the narrator) said, "Will there be any evil after that good?" He said, "Yes there will be inviters at the gates of hell, whoever accepts their invitation, he will be thrown in it" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:439). Then, after further discourse the Prophet was asked advice on how to deal with the situation and he replied, "Adhere to the main body of Muslims and their ruler" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:439). This discourse highlights the orthodox position regarding *taqleed* and following extremist personalities. Also, in accordance with the foundation of the religion stemming back to the Prophet, Muslims should avoid sectarianism, obey their leadership, and hold fast to the Qur'aan and Sunna. This was the methodology of the righteous predecessors, and this is the prescription for religious extremism according to the orthodox creed (al-Lawayhiq 1999a/3:90).

## 2.6 Renouncing Islaam

As was mentioned previously, the *Khawaarij* due to their extremism declare other Muslims to be apostates as a central tenant of their faith. However, in Islaam one cannot declare a Muslim to be a disbeliever unless the act or belief they hold is mentioned as an act of disbelief in the Qur'aan, or the Prophet's traditions, or is an

action or belief that necessitates expelling someone from the religion according to the consensus of religious scholars. Shaikh 'Abd al-Rahmaan Hasan said:

And every *munkar* (evil sin) must be repudiated from leaving something obligatory or falling into something prohibited. However, one is not expelled from the religion except from an action of disbelief proven by the book (Qur'aan), and the Sunna as disbelief, and likewise, an action or belief which the scholars agree upon as disbelief, like denying something obligatory that is well known from the religion by necessity (al-'Aasimee 2004/10:348).

Al-Fawzaan mentions that there are four bases of apostasy.<sup>39</sup> "The apostate is the one who leaves his religion either through speech, or belief, or action, or doubt, these are the foundations of the various types of apostasy" (al-Fawzaan 2004:18). As for speech it is joking or making fun of Islaam or any speech whether it is serious, or not, that ridicules the religion. Allah mentions in the Qur'aan, "They swear by Allah that they said nothing (bad), but really they said the word of disbelief, and they disbelieved after accepting Islaam" (Qur'aan 1996/9:74). This verse illustrates the import of taking the word of Allah as play; even if one was not intending harm this can expel him from the religion. Allah also says, "They declare: We were only talking idly and joking. Say: Was it Allah, and his Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and his Messenger that you were mocking? Make no excuse; you disbelieved after you had believed" (Qur'aan 1996/9:65). Making fun of the verses of the Qur'aan, or the Prophet, or his message, is strictly forbidden in Islaam, and constitutes disbelief. Also, uttering words that involve associating partners with Allah, praying, or invoking other than Him are also acts which expel one from the fold of Islaam (al-Rahaylee 2006:108).

The second foundation of apostasy is leaving the religion through incorrect belief. A person may believe an unlawful action is lawful or a make a lawful action unlawful. For example, Islaam teaches that every Muslim must pray five times daily at the prescribed times for prayer. A Muslim who knows that this is a religious obligation but rejects this in his heart believing it to be false, regardless if he performs the prayer, is guilty of hypocrisy which necessitates apostasy from Islaam. Allah says, "They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts" (1996/48:11). This verse referred to the

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<sup>39</sup> Shaikh Saalih Bin Fawzaan al-Fawzaan is a member of the committee of major scholars in Saudi Arabia.

Arabs who stayed behind during the treaty of Hudaibiya, and asked the Prophet to pray for forgiveness for them for doing so, when in reality they felt no sorrow, and their speech amounted to vain words. This shows the import of belief in the heart and its relationship to actions in Islaam, and furthermore that faith encompasses belief, action, as well as speech. The Prophet said, "Actions are related to intention and every man shall have that which he intended. Thus, he whose migration was for Allah and his Messenger, then his migration was for Allah and his Messenger. And he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, then his migration was for that for which he migrated" (al-Nawawee 1997/13:55). The scholars of Islaam explain that this saying of the Prophet shows that the place of intention is in the heart, and that actions in Islaam necessitate correct belief, and intention to please Allah. In addition, actions must be in accordance with the Prophet's sayings, actions, or things he approved of. Therefore, rejecting an action even if it is by intention nullifies it, and one's belief can bring him into the fold of Islaam or take him out of it (al-Rahaylee 2006:107-108).

The third foundation of apostasy is through action: an act of worship that completely contradicts the Islaamic creed. For example, any act of worship done for anything or anyone other than Allah's pleasure, or associating a partner with Him nullifies one's action or deed, and in turn can nullify one's Islaam. If for example, someone were to pray to a grave, or sacrifice an animal to other than Allah, this is considered associating a partner with him, and necessitates apostasy. However, there are more details to be discussed regarding judging a particular individual with becoming an apostate, even if his saying or action amounts to disbelief.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> This ruling will be discussed in the section on specific *takfeer*.

According to the orthodox creed disbelief is of two types: the major disbelief (*kufr al-akbar*) and the minor disbelief (*kufr al-asghar*). The major disbelief entails those sins that constitute infidelity such as associating partners with Allah, worshipping other than Him, not declaring a non-Muslim to be a disbeliever, believing there is superior guidance to what the Prophet brought, hating, or mocking something from the religion, magic, and helping disbelievers against Muslims,<sup>41</sup> ruling according to human law as opposed to divine law, and neglecting the religion: refusing to learn and practice it. The major disbelief also includes: rejecting the Qur'aan and Sunna by being arrogant, doubtfulness in the truth, and hypocrisy (al-'Ateeq 2004:21).

The minor disbelief (*kufr al-asghar*), does not nullify one's faith. However, according to the orthodox creed these are major sins such as rejecting the favor or blessings of Allah, killing a Muslim, and swearing by other than Allah (al-Rahaylee 2006:93). Certain sins or actions can be at one time a type of major disbelief expelling one from the religion, and at another time minor disbelief. One such action that falls into this category is ruling by human law as opposed to divine law (al-Rahaylee 2006:108).

## 2.7 Ruling according to Human Law as opposed to Divine Law

One of the major sins which can sometimes take one outside the fold of Islaam is ruling by other than divine law: the Qur'aan and the authentic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad. Scholars from the time of the companions of the Prophet until now have some differences regarding when ruling by human laws constitutes major disbelief. However, the classical scholars agree that at times ruling by other than divine law takes one outside the fold of Islaam, and at other times it is a major sin: the fourth foundation of apostasy is having doubt in something the Prophet was sent with, or doubting his being a prophet. This also includes expressing uncertainty of great debate in our current times especially amongst those who have been influenced by *Khawaarij* beliefs. Al-Fawzaan gives an example of the kind of questions one in doubt might ask when he said, "Is there a paradise and a hell-fire, or not? Then this one disbelieves through his doubtfulness even if he prays and fasts" (2004:21). Then the scholars of Qur'aanic exegesis had two main opinions regarding the applicability of the verse, "Whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, Qur'aan and Sunna is also a type of apostasy.

<sup>41</sup> Details regarding this principle will be detailed in the section on Aboo Hamza.

<sup>42</sup> See *Hukum bi Ghayr ma Anzala Allah* by Dr. 'Abd al-Rahmaan Ibn Saalih al-Mahmood (1999) for details regarding this issue and the classical scholars' stance pertaining to it.

such are of the disbelievers" (Qur'aan 1996:5:44). Some said it was a general verse applicable to anyone who does not rule or judge in accordance with Islaamic laws. Others said it was restricted to the Jews, as it was revealed about two Jewish tribes who sought arbitration from the Prophet Muḥammad. One of the tribes secretly sent some people to attempt to gain knowledge about his verdict in the matter, and they decided before hand that if the dispute was not in their favor they would not accept his judgment, so the verse was revealed about them.<sup>43</sup> The correct opinion is that the verses are general in their applicability, and refer to anyone who does not rule in accordance with Islaamic law, whether he is a ruler, or someone from the general Muslim population. The issue of ruling by human law as opposed to divine law is "not restricted to judges, leaders and princes, but rather it includes anyone who judges between two parties, like a teacher and his students, a father and his children etc..." (al-'Utaybee 2005:15). The biggest area of contention between the *Khawaarij* belief and the orthodox belief is the condition of the ruler, and when he is considered to be out of the fold of Islaam because of his ruling by other than the sharee'a.

As it has already been mentioned the orthodox scholars agree that not judging by Allah's laws is a major sin; however there are important details they highlight regarding when the ruler is considered to be out of the fold of Islaam (al-Fawzaan 2004:105). "Ibn 'Abbaas and Taawoos"<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> See Tafseer Ibn Katheer (1997/1: 61-62) for more details regarding the verse.

<sup>44</sup> A *Taabi'ee*: a student of a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad.

it then he is an oppressive sinner" (al-Baghawee 2002:381). Ibn al-Jawzee, (died 1201 AD), said:

And the decisive speech in this regard is that whoever does not judge by what Allah revealed, while rejecting it in belief (*jahada*), and he knows that it is Allah who revealed it, as the Jews did, then he is a disbeliever. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, inclining to his desires without rejecting it (in belief) then he is an oppressive and wicked sinner (cited in Rafiq 1998:2).

Ibn al-Qayyim, a scholar of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and student of Ibn Taymeeya, also believed that the ruler's condition should be evaluated before passing a judgment of *takfeer* upon him. He said regarding the ruler:

If he believes in the obligation of judging by what Allah has revealed in this situation, but turned away from it-out of disobedience-and while acknowledging that he is deserving of punishment then this is *kufra asghar*. And if he believes that it is not obligatory, and that he has a choice in the matter-along with his firm belief that it is the judgment of Allah-then this is *kufra akbar*-and if he was ignorant in the matter or made an error then he is one who errs (*Mukhtee'*) and his ruling is the same for those who err (cited in Rafiq 1998:2).

From amongst more contemporary scholars, 'Afeefee mentions three types of rulers, said: This is not the disbelief that constitutes infidelity, instead if he rules by other than divine law then he has committed an act of consult the scholars, and he worships Allah without purpose or clarity (*baseerah*), and disbelief and this is not like the one who disbelieves in the Last Day" (al-Baghawee 2002:381). This statement forms the foundation of the orthodox position as it is from ('Afeefee 1992:63). So, this one is a major sinner but still in the fold of Islaam and his judgments are based upon ignorance. Then he mentions the one "who knows the truth and is pleased with Allah's judgment, but sometimes is overtaken by his desires so he appears they distinguished between major and minor disbelief in the above statement. Another classical scholar 'Ataa' said, "It is disbelief less than disbelief, and tyranny acts in opposition to Allah's laws, or judges between the people in some matters or less that tyranny, and wickedness less than wickedness" (al-Baghawee 2002:381). Here a definite distinction is made between the two types of disbelief regarding ruling partisanship. Then he is a sinner, but not a disbeliever" ('Afeefee 1992:63). The third type of ruler is the one "who used to be associated with Islaam, knowledgeable of its exegesis mentioned, "The meaning of this verse is whoever does not rule by divine rulings, and then he makes a new law for the people by arranging a new system for law while rejecting it has disbelieved, and whoever agrees with it but does not rule by them to adopt and be judged by, and he knows that this contradicts Islaamic rulings. Then he is a disbeliever, outside the religion of Islaam" ('Afeefee 1992:64). In the same book Shaikh Hamad Ibn Ibraaheem al-Shatawee explains that "the Shaikh ('Afeefee) meant here: whoever renounces ruling by the sharee'a relinquishing it

totally in all affairs of life" ('Afeefee 1992:63). Another contemporary scholar, al-Fawzaan declares:

So apostasy is not pronounced on everyone who rules by other than what Allah has revealed. Instead, there are details in this (matter) between whoever sees that ruling by other than Allah's laws is better or the same as any other (law), or that there is a choice (between ruling by Islaamic law or not) then this one is judged as a disbeliever outside of Islaam (2004:105).

Bin Baaz, the former *Muftee* (head scholar who passes religious verdicts) of Saudi Arabia, described the one who does not rule by Allah's law as being a disbeliever if he believes the common law he uses to be better than divine law. Likewise, the one who believes it is permissible to rule by another law, apart from Islaamic law, is also a disbeliever, even if he believes Islaamic law is better. However, Bin Baaz held that the one who rules from his desires, or out of fear, making judgments to please others based on bribery, or for some other reason, is a major sinner still in the fold of Islaam. In addition, Bin Baaz made a condition that this ruler "knows he is disobedient to Allah, and that it is obligatory upon him to rule by Allah's law" (2001/4:416). Al-Waadi'ee, another contemporary scholar of *hadeeth*, said, "If someone makes permissible what Allah has made unlawful, and he is knowledgeable [of what he does] and he is not forced, then he disbelieves.... Whoever makes judgments due to bribery has not become a disbeliever, but he has committed a major sin" (2002:147). Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Then the issue of making something lawful is doing something believing it to be lawful" (Ibn al-Qayyim 2006/1:382). This illustrates another striking difference between orthodox scholars and the *Khawaarij*, as the *Khawaarij* and the contemporary *Takfeerees* believe that recurrent sinfulness is making a transgression permissible thus expelling the one who is persistent in sin from the religion. Al-'Utaybee said, "No one from the early scholars understood repetition of a sin to be *istihlaal*,<sup>45</sup> and if they had, they would have established this understanding before us" (al-'Utaybee 2005:20).

The concept of ruling by human laws is often referred to in contemporary literature by the following terms: *tabdeel*, and *taghyeer* or *istibdaal*, which both carry separate judgments. Al-'Utaybee explains that *tabdeel*, "is governing by other than Allah the

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<sup>45</sup> *Istihlaal* is making sins prohibited by the religion lawful or vice versa.

Almighty's law and claiming that it is from Allah's legislation" (al-'Utaybee 2005:29). This is major disbelief that expels one from the religion. For example, a Muslim that fornicates believing it to be permissible, who is not excused by ignorance, misinterpretation, or being forced, has become a disbeliever. *Istibdaal* is "replacing the divine law with another law, without believing it to be permissible, nor doing so out of arrogance or deception, and without claiming the new law to be superior to divine law, equal to it or attributing it to divine legislation" (al-'Utaybee 2005:35). This is the minor form of disbelief although it is a major sin.

Finally, what can be deduced from the statements of both classical and contemporary scholars is that if a Muslim makes judgments or legislates due to his weaknesses: fear, greed, or prejudice, while acknowledging its impermissibility, then he is not a disbeliever, but, instead, a major sinner. However, the one who makes judgments that go against Islaamic law permissible, or believes that they are equal, then he has left the fold of Islaam. <sup>46</sup>

## 2.8 Recognizing Leaders

In Islaam the position of the Muslim ruler is one of great esteem and he should be obeyed in all matters unless it involves disobedience to Allah: contradicts the Qur'aan and Sunna and the teachings of the *Salaf* (righteous predecessors). The Prophet said, "Obey the one who will be given the *bai'a* (pledge) first. Fulfill their (i.e., the caliphs) rights, for Allah will ask them about any shortcomings in ruling over their subjects whom Allah has placed under them" (al-Nawawee 1997/13:5). The Prophet said regarding the ruler "obey him as long as he obeys Allah, and disobey him if he disobeys Allah" (al-Nawawee 1997/ 12:330). Disobedience to the ruler is only in matters in which the ruler commanded disobedience to Allah, as for other commands issued by the ruler, even if he is a tyrant, he should be obeyed and this is the

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<sup>46</sup> Declaring something prohibited in Islaam as lawful expels one from the religion, however to judge someone with doing this is complicated as it can only be determined by outward actions or sayings of disbelief. *Ahl al-Sunna* only judge on the apparent not by what is in someone's heart and this is why an issue like *takfeer* is reserved for scholars and judges that know the impediments to *takfeer* and can issue a legal ruling regarding an individual (al-Rahaylee 2006:307). This issue distinguishes *Ahl al-Sunna* from other sects because many groups attempt to make judgments upon what is inside peoples' hearts. There will be more discussion regarding this in chapter three the section on the modern day movements and groups.

understanding of the orthodox creed.<sup>47</sup> The Prophet said, "A ruler (of the Muslims) is a shield for them. They fight behind him, and they are protected by him. If he enjoins fear of Allah, the Exalted, and Glorious, and dispenses justice, there will be a reward for him; and if he enjoins otherwise, he will receive its consequences" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:434). This shows that according to the Prophet the leader is held accountable in the hereafter and it is not for his subjects to rebel due to dissatisfaction or oppression. The Prophet said, "No obedience is due when it involves disobeying Allah, obedience is only in what Allah loves and all that Islam ordains" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:428). Obedience is only in matters deemed lawful by Islaam and if the leader has open sins he should not be fought. One of the companions asked the Prophet if they should fight the sinful oppressive leaders by the sword. He replied, "No, as long as they observe prayers; and if you notice your rulers doing a hateful thing, hate what they do; but never quit obeying them" (al-Nawawee 1997/12/440). 'Ubaada Bin al-Samit related a saying he heard from the Prophet in which he took the oath of allegiance and one of the conditions was that "we listen and obey (a Muslim ruler) whether it is convenient or inconvenient to us, and at our times of difficulty or ease. And ... give him his right even if he did not give us our right, and not to fight against him unless we noticed him having plain *kufir* (disbelief) for which we would have a proof with us from Allah" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:441). So, unless open disbelief is witnessed or becomes apparent from the ruler and his case is taken to the most knowledgeable and experienced amongst religious scholars<sup>48</sup> he should not be fought, and classical scholars have laid down principles and conditions which must be in place before a leader is fought.

According to classical and contemporary *Salafee* scholars before a ruler can be fought he must have clear, unequivocal and open disbelief and several conditions must be in place.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> This means that his disobedience in some matters does not nullify his authority unlike the claim of many of the neo-*Khawaarij*.

<sup>48</sup> This is primarily due to the fact that the ruling of *takfeer* is a grave and serious matter and the general Muslims do not possess the ability and wisdom in religious matters to make judgments, rulings, and independent reasoning according to the religious texts and founding principles established by classical scholars (al-Shaafi'ee 2005:507-510).

<sup>49</sup> Refer to the section on the foundations of disbelief.

looking out for the welfare of the general society" (al-Salafee 2001:24). So, ability and the general welfare of society must be considered before rebelling in order to prevent chaos.<sup>50</sup> Bin Baaz went on to say regarding the Islaamic principle of avoiding the greater harm, "It is not permissible to remove an evil with what is a greater evil than it. Instead it is obligatory to fend of evil with what will remove it or lessen its harm. So fending off evil with a greater evil is not permissible according to Muslim consensus" (al-Salafee 2001:24). Then, according to the majority of scholars rebelling against the leader is only in exceptional cases and this differs with the *Khawaarij* belief.<sup>51</sup> In addition, disbelief exhibited by the ruler should be open and apparent and there should be no dispute about his infidelity. For example, both contemporary and classical scholars disagree over whether the one who leaves the prayer has become an apostate. So, in this case the one to pass judgment upon this person should be a scholar or judge who is well-versed in knowledge, especially in matters of creed and jurisprudence. This is especially important because it is an issue which classical scholars have no consensus upon. Al-Rahaylee mentions, "The *Salaf*, may Allah have mercy upon them, differed regarding the *takfeer* of whoever leaves the four pillars of Islaam after agreeing upon the *takfeer* of whoever leaves the *shahaada*"<sup>52</sup> (al-Rahaylee 2006:239).

## 2.9 Declaring People to be Apostates

As was discussed in the previous chapter the *Khawaarij* was the first sect in Islaam to misuse the principle of *takfeer* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:105). Therefore, there is a difference between the *Khawaarij* belief regarding *takfeer* and that of the orthodox

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<sup>50</sup> This was witnessed in Somalia after the fall of their president Siad Barre, and in Algeria when the political process failed. Also, in Egypt when Sadaat was killed it caused greater control and oppression of Muslim groups, and a more contemporary example is the chaos, and instability which has resulted from the invasion by America of Iraq.

<sup>51</sup> Delong-Bas poses another view she asserts, "Contemporary fundamentalists have also taken a new approach to defining who qualifies as a "true Muslim." In classical scholarship, the label of apostate could only be applied when a person either expressly abjured Islam or denied axiomatic articles of faith....Lack of adherence to Islamic law did not constitute sufficient grounds for accusations of apostasy for classical scholars other than Ibn Taymiyyah. Contemporary fundamentalists, on the other hand, citing Ibn Taymiyyah, argue that any ruler who does not apply Islamic law in its entirety has committed apostasy and therefore deserves to be overthrown" (Delong-Bas 2004:242). As this section illustrates, classical scholars as far back as the companion Ibn 'Abbaas viewed ruling by other than the sharee'a as a type of disbelief, but before making *takfeer*, the condition of the ruler must be considered.

<sup>52</sup> The *shahaada* is the first pillar of Islaam and it is the saying with belief and knowledge that one testifies that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah and that Muḥammad is the last Messenger of God.

creed. The word *takfeer* as an Islaamic term means to declare someone to be an apostate from the religion. The *Salafee* scholars are cautious when referring to *takfeer* as an Islaamic principle by making statements such as "a person is not judged with disbelief, unless Allah and his messenger have declared him a disbeliever for committing a sin from the things which nullify one's Islaam" (al-Fawzaan 2004b:6). So, it appears that contemporary *Salafee* scholars are careful in the use of language when referring to apostasy. This is probably due to the seriousness of declaring one an apostate, and their strict adherence to the language and methodology used by the classical scholars. "So, *takfeer* or declaring someone an innovator or sinner are Islaamic judgments, therefore its rulings are taken from Islaamic law and it is not for anyone to declare someone to be an apostate, or sinner, or innovator, or to be misguided except with evidence" (al-Raajhee 2005:115). The accusation that someone is heretical or has committed an act of apostasy must be established by sound evidence as slander is punishable under Islaamic law. The Prophet said, "Abusing a Muslim is *fusuq* (an act of disobedience) and killing him is an act of *kufur* (disbelief)" (al-Nawawee 1997/1:242). In another narration which was collected by al-Bukhaaree and explained by Ibn Hajar, the Prophet said, "...whoever accuses a Muslim of disbelief, then it is as if he killed him" (1996/12: 83). These narrations exemplify the seriousness of making *takfeer* and that the one that does so carries an enormous responsibility, and should be a scholar of the religion. Because declaring a Muslim to be a disbeliever by mistake is a major sin, and both classical and contemporary scholars agree to this (al-Jibreen 2005:26).

### 2.9.1 Categories of Takfeer

The classification of *takfeer* into different categories was unknown to the early scholars, though the concepts themselves are derived from the Qur'aan and Sunna and statements of the early scholars. *Takfeer* is divided into two main categories: *takfeer al-mutlaq* (absolute), and *takfeer al-mu'ayyan* (specific) (al-Ghazaalee 1937/3:123). However, some scholars divide *takfeer* into a third category: *takfeer al-kullee* (the total *takfeer*), which is a type of the absolute *takfeer* (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:190).

The absolute *takfeer* is the general category of *takfeer*, which states that if someone commits a particular sin he becomes a disbeliever. For example, it is known

as a principle of the orthodox creed that whoever says that the Qur'aan is created is a disbeliever, or whoever denies one of Allah's characteristics that is proven from the Qur'aan, or the authentic Sunna, then he is also a disbeliever. One of the evidences for this type of *takfeer* is the saying of Allah, "Surely, in disbelief are they who say that Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary" (Qur'aan 1996/5:17). Imaam Aboo Haneefa said, "Whoever says Allah's attributes and actions are created, or that they have a beginning or end, or express doubt in this matter, then he is a disbeliever in Allah the Almighty" (Al-Qaaree 1997:16). Imaam al-Nawawee described the absolute *takfeer* by saying, "In reality it is leaving Islaam. Sometimes this occurs by saying or an action that necessitates disbelief like intending to openly mock the religion, or prostrating to a statue or the sun or dropping the Qur'aan in filth" (al-Nawawee 2002:1725). Many of the books of jurisprudence refer to this principle in the chapter of apostasy (*Kitaab al-Ridda*), and the scholars are at variance with one another in regards to the specific actions that expel one from Islaam. *Takfeer al-mutlaq* is a general ruling that applies to an individual who commits an action of disbelief; however there are conditions before making *takfeer* on a specific individual (*takfeer al-mu'ayyan*), and these will be mentioned in the section on the conditions of *takfeer*.

The specific *takfeer* is "applying the judgment of *takfeer* upon an individual who uttered a saying of disbelief, or an individual who did an act of disbelief, thereby fulfilling the conditions of *takfeer* and negating the obstructions to it" (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:192). So, the state of being of an individual must be considered before making *takfeer* upon him and certain conditions must be in place. Allah says, "Allah sets forth an example for those who disbelieve: the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot" (Qur'aan 1996/66:10). In this verse Allah made *takfeer* of specific individuals decreeing them to be non-Muslims. An example of this type of *takfeer* being put in to practice is if a specific individual mocked the Qur'aan, or the Prophet, which is a major sin that expels one from the religion. Then the matter should be turned over to a judge who would evaluate the condition of the specific individual to determine whether he was sane and aware of his sin, not forced, or ignorant of the ruling. Then the person who mocked the Qur'aan should be provided with the clear evidence to make sure he or she understands this sin expels one from Islaam. If the individual repents then he or she remains Muslim. But, if the individual continues to commit this particular sin then he or she becomes a disbeliever. The specific *takfeer* is only made upon an individual

after establishing the proofs from the Qur'aan and the Sunna, and the opinions of the scholars, and it is done with meticulous care and caution as it is a serious issue to declare one a disbeliever.

Finally, the total *takfeer* (*takfeer al-kullee*) is a type of the absolute *takfeer* which is practiced by both classical scholars and some of the neo-*Khawarij* groups like *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra*. This group used to declare anyone who was not with them to be disbelievers, and this constitutes making *takfeer* of whole groups, societies, and nations. However, the *takfeer* of entire groups, for example, Jews and Christians, is recognized by the Qur'aan. Allah says, "Verily, those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] and the pagans will be in the hell-fire" (1996/98:6). Allah says in another verse, "Then a group of the children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved" (Qur'aan 1996/611:14). This illustrates that whole groups and nations of people that share a particular set of beliefs can be classified as disbelievers. This type of *takfeer* was also practiced by classical scholars as it is known "that the *Salaf* (pious predecessors) made *takfeer* of some of the sects of the people of innovation, which is a form of absolute *takfeer*, and it did not necessitate making *takfeer* of every individual of that sect" (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:190). Through analyzing this statement it can be deduced that the classical scholars were extremely cautious in making *takfeer*, but some sects that arose from Islaam had heretical practices that contained undisputable disbelief necessitating their expulsion from Islaam. However, it must be reiterated that before making *takfeer* of an individual who is considered a Muslim certain conditions must be met.

### 2.9.2 Conditions of Takfeer

Before charging an individual with infidelity, there are certain conditions that must be in place after observing disbelief in their actions or sayings. These conditions are as follows: that the person must be mature and sane, also the person should possess freewill and not have been under compulsion. Furthermore, the ruling for the action or saying of disbelief should be explained to him, and he should not have committed the sin by misinterpreting the text (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:201). In addition, to these conditions the person should have performed an act or expression of disbelief intentionally not mistakenly. The conditions of *takfeer* are directly related with the general criterion of *takfeer*.

The criterion for making *takfeer* are general principles established in the religion which show the relationship of faith and the individual, and they are as follows: the origin of a Muslim is that his Islaam is authentic until there is clear evidence to suggest otherwise. The second criterion is that the orthodox scholars do not make *takfeer* for major sins, unless it is a sin that is specifically mentioned by the Qur'aan or Sunna as expelling one from the religion. Al-Rahaylee points out that "deciding whether a sinful action is disbelief or not is referred back to the Qur'aan and Sunna and there ceases to be independent reasoning in these matters. There is no room for interpretive opinion related to belief, or speech or actions of the limbs, instead it is the right of Allah and his Messenger" (2006:225). The third criterion for applying *takfeer* is that the one who displays characteristics of disbelief rejects what is known from the religion by necessity either by being arrogant or intentionally denying what they know to be true. The fourth criterion is that it cannot be claimed that an individual is a disbeliever and will dwell in the hell-fire after their death, because this is an affair of the afterlife for Allah to judge (Baky 1997:19).<sup>53</sup>

### 2.9.3 Impediments to making Takfeer

There are several factors which excuse someone from being labeled an apostate and these are considered impediments to making *takfeer* by contemporary scholars. Some of the obstructions to making *takfeer* are: excuse of ignorance, being forced to commit an act or saying of disbelief, and misinterpretation (al-Rahaylee 2006:288). The obstruction of ignorance is probably the most common amongst these impediments to making *takfeer* so it will be discussed in detail.

The most commonly referred to obstruction to declaring someone an apostate is ignorance: whether or not the action or saying of disbelief was excusable due to ignorance. The scholars have written at length about this issue devoting whole volumes to it.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> According to the sharee'a individuals can only be judged by their actions and sayings as the intention is a matter of the heart and for Allah to judge (al-Rahaylee 2006:273). This criterion is applicable to those who not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'aan or Sunna as being disbelievers and dwelling in the hell-fire.

<sup>54</sup> See the book 'Aaridh al-Jahl' by Abee'Ulaa Bin Raashid al-Raashid (2003).

Islaam may abandon the prayer and at the same time may not be aware that leaving the prayer is considered disbelief by the majority of Islaamic jurists (al-Rahaylee 2006:239). Another example would be the person who lives isolated from the Muslim community and may not be aware of the prohibition of alcohol and believes that its consumption is lawful which leads him or her to declare it so. Also, there are issues that the general Muslim community may not be aware of, or knowledgeable about, due to their complexity, and this is also considered excusable by Muslim scholars. There are many *hadeeth* narrations which confirm that ignorance is excusable. In a narration recorded by Ibn Maaja, Mu'aadh Ibn Jabal, a companion of the Prophet returned from the land of Sham and when he saw the Prophet he prostrated to him. The Prophet said, "What is this O Mu'aadh?" He said, I arrived in Sham and found the people making prostration to their rulers and religious men, so I intended to prostrate before you." (Ibn Maaja 1993/1:595). The Prophet responded by commanding him not to do that with a very stern condemnation. However, he did not make *takfeer* of him due to his misinterpretation because "he thought that prostration was a type of greeting and veneration which was permissible to give to created beings. Therefore, the Prophet did not charge him with disbelief nor accuse him of sin, instead it was sufficient to prohibit him from that and make clear for him that one should not prostrate to anyone except Allah" (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:196). There are many other narrations which illustrate that ignorance and misinterpretation are excusable in Islaam. Imaam Shaafi'ee said regarding this matter that "the one who strives and rejects Allah's divine names and attributes, and continues to reject them after the proofs have been presented to him has become a disbeliever. However, he is excused due to ignorance before the proofs have been presented to him" (Ibn Hajr 1995/13:407). This statement illustrates how the classical scholars made it conditional even in important issues of creed that to establish the proof upon an individual before making *takfeer* is essential and that ignorance is excusable. However, Imaam al-Nawawee considered one who denied *zakaat* (charity) as a disbeliever; and likewise anyone who denied any aspect of faith which the Muslim community has agreed upon. He said, "If the knowledge of an action is widespread like five times daily prayer, fasting during Ramadan, washing bodily impurities, the prohibition of adultery and alcohol [then an individual who denies these things has disbelieved].... except the new convert to Islaam who denies something from the religion out of ignorance of its prohibition, then he is not declared a disbeliever" (al-Nawawee 1997/1:205). Ibn al-

Qayyim said, "Verily, Allah the Glorified and Mighty does not punish anyone until after the proof has been established upon them according to his statement, 'And we never punish until we have sent a messenger to give warning'" (Ibn al-Qayyim 1973:413). Ibn al-Qayyim explained that the punishment referred to in this verse was for arrogance and stubbornness by refusing to accept the truth after it was made clear to them. Therefore, it is important to make clear to an individual their action of disbelief before making a judgment upon them otherwise they may be excused on the grounds of ignorance.

There are some actions and sayings that necessitate *takfeer* as they are considered essential knowledge of faith that all Muslims should know. "So there is no excuse of ignorance for issues that are clear and undisputable and this is the belief of both Ibn Taymeeya and Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, because to be made aware of the proof and to establish the proof are conditions of *takfeer* and it is not a condition to understand the proof" (al-Raajhee 2005:112). Imaam Aboo Haneefa mentioned things like prayer, fasting, and *al-ruboobeeya* as aspects of the religion every Muslim should know (al-Khumees 1999:95). So, according to classical scholars there are issues which are necessary for all Muslims to know and practice, and ignorance in these matters are inexcusable and can lead to disbelief. According to al-Raajhee, and some classical scholars, someone is not excused for not understanding evidence in an issue after it has been conveyed to them. In such a case if they have been made aware of their sin or mistake which justifies their expulsion from Islaam and they persist, then they have become apostates (al-Raajhee 2005:113). Some of the beliefs that one must possess as a Muslim are belief in Allah and his angels, and messengers as well as the other pillars of faith. Those claim they are Muslim but deny any of the pillars of faith after it has been made clear to them then they are not Muslim (al-Raajhee 2005:113).

Classical and contemporary scholars have differed in respect of establishing proof against an individual before declaring *takfeer*. There are two views. For some scholars conveying the proof from the Qur'aan and Sunna that an individual has fallen into disbelief is sufficient and understanding those proofs is not a condition for making *takfeer*. For example, a person new to Islaam may not know the real meaning of Islaamic monotheism and may declare there is only one God worthy of worship and at the same time he may sacrifice an animal to other than Allah not realizing that

sacrificing is an act of worship in Islaam. Those who support the first view might say it is sufficient to explain the proofs from the Qur'aan and Sunna to this individual and if he does not leave this act he will become a disbeliever. In this regard Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab said, "And establishing the proof is one thing, and conveying it is something else. And the evidence had already been presented to the disbelievers and *takfeer* was declared upon them by conveying the message of monotheism, and they did not comprehend it" (al-'Aaṣimee 2004/10:93). In addition, he offered the example of the Prophet when he commanded his companions to fight the *Khawaarij* who were presented evidence of their errors without comprehending it and so the companions fought them. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab also said, "It is well known that establishing (the proof) does not mean that one understands the speech of Allah and his Messenger like Aboo Bakr al-Ṣiddeeq. Instead if the speech of Allah and his Messenger were conveyed to him, excluding what he was excused for, then he is a disbeliever like the disbelievers who all had the proof established upon them by the Qur'aan" (cited in al-Raashid 2004:51). From the above statements it can be deduced that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab did not make it a condition to understand the proof before making *takfeer* of an individual, but instead he felt it was necessary to merely convey the proof. Shaikh Ḥamad Ibn Naasir Ibn Ma'moor a student of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab said, "All those who were conveyed the message of the Qur'aan and the call of the Messenger have had the proof established upon them" (cited in al-Raashid 2004:51).

Still for other scholars like al-Raḥaylee conveyance is not sufficient alone but rather the individual should be made to understand his error. Al-Raḥaylee said:

So, the scholars have differed in establishing the proof upon an individual and have two sayings. The first view is the proof is established upon an individual by conveying it to him and by making him understand it, knowing what is meant by it and many of the people of knowledge support this saying. From amongst them is Ibn 'Arabee and Ibn Qudaama and Shaikh al-Islaam Ibn Taymeeya and Ibn al-Qayyim... (2001/1:206).

Ibn al-Qayyim said, regarding the opinion that it is sufficient to convey the evidence to an individual without his comprehension of it, "this does not make sense or agree with the saying of the Almighty: 'and whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him.' which the scholars have built their

saying: 'verily the understanding of the call to Islaam with its evidences is a condition for establishing the proof'" (cited in Ma'aash 1996:231).

Finally, from these statements it can be deduced that the classical scholars are not in exact agreement over the conditions of conveying the evidence to an individual:<sup>55</sup> whether understanding the proof is a condition before making *takfeer* or that it requires only conveying the evidence. However, they are in agreement that it is a necessity to establish the proof before making *takfeer* of an individual. It appears that the strongest opinion is that one should comprehend the evidence being presented to him before being judged with disbelief. However, if "...the lack of understanding is a result of avoiding the textual evidences or negligence in seeking guidance in anyway, then there is no excuse for this, and Ibn al-Qayyim's explanation is similar to this" (al-Rahaylee 2006:270).

## 2.10 **Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and the Creed of Takfeer**

Probably one of the most controversial and misunderstood figures regarding the issue of *takfeer* is Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab. Due to his strong religious convictions and heading the revival movement in the Arab peninsula, he is strongly associated by his detractors, both Muslim and non-Muslim alike, as a central figure in the neo-*Takfeeree* movement. Often terms like extremism and rebellion are mentioned when discussing his movement and those who follow his teachings are considered "Wahhaabees" and heretics (Allen 2006:4). Due to the great controversy that surrounds his beliefs and its association with the neo-*Takfeeree* movement it is essential to analyze his creed and compare it with that of the *Khawaarij*.

Most of the sources that chronicle the life of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab come from one of four types: his supporters, polemical sources written by his opponents, Western travelers and Orientalists, and the works of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab himself (DeLong-Bas 2004:14). This information is critical when considering or assessing Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's life as there exists various, often contradictory claims about his life and

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<sup>55</sup> It is important to note that in issues of jurisprudence differences of opinions are generally accepted and acknowledged; however in matters of creed it is generally not tolerated amongst orthodox scholars unless it is an issue where no clear evidence from the Qur'aan or Sunna exists then the scholars may resort to knowledge based interpretation (al-Ethiopee 2005/1:178).

creed. DeLong-Bas concludes, “Of all those accounts, the chronicles contain the most biographical information and are considered to be the most accurate in terms of biographical information because of the proximity of the writers to their subjects” (2004:14).

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab was born in 1695 in 'Uyaynah a city in what is today the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He memorized the Qur'aan before he was ten years old and he studied various Islaamic sciences with a variety of different scholars (Mutaww'a 2003:86).

According to those supportive of the ideals espoused by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, during his life time most of the Muslim world and especially the Arab peninsula had become saturated with idol and grave worship and it had become common practice to go to the graves of saints to pray to them and seek their intercession. Also, pilgrimage was performed to the graves of people who called to the worship of themselves during their lifetime and these acts were believed to bring people closer to Allah (al-'Umar 2001:8). According to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, many of the common people and even some scholars approved and participated in these acts of worship which according to him contradict the authentic texts and Islaamic creed (Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and Ibn Taymeeya 1999: 125). Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab compared them with the original disbelievers at the time of the Prophet who “... supplicated with Allah those who were favored by Him: either the Prophets, or the angels, or to trees or stones which are obedient to Allah. So this differs from the sinners of our time, who associate the vilest people with Allah” (al-Fawzaan 2001:92).<sup>56</sup> Although all acts of worship ascribed to other than Allah or with him are a form of polytheism and disbelief, some of the people who associated themselves with Islaam during the time of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab supplicated to the dead and sought blessings and intercession from trees.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> In referencing some authors the researcher refers to the explanation of the text by authoritative sources instead of the original text as it provides additional insight when attempting to explain the meaning of the text.

<sup>57</sup> “There were in al-Uyaynah at that time a number of trees on which the local populace was in the habit of hanging things in order to request the tree’s blessing or intercession on their behalf. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab believed that this practice constituted a direct and serious violation of tawhid because it visibly proclaimed the belief that something other than God had the power to grant blessings and intercede for people” (DeLong-Bas 2004:24).

### 2.10.1 Detractors of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab

There are a number of critics of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and his movement, both Muslim and non-Muslim alike, which, in all fairness, would require volumes in order to address or even document. This researcher has selected the most frequently mentioned claims asserted against Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab. In establishing this link one commentator claimed, "Like the Kharijites, the Wahhabi viewed all Muslims who resisted as unbelievers (who could be fought and killed). They were therefore to be subdued in the name of Islamic egalitarianism" (Esposito 2003:48). AbuKhalil, a contemporary writer and critic of Saudi Arabia states, "The Wahhabiyyah clerics believe that it is morally safer to preserve the lifestyle and conditions of the early companions of the Prophet, as impractical as this is" (2002:65). Here AbuKhalil criticizes the whole methodology of the movement, declaring it backward and irrelevant, as if to say the foundation upon which the religion was built: the companions and their understanding, has no place in the modern era. He goes on to say that "Wahhabiyyah cannot be sure as to whether the modern innovations in people's lives are satanic in origin or not so they tend to ban them altogether just to be safe" (AbuKhalil 2002:65). One of the foremost critics in the West, who is often heralded as a 'scholar of Islam', is Bernard Lewis who claimed while describing Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's movement that "they enforced their beliefs with the utmost severity and ferocity, demolishing tombs,<sup>58</sup> desecrating what they called false and idolatrous holy places, and slaughtering large numbers of men, women, and children<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Many allegations of extremism made against Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab and his movement are the result of some of the actions he and his followers performed in the name of implementing *tawheed*: “the cutting down of a sacred tree, the destruction of a tomb monument, and the stoning of an adulteress” (DeLong-Bas 2004: 24).

<sup>59</sup> In 1802, an alleged massacre took place in the city of Taif by the followers of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab. However, a couple of points must be considered before passing judgment upon the whole movement and Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab. Firstly, the evidence shows that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab did not approve of such actions and his many military campaigns illustrate this. “However much he denounced certain practices or beliefs, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab never called for wholesale killing of people, not even apostates. Rather, he proclaimed the need to call people to Islam and to educate them” (DeLong-Bas 2004:82). Secondly, this alleged massacre took place approximately ten years after his death and “although observers and historians have assumed that any and all military activity undertaken by Saudis after the 1744 alliance were jihad activities, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s teachings and writings do not support this contention” (DeLong-Bas 2004:35).

who failed to meet their standards of Islamic purity and authenticity"<sup>60</sup> (Lewis 2004:122).

Some of Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's critics within the Muslim community attribute *takfeer* and *Khawaarij*-like characteristics to him. One such critic Aboo Zahra said, "They (meaning those who follow Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab) resemble the *Khawaarij* who used to declare disbelief upon those who committed major sins" (cited in al-Hussayn 1999:274). Al-Saawee claimed while explaining a verse from the Qur'aan that "this verse was revealed about the *Khawaarij* who distorted and misinterpreted the Book and the Sunna and made lawful the blood and wealth of the Muslims like is witnessed in the group similar to them called the Wahhaabees" (al-Hussayn 1999:274). Ibn 'Afaaliq said regarding Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, "By Allah he lied about the messengers, and accused them and their communities of polytheism" (cited in al-Hussayn 1999:282). Their criticisms can be summed up in a single statement by one of his skeptics who said:

You have expelled the whole nation from the religion, and expelled those who did not utter a saying of misguidance or disbelief and you made lawful their blood, wealth, and progeny. And you said to a people who have been upon the religion six hundred years that they are upon nothing. You made it a condition upon whoever wants to join your religion that he bear witness against himself and his parents that they were disbelievers (cited in Aali al-Shaikh 2002:57).

Some of the most persistent claims and accusations against Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab are that he made *takfeer* of all Muslims who did not agree with his concept of Islaam, he was a rebel, and a heretic.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.10.2 Discourse over the Concept of *Tawassul*

His understanding of *tawass*

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<sup>60</sup> Delong-Bas states, "The main issue at stake with respect to deviant behavior was Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's denunciation of sexual immorality his insistence that people of the region adhere to proper Islamic standards of sexual behavior, that is, reserving sexual relations for marriage" (2004:23).

<sup>61</sup> Delong-Bas suggests that much of the initial opposition to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab came not so much from his teachings, but rather political expediency. She states, "However, the fact that his teachings were accepted until local authorities began to feel that their bases of power were threatened makes it clear that the issues were really about power struggles and not so much about heretical religious teachings" (2004:20).

accusations of heresy, those most critical of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab suggest that his understanding of *tawassul* is faulty and thus unorthodox, and in turn he implies in his treatises that those who misconstrue this concept fall into heresy,<sup>62</sup> which may lead to polytheism. *Tawassul*, technically, refers to seeking to come closer to Allah by performing acts of worship legislated by the sharee’a. *Tawassul* is also considered a form of intercession, as will be explained in the forthcoming examples. According to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab three types of *tawassul* are permissible: imploring Allah by His divine names and attributes, imploring Him by mentioning a righteous action or deed one has performed, or a person may ask a righteous living person to supplicate for him or her. These three types of *tawassul* are generally agreed upon by religious scholars (Ibn Taymeeya 1996:1/201). However, some of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab’s critics contend that it is permissible to implore dead saints and prophets in order to have one’s prayers accepted by Allah. This form of *tawassul* is considered forbidden and a type of polytheism according to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab and many of the classical scholars that preceded him (Ibn Taymeeya 1999: 21).<sup>63</sup> Those who believe this type of *tawassul* to be permissible cite *hadeeth* narrations to corroborate their view. One of the most well known historians and critics of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab, and a proponent of this view of *tawassul*, was Ahmad Zainee Dahlaan.<sup>64</sup>

Dahlaan insists that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab was mistaken, and in fact heretical, in his conception of *tawassul* and that his perception was restrictive in nature and thus led to excessive pronouncements of *takfeer*:

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<sup>62</sup> *Tawassul* can be characterized into two categories: permissible, and sinful, meaning that it has no origin in the Qur’aan or the authentic *hadeeth* of the Prophet. Furthermore, sinful practices may further be divided into those practices that are heretical and those that are simply sinful (Al-Rahaylee 2001/1:103). This concept of innovation was acknowledged by the *Taabi’een* as Aboo Haneefa, Awzaa’ee, Hasan al-Basree, ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Azeez and many later scholars acknowledged these divisions and this appears to be the most supported opinion, according to the textual evidences and majority of the Sunni scholars regarding innovation; all unorthodoxy in worship is impermissible (al-Faasee 2003/1:44).

<sup>63</sup> If a person invokes the dead directly then this is polytheism according to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab, however, if someone supplicates to Allah directly but says for instance, “O Allah please answer my supplication by the esteemed status of your Prophet,” then this is an act of worship that has no origin in the religion and is thus sinful. Imaam Aboo Haneefa said, “It is not permissible for anyone to supplicate to Allah except by Him directly and this type of supplication is permissible, in fact it has been commanded” (al-Khumees 1996:269).

<sup>64</sup> Ahmad Zainee Dahlaan was born in 1231 *Hijra* in Makka about twenty years after the death of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab. He was known for his opposition to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab and his movement and has written several treatises in attempt to refute Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab’s concept of monotheism, and criticizing his movement.

He deviated in his heterodoxy by misguiding and seducing the ignorant, and differing with the scholars of the religion until he reached the point of making *takfeer* of the believers claiming that visiting the grave of the Prophet -may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him- seeking his intercession, and that of the other prophets, saints, and righteous people was polytheism. Also he declared invoking the Prophet...while seeking his intercession to be paganism (Dahlaan 2007:1).

One of the greatest claims Dahlaan made against Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab was that the evidences he used to refute intercession of the dead were Qur'aanic verses that applied to the pagan Arabs during the time of the Prophet, and not Muslims. It will suffice to mention some of the verses that Dahlaan mentioned in his treatises that he believed Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab had misconstrued (2007:2). Allah says, "And who is more astray than one who invokes besides Allah, such that will not answer him until the Day of Resurrection, and who are unaware of their invocation of them?" (1996:658/46:5). Also Allah the Almighty says, "And invoke not besides Allah any such that will not profit you nor harm you" (Qur'aan 1996/10:106). Dahlaan comments upon the aforementioned verses that "there are many verses in the Qur'aan like this: so Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab said that whoever invokes the Prophet ... seeking his assistance to remove something harmful (*istighaatha*) or any of the prophets, saints, and pious people or invokes him or seeks his intercession, becomes like those pagans according to the general meaning of those verses" (2007:2). Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's assertion seems to be in accordance with the position held by classical scholars in that the apparent meaning of those verses seem to be applicable to anyone,<sup>65</sup> whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and a general prohibition of *tawassul* or *istighaatha* of those who are unable to fulfill that which is requested of them, which certainly includes the dead. However, this variance over the meaning of those verses necessitates returning to classical interpretations. Ibn 'Abbaas said while commenting upon the above verse that "and 'invoke not' means do not worship that which will not benefit you in this world or the hereafter, and can cause you no harm if you refuse to worship it" (1992:230). Imaam al-Baghawee commented by saying that invocation is worship and by worshipping those who are unable to profit you (by being obedient to them) and are incapable of causing you harm if you are disobedient, then you have committed polytheism by worshipping those who do not deserve to be worshipped

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<sup>65</sup> "The companions -may Allah be pleased with them- understood and practiced the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunna in accordance to their general meaning unless there was clear evidence to support a text being specific in meaning" (Al-Jeezaanee 2003: 322).

(2002:612). These verses apply to anyone who violates the concept of monotheism by persisting in polytheistic practices even if they claim to be Muslim or were raised in an Islaamic environment, because it shows they do not understand central tenets of the Islaamic faith.<sup>66</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab states, “So it seems strange that one who claims Islaam does not know the meaning of the statement *La Ilaaha Illallah* (there is no God worthy of worship except Allah) when even the ignorant disbeliever understands its meaning, whereas the one who claims Islaam thinks it is simply enough to pronounce this statement without believing it in his heart” (al-Fawzaan 2001:47).

In contrast, Dahlaan believes it is Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab’s perception of monotheism, false exegesis of Qur’aanic passages, and restrictive concept of *tawassul* that causes him to make *takfeer* of Muslims who seek intercession from their dead saints. Dahlaan, commenting on Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab’s supposed *takfeer*, states:

And he explained Qur'aanic verse concerning the polytheists in their idol worship: ‘We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah’ (1996/39:3). Those who seek to make *tawassul* are like those polytheists who say, ‘We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah’ (1996/39:3). Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab said, ‘So, those pagans did not believe that those idols could create something, rather they believed Allah the Almighty was the Creator and the proof is His saying, ‘And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: Allah’ (1996/44:87). ‘And if you ask them who created the heavens and earth they will surely say: Allah’ (1996/31:25). So Allah did not judge them with disbelief and polytheism until they said ‘that they may bring us closer to Allah,’ therefore those people [who claim to be Muslim but seek intercession from the dead], are just like them (Dahlaan 2007:2).

Dahlaan’s argument revolves around the premise that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab was misconstruing Qur’aanic verses and applying them to Muslims. Essentially, Dahlaan asserts that the Muslims in the time of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab did not believe that the prophets and saints shared in Allah’s divinity, but instead “they believed they were worshippers of Allah that were created by Him and undeserving of worship” (Dahlaan 2007:2). Dahlaan goes on to explain:

The verses were revealed about the polytheists who held that their idols were worthy of worship and exalted them to the level of

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<sup>66</sup> However, before attempting to pass a judgment upon such persons who claim to be adherents of the Islaamic faith the conditions of *takfeer* should be in place, refer to the section on *takfeer*.

lordship, even though they believed they did not possess the ability to create anything. On the other hand, the believers did not think the prophets and saints had the right to be worshipped or possessed godliness. Nor did they exalt them to the level of lordship. Instead, they believed that they were slaves of Allah, beloved and chosen by Him, whose prayers were answered, and through their blessedness those who worshipped Allah would receive His mercy ... (2007:2).

According to Dahlaan, what distinguished the Muslims who seek intercession from the dead and the pagan Arabs of the past was the pagans thought that idols shared in divinity and were worthy of worship and

this is what made them fall into polytheism not merely their saying, 'We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah' (1996:39:3). Because when the proof was established that the idols had no right to be worshipped and they believed they should be worshipped, that is when they said as an excuse 'We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah' (Dahlaan 2007:3).

Dahlaan appears to justify *tawassul* by Muslims who seek intercession from dead saints and prophets under the condition that they do not deem the intercessor to be godly or divine.<sup>67</sup>

A more contemporary advocate of this type of *tawassul* is Ahmad Rafea'ee who uses several *hadeeth* narrations to support the permissibility of seeking intercession from deceased saints or prophets. Most of the narrations Rafea'ee uses are either fabricated or not traceable to the Prophet (Aali Suleemaan 2005:116-117). However, he uses an authentic *hadeeth* collected in Tirmidhee in which a blind man came to the Prophet and sought his intercession to pray for him to have his sight returned. The Prophet then ordered the man to pray directly to Allah by saying, "O Allah I turn to you and ask of you by your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy, and I turn to you my lord for my need so that you will fulfill it for me. O Allah accept his intercession on my behalf" (Tirmidhee 1996/5:530). Rafea'ee deduced that,

The literal meaning of the *hadeeth* supports seeking *tawassul* from the living and its implication is proof for the permissibility of seeking *tawassul*

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<sup>67</sup> Imaam al-Nawawee said, "A person can apostate by a saying of disbelief whether it stems from creed, arrogance, or joking" (al-Nawawee 2002:1725). This statement of Imaam al-Nawawee illustrates that certain actions in and of themselves expel one from Islaam and this contradicts the claims made by Rafea'ee and Dahlaan: seeking intercession from the dead becomes an act of disbelief if one believes the dead themselves are the reason one's prayer is answered. This also illustrates that there were scholars, long before Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, who made *takfeer* for actions that were considered automatic disbelief.

dead. Meaning that to make *tawassul* to the living or the deceased is not in itself seeking intercession with the physical body, living or dead; but rather something more important which is inherent in a human being, whether he is living or dead. The body is just like a bag in which this essence is being preserved, so it should be honored whether living or deceased. Likewise, [according to another narration] his saying, ‘O Muḥammad’ is an invocation of one who is absent regardless of whether he is living or dead. Therefore, the supplication is being directed to that essence which is inseparable with the soul and honored by Allah. So, the main point of *tawassul* is that it is the same regardless of whether it is directed to the living or the dead (Rafaa’ee 1984: 80).

This definition of *tawassul* has undertones of philosophical pontification with references to the soul and essence of a human being and this has no precedence from the Prophet or his companions and the early generations. Allah says regarding the soul, “And they ask you concerning the soul. Say: The soul is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge you (mankind) have been given only a little” (Qur’aan 1996/17:85). Secondly, the blind man is making supplication and in the narration where he invokes the Prophet he is present, so this evidence does not support seeking *tawassul* from those who are absent and especially not the deceased. Thirdly, Dahlaan and Rafaa’ee both hold it permissible to seek *tawassul* from the dead, and if this evidence were sufficient to support that, then it only follows that after all of their argumentation and their refutations of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab they believe seeking *tawassul* is a type of worship and so seeking *tawassul* through an intermediary who cannot respond is directing worship to other than Allah. Finally, “not a single person from amongst the most knowledgeable of the Qur’aan and its meaning, the early generations, understood from the evidences to come seek penitence from the Prophet during his lifetime”<sup>68</sup> (Sahsoowaany 2007:34). Although there were instances where companions asked the Prophet to supplicate on their behalf to enter paradise, the practice of seeking penitence during the Prophet’s lifetime was unknown. “Additionally, there was never a situation where anyone from the earliest generations came to the grave of the Prophet saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah! I did such and such, please seek forgiveness for me.’ So, whoever reported a narration like this has lied and oppressed the best of generations: the companions and the *Taabi’een*” (Sahsoowaany 2007:34).

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<sup>68</sup> This is a well known concept taken from Catholicism which has no basis in Islaam.

Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab argues that those who perform any acts of worship, for example *tawassul*, to other than Allah have fallen into polytheism. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab claims the mission of the prophets was to destroy all false worship and redirect divine veneration to Allah alone. He states, “Allah sent him to a people who were given to devotion and worship, would perform the pilgrimage, give charity, and remember Allah often. However, they made some of Allah’s creation into intermediaries between themselves and Allah, and would say, ‘We seek to come closer to Allah by them’ and ‘We seek their intercession’” (al-Fawzaan 2001:25). Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab compares the *tawassul* of the pagans to the practices that were widespread amongst the Muslims of his time, and although his treatise Kashf Al-Shubuhaat (al-Fawzaan 2001) was written at least seventy years before Dahlaan’s refutation, it is as though it were written as a refutation of Dahlaan’s central claim: the Muslims did not fall into polytheism. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab states, “So the polytheists concurred that Allah is the Creator, and the Sustainer, who has no partners, and that no one causes life and death or sustains provisions except Him” (al-Fawzaan 2001:25). Dahlaan holds that Muslims made *tawassul* by using dead saints as a means to come closer to Allah and that they did not believe there was a God other than Allah worthy of worship. However, those who performed this type of *tawassul* performed the same actions as the polytheists only they did not consider it to be worship of the dead, and it is a well known religious principle that the essence of something is not changed by renaming it (Ibn al-Qayyim 2006:216). So, because some Muslims in the time of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab did not consider their *tawassul* to dead saints as worship, although they invoked them and venerated their graves, it did not change the fact that this *tawassul* was a form of worship as the verses indicate, and thus an act of polytheism. Allah says, “Say (O Muhammad): “Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs? “They will say: “Allah” Say! “Will you not be afraid of Allah’s punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allah)?” (Qur’aan 1996:10:31). Both the pagans in the time of the Prophet and many of the Muslims in the time of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab concurred that Allah was the Lord of all things, yet, they performed acts of worship to other than Him which violates the concept of Islaamic monotheism. Finally, the Prophet said, “You will follow the way of those who came before you hand span by hand span, arms span by arm span, so much that even if they entered the hole of a lizard you

would enter it.” We said, O Messenger of Allah! The Jews and the Christians? He said, “Who else?” (al-Nawawee 1997/16:436). Imaam al-Nawawee explained that this illustrates the extreme manner in which the Muslims would come to imitate non-Muslims especially in sinfulness and acts of worship contrary to the Sunna, by invoking dead saints and seeking their intercession (al-Nawawee 1997/16:436).

### 2.10.3 Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab’s Creed

Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab is mostly known, by his supporters, for reviving the call to Islaamic monotheism, and prohibiting what contradicts it as evidenced in his books and beliefs which are "in accordance with the Qur’aan and the Sunna and the methodology of the people of the Sunna and the group. Therefore, he did not instigate a new school of thought or different methodology" (al-Mutaww’a: 2003:103). Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab described his own beliefs by saying I am "a follower of the Qur’aan and Sunna and not a heretic. My belief, my religion is that which Allah has authorized which is the way of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa’a* which the leaders of the Muslims were upon like the four Imaams,<sup>69</sup> and those who follow them until the Day of Judgment" (al-‘Aasimee 2004/1:79). Here he affirms his belief in the orthodox creed and asserts that his methodology is the same as the companions and orthodox scholars who came after them.<sup>70</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab thought of himself as a revivalist, and this is evidenced in a statement in which he described himself as making "clear for the people: sincerity in the religion for Allah, I prohibited them from supplicating to the living and dead amongst the righteous" (al-‘Aasimee 2004/1:79).<sup>71</sup> However, many of his critics were known for their unorthodox beliefs: supplicating to the dead for intercession, building high tombstones as monuments for saints,<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Imaam Aboo Haneefa (died 150 *Hijra*), Imaam Maalik (179 *Hijra*), Imaam Shaafi’ee (204 *Hijra*), and Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (241 *Hijra*), are the four major scholars of Islaamic jurisprudence who were known for their scholarship, and service in preserving the religion. All of them advocated following the authentic religious texts and prevented people from blindly following them in their religious verdicts.

<sup>70</sup> “Ibn Abd al-Wahhab frequently used examples from the time of Muhammad to illustrate his points. This was not done in an attempt to recreate the early Islaamic community, as some scholars have posited” (Delong-Bas 2004:54).

<sup>71</sup> Delong-Bas states, “Other non-Wahhabi historical records confirm that actual examination of Wahhabi texts revealed consistency with the Quran and *hadith* so that those who bothered to read them did not find any evidence of heresy in Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s writings” (2004:20).

<sup>72</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab leveled the graves of saints even destroying the monument over the grave of a companion. Delong-Bas states, “The destruction of the tomb represented direct adherence to the example of the prophet Muhammad. The *hadith* record Muhammad’s command to destroy tombs and

in their love for the Prophet even ascribing divinity to him. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's prohibition of these practices appears to be in accordance with the Qur'aan and the Sunna. Allah says, "And who is more astray than one who calls on (invokes) besides Allah, such as will not answer him till the day of resurrection, and who are (even) unaware of their calls (invocations) to them?" (Qur'aan 1996/46:5). Allah also says, "Verily those whom you call upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them and let them answer you if you are truthful" (1996:7:194). In the above verses Allah challenges those who supplicate to other than him to see if their prayers get answered.<sup>73</sup>

and being excessive

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shrines because they can and have led to the veneration and worship of the people buried or commemorated there, an act that clearly violates the principle of *tawhid*" (2004:25).

<sup>73</sup> Refer to the section on discourse over the concept of *tawassul*.

#### 2.10.4 Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's Position Regarding Leadership

Many of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's critics accuse him of rebellion against the Muslim leadership, something which is against the orthodox creed and is one of the main foundations of the *Khawaarij* belief. His statements and actions must be scrutinized in order to make concise conclusions as to whether or not he adhered to the *Khawaarij* creed. In a letter Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab wrote to the people of Qaseem province <sup>74</sup> he said, "I believe it is obligatory to hear and obey the leaders of the Muslims, the pious amongst them and the wicked amongst them, as long as they do not order disobedience to Allah and it is prohibited to rebel against them" (Abd al-Lateef 1991:234). He also said regarding following the leadership "it is part of the greater good to hear and obey whoever leads us even if he were an Ethiopian slave" (Abd al-Lateef 1991:234). So, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's statements conform to the orthodox creed and even the language he uses is similar to what the Prophet used when he said excessive praise of the Prophet is prohibited then it only follows that supplicating to him is also considered unorthodox: "If a slave whose limbs are amputated is ruling you by the book of Allah, you must hear and obey him" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:429). In another authentic narration collected in Muslim he said to hear and obey even if the leader were an Ethiopian slave. In addition, Allah says: "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messengers, and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority" (Qur'aan 1996/4:59). Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's beliefs and statements appear to conform to the Qur'aan and Sunna acts of worship which emulated polytheists, excessive reverence towards the Prophet, and seeking intercession in worship. Likewise, the Prophet forbade and warned strongly against these practices and fought those who believed in Allah but also associated partners in worship with him. The Prophet even predicted that the Muslims would rebelled against the Ottoman Empire. Aali al-Shaikh rebutted the claims made against Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab by pointing out that Naid was not under the control of Ottoman leadership. Naid was considered unimportant to them economically and politically and it had no governor appointed for the area with every village being governed by its own prince. Also, there was widespread fighting between the Arabs who were ignorant, fearful, and impoverished, and this exemplified the fact that there was no control or safety in the area. <sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> This is a province north of the capital of current Saudi Arabia.

<sup>75</sup> "Corruption, greed, violence and insecurity were rampant in the Hijaz by the late eighteenth century....Appalled by the failure of the sultan to provide the security and justice that served as the

were built to glorify dead saints, and people prayed alone instead of unified in groups according to their own methodology. Secondly, instability and disbelief were widespread and rampant amongst the general people and many polytheistic practices had become common. Thirdly, the Ottoman Empire was collapsing and it was not the result of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and his movement, but rather pressures from imperial powers like Britain as well as internal struggle (Aali al-Shaikh 2004:140). These evidences offer insight into the movement of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, the background of his revival, and the condition of the Arab Peninsula at the time.<sup>76</sup> Finally, historical evidence shows that during the lifetime of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab his movement was not a revolt against the Ottoman Empire as it did not assert control over the entire region, nor was the aim of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab regime change, thus the *jihad* of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab should not be considered rebellion, according to classical Islaamic understanding.

### 2.10.5 His Jihad

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab is seen by many contemporary *Salafee* scholars and Muslim activists as a reviver of the religion, due to his calling to restore orthodox Islaam and *jihad*. As was previously mentioned his teachings focused on calling Muslims to traditional understandings of Islaam.<sup>77</sup> As for his *jihad*, it also appeared to be in accordance to the principles established by the classical scholars (DeLong-Bas 2004:231).

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sources of his religious legitimacy and political claims to the region, the Wahhabis decided to conquer the Hijaz and restore order themselves” (DeLong-Bas 2004:247).

<sup>76</sup> DeLong-Bas states, “Although Ibn Abd al-Wahhaab recognized the possibility of a Muslim leader failing to fulfill his duties, he had limited the response to such failure to discussion and debate with the leader about where his errors lay following the teachings of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the general stance of classical Muslim scholarship, he did not allow for the removal of such a leader from power” (2004:247).

<sup>77</sup> What distinguishes Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's *jihad* was that it was carried out against those who he considered to be apostates due to their heretical beliefs and he saw this to be enjoining the good by forbidding the evil of polytheism (al-'Umar 2001:63). Although, neo-*Takfeerees* and *Jihaadees* often associate themselves with Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and Ibn Taymeeya, whose concepts of *jihad* are radically different from those extremist groups who tend to call for a perennial global *jihad* against all of their opposition by insisting *jihad* is always offensive with disregard for its principles. On the other hand, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and Ibn Taymeeya both saw *jihad* as a means of defending the Muslim community and advancing the religion of Islaam: making Allah's word superior which is a permanent duty and this is consistent with the four primary schools of jurisprudence; however it is based upon conditions and principles (al-Muneef 2005:16). There will be a further discussion highlighting the differences between *Jihaadees* and orthodox concepts of *jihad* in chapter four the section on western think tanks and *Jihaadees*.

The *jihad* (holy struggle or fighting) of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab is also another issue exploited by his critics who accuse him of killing women and children and those who disagreed with him. Allen alleges, "Whatever spiritual gloss he cared to put on it in his writings under al-Wahhab's tutelage the bedouins of Najd became not so much holy warriors as fanatics without scruples. They preyed on their neighbors, each man in the raiding party setting out to plunder, destroy and kill bolstered by the conviction that he did so as a jihadi" (Allen 2006:55). This statement needs historical support; however it is known that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab emphasized the importance of the Islaamic rulings and principles established by the classical scholars while fighting *jihad* and this appears to contradict Allen's assessment. According to the writings of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, he emphasized restraint and ordered his followers not to be hasty in passing judgments upon others, and to authenticate matters before acting. He cited the example of the Prophet on one occasion by saying, "He knew who the hypocrites were in his midst but he judged them according to their outward appearance of faith. Then if they exhibited hypocrisy and he affirmed it then he fought them" (al-'Aasimee 2004/8:52). Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's statements and advice to his followers is very telling about his character and show a side of him often misunderstood by his critics. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab said, "Making mistakes by being extreme while admonishing people creates divisions between Muslims, and Allah and the Messenger both commanded Muslim unity" (al-'Aasimee 2004/8:49). This indicates Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab had concern about how he was perceived in his call to *tawheed* before making preparations for *jihad*. He further states, "The classical scholars say that the one who commands the good and forbids evil should possess three things: knowledge of what he is commanding to do and prohibit from, gentleness in his demeanor of enjoining good and prohibiting evil, and patience with the trials he may face while doing so" (al-'Aasimee 2004/8:49). He also emphasized not causing a greater harm when trying to remove an evil; this is what distinguishes Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab from the *Khawaarij's* perception of removing evil.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Aside from the differences in creed the *Khawaarij* believed in changing what they perceived as evil by hand and those who opposed them were considered disbelievers. Refer to chapter one.

prayer and prohibit paying charity like Aboo Bakr<sup>79</sup> fought those who refused paying it (cited in al-Shathree 2002:45).

This statement shows "that the methodology of the Shaikh in this issue is the creed of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* and that the goal of fighting and *jihad* is to make apparent the religion of Allah and pure worship of him alone, as He has no partners" (al-Shathree 2002:45). To further illustrate, Aali al-Shaikh also asserts Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's *jihad* was similar to the companions, and he points out that "the companions had consensus on fighting those who became apostates" (2004:59).<sup>80</sup> During the time of Aboo Bakr's caliphate many Arab tribes had become apostates and some people even claimed they were prophets after the Prophet Muḥammad. Still some reverted to idol worship, while some tribes refused to pay the obligatory alms tax. So, the companions fought them as that was in accordance with the Islaamic faith as expounded by the Qur'aan and Sunna, and according to some contemporary scholars, this similarly correlates with Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's *jihad*.<sup>81</sup>

#### 2.10.6 His Position Regarding Takfeer

The single most controversial issue associated with Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab is his position regarding *takfeer*. There are numerous sayings attributed to him regarding *takfeer* from both his detractors and contemporary scholars who support his teachings, and there appears to be no consensus even amongst *Salafee* scholars regarding some of the more intricate details of his conditions for *takfeer*.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Aboo Bakr, the most beloved companion of the Prophet and first caliph in Islaam. During his caliphate a group of Muslims refused to pay the *zakaat* (charity or alms tax) which is the third pillar of Islaam and an obligatory duty upon all those who are able and whose wealth meet the conditions for paying it.

<sup>80</sup> The Prophet said, "Whoever changes his religion should be executed" (al-Bukhaaree 1970/9:43). Majority of scholars of *fiqh* did not fight the apostates until this day, but accepted for tribulation according to Islaamic law and for committing an infraction punishable by death.

<sup>81</sup> Delong-Bas concludes that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab emphasized the value of preserving human life and death. Likewise, we fight whoever curses the religion of the Messenger... after he understands it. Also, we fight the idol worshippers and those who leave the served to place limitations on the violence of jihad's activities rather than incite them. While this may not be in keeping with traditional historical interpretations of the Wahhabi movement, this support for the maximum preservation of human life and dignity and the protection of property is entirely consistent with Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's worldview" (2004:234).

<sup>82</sup> Refer back to the section declaring people to be apostates.

explicit authentic sharee'a proof" (Al-Radaymaan 2005:45). Al-Madkhalee said, "The methodology of Imaam Muḥammad... is the essence of the methodology of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* in this issue ... which differs from the *Khawaarij*" (2004:47). According to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab's statements it appears he was cautious in making *takfeer* and this is in accordance with the classical scholars' concept of making *takfeer*. Delong-Bas states, "Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's stance did not, however, prevent some of his more enthusiastic followers from actively seeking an excuse to label someone a kafir because he or she refused to join the movement....Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's writings indicate that he was aware of such distortions of his teachings during his own lifetime" (Delong-Bas 2004:221).

Some writers accuse Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab of making *takfeer* of the entire population of the Arabian Peninsula, especially those who disagreed with him, but his creed and the statements of the *Salafee* scholars contradict these claims. Al-Hussayn said, "We did not come across any religious verdict from him where he accused the Ottoman empire of apostasy" (1999:394). In contrast, Abou El Fadl claims Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab made *takfeer* of the Ottoman empire accusing them of major heresy. El Fadl states Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab "claimed that supporting or allying oneself with the Ottomans was as grievous a sin as supporting or allying oneself with Christians or Jews" (El Fadl 2005:51). This statement attributed to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab might lead one to conclude he accused the Ottoman leadership of disbelief. However, it appears El Fadl was mistaken as the statement in question is that of Ḥamad Bin 'Alee. However, *Salafee* scholars do agree that his belief is within the domain of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*. Bin 'Ateeq, one of the students of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab.<sup>83</sup> Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab said in response to those who accused him of the general *takfeer*, "I make *takfeer* of the use of the principles of *takfeer* when he said, "Then it appears that the Imaam one who is knowledgeable of the religion, then curses it, and prohibits others from it, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab... supported his position regarding *takfeer* with and makes these actions a habit....and most of the *Umma* is not like that" (al-

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<sup>83</sup> The statement is taken from the chapter entitled "Kitaab Beyaan al-Najaat wa al-Fakaak" which was compiled by Bin 'Ateeq, so Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab cannot be held accountable for the conclusion of one of his students (Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and Ibn Taymeeya 2004:165).

most popular practices of Sunni Islam were also condemned as innovations or reversions to paganism. They included a host of expressions of religious devotion that had developed over the centuries, such as invoking the intercession of the Prophet, the saints or the angels; visiting or praying at the graves of holy men or erecting monuments over their graves; celebrating the Prophet's birthday or the feasts of dead saints; and making votive offerings. At the same time, many everyday habits were also declared sinful, among them smoking hashish, dancing, playing music, fortune-telling, dressing in silks, telling beads or wearing talismans.... But the parallels with Puritanism went only so far. According to the Wahhabi code, the moment a Muslim deviated from Al-Wahhab's interpretation of monotheism he became an unbeliever (Allen 2006:56).

This statement of Allen illustrates the conflicting opinions writers and scholars alike hold with regard to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab. In the above statement Allen contends that Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab considers all those practices to be among the actions which nullify one's Islaam, and this is a blatant error as many of those practices, according to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, are innovations but do not constitute disbelief (Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab and Ibn Taymeeya 2004:23-24). Finally, although Allen is critical of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, he concedes that those practices "had developed over the centuries", which shows they were unknown as acceptable acts of worship to the Prophet, his companions, and the *Taabi'een*, and thus cannot be considered orthodox.

## 2.11 Conclusion

Through careful analysis the researcher was able to compare the relevant aspects of the Islaamic creed and compare them with that of the *Khawaarij* highlighting the differences to provide a meaningful background to Islaamic extremist thought. In addition, the researcher gained insight into the issue of *takfeer* and the complexities that underlie it, and how groups like the *Khawaarij* deviate from the orthodox view and methodology due to their oversimplification of matters associated with *takfeer* and faith. Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Another important principle that distinguishes *Ahl al-Sunna* from heretics like the *Khawaarij* is according to the foundation of *Ahl al-Sunna* a man may possess both disbelief and faith, *shirk* and *tawheed*, sinfulness and God consciousness, hypocrisy and faith..." (1992:39). The *Khawaarij* make *takfeer* for major sins, and rebel against the legitimate Muslim authority and differ with orthodox scholars in many important aspects of creed. Regarding the controversy

surrounding Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab it can best be summed up by the saying of the Orientalist Julid Sehir:

It is incumbent upon whoever seeks to make a judgment on Islaamic events that he considers Wahhaabism as support for the Islaamic religion in the image put forth by the Prophet and the companions. Therefore, the aim of Wahhaabism is returning Islaam to the way it was (cited in al-Hussayn 1999:463).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Contemporary Islaamic Thinkers**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

There are many contemporary individuals and groups who like Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab are beset with tremendous controversy. Most of them have been associated with *takfeer*, rebellion, and terrorist ideology, and for that reason an analysis into their fundamental creed is required to determine if there is a link between them and the *Khawaarij*. Before analyzing the various ideologues and their beliefs it is imperative to highlight some of the background issues from a historical perspective to provide the context in which these various movements and ideologues developed.

No study of the rise of these political movements and ideologues would be complete without scrutinizing the general underlying factors which gave rise to them. This section will introduce the underlying issues which contribute to the animosity and rise in reactionary movements and ideologues. Secondly, in this section there will be a concise overview of the permissibility of criticizing deviant Muslims. Thirdly, there will be a comparison of the main traits of the *Khawaarij* with that of the individual ideologues. Lastly, this section will gauge if there is a link between the various groups and extremism.

#### **3.2. Factors Contributing to the Radicalization of Islaamic Movements**

This section, although brief, is dedicated to some of the main concerns that are often voiced by many of the groups and ideologues associated with *takfeer* and terrorist ideology. Amidst the backdrop of colonialism and the rise in nationalism many of the early groups of this century were formed. In fact many groups like the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen*) and political thinkers such as Aboo al-A'la Mawdoodee became active as a reaction to colonialism and its effects upon Muslim communities and populations. Mamdani vividly describes this turbulent

period attributing to it the rise of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, who "argued that Muslims must draw on their own historical and cultural resources instead of imitating other peoples, as if they were 'cultural mongrels' " (2005:49). Al-Banna formed the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 initially as a group that disavowed violence and provided social welfare to the general people; however "It was the defeat of Arab armies in 1948 and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel that convinced the society to expend its energies beyond welfare to armed politics" (Mamdani 2005:49). Initially they had the support of the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, but after pressuring him to democratize the society; they were banned and imprisoned with some of them becoming radicalized in prison. Mamdani states:

If the reform vision was identified with the thought of Hassan al-Banna in the formative period of the society, the extremist turn was inspired by the pen of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), writing in prison. The experience of such brutal repression under a secular government was one influence shaping the birth of a radical orientation in Egyptian Islamist thought (2005:49).

The politicalization of Islaam is the result of a variety of socio-political and historical factors; however in the context of this research probably the most distinguishing characteristics between political Islaam and the *Salafee* approach is that those who espouse political Islaam tend to emphasize the injustices of current regimes, their policies, and a more pro-active approach in addressing the current crisis facing the Muslim community. Whereas, those who claim to adhere to the *Salafee* approach to Islaam emphasize the reformation of creed and the importance of returning to more classical interpretations and understandings of Islaam. The *Salafee* view holds that rectification of the leadership, society, Muslim deviancy, and political grievances will result by restoring the creed and methodology of the Prophet. Those who hold a more politicized view believe that *Salafees* do not address the current political crisis (especially with regard to leadership) and tend to be openly critical of the scholars who espouse that view. <sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> These are some of the general divisions between what is seen by some as political Islaam and the more orthodox approach. With regards to the more political approach it appears that those who adhere to this view vary with regards to their call, approach and methodology. Whereas some call for reform of Muslim leadership by democratic reforms and more participation others respond by calling for rebellion and *takfeer* as they deem the leadership illegitimate.

There are several key factors that contribute to the cause and rise in the radicalization of political Islaam.<sup>85</sup> Some of the most important factors are the fall of the Islaamic Caliphate, the spread of secularism and secularist regimes, their dependence upon non-Muslim states, and non-Muslim presence and power in Muslim lands. These factors fuel much of the discontent in the Muslim world and contribute to the rise in terrorist activity and political violence which will be discussed in the section detailing the creed of contemporary groups like al-Qaeda.

### 3.2.1 Fall of the Islaamic Caliphate

The abolishment of the Islaamic Caliphate by Mustafaa Kemal Attaturk in 1924 has had a profound impact upon the psyche of the Muslim nation as a whole and as a result contributed to the rise in both secular<sup>86</sup> and radical movements.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> By political Islaam the researcher is referring to Islaamic movements and parties that compete for political control either through the system or by fighting both Muslim and non-Muslim governments. However, the term “political Islaam” can be confusing, because according to both orthodox and *Salafee* scholars, Islaam is inherently a whole system which does not distinguish between the governing institutions and the religious authority: all are governed by Islaam.

<sup>86</sup> Secularism is an ideology that separates the belief in God from the life and politics of the individual, or state. Secularism as a system is used to dismantle the role of religious institutions in a given society.

<sup>87</sup> Contemporary groups like Mawdoodee’s *Jamaa’ a al-Islaamee* and *Hizb al-Tahreer* make it their primary call to reinstate the Islaamic caliphate (al-Hilalee 2004:369).

total cultural revolution, imposed by one man's iron will and by the force of a ruthless army (1982:2).

After dismantling the caliphate Ataturk began systematic reform of the Turkish society and began to implement a policy of extreme nationalism and secularization in Turkey.

From the very onset of coming to power, Kemal Ataturk and his followers -the Kemalists- tried to doom Islam from ever becoming a vital force in the Turkish social and cultural life. Sufi orders were dissolved. Adhan, the call to prayer, was initially banned from being transmitted in Arabic. A Turkish form of Adhan was endorsed, only to be rejected later (because of mass disapproval). Sermons were to be delivered in Turkish, and no longer in Arabic. Even private instructions in religion were disapproved. Official Imams were appointed to preach the official line. Many mosques were closed down. People were not allowed to put on turban and the Fez for prayer. Even keeping beard was restricted. The Kemalists wanted to reform Islam in the light of Reform Judaism. In this regard, it is worth noting some of the suggestions put forward by Kopruluzade, a disciple of Zia Gokalp: religious service should be made inspiring by the employment of musically trained chanters and prayer leaders and the introduction of instrumental music; the Turkish language is to be used as language of worship, instead of the Qur'anic Arabic. Kopruluzade's Masonic ideas caused such uproar in the public that the government had to shelve the report (Siddiqui 1982:4).

The Kemalists' reforms illustrate the epitome of secularist extremist ideology and policy, and how secularism, to most scholars, aims to destroy Islaam from its foundation by opposing its laws, and attempting to reform Islaam in the name of "progress".

Groups like al-Qaeda offer the most stinging criticism of the current leaders and secularization. According to al-Qaeda, since the fall of the caliphate, rulers "started to fragment the essence of the Islamic nation by trying to eradicate its Moslem identity. Thus, they started spreading godless and atheistic views among the youth. We found some that claimed that socialism was from Islam, democracy was the [religious] council, and the prophet-God bless and keep him-propagandized communism" (al-Qaeda 2005:8).

### 3.2.2 Secularization of Regimes

The rise in secular regimes is a cause of great concern for many Muslims and due to the spread of secularist thought throughout the Muslim world there has been a backlash by both extremists, and those who uphold the orthodox creed with the former taking the form of violence. Secularism is a concept alien to Islaam and actually opposes it completely as the orthodox creed is built upon the belief that Islaam is an entire system and way of life with no separation between religion and state. Allah said, "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and chosen for you Islam as your religion" (Qur'aan 1996:5:3). The orthodox creed holds that Islaam is a complete way of life and pure religious system that dictates public and private life which by its very nature opposes secularism. Secularism as an ideology has had a profound effect upon the Muslim nation in the aftermath of colonial domination and Zakaria points out that, "as Western powers occupied more and more Muslim territories, they inevitably influenced the way of thinking of the faithful" (1989:164). He goes on to criticize the post-colonial Muslim leaders by saying:

Now their rulers-inept, cowardly, and corrupt- had not only yielded power but were willing to adopt Christian values, laws and institutions... in the process Islam was pushed aside. Though they talked of reforming Islam, the aim of these leaders seemed to secularize it, and like Christianity, turn it from a community religion to one to be practiced in the home (1989:164).

According to Zakaria the newly Western educated elites began to opt for reforms and to imitate Western governments at the same time by trying to industrialize, and cast off the so-called restraints dictated by Islaam. Some secularist leaders through ignorance and misinterpretation attempted to justify their secularist ideologies by reinterpreting the religion. Ruthven describes Habib Bourguiba the founder of modern Tunisia of making *jihad* analogous to modernization. Ruthven says, "Bourguiba persuaded the Tunisian ulama (scholars) to allow workers to be exempted from Ramadan fast, which he held responsible for slowing production, since mujahidin (the warriors taking part in jihad) are exempted from fasting" (2004:68 Both the secularists and nationalists had profound effects upon the Muslims and their concept of nationhood, and both ideologies are inherently alien and hostile towards Islaam and

the foundations of its creed.<sup>88</sup> An example of the nationalist ideology prevalent in the 1960s was that of the Ba'athist of Syria who were quoted in one of their papers as saying, "Let us call upon the Arab rulers to make comrade Assad their political qibla (literally: direction of prayer) instead of kneeling down before the idols of Islam" (cited in Sivan 1990:58). This demonstrates the general trend amongst communist and nationalist movements: lack of respect for religious symbols, and encouragement of ideals contrary to the Islaamic creed. Islaam by its very nature is not comprised of borders and racial boundaries, but instead Muslims are commanded to be one nation. Allah says, "And hold fast, all of you together to the rope of Allah and be not divided among yourselves" (Qur'aan 1996:3:103).

A key thinker in voicing hostility toward both the secularists' and nationalists' movements was Sayyid Qutb. Unfortunately his hostility did not stop with Attaturk began to gain power at a time when the Ottoman Empire was nearly completely secularization, but instead led him to traverse the path of *takfeer*. Qutb said: destroyed. Attaturk had a secularist nationalist vision in which he saw that the birth and preservation of the Turkish state would only come by Westernization and rejection of traditional religious values. Qutb states: Among Muslim societies, some openly declare their secularism and negate all their relationships with the religion; some others pay respect to the religion only with their mouths, but in their social life they have completely abandoned it. They say that they do not believe in the 'Unseen' and want to construct their social system on the basis of 'science', as science and the Unseen are contradictory! This claim of theirs is mere ignorance, and only ignorant people can talk like this. (Qutb 2005: 5)

His program was for Turks to become Europeans. He abolished the caliphate, and changed the country to a secular republic. He closed the Sharia courts of law and religious colleges, replaced the remaining parts of Islamic law by Western civil codes. He moved the capital city from Istanbul inland to Ankara. Qutb expressed hostility toward the secularization of Muslim societies which is in accordance with the orthodox creed, however at the same time his anger led him to the extremism of pronouncing *takfeer* on all Muslim societies without exception. He removed the Islamic ban on reproducing human images; statues and pictures were introduced. So was Western music. He ended the ban on alcohol and encouraged the growth of a wine industry. Sunday, instead of Friday, became the official day of rest. Women were given Western "emancipation" and strong pressure was put upon them to discard their veils, scarves and other traditional dresses. In 1928, Islam lost its status as the established religion in the Turkish Republic and secularism was enshrined as the state policy. It was a

Many colonizing nations viewed the rise of pan-Islaamic movement as a greater threat than the nationalism of the secularists, so they were more tolerant of those

<sup>88</sup> In chapter four there will be a further analysis of secularism in its extreme form and the political activism of Westernized secularist like Salman Rushdie, who call for the reform of Islaam and the dismantling of its institutions.

<sup>89</sup> *Takfeer* is a religious principle comprised of conditions, and cannot be made arbitrarily.

movements (Zakaria 1989:165). Pan-Islamicism as an ideology began to grow as a reaction to secularism and colonial powers saw this as a threat to stability in their colonies. For this reason, they allowed and encouraged secularism. Secularism was compatible with the ideology of the colonizing nations and moreover a product of it. By encouraging an elitist class of the colonized people who thought like the colonizer, this insured the colonizer's ideals would be propagated and this is what the European powers implemented throughout the developing world.<sup>90</sup> Siddiqui says:

We saw the result of colonial education policy. It created a western educated elite society amongst the natives - many essentially becoming puppets and Quislings for their colonial masters. So invasive was its influence in British India that many western educated Hindus abandoned Hinduism and became Christians. Similarly, many western educated Muslims were brainwashed to imitating the western values. They wanted to become a European from the head to the toes. In this context, it is worth mentioning what Jean Paul Satre, a French scholar, had to say on the effect of western education on the African youths, who were educated in Europe. He said that it was so gratifying to see that those Africans trained in Europe would mould the African society in a European way once when they had returned home. So the Europeans did not have to politically control them. They would, instead, be controlled by western values, which in turn would serve the same purpose (probably, more effectively) (Siddiqui 1982:12).

The colonial powers were well versed in the techniques of divide and conquer and they realized by secularizing educational institutions and the colonized elite, that they could better contain Islaam and their colonial exploits. According to an al-Qaeda document:

Colonialism and its followers, the apostate rulers, then started to openly erect crusader centers, societies, and organizations like Masonic Lodges, Lions and Rotary clubs, and foreign schools. They aimed at producing a wasted generation that pursued everything that is western and produced rulers, ministers, leaders, physicians, engineers, businessmen, politicians, journalists, and information specialists (al-Qaeda 2005:8).

This critique from members of the al-Qaeda organization, although extreme, highlights the mood of the Muslims towards the leaders for their roles in changing the characteristics of the Muslim society, culture and divine laws. However, each leader

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<sup>90</sup> "When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit" (Woodson 1990:xi).

and society must be judged individually by a scholar to before making *takfeer*, which is in accordance with the orthodox methodology.

Another important observation to be noted is that the colonial powers realized that the reform of the belief or creed of a people is paramount to controlling them. The orthodox creed emphasizes the call to Islaamic monotheism in order to repel doubts and disbelief as they corrupt the individual and allow for alien ideologies to become widespread until nothing remains of Islaamic belief. Siddiqui states:

More than a hundred years ago, the British government appointed Dr. William Hunter to propose specific measures that would enable Muslims in the Indian subcontinent to be ruled more efficiently. Hunter recommended that the Muslim youth be "western educated." Western education would make Muslims more tolerant of the British rule, like the Hindus who had already succumbed to such a British gambit. The recommendation for implanting the British educational policy was carried out so meticulously that there hardly exists today a single school where a balanced and adequate knowledge of religion is imparted in relation to demands of our modern time (1982:15).

This flagrant implementation of secularist policies and encouragement of new secular elite began to isolate the religious scholars who saw secularism as a threat to Islaam. Zakaria says regarding the radical backlash that began to build that:

Already they were mortified by the replacement of the shari'ah by European criminal and civil codes; but they found the interference in personal and family laws, as engineered by Western-educated classes, intolerable. They had acquiesced in the replacement of Qur'anic punishments for certain offences; and in the taking of interest on loans, but they could not stomach the tampering with of personal and family laws which threatened to destroy the whole social fabric (1989:169).

Many Muslims who became secularized began to feel a sense of betrayal, and that reforms were becoming too intrusive into their daily lives. In addition, in 1918 after the defeat of the Turkish Empire the British promised the Jews a homeland in Palestine. "The rebellious Arabs discovered to their cost that they had only changed masters from fellow Muslims to alien Christians, who had no real love for them" (Zakaria 1989:171). Zakaria points out that this model was pertinent to the developing Arab states, but that the rest of the Muslim world had their own models of colonial domination and secularism to contend with.

One of the most significant factors that accounts for the rise in secularism according to Ahmad al-Rahaylee is deviance of Muslims from the orthodox creed due to colonialism. He mentions that the weakness of the Muslims is attributed to alien ideas that became widespread from colonial powers. As a result Muslims became ill-prepared to wage *jihad*, their lands infiltrated by Western culture and ideas, the spread of missionary schools which effected the youth and encouraged sectarianism. Groups like the Qadiyaania<sup>91</sup> were established by the British and al-Rahaylee suggests that some Sufi groups<sup>92</sup> were put in place to change the creed and thoughts of the Muslims in order to weaken them (al-Rahaylee 2003:27). Also the establishment of English as the official language helped to turn the youth against their Islaamic traditions, cultures, and mannerisms resulting in a new class of Muslims who regarded their own religion as backward, oppressive and detrimental to progress. Most of these examples were the result of Western imperialism and as for the Eastern communist model al-Jaamee commented, "Is there a form of colonialism more oppressive than the system of communism? Which does not leave for us our religion or worldly affairs! This is the price we have to pay for security. And we pay for it with our religion and belief" (al-Jaamee 1993:220-230). To many contemporary scholars the ideology of communism is more oppressive than the ideals espoused by Western imperialists as the communists tend to be more intrusive, oppressive and brutal, especially with regards to religious expression. All of these factors gave rise to secularist ideology in the Muslim world and left many Muslims alienated and angry, thus giving rise to a more militant backlash and extremism.

### 3.2.3 Repression as a Backlash to Islaamic Militancy

The rise in extremist thought and activity has not gone unnoticed by the regimes in power and their reactions to the rise in militancy are all too often repressive serving to further isolate and anger extremists who see the regimes as illegitimate in the first place. In many cases Muslim regimes will react to the pressures placed upon them

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<sup>91</sup> A sect that is believed to be started by the British during their colonization of India in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the leader of the sect was Ghulaam Ahmad al-Qadiyaanee who claimed he was a Prophet after Muhammad and by consensus of the orthodox scholars this is disbelief (al-Faasee 2003:1/44).

<sup>92</sup> Sufism is a very broad term denoting mystical tendencies in general. As a term it is used to describe those who are prone to asceticism. There are many different Sufi groups, some of which have a tendency towards mysticism and others who have transgressed the bounds of Islaam in creed and practice (al-Juhane 2003/1:247-248).

with brutality and repression. Burgat observes while discussing the Egyptian state that, "as products of the dysfunctional system, there appears to be a common link between the acts of Islamist violence that followed the gradual intensification of the repression of these currents" (2003:98). He then details many cases in Egypt of the secret police's policy of assassination and torture of alleged extremists.

### 3.2.4 Regime Cooperation with Non-Muslim States

Another area of contention for extremists is dependence of Muslim states upon Western governments economically, politically, and militarily. Due to the weakness of many Muslim states and need for economic development most of them have forged strong bonds of cooperation with Western governments and this is especially true of the Gulf states. According to Burgat:

US policy has supported what are effectively long-lived dictatorships: political protection, blind acceptance of autocracy and lucrative weapons deals are offered to Saudi Arabia in return for maintaining high levels of cheap oil production. Such policies serve to fuel the anger, alienation and resentment felt by a generation deliberately excluded from the domestic political process and marginalized by the global struggle between rival states (2003:xiv).

Many Western as well as non-Western writers offer stinging criticism such as Burgat's about the interdependent relationships between the West and many Muslim states. Zakaria claims:

The ulama (religious scholars) are not a force in the Gulf states, as they depend for their livelihood on the rulers and toe the official line. In foreign relations these states are guided by the British and the Americans who guarantee their ruler's protection from external enemies and internal revolts.... The anti-communist outlook of the rulers has prevented them from cultivating friendly relations with Russia and China as they are entirely dependent on the armed support of America and Britain (1988:181).

Zakaria's comment echoes that of many of those critical of contemporary leaders which will be explored in detail in the section on the creed and criticisms of the various movements. However, it is important to note that Zakaria's comment regarding the scholars requires verification as many of the neo-*Khawarij* sects make criticizing the Muslim governments and scholars the main focus of their call. Instead of making *takfeer* of the companions as the original sect did, the neo-*Khawarij*

pronounce *takfeer* and attack the religious scholars with false statements and unfounded criticisms. These criticisms contradict the orthodox creed which maintains that the religious scholars are the inheritors of the Prophets and hold an extremely important position in Islaam.<sup>93</sup> Interdependence probably more accurately defines the relationship between many Muslim and non-Muslim governments, and these relationships and the orthodox position regarding them will be analyzed further in the section detailing modern day movements.

Another important observation regarding Muslim state relations is that many Muslims feel betrayed by the relationships these states have with non-Muslim states. Examples would be the making of peace treaties and trade with nations hostile to Muslim interests like Israel, China and Russia.<sup>94</sup> In the example of Israel, Jordan and Egypt both have peace treaties with Israel and close ties with the United States and support its 'war on terror' and both have recently felt the wrath meted out by Islaamic extremists. It is noteworthy that they are the only two Arab Muslim countries with ties to Israel. These relations aggravate terrorists as the U.S is blatant in its biases toward Israel and the U.N sanctions these relations.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> However, this does not mean that scholars are infallible or that some of them are not dubious but rather in general they should be given the benefit of the doubt regarding their intentions when making scholastic judgments as they play an important role in Muslim society.

<sup>94</sup> China has a long record of repression of its Muslim minorities and Russia has been engaged in a brutal war with the Muslim state of Chechnya since the mid-nineties.

<sup>95</sup> There will be a further discussion of US policy towards Israel and its impact upon extremists in chapter four.

gulf between the ruling elite and the governed which breeds enmity and fosters terror. Gleis comments regarding the Egyptian case, "such actions could lead to the overthrow of the regime of President Hosni Mubarak. Such a move would be catastrophic for U.S. interests, considering that a stable Egypt is central to U.S. interests in the Middle East, and the United States has pumped billions of dollars in aid to the Mubarak government" (2005:4). The U.S has direct investment in the stability of many Muslim regimes and is pursuing an increasingly aggressive democratization policy which serves as a catalyst for violence for many *Takfeeree* groups and fosters resentment amongst Muslims.<sup>96</sup>

Paul Pillar, a former CIA intelligence official, describes how "the U.S role in this picture is both as the current leader of the West that established this Zionist beachhead in the Muslim world and as the principal military supplier and backer of Israel" (2001:61). This flagrant support of the state of Israel at the expense of the Muslims has served to anger and foster hostility between Muslims and the West and is an important factor in the rise of militancy. Furthermore, "the latest upsurge in terrorist attacks in Egypt by Islamic extremists is another sign of the danger posed by *Takfir Wal-Hijra*" (Gleis 2005:3). This observation by Gleis

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shows the seriousness in which *Takfeeree* groups regard interaction with Western states and the vulnerability of these governments to terrorist attacks. This offers insight into the relationship between terror and *Takfeeree* ideology. Financial support from Western governments used to stabilize oppressive regimes (2005:37). This statement is indicative of the position of many contemporary scholars towards democracy as they view it as most extreme and consider a great compromise to divine law, therefore they do not respond in absolute terms in order to prevent compromise to divine law. On the other hand, proponents of democracy or the democratization of Islamic political institutions tend to cite the concept of *shura* or consultation which was practiced by the Prophet. The concept of democracy and its relationship to Islam is extremely complex and an in-depth discussion is outside the scope of this research; however democracy or consultation (assuming they are interchangeable concepts) cannot be applied in issues clearly demarcated by the Qur'aan or Sunna as this may constitute ruling by man made laws or compromising divine legislation. *Salafee* scholars also claim that *shura* is between the governing authority, scholars and those politically astute individuals charged with government affairs (ahl al-*hij* wa al-*'aqd*) and it is based upon the Qur'aan and Sunna.

### 3.2.6 US Attack on Muslim Countries

Mamdani states regarding political violence that "by seeing the perpetrators of violence as either cultural renegades or moral perverts, we are unable to think through the link between modernity and political violence" (2005:4). A case in point is the recent London bombings and George Bush's and Tony Blair's adamant refusal to admit that the war on Iraq and Afghanistan might be one of the contributing factors for these bombings even though the evidence suggests this.<sup>97</sup> Esposito says, "It is well documented that religious discourse can be used to condone and sanctify violence, although it is in no way the cause. The Quran can 'explain' Osama bin Laden no more than the Bible can explain the IRA (Muslims)." (2003:116). Ideologies of the modern Islaamic

ideologues claim the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq are to blame for the increase in terrorist activities, because Western foreign policy fuels resentment in the Muslim world. In the following sub-chapters this relationship between the claims of radical Muslim population. From Mc Donald restaurants to military troop facilities, the West Islaamic ideologues and Western intervention in the Muslim world will be explored to determine the motivation for terrorist activities. This analysis is necessary in order to verify if indeed these are 'attacks on freedom' or there are deeper and more substantial political motivations behind these attacks. Gunaratna articulates the stance of al-Qaeda by saying, "Al-Qaeda believes that until US troops are ejected from Saudi

Arabia, Muslim society will be living a life of sin" (Gunaratna 2003:116). This is

### 3.3 Overview of Islaamic Thinkers

similar to how the *Azaariqa* considered themselves disbelievers until they emigrated from the non-Muslim society. (al-Shahrastaanee, 1984:115)

The various groups and thinkers that have a common *Takfeeree* ideology all express a common concern for the welfare of the Muslim community and establishment of the Islaamic sharee'a. However, their extremist interpretation of the texts and deviation from the orthodox methodology prevent them from attaining their goals and prioritizing them.

The reasons for discussing these various individuals and groups are to highlight the issue of *takfeer* and radicalism that links these movements in the contemporary setting. There has been a strong rise in terrorist activities and attacks around the globe

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<sup>97</sup> "Prime Minister Tony Blair's government has insisted the bombings have no link to its foreign policy, particularly its decision to invade Iraq alongside the United States. But an opinion poll this week showed two thirds of Britons see a connection between Iraq's war and the bombings. A top think tank and a leaked intelligence memo have also suggested the war has made Britain more of a target for terrorist" (Gray 2005:1).

associated with Islaam. These contemporary figureheads are contributors, if not supporters of the radical ideologies that fuel Muslim terrorist activity.

Before detailing the creed of these modern day groups, it is important to look into the permissibility of criticizing individuals in Islaam. As previously mentioned, slander and backbiting are major sins in Islaam. However, in certain circumstances criticizing individuals and groups according to the orthodox creed becomes permissible and one such case is when warning the Muslim community about heretics or innovators whose harm distorts the religion and leads others astray. The proofs for this are many from the Qur'aan and Sunna and it is a part of commanding the good and forbidding the evil. Allah says, "Allah does not like that the evil should be uttered in public except by him who has been wronged. And Allah is ever All-Hearer, All-Knower" (Qur'aan 1996:4:148). Ibn Katheer and Ibn Taymeeya, both classical scholars, explain that this verse is proof for speaking about the people of innovation and especially the one who openly sins or is guilty of oppression. Therefore, it becomes permissible for the one who was oppressed to warn against his or her oppressor and there are numerous examples from the Sunna exhibiting this principle (al-Rahaylee 2001/2:486). According to al-Rahaylee the conditions for backbiting (*gheebah*) the people of innovation are four. The first being sincerity; meaning it is done as an act of worship to warn Muslims against the harm or deviance of the individual being warned against. The second condition is that the individual has outward deviant actions or sayings meaning they have the potential of being spread among the general Muslim population. The third condition is that the individual being warned against should be living, or if he is deceased it is only permissible to warn against him if his harm is still spread through books and speeches. Lastly, the one who warns against someone should be just, not exaggerating or lying about the person they are criticizing (al-Rahaylee 2001/2:508). The warning against groups and individuals is part of the preservation of the Islaamic creed and classical scholars have written extensively about sectarianism in defense of the orthodox creed of Islaam. Even to the extent that the preservation of *hadeeth* is built upon the science of criticizing narrators for their trust worthiness and reliability in narrating and collecting *hadeeth*. Therefore, it becomes impingent upon those who have knowledge, ability,

and the determination to warn against extremism before it is manifested in violent action.<sup>98</sup>

The concept of criticizing an individual and determining whether he is from the ranks of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* is similar to the concept and parameters of *takfeer* established by *Salafee* scholars. Similar to *takfeer* there are criterion the scholars use to determine whether an individual who differs with the orthodox creed or commits an act of innovation is within the ranks of *Ahl al-Sunna* or not. The first criterion being that the innovation should not contradict the foundation of Islaam or something accepted by consensus of the Muslims. Secondly, the misinterpretation or mistake should be knowledge based and in an ambiguous matter which may be open to different interpretation due to a difference in meaning between a sharee'a term and a term common in the Arabic language. Thirdly, that the intention of the individual was in accordance with the sharee'a. Fourthly, that the individual is not arrogant or fanatical in adhering to his view (Rislaan 2007:170). Ibn Hajr said, "The scholars say that anyone who misinterprets based on knowledge, but his opinion can be understood from the perspective of the Arabic language, then he is excused without sin" (1996/12:318). For this reason many scholars who contributed tremendously to preserving Islaam and the orthodox creed were not considered innovators even if they held a particular opinion or view that appeared to differ with the orthodox creed. For example, Imaam Nawawee, Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hazm, Imaam Bayhaqee, Imaam Shawkaanee, and countless other scholars who were known for their contribution to Islaam, and mentioned as imaams of the *Sunna*, were criticized for some controversial views they held in creed but were held in high esteem. *Salafee* scholars hold that those individuals esteem should be preserved but the matters in creed that they differed with the orthodox position should be warned against. Also, each individual must be critiqued to determine if they differ in methodology or in certain issues to determine whether they are considered from *Ahl al-Sunna* or not. Al-Rahaylee states, "None of the scholars from *Ahl al-Sunna*...can be judged as an innovator or outside the fold of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* due to a mistake in *ijtihad* whether it is a mistake in creed and *tawheed*, or an issue of determining whether something is lawful or unlawful, because he struggled to attain the truth" (2001/1:63).

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<sup>98</sup> Imaam al-Aajooree said, "...One must adhere to the book of Allah and the Sunna of His Messenger and the Sunna of the rightly guided caliphs, all the companions and those who follow them in righteousness, and the leaders of the Muslims. Also, a person should leave debating, argumentation, and disputes in religious matters and keep far from the people of innovation" (al-Aajooree 1999/1:424).

Finally, although this chapter is based upon the critique of certain individuals and groups by contrasting their ideologies with the *Salafee* creed, the author of this study in no way calls for the *takfeer* of, or accuses anyone of them of apostasy, but rather criticizes them in effort to determine some of the causes of contemporary Islaamic extremism. “And the consensus of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that the believers who pray towards Makka and believe in Allah, His angels, books, and messengers, and all affairs Allah the Almighty and His Prophet commanded us to believe in, are not considered outside the realm of Islaam or disbelievers for the major sins they commit” (al-Faasee 2003/1:10).

### 3.3.1 Aboo al-A'ala al-Mawdoodee

One of the most well known contemporary thinkers associated with 'Muslim radicalism' in the twentieth century is Aboo al-A'ala al-Mawdoodee. He was born in 1903 and is the "founder of Jama'at-i-Islami, the foremost fundamentalist organization in South Asia" (Zakaria 1988:9). Mawdoodee was not a scholar of Islaam but instead he was a journalist and religious thinker who later became known for his Islaamic activism and protest against nationalism, and he was a fervent proponent of Islaamic statehood and sharee'a. Mawdoodee “described the West as morally decadent and corrupt and argued that Islam was self-sufficient and quite separate from, and indeed opposed to, both Western and socialist ways of life. He advocated total reliance on the Shari'a, while recognizing the need for interpretation in response to changing circumstance” (Marsden 2002:81). Mawdoodee was relentless in trying to achieve his vision of Islaamic statehood in Pakistan by the use of non-violent political means, although his writings show he was considering a progressively more violent approach, essentially this distinguishes him from his successors who went from activism to calling for violent rebellion.<sup>99</sup>

#### 3.3.1.1 Mawdoodee's Creed

Mawdoodee was passionate about the cause of Muslim empowerment and statehood which is reflected in his various writings, however it seems at times his

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<sup>99</sup> Some suggest that Mawdoodee also differed with subsequent thinkers like Qutb over the issue of *takfeer*. Al-Bahnasaawee states, “It is clear that one cannot attribute to Mawdoodee that he believes in *takfeer* of whole societies because he clearly denies that in his statements” (al-Bahnasaawee 1985:67).

political vision overshadowed his call to *tawh̥eed* by emphasizing the reform of Muslim leadership. Much of his call was focused on exhorting Muslims to evaluate their leadership and this was probably due to the turbulent time in which he lived. Mawdoodee centered his call on the reform and overthrow of repressive leaders and likened the call of the Prophets to political and revolutionary causes to establish the religion of Islaam. Mawdoodee said, "Therefore the goal aspired for in the messenger-ship of the Prophets...in this world did not cease to be the establishment of the Islamic government upon the earth. Through this they could establish the complete system for human life which they brought from Allah" (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:183). However, Allah says regarding the goal of the Messengers that "... We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) except we revealed to him (saying): none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship me" (Qur'aan 1996:21:25). In another verse Allah mentions the goal of the Messengers was to "worship Allah (alone) and avoid *Taghut* (all false deities)" (1996:16:36). According to the orthodox creed the link that binds and forms the call of the prophets and messengers sent by Allah to mankind is Islaamic monotheism.<sup>100</sup> Mawdoodee's vision for Islaamic statehood was so overwhelming that he overlooked important matters of creed and was willing to compromise them in order to achieve his goal. He commented upon the Iranian Shee'a revolution by saying:

Khomeini's revolution is an Islaamic revolution. Those who participated in it are the Islaamic group and the youth experienced Islaamic education in this movement. Furthermore, it is upon all the Muslims in general to assist it and especially the Islaamic front to aid and establish that revolution and cooperate with it at every opportunity (cited in al-Suḥaymee 2005b:165).<sup>101</sup>

Al-Suḥaymee states, "And this is proof of Mawdoodee's lack of knowledge of the Sunna and ability to distinguish it from innovation, truth from falsehood, and misguidance from guidance" (2005b:165). Al-Suḥaymee criticized Mawdoodee because it appears that his zeal to establish a Muslim state led him to urge Muslims to

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<sup>100</sup> This does not mean Mawdoodee's writings did not contain emphasis on *tawh̥eed*; on the contrary he emphasized both *al-ruboobeeya* and *al-ulooh̥eeya*, with special care given to Allah's sovereignty as the sole legislator (al-Mawdoodee 1987:47-52). During the life time of Mawdoodee and Qutb, both were accepted amongst many contemporary scholars and respected as great thinkers and proponents of *tawh̥eed*. Until recently, due to an escalation of terrorism and violence in Muslim lands, neither Mawdoodee's nor Qutb's writings had come under such careful scrutiny resulting in many contemporary scholars renouncing them altogether or writing refutations of their concepts of *tawh̥eed*, *takfeer*, and rebellion against the Muslim authorities.

<sup>101</sup> Al-Waadi'ee said while describing Khomeini's Iran, "and the *Raafida* and Shee'a both praise that evil government" (al-Waadi'ee 2000:292).

support those who cursed and made *takfeer* of the companions. Khomeini is known for his many statements of disbelief, like cursing the companions, *takfeer* of the orthodox scholars, and even criticism of the Prophet Muḥammad which are acts of disbelief contradicting the orthodox creed (al-Hilaalee 2004:625-634). This lends credence to Suḥaymee's claim that Mawdoodee lacked correct knowledge of the orthodox creed.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> What seems odd is Mawdoodee emphasized the significance of all the categories of *tawḥeed* and the importance of correct practice and staying away from heresy much in the same way Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab did except not nearly to the same extent. Mawdoodee said, "It is not simply a matter of telling Muslims that they will enter paradise by simply agreeing to the creed of *tawḥeed*, and then it being permissible for them to call to what they desire from their opinions and false beliefs and deviance..." (al-Mawdoodee 1987:63-65).

Mawdoodee goes on to say regarding the Prophets' revolutionary zeal that "others actually managed to start revolutionary movements, but their messengership finished before the divine government could be established at their hand, such as Jesus" (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:189). Here Mawdoodee seems to imply that some of the messengers failed or fell short of their divine purpose which would amount to heresy as it implies the messengers were guilty of incompetence. According to the *Salafee* creed it is considered heresy to speculate in matters regarding belief, so *Salafee* scholars would see this as a deviation from the beliefs of the prophets and in his evidence as a deviation from the goal of the prophets and in his belief regarding the prophets. He claimed, "Therefore every prophet and every messenger suggests that a political revolution and the effects of it as they were limited long preceding the way and the mission of the prophet for Muslims: Mawdoodee said he felt (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:189) Mawdoodee's Islamic viewpoint that the prophet Ibraaheem preaching his guidance appears instead of the prophet Muhammad's goal but it was thought and gathering the followers together of Islamic revolution. (Mawdoodee 1984:16) His statement that the prophets fulfilled the obligation of calling the people back to any political and Prophet establishing Islam a religion does not consider the fall of the prophets Allah says, "The original propagators of the Method made that you should follow the religion of Ibraaheem who was a Muslim upon the true religion and was Mawdoodee's particular worshiped deity and also the parent of the Muslims" in (Qina'ah 1996:61/23). Widespread was known as the father of the People he aimed to exemplify was that of the righteousness, political and polytheism, reform. As Madkhalee says, "So of the Prophet and Messenger of the Prophet of al-Madkhalee (1997b:56) story, and he Madkhalee's effort to affirm the belief of the Muslims is of the goal of the Prophet influenced by the fathers and indeed present day idolaters" (al-Madkhalee 1997b:161). So, according to al-Madkhalee, rectification should have begun with the removal of un-

The call to *tawheed* (Islamic monotheism) represents the peak of sincerity, Islamic beliefs and practices adapted from Hinduism and Buddhism which wisdom, and intelligence... as Allah has willed not merely struggling for influencing the Muslims in his fight for this was the goal of all the prophets: had been to attain ruler-ship and authority he would have taken a different methodology began their call with monotheism and prohibited polytheism. Mawdoodee, who was to this, and he would have found people who gathered around him and supported him (al-Madkhalee 1997b:63).

<sup>103</sup> Mawdoodee's statement must be placed in its proper context and through analyzing his writings it is easy to conclude that Islamic political activism and reform were of the utmost importance to him. Marsden makes a comparison between Mawdoodee's tactics for political reform and that of the Muslim Brotherhood by saying, "He was highly elitist in his approach in that he set out to influence those holding power in societies as a means of promoting change within it. This was quite distinct from the policy of the Muslim Brotherhood, which advocated the building of change from the bottom, though the development of mass movements" (Marsden 2002:81).

not an ignorant man should have known “the strength of the methodology of the Prophets in calling to monotheism...and in concentrating upon giving importance to the Muslim’s creed in order to save them from the claws of the shirk (polytheism) of Hinduism, Buddhism and their like” (al-Madkhalee 1997b:161). Mawdoodee best articulates his call when he said:

it becomes apparent from our books and treatises that the final goal which we aim in our present struggle is to cause a revolution overthrowing the leadership, what I mean by that is that we wish to attain and be successful in this world by achieving to purify the earth from the filth of wicked leaders and their supremacy, and to establish the system of pious and rightly-guided leadership (*imamate*) (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:158).

Mawdoodee is very unambiguous about his objectives which conform to aspects of the *Khawaarij* creed and contradict the basic principles of orthodox Islaam,<sup>104</sup> even in his discussion of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed*.<sup>105</sup> Much of Mawdoodee’s call was based upon revolt against corrupt leadership and this seems to be his methodology for changing the condition of the Muslim community. However, the orthodox creed calls for the rectification of the beliefs of ignorant Muslims before any other reforms can be put in place and this was the methodology of the Prophets (al-Ja’eer, al-‘Ulyanee and al-Juhanee 2007:87).

### 3.3.1.2 Mawdoodee’s View on Leadership

Mawdoodee regarded corrupt leadership as the cause of the ills and humiliation of the Muslims. He believed that the masses of Muslims had not realized their true calling: to remove corrupt leadership as they are to blame for the Muslims' lowly condition. Mawdoodee said, "The leadership of the wicked and evildoers is the source of all disasters and calamities that afflict mankind, and the well-being and happiness of mankind rests solely upon the reins of authority over the worldly affairs lying in the hands of the righteous and just" (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:162). While

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<sup>104</sup> Majority of the classical and contemporary scholars hold it to be impermissible to rebel against the Muslim authorities (al-Faasee 2003:107).

<sup>105</sup> Mawdoodee’s emphasis on *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* primarily dealt with the aspect of rulership and sovereignty, and it is this overemphasis in his writings which latter thinkers and ideologues transferred into violent action. Mawdoodee said, “The foundation on which the Qur’aan stands is nothing more than mankind submitting themselves to the guidance and laws which Allah revealed through his messengers and fighting their own independent desires” (al-Mawdoodee 1987:216). It is not Mawdoodee’s general concept of *tawh $\ddot{e}$ ed* that is in question here, but instead his conclusions and linking these concepts to revolutionary theory is where he seems to depart with classical interpretations.

concern for the leadership's conduct is important, it is not the main cause for Muslims' weakness according to scholars like al-Madkhalee (1997b:162). For many contemporary scholars, the cause for Muslims' weakness is in part due to deviation from the orthodox creed, sins and failure to enjoin good and forbid evil, along with leaving *jihad* and widespread ignorance.<sup>106</sup> In contrast, Mawdoodee uses a fabricated saying he mistakenly thought was a *hadeeth* of the Prophet to justify his claim that failed leadership is the cause for the misfortunes that plague the Muslim community. He said, "The scholars of the *Umma* and its leaders are the ones responsible for its well-being or its corruption" (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:166). Allah says, "And any misfortune which befalls you it is a punishment for the sins which you have committed" (Qur'aan 1996:42:30). In accordance with the aforementioned Qur'aanic verse it seems that the sins committed by individuals as well as those who lead the community are the cause for Muslims' humiliation and trials; however many of the contemporary extremist groups and ideologues blame the leadership, and this is one of the key traits of the *Khawarij* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115).

Mawdoodee seemed to think the success of the Muslim community would come through revolution, but unfortunately failed to realize the orthodox methodology.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Refer back to section on causes for extremism in chapter two.

<sup>107</sup> Mawdoodee said, "Our call is to all of mankind, to bring about a general revolution against the contemporary law of the wicked and *Tawaagheet* who have corrupted the earth, and replace their leadership and ideology" (al-Mawdoodee 1973:5).

In the first part of Mawdoodee's statement he seems to call into question that faith comprises of actions, the tongue, and the heart.<sup>108</sup> His claim that admonishment is not enough suggests that he rejects the possibility of changing corrupt leadership by rebuking it verbally.<sup>109</sup> In the second part of his statement Mawdoodee calls for revolution and rebellion which is one of the central tenets of the *Khawaarij* creed.<sup>110</sup> Lastly, Mawdoodee's statement seems to echo the same discontent and rhetoric that the nationalists used when protesting colonialism. So, Mawdoodee despite the fact that he rebuked and despised Western vice and secularism emulated and borrowed much of the rhetoric and ideas of the nationalists and communists and applied them to his critique of Islaamic governments. Mawdoodee was "impressed by the totalitarian movements in Russia, Italy and Germany, he compared Islam favorably with communism and fascism as a movement with the potential to mobilize the masses" (Ruthven 2004:69). Mawdoodee was very influenced by the political forces of his time and this affected his creed and methodology causing him to believe that reform should begin with leadership instead of the masses which is inherent to *Khawaarij* thought.

Finally, Mawdoodee was passionate about the struggle to improve the plight of Muslims; establishment of the Islaamic state, and re-establishment of the Islaamic leadership, which was similar to the *Khawaarij* and the various secular nationalist forces he opposed. Mawdoodee said:  
 Instead of calling to correct worship Mawdoodee began with rebellion against corrupt caliph. However, he could not break free from the very ideologies that he so fervently fought, and this appears to be a major factor in his placing emphasis on Islaamic revolution and political reform instead of creed.

3.3.2 **Sayyid Qutb** So if someone today wishes to purify the earth and change the corruption to well-being, unrest to security, corrupt manners to righteous manners, sins to good deeds, then it will never be enough for him to call them to good and to admonish them to have God fearfulness, and to encourage them to have good manners. Rather it is a duty upon him to gather what he is able with regard to the resources of righteous people, and form them into an organized group and a strong community, such as will enable him to snatch the reins of authority from those in charge of civilizations in this world, and bring about the revolution aspired for, to attain leadership of the world (cited in al-Madkhalee 1997b:165).

<sup>108</sup> Imaam al-Aajooree said, "The Muslim scholars believe: that faith is an obligation upon all of creation and it consists of belief in the heart, utterance of the tongue, and deeds with one's limbs" and He also said, "It was narrated upon the Prophet, and a group of the companions, and many of the *Taabi'een*, that faith is belief in the heart, pronounced upon the tongue, and comprised of actions done with the limbs, and whoever does not possess something from these characteristics is a disbeliever" (al-Aajooree 1999/2:636).

<sup>109</sup> Admittedly, it is quite plausible that due to his emphasis on revolution that he places greater stress on faith as action (al-Mawdoodee 1984: 18-37).

<sup>110</sup> This was detailed in chapter one regarding the *Khawaarij* creed and in the section regarding faith.

in Egypt in 1966.<sup>111</sup> Qutb was influenced by the thinking of Mawdoodee as he often quoted from him in his Qur'aanic exegesis. Qutb memorized the Qur'aan at an early age but his main training was in literature at which he became quite prolific as a writer. Later in his life he joined the Muslim Brotherhood of Hasan al-Banna and became a very influential espouser of revolutionary movement and Islaamic statehood. Ruthven says regarding one of his writings "more than any other text it articulates both rage and the revolutionary energy underpinning the Islamist movement. It also reveals the extent to which the values and aspirations of the movement are rooted in classical Islam, while also significantly departing from it" (Ruthven 2004:85). Qutb is one of the most revered spokesmen for contemporary extremists, so it becomes absolutely necessary to critique his thought by comparing it to that of the orthodox creed to determine why his example is so often used by these modern ideologues.

### 3.3.2.1 His Creed

Sayyid Qutb's creed will be analyzed from its three main aspects: his view regarding the Qur'aan, the companions and prophets, and his thoughts concerning monotheism and Allah's divine characteristics. By analyzing these aspects of his creed it will be easier to discern whether he is indeed influenced by the *Khawaarij* in his beliefs or closer to the orthodox beliefs of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*.

Sayyid Qutb made some very serious statements regarding the Qur'aan and some of his claims appeared to support the concept that the Qur'aan was created. Muslims view the Qur'aan as the speech of Allah and that it is uncreated and perfect, and this is an important aspect of the orthodox creed, therefore classical scholars made *takfeer* of those sects who claimed the Qur'aan was created or imperfect.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> "Qutub's vision of global jihad was developed at a time of conflict within a specific environment--Nassir's secular Egypt and its persecution of the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet it was precisely because of this context that his work has been taken as an inspiration for contemporary jihad-oriented organizations that see themselves in similar battles against secular ideologies and repressive, authoritarian governments..." (DeLong-Bas 2004:265).

<sup>112</sup> "It is the consensus of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*, that Allah's commands and speech have no beginning and were not created" (al-Faasee 2003/1:26).

declaring *takfeer* of those who doubted the Qur'aan's authenticity or claimed that it was a created thing. Quṭb said regarding the Qur'aan "that the main aspect of this miracle is that it is an integral part of all of Allah's creation. So, it is like Allah's creation of everything and the creation of the people" (Quṭb 2007/1:38). He also said regarding mankind "that they do not possess the means to author a book like this. Because it is from Allah's creation not from mankind" (Quṭb 2007/5:2719). The importance of introducing these quotations of Quṭb is that it illustrates his departure from the classical view regarding the Qur'aan: his suggestion that the Qur'aan was created and this researcher has not found any evidence to suggest that contemporary scholars make *takfeer* of him.<sup>113</sup> In contrast, Quṭb was very apt to issue verdicts of disbelief upon whole Muslim societies for their shortcomings in implementing the sharee'a and sins.

Sayyid Quṭb also made other statements which call into question his creed regarding some of the prophets, and the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad. This is a major sin that can lead to unbelief as discussed previously.<sup>114</sup>

One of the early scholars and *hadeeth* narrators Wakeeá Ibn al-Jaraa said, "Whoever doubts that the Qur'aan is the speech of Allah: not a created thing, then he is a disbeliever" (al-Laalakaa`ee 2002/1:360). There are many such narrations upon the early scholars

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<sup>113</sup> This is most probably due to the ambiguity of some of his statements and the possibility of his words being misconstrued.

<sup>114</sup> Refer to the section on slandering the companions in chapter two.

striking similarity to the *Khawarij* creed and clear deviance from the orthodox position regarding the Prophet's companions.<sup>115</sup>

In addition to criticizing the companions, Qutb also had harsh condemnation of the scholars of al-Azhar University of that time. Zakaria describes how the scholars appointed by Naaser supported him in his socialist reforms and "Qutub denounced them as pharaonic pagans, who had no understanding of Islam; they were *munafiqun* or hypocrites, who loved the pleasure of this world more than the life of the hereafter" (Zakaria 1989:189). If indeed the scholars were supportive of reforming or dismantling the Islamic shari'ah then they were committing major sins; however Qutb's criticism was extreme accusing them of hypocrisy and paganism with blatant disregard for the conditions for making *takfeer*.

Qutb also made statements which might lead one to believe he was a proponent of *wahdahtu al-wajood* (Allah merging with His creation) which is a belief that originated with some of the extreme Sufi sects.<sup>116</sup> This pantheistic view describing the Prophet Moses as he said "What I take Moses and the example of a prophet and in and its operation. What is challenging in Suhayme (2005b:167) is the ambiguity of his language and the Prophet to conclude that he is a disbeliever and the denigrating of some scholars, so statements or criticizing a prophet whom has been proclaimed as a character of an indicator of the Prophet between *Shirk* and the other classic descriptions of Moses by Qutb in the methodology of the Republic of the Islamic Republic of Iran (cited in Suhayme 2005b:167). However, it is suspected that Bin Baz's statement (was general and not specific) in Qutb's *al-Farooq* (Qutb 2007:132) in Qutb's *al-Farooq* (Suhayme 2005b:167) then Qutb described the disbelievers and the infidels as being in the same category as the infidels by saying "While Musa was on his side and his companions relied on him, this is not the case (Qutb hypocrisy, 2007:440).<sup>117</sup> purchasing slander, 'Alee did not condescend to such low levels" (cited in Suhayme 2005b:168). This type of criticism is considered slanderous, according to

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*Sufi* scholars against Mu'awiyah and is a pillar of the Shi'a and the *Khawarij* for their *takfeer* of him, refer back to chapter one. The position of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* has already been detailed.

Although Qutb was known for his stance against extreme mysticism some of his statements appear to have an undertone of this view. Another rendition of what Qutb said that has been translated into English reads "the unity of Allah is such that there is no reality and no true and permanent existence except His. Moreover, every other being acquires whatever power it possessed from the effective power of Allah which rules over the world. Nothing else whatsoever plans anything for the world nor decides, for that matter, anything in it" (Qutb 2007a:3). This translation, which is what is circulated throughout Western countries, does not accurately reflect Qutb's statement, as there are many words added which actually change the meaning

statement is astounding and it contradicts *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*. His explanation of the verse is evidence that points to the belief of *wahdahtu al-wajood*" (cited in Suhaymee 2005b:169).<sup>118</sup> What is apparent in Ibn 'Uthaymeen's criticism is that he does not attack Qutb, but rather points to the fact that his exegesis of the particular verse in question has a statement which contains a form of panentheism. After analysis of the evidence it is difficult to determine precisely what Qutb believes in this regard and whether he was mistaken in his use of language or due to the ambiguity of his statement it has been misconstrued. Qutb was a linguist and he used a high level of Arabic in his writings, but nonetheless, matters of creed are not debatable or left to personal reasoning and Qutb has no predecessor, from amongst orthodox scholars, who explained the verse in the way in which he articulated its meaning. What can be deduced is that if he believed in aspects of this concept it is a radical departure from the orthodox creed and at the same time it is clear that he was not a supporter of the more extreme Sufi schools of thought and if he were it would have been apparent through his many writings.<sup>119</sup>

### 3.3.2.2 Qutb and Takfeer

Probably the most serious deviance in creed attributed to Sayyid Qutb is the total *takfeer* of entire societies. This was primarily due to his use of the term of *jaahileeya* (pre-Islaamic ignorance) to describe non-Muslim and Muslim states which he claimed did not rule by the sharee'a. Qutb said, "Then there is not on the face of the earth a

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of his statement. What is apparent from this rendition is that Qutb believes that Allah is the only true existence which contradicts the Qur'aan and basic reasoning. Throughout the Qur'aan Allah declares that the Day of Judgment and death are realities and the existence of mankind and *jinn* are real and are created by Him not a part of Him (Qur'aan 1996/55-56).

<sup>118</sup> *Wahdahtu al-wajood* (regardless of its variance), according to *Salafee* scholars, is considered a major form of deviance which can expel one from the fold of Islaam because, they agree, it involves ignorance of the creator, which can lead to incorrect worship and even polytheism. In accordance with the *Salafee* belief, the one who believes in this concept might claim that Allah is everywhere, which is inclusive of filthy places, or he or she may claim they have become Allah so they should be worshipped or have no need of worship and this is what some of the extreme mystics practice. (al-Juhane 2003:1:1168). Some suggest that the concept of *wahdahta al-wujood* is more complex than the *Salafees* suggest and that their view is over simplistic. However, *Salafee* scholars look at whether a belief can be traced back to the Prophet and his companions before it can be authenticated as a legitimate Islaamic belief or concept. In sum, the *Salafee* belief holds that if a practice or belief is determined to be without origin from the sources of the religion then it is unacceptable as a practice or concept and this seems consistent with the belief of the companions.

<sup>119</sup> Bin 'Uthaymeen scrutinized Qutb's statement and made his deduction after contextualizing the statement in question and comparing it to other statements Qutb has made in his exegesis of the Qur'aan. This process is a part of passing a judgment on an individual to determine whether he made a mistake in his use of language or he has a defect in creed.

Muslim country nor a Muslim society that rules practicing Allah's legislation and Islaamic jurisprudence" (cited in Suhaymee 2005b:180). This statement carries very serious implications and Qutb is accusing the whole Muslim nation of his time of not practicing the sharee'a and insinuating that they are apostate societies. He also said, "The Muslims of today do not fight *jihaad* that is because they cannot be found. The situation Islaam is in and the Muslims are in today needs remedy" (cited in Suhaymee 2005b:180). Here again Qutb implies that there are no Muslims due to the poor state of affairs of the Islaamic nation and the lack of *jihaad*, what is in question here is not Qutb's analysis of the problem, but rather his conclusion that there are no Muslims to be found. Qutb comments upon another verse in his Qur'aanic exegesis by saying:

This is a sine qua non for the contemporary advocates of Islam. They badly need to realize that they are calling for Islam today in entirely ignorant surroundings amongst ex-Muslim peoples whose hearts have grown harder and whose beliefs have now deteriorated considerably. They need to understand that there is no room for short-term or half solutions, compromises, or partial redemption or adjustment, and that their call is for uniquely distinguished Islam, in contrast to what these people conceive of as Islam (Qutb 2007/6:3992).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Many of the direct quotes taken from sources already rendered into English contain a variety of different spellings for words like *jihaad*, Islaam, *takfeer* and sharee'a due to the use of various different transliteration systems.

Evidence suggests Qutb's concept of faith resembled the *Khawaarij* paradigm: either a Muslim had complete faith or none at all.<sup>121</sup> This is illustrated in his use of the term *jaahileeya* and reference to Muslim states as illegitimate. Qutb said:

The chasm between Islam and *jaahiliya* is great, and a bridge is not to be built across it so that the people on the two sides may mix with each other, but only so that the people of *jaahiliya* may come over to Islam, whether they reside in a so-called Islamic country and consider themselves Muslims or they are outside the 'Islamic' country, in order that they may come out of darkness into light and may get rid of their miserable condition, and enjoy those blessings which we have tasted-we who have understood Islam and live in its atmosphere (2005:10).

One of the strongest statements made by Qutb which suggests his *takfeer* of the Muslim nation is when he said, "The question in essence is that of unbelief and belief, of associating others with God and the Oneness of God, and of *jaahiliya* and Islam. This ought to be made clear. Indeed, people are not Muslims, as they proclaim to be, as long as they live the life of *jaahiliya*" (Qutb 2005:11). In line with the creed of the *Khawaarij* Qutb declares *takfeer* of all those who have weak faith. According to Qutb there is no middle ground, one either has complete faith or is a disbeliever regardless of his testimony of faith. The danger inherent in this type of thinking is that it is a nullification of all the rights that were afforded to Muslims. In addition, it paves the way for rebellion and disobedience of the Muslim leaders which usually results in chaos.<sup>122</sup> Qutb went on to explain that *jaahiliya* and Islam cannot mix then he said, "This is not Islam, and they are not Muslims. Today the task of the call is to return these ignorant people to Islam and make them into Muslims all over again" (Qutb, 2005:13). His *takfeer* of (whole Muslim) societies was based upon his lack of insight into the principles of *takfeer* and misinterpretation of the religious texts which he misused to pronounce his judgments'. It appears that Qutb believes that faith is either complete and one is a believer, or non-existent: become a disbeliever for

It is imperative to discern what Qutb defines as *jaahileeya* to determine to what extent his creed resembled the *Khawaarij*. Qutb said, "The *jaahili* society is any society other than the Muslim society; and if we want a more specific definition, we

<sup>121</sup> According to the majority of orthodox scholars, faith fluctuates and one can be in the fold of Islam and a sinner and major sins do not make a person an apostate (al-Faasee 2003/1:8). In contrast Qutb said, "As explained in the commentary on surah 103, "The Declining Day", the essence of faith once firmly rooted in the hearts and minds, will begin immediately to operate and manifest itself in men's behavior. The surah stresses unequivocally that, if this is not the case, there is no faith" (Qutb 2007/7:3985).

<sup>122</sup> See the section on Zarqaawee.

may say that any society is a *jaahili* society which does not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas in its observances of worship, and in its legal regulations" (Qutb 2005:14). Qutb was clear in explaining his usage of the term *jaahileeya* and according to him all societies during his time were disbelievers. However, al-Bahnasaawee suggests that Qutb and Mawdoodee both used the term *jaahileeya* to mean oppressiveness and sinfulness, which does not expel one from Islaam, so they cannot be considered *Khawaarij*-like (al-Bahnasaawee 1985:75-78). But the weight of the evidence suggests, that at least in the case of Qutb, *jaahileeya* meant disbelief. Qutb said, "According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are *jaahili*...Lastly, all the existing so-called 'Muslim' societies are also *jaahili* societies" (Qutb 2005:14). The statements of Qutb are unambiguous and full of blatant examples of the misuse of the principles of the general *takfeer* by labeling the Muslim societies during his time as 'so-called Muslim'. Qutb goes on to explain what makes a society *jaahilee* and he expounds on his definition by saying:

We classify them among *jaahili* societies not because they believe in other deities besides God or because they worship anyone other than God, but because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone. Although they believe in the unity of God, still they have relegated the legislative attribute of God to others and submit to this authority, and from this authority they derive their systems, their traditions and customs, their laws, their values and standards, and almost every practice of life (2005:15).

Qutb refers to those governments that do not legislate by Allah's sharee'a as *jaahilee* and to him that means they are non-Muslim and this differs from the orthodox creed which holds that ruling by other than the sharee'a is a major sin and at times is a type of lesser disbelief, and this has already been discussed in the section on ruling by divine law. Qutb does not appear to distinguish between minor and major disbelief and his writings indicate that he considers *al-hakameeya* the most important aspect of *tawheed* as he declares total societies to be *jaahilee* for their tacit support of their leader. Qutb said in this regard:

Islam does not look at the labels or titles which these societies have adopted; they all have one thing in common, and that is that their way of life is not based on complete submission to God alone. In this respect they share the same characteristic with a polytheistic society, the characteristic of *jaahiliya* (2005:16).

Here Qutb likens Muslim societies to polytheistic ones in the same way the *Khawaarij* likened those individuals, groups, and societies which disagreed with them as polytheists. Also, Qutb claims that any deviance from the sharee'a is major disbelief and this coincides with the *Khawaarij's* accusation against 'Alee the fourth caliph whom they accused of not judging in accordance with the Islaamic sharee'a and becoming an apostate from the religion. It appears, according to Qutb's view, Muslim societies have become polytheistic in nature because of their shortcomings in implementing the Islaamic sharee'a and widespread sins. The *Khawaarij* preceded him in this view: faith is either complete or totally absent due to falling into major sin. Conversely, the orthodox creed is derived from the Qur'aan and Sunna and understanding of the pious predecessors who believed faith fluctuates: at times one's faith is high and at other times it is low, but still one is considered a Muslim. Allah said, "And whenever there comes down a verse, some of them (hypocrites) say: 'Which of you has had his faith increased by it?' As for those who believe, it has increased their faith, and they rejoice" (Qur'aan 1996/9:124). Ibn Katheer said about this verse that "this noble verse is one of the greatest proofs that faith increases and decreases, like the way (*madhhab*) of most of the predecessors (*Salaf*) and successors (*Khalaf*) among the major scholars. Moreover, it has been narrated upon more than one authority that this is the consensus" (cited in Mubdal 2003/3:1202). Evidence suggests that Qutb makes *takfeer* of whole societies due to the sins of its inhabitants and leaders. This creed and methodology of *takfeer* is in total violation of the principles established by the early scholars of Islaam (al-Rahaylee 2006:38-39).

### 3.3.2.3 Qutb's Assessment of Daar al-Harb

Qutb's emphasis and assessment of *Daar al-Islaam* and *Daar al-Harb* led him to call for the separation of his followers from the rest of Muslim society and this is a trait of the *Khawaarij*. Qutb described *Daar al-Islaam* saying, "It is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shari'ah is the authority and God's limits are observed, and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (*Daar-al-Harb*)" (2005:18).<sup>123</sup> Qutb essentially made *takfeer* of whole Muslim societies considering

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<sup>123</sup> Qutb's statement seems to suggest he visualized a state in which Islaamic law prevailed under the auspices of democratic procedure. It is difficult to determine if Qutb envisioned a representative type of

them to be *Daar al-Harb*. Shaikh Muḥammad Sa'eed al-Booty said regarding their issuance of *Takfeeree* rulings that, "the reason for their issuance is ignorance of the sharee'a rulings while excluding oneself from this trait (of disbelief). [*Takfeerees*] assess things according to their desires then apply a dangerous ruling in the name of Islaam and the sharee'a upon the land belonging to Allah the All-Glorified, and judge most of it, if not all of it as the land of disbelief or war" (al-Qurayshee 1992:427). Qutb's revival and preoccupation with these concepts led subsequent radicals to go a step further by separating from Muslim society and committing acts of violence. Groups like *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra* would encourage their members to intermarry, live in caves and establish a separate economic base from Egyptian society which they felt was essentially one of disbelief. The withdrawal phase was removing themselves from the *jaahili* society, then the indoctrination phase until they began to use violence (Sivan 1990:88). For Qutb:

A Muslim can have only two possible relations with *Dar-ul-Harb*: peace with a contractual agreement, or war. A country with which there is a treaty will not be considered the home of Islam ...Any country which fights the Muslim because of his belief and prevents him from practicing his religion, and in which the Shari'ah is suspended, is *Dar-ul-Harb*, even though his family or his relatives or his people live in it, or his capital is invested and his trade or commerce is in that country; and any country where the Islamic faith is dominant and its Shari'ah is operative is *Dar-ul-Islam*, even though the Muslim's family or relatives or his people do not live there, and he does not have any commercial relations with it (2005:19).

Qutb's portrayal of *Daar al-Harb* and insistence of separation from it was a principle that would be taken up by many successive movements. In fact, "...some of Qutb's votaries such as 'Alee Abduh Isma'il began to organize their group in jails during the late 1960s and they had recourse to the basic symbols of segregation: refusing to pray with the impure imams and choosing to have their group pray on its own" (Sivan 1990:86). According to the orthodox creed Muslims should separate from *Daar al-Harb* the problem lies in Qutb's assessment and classification of all countries including Muslim societies as being such. Many subsequent thinkers tend to view treaties with their adversaries as weakness and impermissible (refer to the section on Shukree Must

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government or he was merely suggesting greater participation of the general public in the decision making process.

Qutb also espoused violence as a means to remove corruption and establish the Islaamic state. Qutb reiterates his call to fight the oppressive system of *Daar al-Harb* when he said:

But any place where the Islamic Shari'ah is not enforced and where Islam is not dominant becomes the home of Hostility (*Daar-ul-Harb*) for both the Muslim and the *Dhimmi*.<sup>124</sup> A Muslim will remain prepared to fight against it, whether it be his birthplace or a place where his relatives reside or where his property or any other material interests are located (2005:19).

Qutb's assessment is too rudimentary. He considers any land not ruled entirely by the sharee'a or where the Muslims are not in the majority permissible to fight or rebel against. His assessment laid the foundation for terror and violence as many successive movements adopted his ideals (al-Rahaylee 2006:39). It appears Qutb's extremism results "from a gloomy diagnosis of the malady of Islam, hence the sense of urgency. If urgency does not necessarily lead to violence... it does however, lead to a divorce from and almost always to some sort of revolt against present Muslim society and policy" (Sivan 1990:84-85). Most of the *Takfeeree* groups share this characteristic which is similar to the original *Khawaarij*; however the *Takfeerees* seem to be more reactionary and driven by political circumstance.

#### 3.3.2.4 Sayyid Qutb and Leadership

Qutb like his predecessor Mawdoodee was also extremely critical of contemporary Muslim leadership and he believed Muslims have a responsibility to remove them.

Qutb said:

The foremost duty of Islam in this world is to depose *jaahiliya* from the leadership of man, and to take the leadership into its own hands and enforce the particular way of life which is its permanent feature. The purpose of this rightly guided leadership is the good and success of mankind, the good which proceeds from returning to the Creator and the success which comes from being in harmony with the rest of the universe. The intention is to raise human beings to that high position which God has chosen for them and to free them from the slavery of desires (2005:15).

Qutb like Mawdoodee considered removing corrupt or *jaahilee* leadership as the supreme duty in Islaam. Qutb like the early *Khawaarij* was so disaffected by corrupt

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<sup>124</sup> This refers to those non-Muslims who reside in Muslim lands under their protection and pay the *jizya* tax.

society and leadership that he left only two courses of action: to revolt or excommunicate from the society. Qutb said during his trial, "We are the *Umma* of believers, living within a *jaahili* society. Nothing relates us to state or society and we owe no allegiance to either. As a community of believers we should see ourselves in a state of war with the state and the society. The territory we dwell in is *Dar al-Harb*" (cited in Sivan 1990:86). Qutb's appeal was powerful evoking emotion and at the same time it showed similarity to the *Khawaarij* belief as he nullified his allegiance to the Muslim society and essentially declared war against it and its leadership. Finally, Esposito draws a comparison between Qutb and Khomeini and concludes that their ideals of revolution are identical. Khomeini said:

Give the people Islam, then, for Islam is the school of jihad, the religion of struggle; let them amend themselves and transform themselves into a powerful force, so that they may overthrow the tyrannical regime imperialism has imposed on us and set up an Islamic government.... If certain heads of state of Muslim countries...permit foreigners to expand their influence... they automatically forfeit their posts.... Furthermore, it is a duty of the Muslims to punish them by any means possible (cited in Esposito 2005:61).

### 3.3.3. **Shukree Mustafa**

In more contemporary times one of the most extreme of the *Takfeeree* groups who set the precedence for terrorist action and belief was *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra*. Reminiscent of the early *Khawaarij* this "...group is known for perpetuating violence against those it considers kufaar (heretics), including those Arabs and Muslims whom takfiris do not consider to believe in accordance with true Islam" (Gleis 2005:2).

The group was founded by Shukree Mustafa an agricultural engineer in Egypt in the 1960s as an offshoot of *Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen* (the Muslim brotherhood). While Mustafa was imprisoned for his activities with *Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen* he became highly influenced by Sayyid Qutb's book Milestones which is still revered by *Takfeerees* and other extremists as a reference for creed, rebellion and revolution. Aboo Hamza al-Misree one of the contemporary *Takfeerees* commented regarding Mustafa, "however he went overboard with his idea and he exaggerated some of the meanings of what was in that good book" (al-Misree 2000a:100).<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Although Aboo Hamza al-Misree's creed will be discussed in the following subsections he is cited frequently throughout this section as he is regarded as an authoritative source on the subject of

Mustafa's extremism never really became deep rooted in Egyptian society as in the initial stages they called their followers to emigrate from the mainstream society. Al-Misree says, "He issued a fatwa (religious verdict) that the imaams of all *masaajid* in Egypt are kuffar and that no good Muslim can pray behind them. He also issued in his *fataawa* that all *masaajid* in cooperation with the government are *masaajid* of harm and may not be used for worship" (al-Misree 2000a:101). This trait of excommunication from Muslim society is apparent in nearly all *Khawaarij* groups and individuals who possess their characteristics. These groups feel it is a religious obligation to separate and fight the society and its corruption, and this coincides with the *Azaariqa* belief as discussed in chapter one.

Mustafa was executed in 1978 by the Egyptian authorities; however his ideology still exists today, and as the evidence suggests, his thought is deeply rooted in the *Khawaarij* creed. When the early *Khawaarij* fought 'Alee the fourth caliph and were nearly wiped out, the remnants of their group carried their ideas throughout the Muslim world until they eventually assassinated 'Alee himself. Both the ideas of Mustafa and the *Khawaarij* are not easily contained and therefore should be exposed before they manifest themselves in terrorist activities ('Aseere 2007: 134).

### 3.3.3.1 Shukree Mustafa's Creed

The central tenets of Mustafa's belief are excommunication from the Muslim state, *takfeer* of those who opposed him, and rebellion against the Muslim authority. Mustafa like the *Khawaarij* misinterpreted the Qur'aanic verses and twisted their meanings to strengthen his opinion.

Mustafa and his group "found the whole social fabric anti-Islamic and urged their fellow-Muslims to withdraw into the mountains away from the corrupting influence of secularists, and lead lives of purity as good Muslims. They declared that all those who disagreed with them were enemies of Islam" (Zakaria 1989:190). Parallel to Qutb's concept of *jaahilee* society Mustafa also held Egyptian society as a disbelieving one, ripe with sin and vice, and he considered those who disagreed with

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*Jamaa'a al-takfeer* and Shukri Mustafa, and his analysis offers direct insight into the perspective of the *Takfeerees* themselves as he shares some of the same beliefs regarding *jihad* and *takfeer*.

his concept of excommunication as apostates. This exemplifies his misuse of the principles of the general *takfeer*. This concept of declaring detractors as disbelievers is at the core of the *Khawaarij* doctrine.

Mustafa's group went one step further when they "kidnapped Muhammad al-Dhahabi, a former Waqf minister, who had condemned their movement and executed him" (Zakaria 1989:190). Mustafa and his group did not stop with making *takfeer* of those who opposed them, but they showed they were willing to act upon their ideology by kidnapping and killing their opponents. This seems to be a common characteristic of the more radical *Takfeeree* groups of today, like al-Qaeda and Zarqaawee's group, who believe in striking terror into the hearts of those who oppose them in order to support their cause. There will be further analysis of the phenomena of kidnapping and killing in the section on Zarqaawee.

*Takfeer wa al-Hijra* practiced the concept of *taqeeya* or dissimulation which is a practice associated with the extreme Shee'a. The identification of *Takfeer wa al-Hijra* with Qutb's concept of a *jaahilee* society, induced some of the group at the early stage to secretly withhold declaring *takfeer* of the society. "Since one could not pronounce the takfir openly on Egyptian society while continuing to live in it without incurring the charge of *ilhad-heresy*-<sup>126</sup> the takfir must be done secretly, in the heart, while the true believer continued to observe the outward conduct of an ordinary Muslim" (Ruthven 2004:106). Ruthven suggests that this practice is inherent in the Shee'a minority groups within a Sunni society: they declare openly an allegiance to the Sunni leadership and at the same time conceal in their hearts loyalty to their imaams, some of whom they take to be divine ('Awaajee 2001/1:370). Ruthven also mentions that "these moderate Islamists actually prayed on Fridays before an imam whom they privately regarded as being apostate" (2004:106). According to the orthodox creed one's prayer is nullified if the imaam is not a Muslim and this is agreed upon by all of the scholars (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:344). This practice by Must

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<sup>126</sup> Innovation as used by the author of this study does not necessarily mean apostasy from the religion as the above quote seems to suggest, because some unorthodox practices expel one from Islaam and others are considered only sinful (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:104).

groups, was not a common practice of the *Khawaarij* because they believed that deception was disbelief ('Awaajee 2002:448-449).

Mustafa's group began to become more outward in their "radical approach of complete religious and social separation. They prayed at home, refusing to attend Friday prayers or to visit mosques other than family (private) mosques where the prayers were led by imams of their persuasion" (Ruthven 2004:107). This separation in all spheres of life had all the trappings of a secret society in which even the marriages of its members were declared void if one of the spouses was not a member of the cult. These practices are totally inconsistent with orthodox Islaam, its texts, and the understanding of the companions, and are a testimony to their extremist thinking.<sup>127</sup>

### 3.3.3.2 Qur'aanic Misinterpretation

Shukree Mustafa in his religious fervor misused and misinterpreted Qur'aanic verses to support his paradigm and he ignored the established foundations of Islaamic jurisprudence in favor of his own reasoning. "...Shukree denounced both the traditionally orthodox and the secular modernists. Relying on the Quranic verse that 'god knows and you know not' [1996 2:216], he said that everything that came after the Quran and the Sunna was not binding on Muslims. He considered the four great schools of Sunni jurisprudence null and void; they were counterfeit and had no place in Islam" (Zakaria 1989:190). This denunciation of the main schools of jurisprudence by Mustafa contradicts the foundation of Islaam, which is built upon the Qur'aan and Sunna, and the understanding of the orthodox scholars especially the first three generations after the Prophet Muhammad. Shaikh Aadam al-Ethiopee<sup>128</sup> said, "The sources that are agreed upon by the majority of *Ahl al-Sunna* are: the book (Qur'aan), the Sunna, the consensus, and juristic reasoning" (2005/1:289). This quote shows Mustafa's deviance from the orthodox methodology and this is a sign of the people of innovation: they attempt to undermine the principles of the religion in order to re-establish their commonality to the *Khawaarij* and Shee'a rather than the orthodox belief of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a*. However, *taqeeya*, which is a common practice of *Jihaadee*

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<sup>127</sup> 'Aseeree mentions four aspects of excommunication practiced by *Jamaa'a wa al-Takfeer*: excommunication from mosques and congregational prayer, the society, universities and schools, and government employment ('Aseeree 2007:134).

<sup>128</sup> He is a well known contemporary scholar of *hadeeth* who resides in Saudi Arabia.

that his own interpretation of the religious texts could only be considered valid, and he re-established the principles and verdicts of the early scholars. It was narrated upon several companions like Aboo Darda`a, and 'Abd Allah Ibn Mas'ood that "frugality in the Sunna is better than (*ijtihaad*) perseverance in innovation" (cited in al-Atharee 1996:55). So, adherence to the established Sunna and ways of the early scholars is part of the orthodox creed, and the *Salafee* creed holds that it is incumbent to distance oneself from unorthodox practices and ideologies.<sup>129</sup>

Another illustration of Mustafa's desire to depart from classical interpretations of Islaam was his approach to understanding the Qur'aan. Mustafa claimed, "Islam has been in decline ever since men have ceased to draw their lessons directly from the Qur'an and the Sunna and have instead followed the traditions of other men."<sup>130</sup> Those who call themselves imams. The Qur'an, he emphasized, was clear as crystal. To understand its verses a Muslim needed a dictionary, not a commentary" (Zakaria 1989:190). On numerous occasions Mustafa violated the principles of religious tradition and Qur'aanic exegesis which is an integral part of Islaam and part of the preservation of the orthodox creed. As previously mentioned, a statement like this contradicts the consensus of the scholars and leaves the divine texts open for anyone to interpret according to his whims.

Mustafa also had a very serious mistake in creed regarding the Qur'aan. He replied after being asked if the Qur'aan was the speech of Allah that, "I believe that the Qur'an is with absolute certainty from the practical point of view which implies glorifying it and worshipping Allah according to its orders...." (cited in al-Misree 2000a:109). Then he was asked, "Do you mean that the Qur'an is not with absolute certainty the word of Allah from the theoretical point of view?" Must

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<sup>129</sup> Innovations in creed and practice that have no basis in the foundation of the religion are rejected according to the orthodox creed. However, this does not suggest that Islaam does not accommodate changes in circumstances and technology, but rather the established principles of the religion are used to make judgments of whether something is permissible or not. Mustafa held

<sup>130</sup> Mustafa might be classified as an extreme literalist; however he departs radically with the ideas of traditional literalists like Ibn Hazm (died 1064), one of the great scholars of jurisprudence, who interpreted the religious texts according to their most literal interpretation. Whereas, Mustafa sought to reinterpret entire principles regarding creed, jurisprudence and Qur'aanic exegesis according to his understanding, Ibn Hazm on the other hand was more of a traditionalist who generally adhered to the principles and foundation that the classical scholars agreed upon.

according to it" (al-Misree 2000a:109). So it appears Mustafa may have had some doubts about the authenticity of the verses of the Qur'aan and al-Misree concludes by saying his statement is flawed and "he is hinting that some ayat in *Surat ul Ahzaab* and *Surat ut-Tawba* had only one sahaaba (companion) to witness them, other than the collector of the Qur'an" (al-Misree 2000a:109). Mustafa's speech seems unclear and ambiguous.<sup>131</sup> However, as it has been previously stated, according to classical scholars the one who doubts the Qur'aan's authenticity has disbelieved. Al-Aajooree, a 9<sup>th</sup> century scholar, said:

Surely the Qur'aan is the speech of Allah the All-Mighty and it was not created, because the Qur'aan is from the knowledge of Allah, and Allah's knowledge is not a created thing. Allah is far removed from that. The Qur'aan, the Sunna, the sayings of the companions-may Allah be pleased with them- and the sayings of the imaams of the Muslims all prove this. No one denies this except an evil *Jahme*<sup>132</sup> and to the scholars the *Jahme* is a disbeliever (1999/1:489).

Mustafa seemed to reinterpret the religion and its texts in order to give credibility to his movement. This is best illustrated when he claimed, "I want to declare that no authority could possibly have the capability to denounce our doctrine. That is because we have put conditions on ourselves that our evidence should always be decisive in meaning and not have any other meaning that could be over ruled or superseded" (cited in al-Misree 2000a:109). This quote from his trial shows his conviction and pedantry which are inherent in *Khawaarij* thought. Mustafa's opinions are usually derived from general verses used to support his belief instead of surveying all of the evidences and returning to more orthodox interpretations.

Must

afa replied, "Yes

and without any reservation. I want to say that Allah did not send down the Qur'an so it would become an idol or a shape, but it has been revealed so people could work

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<sup>131</sup> Some sects doubt the authenticity of *hadeeth* literature that was only transmitted by one narrator and this could be the case with Mustafa except his mistake is more serious as he seems to express doubt in a verse from the Qur'aan.

<sup>132</sup> The *Jahmeeya* is the name of a sect that began with Ja'd Bin Dirham around the 7<sup>th</sup> century and they denied Allah's divine names and attributes, and claimed the Qur'aan was created and the classical scholars made *takfeer* of them by consensus (al-Aajooree 1999/1:489).

He said, "I still declare now that it is beyond the capacity of all of our opponents to bring one sound evidence to answer or denounce our doctrine. And that challenge from us is sound and trustworthy until the Day of Judgment" (cited in al-Misree 2000a:109). Most of Mustafa's speech leaves no room for ambiguity and is rightfully labeled *Takfeeree* with ideological roots firmly grounded in *Khawaarij* thought. Mustafa made *takfeer* of the state and all of those who were deemed part of it similar to his predecessors the *Khawaarij* who believed all of those who were employed by the state were apostates and hypocrites. It was this principle which led Mustafa to make *takfeer* upon Shaikh al-Dhahabi who was the imaam of al-Azhar Masjid and Minister of Religious Endowments at the time. Regarding this he said, "My evidence is that he worked in the religious endowments department and was a minister and director for the nobility of the *Masaajid of daraar* (harm). He also made an oath in swearing by other than the judgment of Allah in taking an oath upon entering the office of ministry" (cited in al-Misree 2000a:126). According to Mustafa the minister was a disbeliever because in his view he had made a sacrilegious oath to an apostate government, thus he became an apostate. This type of circular reasoning is very common in neo-*Takfeeree* thought: they make *takfeer* by association rather than looking at the condition of a particular individual, state, or regime and they tend to disregard the principles of *takfeer* altogether (al-Rahaylee 2006:45).

Mustafa declared that the essence of the Muslim is actually disbelief until proven otherwise. Although it is known from the religion that the essence of a Muslim is his belief: he is not tested regarding his Islaamic belief unless something of doubt arises in his actions which call his beliefs into question (al-Barbahaaree 1997:123). Mustafa's group not only misinterpreted the evidences from the religious texts but however reversed this principle and began with suspicion of his fellow Muslims they also believed he was the *Mahdee* or savior and could not be killed. "Shukree which led him," to stop judging a person as a Muslim initially until he goes through a Ahmad Mustafa believed that he was the savior of the era. He frequently challenged test. Thus until tested, everyone claiming Islam was judged to be *kaafir* (disbeliever) the government in court and was adamant in saying that no one could kill him and he first. Then, upon passing the test, they (the new members) also have to give him (*bai'a*) would never die" (al-Misree 2000a:109). The extremism exhibited by this group gave the oath of allegiance due to a Muslim ruler by his subject" (al-Misree 2000a:103). the leadership a cult-like following and contributed to his thinking he was infallible. This new edict of Mustafa's only served to further illustrate his deviant beliefs and deviancy from the orthodox creed as al-Barbahaaree, a 9<sup>th</sup> century scholar, said, "Testing in Islaam is an innovation" (1997:123). In this regard the Prophet said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for the other's faults and do not spy, and do not cut relations with one another..." (al-

Bukhaaree 1970/8:59). Mustafa seemed adamant about disregarding the principles upon which the religion was based. His extremist interpretation only served to distance him from orthodox Islaam and ultimately led to his demise. Mustafa contradicted the principles of *takfeer* laid down by the orthodox scholars in their totality by building his beliefs upon the foundation of the *Khawaarij* creed.

Mustafa also distrusted and pronounced *takfeer* of the scholars of al-Azhar University which is characteristic of the contemporary *Takfeeree* groups. Instead of attacking the Prophets and companions, they criticize and make *takfeer* of the scholars. Mustafa criticized and accused the scholars of his time by saying, "They propagate sins and for the *haram* to become *halal* (unlawful to become lawful) in the name of Islam....This is because it became a physical fact in our life, such as making usury, adultery, ruling by other than the Shari'a of Allah, obscenities, and even toxic drink *halal* in the name of Islam" (cited in al-Misree 2000a:113). Mustafa then mentioned several of the scholars of al-Azhar who he accused of giving religious verdicts allowing interest, and the consumption of alcohol.<sup>133</sup>

Finally, the level of extremism of which Shukree Mustafa and his movement had reached regarding *takfeer* and *jihadist* thinking can best be summarized in his own words when he responded at his trial to the question of defending Egypt against Israeli aggression. He answered by saying, "If the Jews or others come, our movement should not take part in combat in the ranks of the Egyptian army. We would rather escape to a safe place.... For by no means can the Arab-Jewish conflict be considered Islamic warfare" (cited in Sivan 1990:19). There are two noteworthy points in this statement. First, he regarded the Egyptian army as an army of apostates and so he felt it was impermissible to fight alongside it. This shows his abuse of the principles of the total *takfeer* by decreeing the Egyptian army to be apostate as if it constituted a sect holding a particular belief. Al-Rahaylee relates that "...all of this is from the general *takfeer*, which really is a classification of a saying, action, or particular belief as disbelief, which also includes the categorization of a particular group well known for

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<sup>133</sup> Mustafa and Qutb both criticized the Egyptian government and scholars of their time and it is well documented in several sources this researcher has come across that some of the scholars of al-Azhar were guilty of making lawful things prohibited by Islaam ( Ruthven 2002:110). However, this does not excuse the blatant misuse of the principles of *takfeer* by Mustafa and his group and caution must be exercised when making judgments of *takfeer*.

a characteristic of disbelief” (2006:253). Therefore, it is not permissible for Mustafa to declare a group of individuals to be disbelievers without open proof of their apostasy as a group. Second, he considered the whole conflict to be illegitimate: not *jihad*, but instead an Arab-Israeli nationalist struggle and this issue differentiates his movement from some of his successors like Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salaam Faraj.

### 3.3.4 Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salaam Faraj and Jamaa'a al-Jihad

As an outgrowth of Shukree Mustafa's *Takfeer wa al-Hijra* movement came another revolutionist thinker Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salaam Faraj. Faraj was an Egyptian engineer who was influenced by the writings of Sayyid Quṭb, and Mawdoodee "and their interpretation of Ibn Taymiyyah's writings. He rejected many of his contemporary Salafis<sup>134</sup> including the Muslim Brotherhood for seeking integration with the political process and Shukree Mustafa's Takfir W'al Hijra for allegedly shirking the duty of jihad" (Stanely 2005:1). Like Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, the writings of Ibn Taymeeya also seem in accordance with classical writings and especially with regards to creed. However, they were often misunderstood and interpreted as being supportive of *Takfeeree* ideology as they both wrote extensively upon the topic. Faraj's movement did not last very long as he began in 1981 and he was executed in 1982 by the Egyptian Authorities for his alleged involvement in the assassination of then President Anwar Sadat.

#### 3.3.4.1 His Creed

Faraj like his contemporaries was influenced by revolutionary thought and the ideas of Mawdoodee and Quṭb. Primarily his creed and call were to *jihad*, *takfeer*, and revolution. Faraj said, "Governments in the Islamic world today are in a state of apostasy-of Islam they preserve nothing but its name although they pray, fast and pretend to be Muslims" (Zakaria 1989:13). Faraj was very explicit when describing the rulers as apostates from Islaam and he offered a very clear and unequivocal prescription to their rulership over Muslim societies when he said, "Our Sunna has determined that the apostate must be killed even if he is in no position to fight, while

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<sup>134</sup> The term *Salafee* could denote those who preceded him in the *Takfeeree* methodology. According to the scholars referred to in this research the term *Salafee* distinguishes those who follow the classical methodology in creed from that of other sects.

an infidel does not merit death in such a case" (Zakaria 1989:13). From this statement it seems clear that he considered himself an authority to establish and derive the rulings regarding the leader and adjudicate his death sentence. Secondly, like the *Khawaarij* he begins by making *takfeer*, fighting Muslims, and calling for the overthrow of the rulers and these are principles frequently articulated by advocates of this thought, and both Mawdoodee and Qutb held the same notion: reform should begin by overthrowing corrupt leadership. Faraj states, "There is no doubt that the *Tawaagheet*<sup>135</sup> should be removed by the sword" (Faraj 1981:2). Faraj like Mawdoodee and Qutb also believed that the supreme aim for Muslims should be to establish divine law on the earth by any means. He says, "Establishing Allah's law likewise an Islaamic state is an obligation upon Muslims, and an obligation is not fulfilled except by completing that which is an obligation, so if the state cannot be established except through violence, then it becomes imperative that we fight" (Faraj 1981:3).

Some of Faraj's ideals are deeply rooted in the *Khawaarij* creed, with an embellishment of Qutb's thought, although he did refer to classical scholars like Imaam Aboo Haneefa and Ibn Taymeeya frequently. Faraj thought the Egyptian state had become *Daar al-Harb* and he cited Imaam Aboo Haneefa's conditions for changing a Muslim state into a disbelieving one to support his conclusion (Faraj 1981:5).<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> The term *taaghoot* refers to those things or people worshipped besides Allah; here Faraj uses this term to refer to leaders that rule by human law.

<sup>136</sup> Aboo Haneefa's conditions were as follows: human laws supercede divine law, the land became unsafe for Muslims, and that hostile non-Muslim states were on its borders. Faraj felt the sharee'a had been subverted in the Egyptian state to the extent it became *Daar al-Harb* (Faraj 1981:5).

they often begin their fighting against the Muslim society and its rulers.<sup>137</sup> Another characteristic of these groups is that they are usually supportive if not active in terrorist activity (al-Suḥaymee 2004:19). These groups and individuals should not be confused with those who sincerely fight Islaamic *jihad* according to its conditions and principles established by the classical scholars as practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions.

#### 3.3.4.2 Faraj's Concept of Jihad

For Faraj, *jihad* was one of the most important obligations to fulfill and the sole means for rectifying the state and replacing the ruler. Faraj is most noted for his book entitled The Neglected Obligation

"His contribution to the Qutbist/Jihadi theory of Islamic revolution was ultimately unsuccessful in that his group was quickly crushed without overthrowing established authority in Egypt, much less establishing an Islamic state" (Stanely 2005:1). Although Faraj may not have realized his goals of overthrowing the state his ideals and concepts would spill over into Islaamic extremist ideology and form the foundation for contemporary *Jihaadee* groups. The term *Jihaadee* is a general reference to those Muslims who interpret *jihad* in contradiction to classical interpretations and make it their utmost priority to call to *jihad* regardless whether its conditions are present or not. These individuals often have traits of the *Khawarij* and

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<sup>137</sup> This contemporary classification is a result of a more recent phenomenon: the call of individuals and groups to *jihad* with blatant disregard for established jurisprudential principles or the overall objectives that dictate the rules of Islaamic combat (Delong-Bas 2004:230).

has different rulings depending upon the situation and this differs from the conclusions of the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* groups who claim *jihad* is always an obligation regardless of whether its conditions are met or not. For Faraj, like his predecessors, removing the rulers was one of the utmost duties of *jihad* and this is where he began his call. Faraj wrote:

There are some who say that the jihad effort should concentrate nowadays upon the liberation of Jerusalem. It is true that the liberation of the Holy Land is a legal precept binding upon every Muslim. . . . but let us emphasize that the fight against the enemy nearest to you has precedence over the fight against the enemy farther away. All the more so as the former is not only corrupted but a lackey of imperialism as well. . . . In all Muslim countries the enemy has the reins of power. The enemy is the present rulers. It is hence, a most imperative obligation to fight these rulers. This Islamic jihad requires today the blood and sweat of each Muslim (Faraj 1981, in *ibid*).

he "posits jihad as the sixth pillar of Islam, a *fard 'Ayn* (compulsory religious duty) that must be satisfied immediately. For Faraj fighting the rulers took priority to fighting those who had usurped Muslim land, this is a trait of his successors who call for the liberation of the Muslim lands Muslim world into its current malaise" (Stanely 2005:2). Although *jihad* has from the alleged apostate rulers. This call for revolution contradicts the Islaamic creed extremely important status in Islaam it is not mentioned in the traditions of the in several aspects. Firstly, it is the methodology of the *Khawaarij* to make *takfeer* for Prophet as being a pillar of Islaam. In addition, *jihad* at times is obligatory upon major sins and rebel against the ruler whereas the more classical approach encourages some of the Muslims (*fard kifaaya*) and the Qur'aan and Sunna and books of Islaamic communal duties like hajj and *jihad* alongside them regardless of the mistakes they jurisprudence all attest to this (al-Ahmadee 2004:42). However, under certain may commit as long as they remain Muslim. Al-Tahaawee said, "And performing hajj conditions it becomes obligatory upon all those who are able to fulfill the *jihad* (*fard* and *jihad* with a pious or wicked leader is a duty until the Day of Judgment and *'ayn*). Allah says in the Qur'aan, "Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at nothing changes this principle nor falsifies it" (Ibn Abee al-'Azza 1988:555). This (at home), except those who are disabled, and those who strive hard and fight in the radically differs with the *Takfeeree* approach to *jihad* which begins with eliminating cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives. Allah has preferred in grades those the alleged apostate leadership. Secondly, Faraj has declared '*jihad*' when he was not who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit" the legitimate Islaamic authority which contradicts one of the main conditions for (Qur'aan 1996/4:95). This shows that at times only a group is required to fight *jihad* offensive *jihad*. Thirdly, Faraj in his extremism has equated *jihad* to revolutionary and those who stay back with valid excuse are rewarded as well. Ibn Katheer said theory, a foreign ideology, which can be found amongst the theories propounded by about the above verse that "In it is proof that *jihad* is not obligatory on all, instead it the communists and other idealists. Hoffman compares the concept of terror and the is obligatory on some" (1997/2:241). Al-Badr said, "*Al-jihad* in the cause of Allah is French revolution to communist Marxist ideals "born of the alienation and one of the greatest Islaamic rites and one of the most important religious obligations, exploitative conditions of 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism. From this milieu a new era of and its ruling varies according to its type and level and by assessing the conditions of terrorism emerged, in which the concept had gained many familiar revolutionary, the ones who are entrusted with it" (2005:15). The above evidences show that *jihad* anti-state connotations of today" (Hoffman 1998:17). Faraj's theories seem to

resemble the call of Marxist revolutionaries more than Islaamic *jihad*; however most of his book is well supported by Islaamic texts and examples throughout history, but

his conclusions about how to practice those principles is what differentiated him from orthodox scholars primarily. The Prophet was asked about *jihad* and he answered, "Whoever fights to make the word of Allah superior then this is for the sake of Allah the Most Exalted" (al-Bukhaaree 1970/ 4:50). So, the establishment of Allah's religion is the purpose of *jihad* according to classical scholars not revolution and blood shed. Finally, Faraj made it an obligation upon all Muslims to rebel as he felt the leaders were apostates, and this contradicts the authentic narrations of the Prophet urging obedience to the rulers in goodness and patience if they become oppressive. Faraj alleges, "The governments of today have abandoned Islaam and they were raised under the supervision of colonialism, regardless of whether it was crusaders, communists or Zionists" (Faraj 1981:6). For Faraj the leaders were simply masquerading as Muslims and deceiving the people by implementing secularist policies and educational systems. However, his claims did not legitimize rebellion and his view seems inconsistent with more classical interpretations. Imaam Shawkaanee (born 1173 *Hijra*) said, "It is not permissible to rebel against the leaders even if they are extremely oppressive. The limit is as long as they establish the prayer and do not show open disbelief" (cited in al-Jazaa'iree 2003:135). Therefore, it becomes clear from the above evidence that the purpose of *jihad* is not to overthrow the Muslim rulers and cause chaos in Muslim societies, but rather to make the word of Allah supreme by defending it and spreading it, and the command to offensive *jihad* is at the discretion of the legitimate Muslim ruler.

From Faraj's statements it appears he differs with Mustafa with regards to his theory of revolution and *jihad*. Stanely in his analysis of the two ideologues commented:

Faraj's theory of revolution as an antithesis to Shukree Mustafa's is a useful way of understanding it and the synthesis that came afterwards. Both men were in the stream of radicals who had interpreted Qutb's Milestones literally, and both therefore rejected the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood's line that fighting Israel took precedence over overthrowing the Egyptian regime, which led the MB to collaborate with the regime (2005:1).

So, for Faraj and Mustafa overthrowing the regime took priority over dealing with external enemies and for Faraj that meant immediate rebellion, whereas Mustafa sought to excommunicate and prepare for war. Another issue where they tended to

differ was regarding excommunication. For Faraj it seemed to be more of a spiritual separation from the society, "he rejected the idea of the 'period of weakness' and physical separation from the infidel society, instead advocating infiltration of society, government and security forces and militant engagement with the regime" (Stanely 2005:2). This strategy of Faraj seems to indicate he had more sophistication, planning and vision than Mustafa and his predecessors. Even the *Khawaarij* sects like the *Azaariqa* tended to advocate complete removal from the infidel society as it was deemed sinful to stay amongst disbelievers. Another area in which Faraj differed with Mustafa, and many of his contemporaries, was that he believed *jihad* required preparation and the ability to carry it out, but he felt that many of his contemporaries used this as an excuse to leave *jihad* off permanently. He states, "It is agreed upon that Muslims should possess strength to fight, but how can they realize this strength when you negate the obligation of *jihad*?" (Faraj 1981:18). Faraj also refuted those during his time who held that *jihad* could not be carried out because the Muslims were in a state of weakness like the Makkan period during the lifetime of the Prophet. Faraj states, "There are some who claim we live in the Makkan phase so they can have an excuse to leave off *jihad* in the path of Allah. Therefore, whoever claims they are in the Makkan phase so they can leave the obligation of *jihad* should also leave fasting and prayer, and they can practice usury because it was not prohibited until Madina" (Faraj 1981:18). Faraj's group eventually assassinated Sadat and was crushed soon after carrying out its plot. What is noteworthy though is that "the assassin was an army officer, Lieutenant Khalid Islambouli, who was able to get close to the President because he was part of the parade. This attack, which was personally sanctioned by Faraj, demonstrated the effectiveness of his policy of infiltration of the regime" (Stanley 2005:2). Due to the government repression that ensued after the assassination of Sadat, militants were forced underground and this discredited Faraj's ideals in Egypt. However, there still remains in many of the contemporary *Jihaadees* elements of his conceptualization of *jihad* and *takfeer* which evolved from the *Khawaarij*. Both Faraj and Mustafaa possessed *Khawaarij*-like thought although their approach to achieving their aims differed.

### 3.3.5 ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan

Another more contemporary figure who has had a large influence upon *Jamaa’ a al-Jihaad* was ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan. ‘Umar is a blind cleric who spent a significant portion of his life in prison for radicalism and inciting terrorist acts. Currently he serves a life sentence in America for his alleged role in the plotting of the World Trade Center Bombing in 1993. ‘Umar was a strong influence on Islambouli one of the assassins of Sadat and “he became known to some of his students and followers as the ‘muftee’ or religious suzerain of al-Jihad” (Cooley 2000:40). Consequently, *al-Jihaad* was the group led by Faraj and it was well known for its violent extremism; “members could and did commit murders, and for purposes of gathering funds for the organization, made armed raids and robberies on jewelers or goldsmiths, many of whom happened to be Coptic Christians” (Cooley 2000:40). These activities may not be directly attributed to ‘Umar but they are illustrative of his religious rulings. These illicit activities are characteristic of *Takfeeree* groups as they deem the state as *Daar al-Harb* and they make it permissible to steal, terrorize and take war captives, and they perform these acts to materially strengthen their groups under the guise of Islaam (Cooley 2000:40).<sup>138</sup> ‘Umar is well-known for his incitement to rebel against contemporary Muslim leaders, and perhaps, this is in part due to his adherence to the Qutbists' methodology (Cooley 2000:43).<sup>139</sup>

‘Umar was tried and acquitted of the plot to assassinate Sadat. When asked about the ruling on assassinating a leader who rules by other than the sharee’a he replied it was permissible. “Later when asked to give a specific ruling about Sadat he replied, 'I cannot say that he has definitely crossed the line into infidelity'... This helped to make possible his future acquittal, and to empower him as a helpmate to the CIA in recruiting young zealots, especially among Arab-Americans in the United States, for the jihad in Afghanistan” (Cooley 2000:41). ‘Umar, unlike some of his predecessors, was knowledgeable about Islaam and trained in the religion. These characteristics combined with charisma and fiery speech has given him enormous impact upon *Jihaadees* and Muslim youth in general around the Muslim world.

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<sup>138</sup> The issue of terror as a political weapon will be explored under the sections on Bin Laaden and Zarqaawee.

<sup>139</sup> This term refers to those who follow or are influenced by the methodology or creed of Sayyid Qutb, especially in matters of *takfeer* and group partisanship.

### 3.3.5.1 His Concept of Jihaad

*Jihaad* as was mentioned previously is an important obligation in Islaam; however ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan and those who follow his methodology tend to over-exaggerate its place in Islaam. For ‘Umar, as well as his predecessor Faraj, *jihaad* was considered a sixth pillar of Islaam and the most important matter to rectify the condition of the Muslim nation (Esposito 2002:62). In addition, similar to the *Khawaarij* they claimed one of the main objectives of *jihaad* is to remove corrupt leadership. It appears they did not consider the consequences of removing the rulers through violent means and its cost physically and financially upon Muslim society.<sup>140</sup>

For ‘Umar and many of his successors *jihaad* was deemed so important that it was waged by cooperating with their enemies. During the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, ‘Umar like many of the famous *Mujahideen* (Islaamic holy warriors) became assets to the CIA and other Western intelligence agencies. A noteworthy personality he became acquainted with was ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam a well known scholar who like Shaikh ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan “appears to have worked with the CIA in their campaign to recruit foreign volunteers to fight the Soviets” (Ruthven 2002: 203). This is an incredibly significant point as it illustrates the fact that many of the extremists who openly defy, terrorize and berate the West also seek refuge, financial and military support from Western governments. Moreover, in the cases of ‘Umar, ‘Azzam, Bin Laden, and Zarqaawee they were even dependent upon those most hostile to their aims like the CIA and the American military establishment for military training and aid. For example, “By the time the last Russian soldiers marched out of Afghanistan in February 1989, money measured in billions of dollars, to say nothing of over a million human lives, had been expended to win the war” (Cooley 2000:107). The most outspoken critics of the American government also benefited tremendously from it and openly accepted its support, and this is where many of the modern day groups depart with the original *Khawaarij*. Whereas, the *Khawaarij* freed themselves totally from their enemies, the contemporary groups do so when it appears convenient (‘Awaajee 2002:459). According to Cooley:

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<sup>140</sup> There are tremendous costs materially due to the destruction of infrastructure, the loss of life, instability, and fear that result from terrorist acts, and Muslims bear the brunt of such actions.

Beyond the CIA funds and the largesse of Arab Shaikhs, kings and financiers, many other sources, well before the victory, had made the continuing Islamist jihad and its export around the world, self-financing. There was the profitable sale and resale of gift weapons, from rifles to Stinger missiles and other commodities of all descriptions, sent free to fighters and their Pakistani sponsors, but often reaching arms salesmen. Some of the victorious Afghan leaders, by the time they fell out and began after the soviet withdrawal to slaughter each other, had already built a huge international drug network (Cooley 2000:107).

It is noteworthy that most of the supporters of the Afghan *jihad* (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other Muslim governments) later became the targets of the new global *jihad* waged by the various *Takfeeree* groups, and ‘Umar is considered to be instrumental in exporting of that so-called *jihad*. ‘Umar “...allegedly was among the group of Egyptians who first persuaded Bin Laden to ‘have a clear idea to use (the Arab recruits) after Afghanistan for other wars’” (Kohlmann 2004:26). ‘Umar is renowned and respected amongst *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* circles as a shaikh who exhorts to *jihad* and condemns the West, although he sought refuge in America from the Egyptian authorities. ‘Umar claimed, “Americans are descendants of apes and pigs who have been feeding from the dining tables of the Zionists, Communism, and colonialism!” (cited in Kohlmann 2004:26). Even though ‘Umar was dependent and a beneficiary of American military and political power he never ceased to express his hostility towards the American establishment. This apparent duplicity was not known to the *Khawarij* as they were very open in their stance towards their enemies and refused to reside amongst them (‘Awaajee 2002:448). The support and aid to groups and individuals like ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan, and al-Qaeda, who took part in the Afghan *jihad* served to spread the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* ideals and export terror in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies.<sup>141</sup>

### 3.3.5.2 ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan on Rulership and Takfeer

‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan and his group were determined to implement what they consider a pure Islaamic state under the rule of a single leader. However, this goal has not materialized and it has come at a high price: bloodshed and terror of those who are protected under Islaamic law. Esposito described their rationale by saying, “They have rationalized their holy war against Egypt’s ‘atheist’ state and rulers as required,

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<sup>141</sup> Essentially, the West made allies with those whom they shared a common political objective with: stopping Soviet aggression.

the obligation of all true believers. Islamic Jihad's war is waged against all nonbelievers, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Extremist groups like Jihad reject Islam's traditional tolerance of the protected communities of Jews and Christians, People of the book (dhimmi)" (2002: 90). These ideals espoused by 'Umar are similar to Qutb's, and yet are another striking difference between classical scholars, *Takfeeree* groups and their predecessors the *Khawaarij* who also sought to overthrow the leaders and declare their opposition to be apostates, potentially resulting in havoc for Muslims and those under their authority.<sup>142</sup> 'Umar "issued a *fatwa* sanctioning the killing and plundering of Christians in Luxor in 1997 because they were anti-Muslim" (cited in Esposito 2002:91). Allah says, "If anyone of the polytheists seeks your protection then grant him protection so that they may hear the word of Allah then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not" (Qur'aan 1996/9:6). This verse is for those who seek protection from the Muslims, so it can be inferred that those who reside in a Muslim land have the same protection and security afforded to them. The Prophet mentioned specifically that whoever kills those who are under the contract or protection of the Muslims will not smell the fragrance of paradise (al-Bukhaaree 1970/4:259). Therefore, this religious verdict given by 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahmaan is inconsistent with verdicts issued by classical scholars as it contradicts the authentic sources of Islaam. Moreover, this verdict constitutes disobedience to the leader as the non-Muslims are under his authority and protection, and have his permission to live in the country. Ibn al-Qayyim, a 13<sup>th</sup> century scholar, mentioned the seriousness of issuing religious verdicts in the following words, "Then every danger for the muftee is the same for the judge. His danger is even greater than this because he specializes in verdicts. However, the danger of the *muftee*<sup>143</sup> is greater in another way, for his sharee'a verdict is general and it applies to the one who asked for it and those other than him" (Ibn al-Qayyim 2002:2/72). So, it is not for everyone in the society to make religious rulings and attempt to implement them without the governing authority because this amounts to arbitrary rule instead of Islaamic justice.

From amongst the *Takfeeree* ideologues analyzed in this study, 'Umar's argument for rebelling against an oppressive leader is the most coherent. 'Umar cites three

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<sup>142</sup> "Mirroring the Kharijites, Qutb taught that those Muslims who refused to participate were to be counted among the enemies of God, apostates who were excommunicated (takfir) and should be fought and killed along with the other enemies of God" (Esposito 2002:61).

<sup>143</sup> One who makes religious verdicts.

different sayings regarding the orthodox scholar's position regarding the corrupt leader. The first position being that one should abstain from rebellion unless disbelief becomes open and apparent from the leader. The second position is abstinence from removing the oppressive leader if it will cause greater harm to the Muslims than his remaining in power. Lastly, a group of the classical scholars held that it was permissible and obligatory to remove the corrupt leaders, among those scholars he cited were Aboo Haneefa one of the early jurists, and classical scholars; al-Maawardee and Ibn Hazm.<sup>144</sup> The evidence for the first two positions has already been mentioned in the section referring to the orthodox position regarding leadership. The third position requires analysis as this would appear to bolster 'Umar's argument for rebelling against corrupt leadership.

Although initially some classical scholars supported rebelling against corrupt leadership, this opinion contradicts the majority of the textual evidences. Many *hadeeth* urge patience and tolerance of the leader as long as he does not become a disbeliever. Some classical scholars used the following *hadeeth* narration as evidence to support the permissibility of rebelling against an oppressive leader. In a narration transmitted by Muslim, the Prophet said:

There was no Prophet sent by Allah to the nations of old who did not have disciples and companions from amongst his own people, adopting his manner and executing his instructions who, later came to differ amongst themselves, saying what they did not do and doing that for which they had no authority. Whoever fights against them with his hands is a believer, and whoever fights them with his tongue is a believer and whoever fights them with his heart is a believer, for behind this there lies not a mustard seed of faith (al-Nawawee 1997/1:215-216).

Al-Maawardee, a classical scholar, explains this *hadeeth* claiming that if the leader is corrupt and neglecting his duty he should be advised and if he does not heed this advice he should be removed. This is essentially the argument of 'Umar and some of his contemporaries like Aboo Qataada whose position will be discussed in the next section. Although this opinion was held by a group of classical scholars it contradicts

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<sup>144</sup> Two important points are worth mentioning here: that although these orthodox scholars held this position contrary to the majority of classical scholars and what the strongest evidence suggests, it does not lessen their status as major orthodox scholars. The second point is that the fact that 'Umar and some *Takfeerees* use these scholars' opinion in this issue does not mean they are correct, nor is this researcher suggesting those classical scholars were *Khawaarij* because they concur upon this particular issue.

most of the evidences from the Qur'aan and the Sunna and the general consensus of the classical scholars as was illustrated in chapter two. Another problem with this argument is that it does not take into consideration the welfare of the general Muslim population: most leaders resist attempts to remove them from power, especially corrupt ones, and this internal strife usually leads to bloodshed and general instability ('Aseeree 2007:137).

As for the saying of Aboo Haneefa which was cited by Qurtubee in his explanation of the Qur'aan, where he said, "If a regime becomes corrupt, overthrow it for if it is not overthrown then every successive regime issuing from it becomes illegitimate" (cited in 'Abd al-Rahmaan 1990:12). This opinion of Aboo Haneefa also goes against the evidences from the Qur'aan, the Sunna, and what the majority of the classical scholars agreed upon. Also, some suggest Aboo Haneefa later recanted this statement and recalled his verdict as is evidenced by the saying of Imaam al-Tahaawee who was a follower of his school of jurisprudence (Ibn Abee al-'Azza 1988:73).<sup>145</sup> Al-Khumees concludes, after weighing the different evidences, that Aboo Haneefa "in the beginning used to support the overthrow of corrupt leadership, then later in his life he chose the position of abstaining from their removal, and this is evidenced by the position al-Tahaawee chose and agreed to when clarifying the belief of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa'a* according to the school of jurisprudence of Aboo Haneefa and his companions" (1996:569). Also, it is narrated that Aboo Haneefa held the position that rebelling against the corrupt leader entails creating a greater harm than benefit and this is another way in which classical scholars differed with modern thinkers on this issue: *Takfeerees* view rebellion as a point of creed and generally see greater benefit in removing corrupt leadership (al-Khumees 1999:108-109).

Finally, Ibn Hazm (died 456 *Hijra*), a major Sunni Muslim jurist also held that it was permissible to revolt against the corrupt leader. However, Ibn Hazm is known to have held controversial views in matters of faith especially regarding the characteristics and attributes of Allah, and therefore some scholars question his

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<sup>145</sup> Evidence is conflicting regarding the final position of Aboo Haneefa as many scholars of his school of thought narrate that his position changed. "The statement that al-Tahaawee mentioned was also reported on the authority of Ibn al-Hamaam on Aboo Haneefa in *Al-Masaayira* and Ibn Abee al-Shareef and Ibn Qatloobgaa explained it and also concurred. Likewise, al-Bazdawee mentioned it" (al-Khumees 1996:569).

opinion regarding this issue especially since it contradicts the evidences of the majority of the orthodox scholars in this matter (Ibn Hazm 2002/1:9-15).<sup>146</sup> Additionally, the evidence 'Umar cited from Ibn Hazm applies to rebelling against the apostate ruler not one who is corrupt. Ibn Hazm was referring to the *Raafida* Shee'a who are known to contradict the orthodox creed through their extremism in worship, *takfeer* of many of the companions of the Prophet, and are considered to be non-Muslim by the consensus of orthodox scholars both classical and contemporary ('Awaajee 2001/1:362). Therefore, this example 'Umar cited was not applicable to the matter at hand: rebelling against the corrupt leader. 'Umar is very clear in articulating his stance towards the leadership when he says, "Whenever an element of injustice appears, the imaam must be approached in order that he be corrected or restrained....But if he refuses to fulfill any of his duties and is unrepentant then his removal is obligatory and he should be replaced by a man who will stand by truth" ('Abd al-Rahmaan 1990:15). This statement is in clear contradiction to the orthodox position regarding advising the ruler. Firstly, when enjoining the good and forbidding the evil it should be done in accordance with one's ability to carry out the duty and not cause a greater harm. Secondly, classical scholars like Imaam Ahmad, Ibn al-Jawzee and many others viewed changing a wrong by the hand as meaning to separate two parties physically not using a weapon or through violence. Thirdly, if the leader is to be advised it should not be done in a way that causes the subjects to have rancor for him, or spread harm or rebellion ('Abd al-Kareem 2001:106). The Prophet said in a *hadeeth* transmitted by Muslim that "Verily Allah is pleased with three things for you; that you worship him and not associate partners with him. That you all hold fast to the rope of Allah and not split, and that you advise the one Allah has placed in authority over you" (al-Nawawee 1997/12:432). Many scholars use this narration and many others to support advising the leader with patience, and kindness regardless of whether he is corrupt or just, and the leader should be advised in privacy so as not to threaten his position or reduce his authority in the eyes of the general population. Ibn 'Uthaymeen points out that the killing of 'Alee the fourth caliph and 'Uthmaan the third caliph, as well as the fighting and differences that arose between the companions

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<sup>146</sup> Although Ibn Hazm differed with orthodox scholars in his understanding of *al-asmaa wa al-sifaat* none of the classical scholars refer to him as a heretic because of his immense service to the Sunna and support for it and his contribution towards the preservation of Islaam and he is considered excused due to his misinterpretation of verses that mention certain attributes of Allah. However, according to the orthodox creed it is not permissible to follow him or anyone in their mistakes as only the Prophet Muhammad can be followed blindly and can be considered a perfect example.

was the result of outwardly criticizing the leaders, publicizing their faults, and creating rancor and differences between the subjects and leadership, and this was the beginning of the *Khawaarij* and those who followed their methodology ('Abd al-Kareem 2001:112). 'Umar's position regarding how to deal with Islaamic authority is inconsistent with the majority of the classical scholars and “the scholars of the *Salaf* used to warn against following strange issues, that which is permissible but not recommended, mistakes of the scholars, and odd sayings or opinions, and they were very strict in rejecting those that follow that methodology” (Hussayn 2007:18).

In sum, the most important arguments posed by the classical scholars against deposing a corrupt leader are as follows: the Qur'aan and Sunna both provide clear evidence to show that it is impermissible to rebel against the Muslim leader unless he exhibits open disbelief.<sup>147</sup> Secondly, majority of the scholars consider it to be a foundation of the orthodox creed.<sup>148</sup> Thirdly, those scholars like Maawardee, and Aboo Haneefa who thought it was permissible to rebel against an oppressive leader believed it was only an option if the benefit of revolt was greater than the harm of revolting, and this seems to indicate that patience was the primary premise and rebellion was considered only in exceptional cases. Many of the books of the early scholars of creed and jurisprudence mention (*ijmaa'a*) consensus when discussing this issue in favor of not rebelling.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Refer to the whole chapter of Saheeh Muslim with the explanation of Imaam al-Nawawee, entitled *Kitaab al-Imaarah* (al-Nawawee 1996/12:405-448). There are no less than one hundred and two *hadeeth* in that chapter alone that strengthen the argument of those who hold it to be impermissible to rebel against the Muslim leader who is not guilty of open disbelief.

<sup>148</sup> Imaam al-Nawawee said, “As for rebelling and fighting against the leaders, then it is unlawful according to the *Ijmaa'a* (consensus) of Muslims, even if the leaders were sinful oppressors. My opinion is supported by evidence from *hadeeth* and *Ahl al-Sunna* have consensus on the impermissibility of removing the leader due to his sinfulness” (al-Nawawee 1997/12:432).

<sup>149</sup> Imaam al-Nawawee states, “As for the position supported by some of our companions [scholars of Shaafi'ee jurisprudence] in the books of jurisprudence that the leader can be removed, and it is the position of the Mu'tizilah as well, then it is a mistake that goes against the consensus. The scholars say: the reason for not removing the leader and rebelling against him is because of the tribulations, bloodshed, and open wickedness that results from it” (al-Nawawee 1997/12:432). Imaam al-Barbaharee said, “It is not permissible to fight the leaders and rebel against them even if they commit oppression... and it is not from the Sunna to fight the leader as it spreads evil in the religion and worldly affairs” (al-Barbaharee 1997:76). Majority of the books of creed and jurisprudence support this and refer to rebellion against a Muslim leader as a sinful practice and refer to it as agreed upon, meaning it is a principle that forms the foundation of Islaam and those who disagree with it either have fallen into innovation or mistaken in their *ijtihaad* (jurisprudent reasoning). For other statements of the early scholars and their view that this principle is agreed upon refer to (al-Laalakaa'ee 2002/1:176-183) and (al-Faasee 2003:107).

throughout Muslim history, against the leader resulted in bloodshed and failure (Ibn al-Atheer 1965/3:372:410).

### 3.3.6 Aboo Qataada al-Filisteenee

Among the better known clerics in the West, often associated with radicalism, is 'Umar Aboo Qataada al-Filisteenee. Born in Bethlehem around 1960, Aboo Qataada is a Jordanian national thought to have had ties with the Armed Islaamic Group<sup>150</sup> in Algeria and to have been an associate of Usaama Bin Laden. Unlike many of his predecessors with the exception of 'Umar 'Abd al-Rahmaan he has a background in Islaamic studies and "...has impeccable traditional and modern Salifist<sup>151</sup> credentials and had acted as the in-house alim to radical groups, particularly in Algeria, from his base in northwest London since 1994" (Burke 2004:184). Aboo Qataada has world wide *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* credentials which among many groups substantiate his Islaamic verdicts and rulings. After Bin Laden's decline in credibility amongst certain *Takfeeree* groups he relied upon Aboo Qataada's religious verdicts to re-establish his legitimacy as a fearless Islaamic holy warrior free from Western influence. Burke comments:

The basis of the Takfiris' criticism was that bin Laden supported, and was protected by, the Taliban who themselves were 'apostate' because they wanted to be recognized by the United Nations, a kufr organization. Abu Qatada decided that the Takfiris were in error. His fatwa ... pointed out that the *Takfiris* were declaring 'very senior and important movements including Hamas, the Taliban, the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and Islamic Movement in Kurdistan' as kufr (2004:184).

Aboo Qataada has remained in controversy for his religious verdicts and alleged involvement with terrorist groups and activities. Burke comments, "Qatada himself had become famous after issuing an opinion on an Algerian cleric's *fatwa* in 1994, in which he backed the view that the killing of women and children by militants in Algeria was justified" (2004:185). Aboo Qataada said in his religious verdict, "this research includes two issues from the topic of *jihaad*: the permissibility of killing

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<sup>150</sup> A *Takfeeree* group that fought the Algerian government after it refused to relinquish power after Islaamic political parties began to have popular support in Algeria.

<sup>151</sup> Aboo Qataada appears to reject the use of associating with a particular group and he takes exception to being labeled *Salafee*. On an audio tape he said, "Whoever makes it an obligation upon the people to be *Ikhwanee* [*Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen*], *Tableeghee*, or *Salafee*, then he must repent or be killed" (Aboo Qataada 2005).

women and children to prevent the danger of the brothers being killed or violating our dignity. Secondly, the permissibility of suicide bombings: these actions should not be classified as suicide” (Aboo Qataada 1994:10).

### 3.3.6.1 Aboo Qataada on Jihaad and Takfeer

Aboo Qataada is most noted for his support for global *jihaad* and his staunch position regarding the modern day leaders and societies, with Saudi Arabia being foremost in his criticisms. In general most of Aboo Qataada's divergence from the orthodox creed appears to be regarding his views on *jihaad* and *takfeer* (al-Suhaymee 2005:193).<sup>152</sup>

Aboo Qataada seems to be aware of the main principles that prohibit making *takfeer* upon an individual; however his verdicts appear to contradict his knowledge. Aboo Qataada was asked about the connection between *jihaad* and terrorism in the West and he replied by saying, "No doubt that the Koran, the Sunna and the life of the Prophet order the Muslim to carry on jihad and fighting. This is something no Muslim can deny. Any Shaikh (who) tries to deny it or strip it of its real meaning is considered [as having committed] an act of apostasy" (Mckenna 2004:1). Aboo Qataada did not mention the fact that someone who denies *jihaad* as an immediate obligation or by misinterpreting the texts or through ignorance of its true meaning and purpose could still be considered Muslim as misinterpretation and ignorance are among the obstructions to making *takfeer*. However, if they deny that *jihaad* is a part of the religion without having the excuse of ignorance, or misinterpretation, or coercion, then they have contradicted the consensus of orthodox scholars and may be considered apostates (al-Muneef 2005:45-48). Aboo Qataada is quick to apply the judgment of *takfeer* with disregard for its conditions and principles similar to the *Khawaarij* and this becomes evident from his position regarding the rulers. In contrast to this Ibn Taymeeya says, "It is an obligation to be cautious not to make *takfeer* of the Muslims for their mistakes and sins; as it was the first innovation that became

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<sup>152</sup> Aboo Qataada made *takfeer* of all the soldiers in Algeria saying they were apostates guilty of killing Muslims and Islaamic fighters and supporting the apostate regime. He said, "So every soldier in Algeria, with the government and its party, are disbelievers in Allah, a polytheist that will spend eternity in the hell-fire and his blood and honor are lawful" (al-Jazaa'iree 2005:66).

apparent in Islaam. For they declared the Muslims to be apostates and made their blood and wealth lawful” (Ibn Taymeeya 1989/13:31).

When discussing the rules of *jihad* Aboo Qataada mentions an important and well known principle, and then he contradicts it by issuing a religious verdict undermining this same principle. From the Prophetic traditions regarding the rules of *jihad* it is established that women, children, and the elderly non-combatants should not be harmed. Aboo Qataada acknowledges this principle. He said, "Islam prohibits the killing of women and children (the non-fighters). But sometimes during jihad, mistakes happen and non-fighters from women and children do get killed. The probability of non-fighters being killed does not stop or prohibit jihad from happening. This is an Islamic as well as a worldly principle" (Mckenna 2004:1). On the other hand, on an audio cassette, Aboo Qataada was asked about a religious verdict he gave for the fighters in Algeria to kill the children and women of the government soldiers, and he said that it depends upon what brings the maximum benefit (Hamad and al-Ree'is 2005).<sup>153</sup> Aboo Qataada clearly contradicts himself with this religious verdict and at the same time this verdict opposes the Qur'aan, the authentic Sunna and the consensus of the Muslim community (al-Faasee 2003/3:1019). This verdict also highlights the similarity of Aboo Qataada and the original *Khawaarij* who believed that it was an obligation to annihilate their enemies after making *takfeer* of them. The only essential difference is that Aboo Qataada believes in killing the combatant's women and children to terrorize his opponents, which is similar to the *Azaariqa* sect, whereas most *Khawaarij* groups advocated enslavement of them (al-Shahrastaanee 1989:115). For this reason some contemporary scholars believe the modern *Takfeeree* groups are worse and more extreme than the original *Khawaarij* and prone to advocating wanton violence.

Aboo Qataada justified his *fatwa* by claiming it was in accordance with the *jihad* of the Prophet and classical sharee'a rulings. He cited a *hadeeth* in which some women and children were killed while fighting *jihad* as evidence to support his ruling. The Prophet said regarding those women and children, "They are from them"

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<sup>153</sup> It is assumed that he means here doing whatever it takes to bring about the victory of the Muslims and cause them the least amount of harm and losses.

(al-Bukhaaree 1970/4:158).<sup>154</sup> Aboo Qataada alleges that his *fatwa* is supported by the sharee'a. He claims, "This makes it clear that what *Jamaa'a al-Islaameeya al-Maslaha* did by issuing death threats to the women and children of the apostates in order to take pressure off the brothers in sisters in prison is without doubt from the sharee'a" (Aboo Qataada 1994:12). In addition, he also asserts that "the *Mujahideen* brothers in Algeria warned the women of the apostates that their husbands had abandoned the religion, so they must separate from them because it is not permissible to stay with an apostate, and if they refuse, then they are as guilty as their husband" (Aboo Qataada 1994:12).<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> It is clear from the *hadeeth* that the women and children were not intended targets as the battle took place at night. Many other *hadeeth* show that it is one of the principles of *jihaad* to avoid harming women and children. This is why Imaam al-Bukhaaree, from his wisdom, entitled the chapter: 'Is it permissible to attack the enemies with the Probability of killing women and children?' This illustrates that Aboo Qataada probably misunderstood this *hadeeth* and took it out of context.

<sup>155</sup> Aboo Qataada seems to exhibit the same circular reasoning many of the *Takfeerees* use: according to him the husbands have become disbelievers; therefore the wives become disbelievers if they remain with them. This claim requires evidence and has parallels with Sayyid Qutb's concept of excommunication: separating from those he believes have become apostates by remaining with infidels, a concept Shukree Mustafa and Faraaj expanded upon (Qutb 2007/6:3990).

Abou Qataada appears to set himself up as the spokesman for the Muslim nation while criticizing the Muslim governments for their shortcomings. Abou Qataada advocates violence as the means for change if Muslim governments do not support his views. This call for violent political action and change contradicts the *Salafee* creed which holds that patience and advice are the appropriate responses to oppression and abuse of power by the Muslim authority.<sup>156</sup> The Prophet said, “Religion is sincerity. We said; to whom: He said: To Allah and his book, and his Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk” (al-Nawawee 1997/2:225). Al-‘Abbaad mentioned that since ~~How is it, helping and raising the head of a lion, We do not believe to Allah (al-Abbaad 2003b:44)~~ If it were known from the many of the classical scholars how they applied in fighting the oppressors (1999:43) the emergence of the affairs of the Muslims were righteously, and leaves sufficient evidence (Abidat their ~~Kusband 2001:186)~~ Abou Qataada appears to be doing for the entire body of the ~~the Sayyid Qutb making it a doctrine and this is reflected in the *Kihs and jush* for revolution theots displayed this harsh word.<sup>157</sup> until contemporary times and this is what seems apparent in the case of Abou Qataada and the contemporary groups (al-Rahayee 2006:37) spouses revolution and overthrowing the leader and this creates divisions amongst Muslims, causing some groups to declare others apostates. By ~~Like the *Khawaarij* and those ideologues that preceded him, Abou Qataada inciting violence and casting suspicion upon the Muslim leaders Abou Qataada advocates violence and the overthrow of present day Muslim regimes because he distances himself from the main body of Muslims which only serves to further the regards them as apostates. Abou Qataada said:~~ depictions of Islaam as a violent terrorist religion. Abou Qataada calls for removing the leader through violence; however the Prophet stated, “Whoever finds something I believe that the regimes existing in our countries are bad regimes. Our he hates nations cannot be patient. For if these regimes are overthrown, then stand-regimes are the ones that are dictating the method of change. If they span then he has died the death of the days of ignorance,” (al-Nawawee 1997/12:442). In another narration the Prophet specifically disallowed rebellion against the leader as the reason for dictating another means of change other than just using words (Mckenna 2004:1). the death of *jaahileeya* (ignorance). Ibn Hajar explained that the death implied here is not like that of a disbeliever, but instead the death of one who is a major sinner dying upon misguidance (Ibn Hajar 1996/7:13). Therefore, in accordance with the~~

<sup>156</sup> One of the main conditions for rebelling against a ruler is that he displays open undisputable disbelief and the Muslims have the ability to remove him from power with the least amount of harm to the society and Muslim population. See chapter two the section on the orthodox position regarding leadership.

<sup>157</sup> “More than anyone else, Sayyid Qutb...inspired generations of jihadis, including Al Qaeda’s senior leaders, Osama bin Laden and his deputies...to wage perpetual jihad to ‘abolish injustice from the earth, to bring people to the worship of God alone, and to bring them out of servitude to others into the servants of the Lord’” (Gerges 2005:4).

Prophet's statement it seems the call for revolution and *takfeer* are issues that divide the Muslims, go against the orthodox creed, and are clear evidence of misguidance and disregard for the well being of the Muslim community.

Aboo Qataada at times appears to base his verdicts upon his personal opinions which conflict the evidences of the Qur'aan and Sunna, and consensus of classical scholars. Aboo Qataada mentioned that rebellion against the corrupt leaders is a duty but he did not bring clear evidence for this statement and it contradicts what has been previously mentioned from the classical scholars in this research. Aboo Qataada stated:

No doubt that one of the types of jihad in our religion is to fight the ruler if he went astray. Some scholars see that the ruler did not do enough wrong, or that he is not wrong at all and thus does not deserve to be overthrown. But I personally believe, and many people believe with me, that the ruler has done enough wrong to be overthrown and fought. Not only in Jordan, but also in all the Islamic countries (Mckenna 2004:1).

Aboo Qataada justifies rebellion of all the Muslim countries without exception. However, unless the leader has openly demonstrated unbelief, and scholars pass a judgment confirming this, then it is not permissible to rebel against them (al-Nawawee 1997/12:440).<sup>158</sup> 'Umar Bin al-Khattaab the second caliph and one of the closest companions to the Prophet emphasized the importance of obedience to the ruler even if he is corrupt. He said, "If an Abyssinian slave rules over you then be patient, listen and obey even if he beats you. Then if he prohibits you then remain patient, and if he wants something that compromises your religion then say: I hear and obey with my blood, with the exception of my religion, and do not divide the main body of Muslims" (cited in 'Abd al-Kareem 2001:142). There are several ways in which this narration about 'Umar contradicts the position adopted by Aboo Qataada. Firstly, it illustrates that even when experiencing physical repression, one should be patient and non-aggressive towards the Muslim leader. Secondly, this narration shows that rebellion is a un-Islamic principle due to oppression alone, as long as the leader does not display undisputable disbelief. Thirdly, 'Umar's statement is supportive of the textual evidences and not based upon whims and opinions, which incite rebellion, *takfeer*, and the violation of Muslim blood which Islaam has made sacred. Fourthly,

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<sup>158</sup> These conditions came from a prophetic tradition and protect the Muslim society from arbitrary judgments which could plunge the society into anarchy.

the statement emphasizes obedience; even if you are not pleased with the leader or he has low status in society, such as in the case of a slave. Finally, as long as the leader remains Muslim he should be obeyed in righteousness, and the majority of both classical and contemporary *Salafee* scholars express agreement on this issue (al-Ja'eer, al-'Ulyaanee, and al-Juhanee 2007:900-904).

### 3.3.6.2 **Aboo Qataada and Leadership**

Although the majority of classical scholars hold it to be impermissible to rebel and spill the blood of Muslims, Aboo Qataada has written extensively, decreeing *takfeer* upon the rulers and calling for their removal by violent means. The main argument held by Aboo Qataada is that the leaders are dismantling (*tabdeel*) the sharee'a which is disbelief, so this de-legitimizes their authority to rule over the Muslims, thus they must be overthrown. An important point that must be introduced is the meaning of *tabdeel* and the term *taghyeer* (changing). On an audio cassette, Al-Ree'is explains that *tabdeel* is to make new legislation and claim that it is permissible to rule by it. Whereas, to legislate while at the same time acknowledging one is sinning by ruling by other than what Allah has revealed is *taghyeer*. Al-Ree'is then mentions that Ibn Taymeeya referred to this in his collection of religious verdicts, Ibn 'Arabee in his book *Ayaat al-Ahkam*, and Imaam Qurtubee mentioned it in his exegesis of the Qur'aan (al-Ree'is 2005). The views held by the aforementioned scholars emphasize the orthodox view: dismantling the sharee'a is disbelief as it involves making un-Islamic legislation permissible, and changing the legislation involves doing these actions through one's desires without believing them to be permissible which is minor disbelief. Aboo Qataada seems to consider both actions the same: any ruling which contradicts the sharee'a is major disbelief which necessitates *takfeer* especially if the leader continues in this behavior.<sup>159</sup> Al-'Utaybee said, "Making an action lawful is not a result of doing a sinful action regardless of whether it is done repeatedly or insistently" (al-'Utaybee 2005:20). This contradicts the statement of Aboo Qataada and shows that if a Muslim continues in a sinful practice he does not become a disbeliever, because making something lawful is an issue regarding belief and is not simply restricted to one's actions.

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<sup>159</sup> Refer back to chapter one to see how the *Khawaarij* made *takfeer* for major sins.

Aboo Qataada claims that the humiliation and trials the Muslims face today are a result of changing the sharee'a, and that the governments "have become apostates in everyway, so they dismantled the sharee'a, and they took the pagans as protectors, and killed the monotheists by accusing Islaam" (Aboo Qataada 2005a:1). Here Aboo Qataada makes a very general claim assessing the current situation of the Islaamic nation as the result of apostate leaders who have lost legitimacy to rule. These claims of his originated in the thought of Mawdoodee and his assessment and prescription for Muslims' problems are essentially the same.<sup>160</sup> Aboo Qataada makes *takfeer* of the Jordanian government declaring it an obligation upon all Muslims "to free themselves from them, and it is an obligation to rebel and refuse to be obedient to them according to the consensus of the early scholars" (Aboo Qataada 2005b:3). Al-Barbahaaree said, "And whoever says the prayer is permissible behind every pious or wicked leader and (believes in) *jihad* with every caliph and does not believe in rebelling against the ruler by the sword, and supplicates for his reformation, has differed with the opinion of the *Khawaarij*" (1997:57). The classical scholars viewed supplicating for the leader as a means of salvation from their harm, and the well-being of the community. Nevertheless, the *Khawaarij* and their successors like Aboo Qataada seek rectification by removing the leader.

Aboo Qataada appears to make *takfeer* for the major sins that are widespread in some Muslim societies. Aboo Qataada uses as evidence for the right to rebel, some of the well known sins that are found in many Muslim countries when he says:

By keeping silent about them likewise paves the way for their false methodology and legislative codes that they practice upon the community of Muḥammad...and in their legislation is making lawful, unlawful wealth, and making permissible illegal intercourse, and they judge between the people falsely, and are oppressive, and the consequences of their rules being to waste and destroy the country (Aboo Qataada 2005b:3).

Aboo Qataada urges the Muslims to speak out against their governments and he pronounces *takfeer* of all the leaders similar to Sayyid Qutb, only Qutb seemed to accuse whole societies of apostasy (al-Rahaylee 2006:39). The problem lies in the absoluteness of his assessment and in his general indictment of all the governments: he does not distinguish between those who allow these sinful practices to happen,

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<sup>160</sup> Refer to the section on Mawdoodee in this chapter.

from those who actually legislate secular laws and take them as superior or the same as divine law. For example, a government may condone and keep silent about banks that deal with interest which is known as an unlawful practice in Islaam. However, if the government knows it is unlawful and they persist due to international pressure, or fear for economic instability then this is a major sin and they will be held accountable for it. On the other hand, if the government declares this practice to be permissible or Islaamically valid, the same as it, or better than divine law then this is disbelief (al-Nawawee 2002:1725). Another example, but on the micro level, might be people who involve themselves in prostitution. They know it is unlawful but persist out of economic necessity. Then these persons are major sinners, but if they believe it to be permissible then this would nullify their faith. Aboo Qataada is aware of these principles but seems to ignore them when analyzing the Islaamic governments. Aboo Qataada mentions that there is a difference between mistakes and actually legislating sinful practices (Aboo Qataada 2005a:2). This shows he is aware that there is a difference, but he persists upon the methodology of *takfeer* and calls for revolt. Lastly, Aboo Qataada considers the governments to be held accountable for their sins more so than the general Muslim population, when in fact they both have obligations and rights (al-'Abbaad 2003:45). Aboo Qataada places all the blame for the ills that exist in Muslim societies upon the governments which fosters rebellion and animosity towards the leaders and makes them a target for *Takfeerees*, in fact Aboo Qataada does not believe there are any Islaamic governments that exist in contemporary times (al-Suhaymee 2005:194).

Like Mawdoodee and Qutb, Aboo Qataada holds overthrowing corrupt governments and establishing the sharee'a as one of the most important goals for the Muslim community to attain. Moreover, Aboo Qataada holds that "the most important matter that a Muslim should know in our time is Allah's judgment on these governments" (Aboo Qataada 2005b:2). This contradicts the orthodox creed which regards monotheism in all acts of worship as the highest attainment in this life, and this conforms to what the Prophets of Allah were sent with. Allah says, "I have not created mankind and *jinn* except for worshiping me" (Qur'aan 1996/51:56). He also says, "And verily, We have sent among every Ummah a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah alone, and avoid *Taghut*'" (Qur'aan 1996/16:36). According to Aboo Qataada, it would seem judgment regarding contemporary rulers has now replaced the

foundation of the Islaamic religion. This methodology reflects that of Mawdoodee and Qutb who made correcting the rulers the fundamental pillar of their creed and activism by emphasizing the *tawḥeed* of Allah's sovereign right to rule only.<sup>161</sup>

### 3.3.6.3 Belittlement of the Scholars

The efforts of Aboo Qataada and many of the modern day ideologues are spent belittling scholars who oppose them in creed. This trait is comparable to the early *Khawaarij* who slandered and made *takfeer* of the earliest scholars, the companions (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). When speaking about some of the contemporary scholars such as Saleem al-Hilaalee he refers to him as one of the leaders of *irjaa'a*<sup>162</sup> and servant to the *Taaghoot* (evil ruler who accepts to be worshiped). In addition, he claims that he abides by the methodology of those who only make *takfeer* upon those who make sinful acts lawful even if there is consensus that they nullify one's faith. He also claimed that Naaser al-Deen al-Albaanee, the former *muftee* of Jordan also known as one of the greatest *hadeeth* scholars of this century; was from the extreme *Murji'a*. Al-'Abbaad states in very unequivocal language that "I swear by Allah that Shaikh al-Albaanee is a major scholar. A well known *hadeeth* scholar, supporter of the Sunna and his creed is excellent...A student of knowledge cannot do without his knowledge and books" (cited in al-Reis 2002:42). Bin 'Uthaimen said in defense of al-Albaanee that he is a "major scholar (*alim*) of *hadeeth* and jurisprudence even if he was greater in knowledge of *hadeeth* than in jurisprudence. I do not know of any speech that shows *irjaa'a* from him ever. But those who want to make *takfeer* of the people accuse him, and those like him, of belonging to the *Murji'a*. So this is an evil name to associate him with. And I bear witness to Shaikh al-Albaanee's correct and sound beliefs" (cited in al-Reis 2002:42).<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Gerges states, "Far from viewing jihad as a collective duty governed by strict rules and regulations (similar to just war theory in Christianity, international law, and classical Islamic jurisprudence, or *fiqh*) jihad for Qutub, was a permanent revolution against internal and external enemies who usurped God's sovereignty" (Gerges 2005:4).

<sup>162</sup> *Irjaa'a* is the belief that faith does not fluctuate and that once one enters Islaam they are a true believer no matter what they do because the meaning of faith to them is by saying not actions. The *Murji'a* are those who ascribe to these innovated beliefs. They are the exact opposite in creed, regarding faith, to the *Khawaarij* as they do not believe in *takfeer* at all, unless one openly declares they have renounced the faith.

<sup>163</sup> Al-Albaanee has edited and authenticated many classical texts that contradict and expose the creed of the *Murji'a*, so this criticism of Aboo Qataada's seems somewhat dubious.

the spread of innovation and misguidance by the *Madkhaliyeen*, followers of Rabee'a al-Madkhalee" <sup>164</sup> (Aboo Qataada 2005c:2). Here Aboo Qataada attacks, one of the contemporary scholars of Saudi Arabia, known for his criticism of the *Takfeeree Qutbist* groups and upholding the orthodox creed. The *Khawaarij* fought and made *takfeer* of those who opposed their methodology, whereas Aboo Qataada and the modern *Takfeeree* groups scrutinize, belittle, and some of the more extreme amongst them make *takfeer* of the scholars ('Aseere 2007:134).<sup>165</sup>

To Aboo Qataada the scholars, "have become traitors for the tyrants (*Taaghoot*), for these people come closer to Allah-as they claim-by exposing the names of those who differ with them and make *takfeer* of the tyrannical regime" (Aboo Qataada 2005c:4). A couple of points must be made regarding Aboo Qataada's claims. Firstly, he claims that these scholars who are well known for their orthodox beliefs are traitors because they advise the leaders and supplicate for them to assume their responsibility. It seems Aboo Qataada would prefer they make *takfeer* of the rulers because of their mistakes. However, the early scholars like Fudhail Bin A'eeyaad, a *Taabi'ee*, advised patience and supplication for the leader. He said, "If I had an accepted prayer I would not make it except for the leader." He was asked, "Why is that O Abaa 'Alee? He replied, "When I make it for myself it does not benefit anyone except me. But when I make it for the leader then it reforms the leader, the slave, and the country" (cited in al-Tareefy 2005:29). Secondly, Aboo Qataada claims that the above scholars say that it is an act of worship to expose those who deviate from the orthodox creed. In that claim he is correct as "speaking about an innovator with the intention to clarify his condition to the people and warning the community from him is permissible in the sharee'a. The obligation increases if there is no other way to rebuke the innovator" (al-Rahaylee 2001/2:506). This position of denouncing sin and innovation stems from some points regarding his creed pertaining to *takfeer* he says, "And that gave rise to the Prophet and his companions and remains the position of the orthodox scholars until today."<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Shaikh Rabee'a al-Madkhalee is another well known *Salafee* scholar known as the "flag bearer of the Sunna" and he is well known for speaking about heresy and the groups who differ with the *Salafee* methodology.

<sup>165</sup> These *Takfeeree* groups through their extremism attempt to refute and attack the credibility of the *Salafee* scholars as can be observed by the statements of Aboo Qataada and some of them even make it permissible to shed their blood as they do not regard them as Muslim.

<sup>166</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned that refuting innovators was a type of *jihaad* and this conforms to the position of Imaam Ahmad as well (al-Muneef 2005:35).

of the major scholars of Saudi Arabia, and his urging the youth to rebel against the Saudi regime. Aboo Qataada says, “Shaikh Safar al-Hawaalee exposed (the *Murji’a* scholars)-may Allah free him from the prison of the tyrannical apostates” (Aboo Qataada 2005c:3). Here he praised al-Hawaalee, who similarly has alleged *Qutbist* inclinations, and is known for his activism and dissent against the Saudi regime. Al-Hawaalee said, “As for ruling by the sharee’a-then this is an old claim- the reality is that the sharee’a does not remain with us except what is called by the friends of the evil tyrants law: personal law and other than that some of the punishments which are intended to maintain security” (cited in al-‘Adnaanee 2004:110). These statements made by al-Hawaalee undermine the legitimacy of the Saudi rulers with the implication that the sharee’a is almost entirely absent and that the rulers have violated their social contract.<sup>167</sup> Statements like these sow the seeds of enmity and discord amongst the Muslim youth towards the rulers. In addition, this statement requires substantiation, as Saudi Arabia is considered by many to be adherent to Islaamic sharee’a. Finally, Aboo Qataada in his supplication makes *takfeer* of the Muslim authority thus giving credence to the claims made against him as being *Khawaarij* like, and one who vilifies the scholars who oppose his methodology.

### 3.3.7 Aboo Hamza al-Misree

Another *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* residing in the West is Aboo Hamza al-Misree. His notoriety comes from his outspokenness, total *takfeer* of the Muslim governments, and his open exhortation to *jihad* to the dismay of the British authorities. Like Aboo Qataada and ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan he sought political asylum in the West and used it as a base of support to recruit Islaamic militants. Aboo Hamza unlike Aboo Qataada and ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan, does not possess the same Islaamic credentials, knowledge, or scholarly background, however he is popular amongst some of the Muslim youth in Britain and America.

Aboo Qataada defends a scholar known in the past for his belittlement

In this section the researcher has chosen to quote from Aboo Hamza extensively in order to present his methodology accurately. Aboo Hamza appears to have a very

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<sup>167</sup> Scholars like al-Hawaalee were generally accepted and held in high regard before the advent of the first Gulf War in 1991. However, in the view of those who criticize him it is precisely that major event and the subsequent American troop presence on Saudi Arabian soil that exposed his deviance in important matters of creed (al-‘Adnaanee 2004:110).

comprehensive approach and theory in which he seems to have amassed a mountain of evidence to prove his points and attempt to refute important aspects of the orthodox creed. The primary differences between his creed and that of the orthodox creed revolve around the issues of *jihad* and *takfeer* and his misapplication of these principles regarding present day leaders and scholars.<sup>168</sup>

### 3.3.7.1 Aboo Hamza's Call to Islaam

Aboo Hamza's call is centered primarily upon four main issues: the call to *jihad*, *takfeer*, the establishment of the sharee'a, and his critique of *Salafee* scholars.<sup>169</sup> For Aboo Hamza the fundamental problem facing Muslims is illegitimate rulership, and he holds that it is of utmost importance to give "moral aid and support for the modern struggle of *tawhid* (that being *hakameeyah*).<sup>170</sup> This struggle is the most important one of our time, as the Shari'a acts as protection for all the forms of *tawhid* and the people that are under the banner of *tawhid*" (al-Misree 2000b:4). The struggle he refers to here is what *Jihaadees* consider to be *jihad*: removing so-called apostate leaders to establish righteous ones who implement the sharee'a (al-Suhamy 2005:266-268). The other aspect of his call is "the negligence of the scholars and their adherents in presenting the ails of the Ummah and giving workable solutions" (al-Misree 2000b:4). Here Aboo Hamza criticizes the scholars whom he describes as negligent with regards to emphasizing the importance of the sharee'a and its implementation. These issues form the basis of his Islaamic propagation. However, the sharee'a emphasizes that claims must be supported by evidence. In this regard the Prophet said, "The evidence is upon the claimant and swearing is upon the accused" (al-Bukhaaree 1970/3:417). Imaam al-Nawawee explained this *hadeeth* by saying, "This *hadeeth* is a major proof from the sharee'a principles for making judgments, and from amongst these principles is that no one's saying is accepted by mere

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<sup>168</sup> It must be noted that Aboo Hamza unlike Aboo Qataada appears to be more abusive, and wanton in his exhortations to violence but does not have the scholarly credentials or same position as Aboo Qataada; however his ideals are equally threatening due to their appeal to some of the Muslim youth.

<sup>169</sup> The emphasis he places upon these issues is evidenced in his books and tapes with titles such as The Khawaarij (2000), Allah's governance on Earth (2000b), and Beware of Takfeer (2005).

<sup>170</sup> *Al-hakameeya* is the belief that all rulership, authority and legislation is from Allah's law as revealed through the Qur'aan and Sunna. This is in accordance with the orthodox creed; however the emphasis that the *Takfeerees* place on it by labeling it as a separate category of *tawheed* and belittling the other categories is a distortion of its meaning. In addition, they emphasize *al-hakameeya* and use it as a political tool, with aspirations to remove or replace the existing Muslim leaders as will be evidenced by Aboo Hamza's statements.

accusations of the accused. Rather we look to the proof or honesty of the accused” (cited in al-Reemy 2000:61). It can be deduced from this statement that it is not sufficient for Aboo Hamza to make unsubstantiated claims and pass judgment upon scholars known for their service to the Sunna, and who have waged *jihad* against religious unorthodoxy.

### 3.3.7.2 His Concept of Jihad

*Jihad* is an important aspect of Islaam and it has rules and regulations governing it, and there are different types of *jihad*: against one’s desires, the devil, against the disbelievers and hypocrites, against innovation and heresy (al-Muneef 2005:31-35). Aboo Hamza believes in all of these types of *jihad*, but his understanding of its detailed principles seems to differ from the orthodox methodology. In the introduction of his book entitled Allah’s Governance on Earth (2000b), he mentions the *jihad* against innovation and heretical scholars, but it seems he attacks scholars known for their adherence to classical interpretations of Islaam. He uses explicit analogies for warfare and claims his book “will fortify the reader with the ammunition for both word and action and (act) as a sword and shield against the knights of dark oppression and their scholars, who act as the horses of *kufur* (disbelief), bringing in their wake the excrement of their *fataawa*, filled with nothing more than dregs and stolen evidence from the books of *Ahl us-Sunna wal Jama`ah*” (al-Misree 2000b:4). Al-Fawzaan says, “It is obligatory to respect the Muslim scholars because they are the inheritors of the prophets and denigrating them is considered belittling their position” (cited in al-Hussayn 2003:70). Aboo Hamza has harsh words for the scholars and leaders and in his view this is his fulfillment of *jihad* against the hypocrites.

Aboo Hamza uses passionate and emotional appeals in calling for physical *jihad* against the leaders. He speaks extensively on how he believes the al-Saud family tricked Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab into establishing their throne, and rebelling against the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, he refers to al-Saud family as *Khawaarij*, and then he exhorts the Muslim nation to action by saying:

This is the time! If we decide now to correct what the illegitimate people have done, those who have stolen the *khilaafa*, destroyed the *khilaafa*, they should be killed just for that alone! Let alone changing the shari’a, taking women’s

clothes off, using money from the *kuffar* against Muslims or dropping jihad and doing their jihad against Muslims. Who is killing the Muslims and making friends with the *kuffar*? This is the definition of the *Khawaarij*. Who is doing this? It is these rulers, not us (al-Misree 2000a:208).

Aboo Hamza cites the sins that seem apparent to him in the Saudi state which according to his rhetoric is enough to pronounce *takfeer* of the regime and wage *jihad* against them, even though he is fully aware of the sanctity of Makka and Madina. Aboo Hamza makes many unfounded claims to justify his *jihad* claiming the two holy Mosques in Makka and Madina are no longer pure because the hotels surrounding them are not being used as guest houses for pilgrims. In addition, on the same audio cassette, he claims people face harassment and get arrested while trying to perform pilgrimage "...and Allah did not order you to go for hajj so you can be killed or you can be raped! When it comes like that then you are exempt from hajj, but you are not exempted from taking steps to do your hajj by doing *jihad* against these people to stop and make it a safe haven for Muslims" (al-Misree 2005c). Aboo Hamza makes many claims against the Saudi regime: accusing them of rape, and creating a volatile environment for pilgrims (al-Su<sup>h</sup>aymee 2004:22-32). However, it is known that the Saudi regime provides security and spends millions of Saudi riyals every year to provide services for the pilgrims. These statements of Aboo Hamza's echo the understanding of the *Khawaarij* who believed in removing the leader by any means instead of looking at the harm of the consequences of their actions. Ibn al-Qayyim said:

If prohibiting evil results in creating a greater evil and what displeases Allah even more, then it is not permissible, even if Allah hates the action and abhors those who commit it. This is similar to preventing a king or ruler by revolting against him as this is the basis of all evil (Ibn al-Qayyim 2002/3:171).

Through extremism and misunderstanding the *Khawaarij* made *takfeer* for the sins they witnessed, and performed *jihad* against the leader (al-Shahrastanee 1984:111). Aboo Hamza appears to be following the same methodology only he does not make a very clear case for his *jihad*, and this researcher has not come across a single religious text that describes poor service as amongst one of the major sins which expel one from the religion, substantiate rebellion, or legitimize *jihad*. Aboo Hamza is known for his financial and physical support for *jihad* in places such as Afghanistan,

Chechnya, and Bosnia (Kohlmann 2004:189). However, his exhortation to fight *jihad* does not justify his mistakes in methodology and creed.

There are several examples of orthodox classical scholars throughout Muslim history rebelling against the leadership and Aboo Hamza attempts to use these examples to illustrate the legitimacy of his call to *jihad* against the leaders. Aboo Hamza states, “We also need to elaborate on how many Imaams of *Ahl us-Sunna wal Jama’ah* have rebelled against tyrant rulers and no one ever called them *Khawaarij*. It was not known that these rulers were *kufaar* either” (al-Misree 2000a:228). From the more prominent scholars he mentioned were Mu’aawiyah Ibn Sufyaan, a companion of the Prophet, and al-Hussayn the grandson of the Prophet, and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Zubayr another companion. This is probably the best illustration of how Aboo Hamza misuses the textual proofs and examples from the classical scholars. Firstly, the reason no one considered them *Khawaarij* was because they did not possess the creed<sup>171</sup> or characteristics of the *Khawaarij* and thus were considered rebels.<sup>172</sup> Secondly, the majority of classical scholars consider it impermissible to rebel against the leader. Al-Tahaawee said, “And we do not see [the permissibility] of revolting against our imaams or leaders, even if they are oppressive, and we do not supplicate against them nor disobey them. We also believe that we are obliged to obey them and this is obedience to Allah the Almighty, as long as they do not call us to disobey Him” (Ibn Abee al-‘Azza 1988:379). Thirdly, in Islaam as a principle it is not permissible to use a single example, even if it was a companion, which goes against the Qur’aan and Sunna and the consensus of the classical scholars as a proof to practice an action of worship (al-Baghdaadee 2005:437). The orthodox creed holds that no one is infallible except the Prophet, and Muslims should not follow anyone in their mistakes (al-Baghdaadee 2005/1:272).<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Imaam al-Nawawee states “The scholars define a rebel as one who leaves obeying the just ruler and ceases to carrying out the obligatory duties owed to him....The *Khawaarij* are a group of innovators who believe that committing a major sin is disbelief and the one who commits it will be eternally in the hell-fire” (al-Nawawee 2002:1718-1719).

<sup>172</sup> It is important here to note that this is a description of the actions they took not a belittlement of the companions by calling them rebels.

<sup>173</sup> Imaam al-Baghdaadee said, “*Taqleed* is accepting someone’s saying without evidence” (al-Baghdaadee 2005/2:128). The concept of *taqleed*, as was discussed in chapter two, has often been abused by many Muslims who only accept the saying of their particular shaikh or methodology of jurisprudence, even if it contradicts the Sunna of the Prophet.

mistakes according to the majority of orthodox scholars (al-Nawawee 2002:1718-1719). Fourthly, Aboo Hamza made a mistake when he used the examples of the companions by saying they “rebelled against tyrant rulers” as this implies that ‘Alee the Prophet’s cousin was a tyrannical ruler, as Mu’aawiya fought against him-which is a harsh criticism levelled against ‘Alee and a grave mistake according to the orthodox creed. Finally, Aboo Hamza’s examples cannot be used as evidence to support resisting a corrupt Muslim ruler as it contradicts the foundation of Islaam. However, the fact that some of the classical scholars fought leaders they felt were tyrannical does not make them like the *Khawaarij* because they did not have their creed (al-Nawawee 2002:1718).

### 3.3.7.3 **Takfeer of the Rulers**

Aboo Hamza seems to disregard the impediments and conditions of *takfeer* concerning the rulers, and he is quick to attribute disbelief to them. Most of his writings contain scenarios in which he deems the Muslim authority as apostates and he sees revolt as the only solution. He states, “If the ruler becomes a *kaafir* for any reason or risks the lives of the Muslims for the *kufaar*, and the scholars, or those in a position to rule fail to remove him peacefully, they must ask the Islamic army to remove him for the sake of Islam and the Muslims. Both Islam and Muslims must be preserved at all costs at all times” (al-Misree 2000b:112). It appears to be contradictory to preserve the Muslims while rebelling against the leader, especially if it spreads chaos, blood shed, and instability as was witnessed in Algeria, Somalia, and Iraq. Aboo Hamza’s description of the leaders is contrary to the way of the Prophets, and his images are often violent, urging the Muslim youth to *takfeer* and act against the ruling regimes. Aboo Hamza states:

Therefore, although there were examples of rebellions by those who held the orthodox creed, it does not legitimize those actions and they were In this day and age, the evil rulers of our time are absolutely obese with their big bellies, engorged with the blood that they have drunk from Muslim societies, not to mention what they have done with the resources of Muslims. The foundations of their kingdoms have been built upon the skulls of our *Ummah*, with the bones from the skeletons of our people as girders and pillars that support the structures of their castles and palaces (al-Misree 2000b:3).

Like those who preceded him, Aboo Hamza pronounces *takfeer* upon all of the existing Muslim regimes, and this is *takfeer al-Kullee* which some of the *Khawaarij*

sects practiced when they made *takfeer* of the leader, his army, and all those associated with him (al-Rahaylee 2001/1:190).<sup>174</sup> Aboo Hamza states, “Although the army and the scholars are both a group of *kufaar* from the point of view of assisting *kufaar* against Muslims, maybe some of them are doing more *kuf*r than others, this is not our concern in this research” (al-Misree 2000b:288). Aboo Hamza accuses the government, scholars and army of apostasy, although even if it were the case that they sought support from non-Muslims against Muslims this does not necessitate disbelief in all cases. “So it is considered disbelief if one supports them intending assistance in their religion. As for supporting them in other than that-like worldly matters for example-then he is not an apostate and these are the details which the scholars use to make their conclusions and what the evidence suggests” (al-‘Utaybee 2005:89). One of the evidences that many of the classical scholars use is the incident involving Haatab Ibn Abee Bult’a, one of the companions of the Prophet, who wrote to the pagans exposing the secrets of the Prophet’s invasion of Makka because his family was under the pagans’ authority and he feared for their lives. Classical scholars like Ibn Taymeeya, and Imaam Shaafi’ee use this as evidence that supporting the disbelievers against Muslims is not always an act of apostasy because the Prophet did not make *takfeer* of him because he acted for a worldly reason: out of fear for his family’s safety. Aboo Haneefa and Imaam Ahmad also believe that supporting pagans against Muslims does not always constitute unbelief (al-‘Utaybee 2005:91). Aboo Hamza and many of the *Takfeeree* groups consider supporting non-Muslims against Muslims as apostasy without reviewing the evidences of the classical and contemporary scholars regarding this complex issue which causes them to misuse the principles of *takfeer* (‘Aseeree 2007:134).

Regarding *takfeer* Aboo Hamza commits mistakes in the principles he espouses. He described two types of oppression: minor *kuf*r dealing with the rights of other human beings and major *kuf*r which deals with the right of Allah. He said, “... however, the moment the tyranny touches the right of Allah, for example legislation, then it is without doubt major *kuf*r and must be resisted until it ceases or the person is removed from his post” (al-Misree 2000b:192). This statement seems flawed as the

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<sup>174</sup> For example, Aboo Qataada makes *takfeer* of all the contemporary Muslim leaders, their police, military and security services. He also declared that there is no difference between Jewish soldiers and Yasser Arafat’s security apparatus, except that Yasser Arafat and his government are guilty of even greater disbelief; however in his opinion both should fought (al-Jazaa’iree 2005:62).

issue of ruling by other than Allah's laws has already been detailed in this research and it becomes apparent that sometimes it is major disbelief and at others minor disbelief. Therefore, usurping the right of Allah does not always expel one from the fold of Islaam as is the case of ruling by other than divine law. As for the one who does not govern by Allah's law Bin Baaz said, "He does not become an apostate unless he makes it permissible, and if he declares that he is not making it permissible then we accept his statement according to its face value, and we do not judge him to be an apostate" (cited in al-'Utaybee 2005:20).

Aboo Hamza attributes the term *Daar al-Harb* to all Muslim societies with disregard for the conditions that prohibit *takfeer*; this is a synthesis of Sayyid Qutb's ideals and the original *Khawaarij*. Sayyid Qutb is known for his *takfeer* of whole societies, his attempts to justify rebellion against the rulers, and coining the term *Daar al-Harb* to describe all Muslims societies (al-Rahaylee 2006:37). Aboo Hamza is clearly *Takfeeree* in his methodology and creed, even though he does not make *takfeer* for all the major sins. Al-Reis states on an audio tape that:

...if someone makes *takfeer* for one major sin then he is considered like the *Khawaarij*. For instance, those who rebelled against 'Alee-may Allah be pleased with him-was their beginning and methodology *takfeer* for every major sin? Or *takfeer* for the major sin of ruling by other than what Allah revealed? They made *takfeer* for one major sin and with that they are all *Khawaarij* by consensus (al-Reis 2005b).

This shows that although one may not possess all the traits of the *Khawaarij* he or she can still be considered *Khawaarij* due to recklessness in making *takfeer* and this is in accordance with the consensus of classical scholars (al-Barbahaaree 1997:114). Like the *Khawaarij*, Aboo Hamza considers making *takfeer* of the leaders as enjoining the good and forbidding evil. Aboo Hamza describes the leaders as apostates stating:

Once the people in authority fail to check the ruler's falsehood, willingly or unwillingly, and the Shari`a of Islam disintegrates, then the whole country is transformed into *Daar ulHarb*. It is irrelevant if it is the two Holy Places (Makkah and Madinah), or Jerusalem, which today is classified as *Daar ulHarb* because it rests in the hands and under the laws of the Jews (al-Misree 2000b:112).

Aboo Hamza tends to use hypothetical case scenarios to substantiate his *takfeer* with vague accusations against all Muslim countries, accusing them of abandoning divine

law. Information and claims must be substantiated by fact and reliable witnesses, or religious texts in order to be considered valid and acceptable. Allah says, “O you who believe! If a *fasiq* (liar, evil person) comes to you with any news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and become regretful for what you have done” (Qur’aan 1996:49:6). This verse shows the importance of confirming information and it is a stern warning to beware of harming others by unsubstantiated claims. Aboo Hamza’s claim is an attack upon the Saudi society which in the view of *Salafees* is the most adherent society today in sharee’a laws, but according to Aboo Hamza it is nothing more than a society governed by apostates that should be fought against (al-Misree 2000b:112). Aboo Hamza gives the impression that the whole society is guilty of supporting open apostasy and has become *Daar al-Harb*. Even if this were the case that the rulers had fallen into open disbelief the rest of society can only be judged with disbelief according to the extent of their support for the apostate leader (al-Mawjaan 2004:95). Aboo Hamza, like those who came before him, attributed the trials of the Muslim community to the absence of the sharee’a. Therefore, the solution is to establish divine law, by any means, to its rightful place on earth and this has become the primary goal of Aboo Hamza. He states, “Since the loss of the Shari’a, the *Ummah* has been put through unimaginable trauma, to the point where every which way we turn in, we see new disturbances mounting” (al-Misree 2000b:3). Aboo Hamza after defining the problem claims:

The Majority of the scholars of Islam, if not all, have declared any country not ruled by the complete Shari’a of Allah, as *Dar ul Harb* with no exception to any land on this blue planet, irrespective of the number of Muslims or the plentiful amount of *masaqid*. The implication for the leader that perpetrates an act of legislation in the Shari’a is that the ruler, his scholars, his army are all a group of *kuffaar* that must be fought, stripped of power, and punished severely for what they are doing to Muslims and Islam (al-Misree 2000b:112).

Aboo Hamza made it a stipulation that the sharee’a must be complete or the land is *Daar al-Harb*.<sup>175</sup> This contradicts the consensus of the scholars and this definition does not consider those lands where the majority is Muslim and the leader makes some mistakes applying the sharee’a.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Refer to chapter one the section on *Daar al-Harb*.

<sup>176</sup> The Shaafi’ee, “Hanbalee, Maalikee, and Hanafee schools of thought base the concept of calling a land a Muslim land on the following criteria: Muslims must be sovereign and have full control over it so that they are able to display the signs of Islaam and implement its regulations (Qureeshee 1992:438). This shows that the classical scholars of jurisprudence regarded the Muslim land to be intact as long as

definition is because if one concedes to Aboo Hamza's definition it potentially opens the door to unwarranted rebellion, *takfeer*, and bloodshed: he does not recognize the possibilities of mistakes by the leaders, and those who feel the leadership has lost legitimacy will more than likely begin by attempting to overthrow it. In contrast, Ibn al-Qayyim said, "It is prohibited to fight and revolt against the Muslim leaders, even if they become oppressive as long as they establish the prayer.... The result of fighting and rebelling against them only increases their harm and the *Umma* is still effected by this evil until today" (Ibn al-Qayyim 2002/3:171). In addition, Ibn Taymeeya said, "It is not for anyone to make *takfeer* of a Muslim even if he makes a mistake or error, until he presents evidence and explains it to him. Therefore, whoever has been affirmed as a Muslim cannot be declared an apostate based upon suspicion, but rather only by providing evidence and removing his doubt" (Ibn Taymeeya 1989/12:466). The second mistake in Aboo Hamza's statement is his conclusion which appears to be reminiscent of the extreme sects of the *Khawaarij* like the *Azaariqa* who believed in killing the women and children of their opponents and all those associated with the ruler whom they deemed to be apostate (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). Aboo Hamza's assessment appears a bit extreme as it violates the principles of *takfeer* by not considering the condition of those under the leader in question, and it disregards the other categories of the state: *Daar al-Kufr*, *Daar al-Sulh* (al-Mawjaan 2004:106). Another example which illustrates Aboo Hamza's likeness to the *Azaariqa* is when he was asked about the September eleventh attacks on the World Trade Center in which he responded by saying, "Everybody was happy when the planes hit the World Trade Center. Anybody who tells you that they are not happy, they are hypocrites on the Muslim nation. I am telling you, everybody" (Mckenna 2004b:1). Here Aboo Hamza in very explicit terms declares that it was justified and an occasion of joy because he equated it to the killing of Muslim civilians by American forces in Iraq and around the world. In addition, he considers the Muslims who did not deem this attack as praiseworthy hypocrites. Aboo Hamza and many of the *Takfeeree* ideologues seem to have no real concern for the sanctity of human life because they are always calling for what they emphasize the difference in destabilization of Muslim societies in order to remove the existing regimes (Gerges 2005:6). Allah said, "...nor kill such person as Allah has forbidden, except for just

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the above conditions are met, unlike Aboo Hamza and the *Takfeeree* groups who decree Muslim lands to be unholy and un-Islamic according to their criteria ('Aseeree 2007:127-128).

cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse, and whoever does this shall receive the punishment” (Qur’aan 1996:25:68). Aside from the major sin for taking an innocent life, the repercussions upon the Muslim nations is far reaching and the effects are still to be seen.<sup>177</sup> Also in the Qur’aan Allah mentions, ...if anyone killed a person other than in retaliation for murder, or to spread mischief in the land, it would be as if he killed all of mankind” (1996:32:156). Mujaahid, one of the *Taabi’een*, explained this verse by saying, “Whoever takes a life which is sacred will roast in the hell-fire similarly to how he would burn in the hell-fire for taking the life of all humanity” (al-Baghawee 2002:374). This shows that Islaam regards human life as sacred and disregarding that sanctity is considered a punishable offense under Islaamic law. On the other hand, Aboo Hamza expresses concern for the sharee’a but he disregards its basic principles and rulings by issuing decrees of wanton violence.

Instead of implementing the methodology of classical scholars, Aboo Hamza exploits and misinterprets evidences to support his paradigm. Aboo Hamza misuses accepted principles from the orthodox creed to attempt to justify the *takfeer*, killing, and rebellion against Muslim states. As evidence of this, Aboo Hamza makes a very vague judgment in support of rebellion, and predicts an almost text book like ending in which the Muslim nation will be rectified. It seems Aboo Hamza disregards the principles of *takfeer*, Muslim life, and property, and maintains that the Islaamic state will be established from chaos and revolt. He predicts success after decreeing:

... that there is no legitimate *bai`a* for any ruler tampering with the Shari`a as he has nullified the contract by his own doing. In Islamic law, the people should replace him for the system of justice to carry on. If the people refuse to do so, and the army supported him, the whole country becomes *Dar al-Harb*, which is loud announcement for enmity to be between Allah and His creation due to their disobedience (al-Misree 2000b:118).

This saying of Aboo Hamza is similar to that of Qutb and his contemporaries who believed in removing the leadership after making pronouncements of *takfeer* upon whole societies. Altering the sharee’a can be *kufir al-asghar* or *kufir al-akbar* depending on the state and belief of the leader as was discussed at great length in

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<sup>177</sup> Whole nations like Iraq and Afghanistan have seen their leaders removed and experienced immense amount of suffering, loss of human life, and instability as direct consequences to these actions (Cockburn 2006:1-5).

chapter two.<sup>178</sup> However, Aboo Hamza appears to make a general judgment encompassing anyone who alters legislation, which is the method of many who deviate from the orthodox creed: they use general evidences which are ambiguous and apply them to specific circumstances without analyzing the applicability of their rulings. Allah mentions, “So as for those in whose hearts there is deviation they follow that which is ambiguous, seeking to (cause) trials, seeking for its hidden meanings” (Qur’aan 1996:3:7). The Prophet said about the above verse that, “If you see those who follow that which is ambiguous then they are those whom Allah has named (as having deviation) so beware of them” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/6:54). This Qur’aanic verse and explanation by the Prophet seem to refute Aboo Hamza’s whole methodology which is to use the general verses that may have many meanings or differences of opinion and apply them to make rulings of *takfeer* upon individuals, groups and societies. For example, Aboo Hamza offers his prescription for the one who failed to rule by divine law which is that, “trustworthy scholars should then pronounce him an apostate and his groups as a group of enemies of God, but not all of them are enemies, as surely some are only sinners” (al-Misree 2000b:118). Aboo Hamza seems to disregard the statement of the Prophet which allows for the mistake of the scholar or judge who attempted to make an honest verdict but failed to do so and the *hadeeth* mentions he will be rewarded from Allah. Aboo Hamza said, “Scholars who fail to deliver the proper verdict also become enemies, regardless of their knowledge or their acts of religious worship. *Jihaad* then becomes compulsory for every Muslim according to each one’s ability until the state is restored with a proper ruler and the state is brought to order” (al-Misree 2000b:118).<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Altering the sharee'a does not mean making lawful practices unlawful or vice versa as this expels one from the fold of Islaam if it is done intentionally.

<sup>179</sup> Aboo Hamza consistently misapplies the principles of *takfeer* accusing those who disagree with his adjudications of *takfeer* to be apostates. When according to *Salafee* scholars, "It is not permissible for a group of monotheists who declare grave worshipers to be disbelievers to pronounce *takfeer* upon another group of monotheists who abstain from pronouncing *takfeer* upon them until the proof has been presented to them...and this differs from *takfeer* of those who there is no disagreement over their disbelief"(al-Daweesh 1990/2:151).

1997/12:239). Aboo Hamza is highly critical of the mistakes of the Muslim leaders and equally critical of those scholars who disagree with his ideology.

### 3.3.7.4 His Position Regarding the Scholars

In addition to making hasty judgments, Aboo Hamza praises those scholars and thinkers who follow his methodology and adhere to a similar revolutionary theory. Additionally, he praises those *Salafee* scholars who may have ambiguous verdicts which are open to interpretation, and Aboo Hamza uses these opportunities to exploit their verdicts to support his theories of *takfeer* and rebellion. Aboo Hamza speaks highly of “those scholars of *tawhid* of our time that we would like to thank and give respect to for their stand regarding *tawhid*” (al-Misree 2000b:6). He names a list of scholars like Muḥammad Ibn Ibraaheem a former muftiee of Saudi Arabia, Muḥammad al-Ameen al-Shanqeetee also a distinguished scholar from Mauritania who taught in Saudi Arabia, Aḥmad Shaakir from Egypt a major *hadeeth* scholar, and his brother Mahmood Shaakir. These scholars were known for their orthodox methodology and creed; however due to their extensive writing about issues regarding rulership they seem to be accepted by those *Takfeeree* ideologues.

Additionally, Aboo Hamza extols many of the ideologues that have been presented in this research as they share a common ideology with him. He mentions Sayyid Qutb, Shaikh `Abd Allah `Azzam and Hasan al-Banna. He then says, “We also thank the scholars alive today that are representing the struggle such as Shaikh `Umar `Abdur-Rahmaan, the thousands of Shaikhs and students of knowledge who have been imprisoned in the Arabian Peninsula struggling to support the Shari`a and the *Mujahidin*, Shaikh Usaama ibn Ladin, Abu Muhammad al-Magdisi and many others” (al-Misree 2000b:6). The paradigm of Aboo Hamza is comparable to that of the *Khawaarij* who were harsh with their opponents and had affinities with those who held their same ideology (al-Shahraastanee 1984:115).

A common practice of Aboo Hamza is the vilification of those scholars who differ from his concepts of rebellion. Aboo Hamza praised Muḥammad al-Ameen al-Shanqeetee, and then he slandered his students when he said, “Although he had the government scholars of today in his class, he did not give them permission to teach

his knowledge, for they were part of a government institution. These government scholars today are Shaikh Ibn Baz, Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-`Uthaimin, and Rabi`a al-Madkhali” (al-Misree 2000b:233). In another statement he seemed to make exception for some of the scholars of Saudi Arabia when he said, “This just shows us that not all of the `Ulama in the Peninsula are the lap dogs of the regime” (al-Misree 2000b: 233). His vilification of the scholars is a common trait of the *Takfeeree* creed, and Aboo Hamza is ruthless in his criticisms, similar to the *Khawaarij* who decreed *takfeer* upon the greatest scholars of the Muslim community: the companions (‘Aseere 2007:134). Aboo Hamza also explained to his followers that “It is well known that many of our scholars will follow in the footsteps of the scholars of the Jews, so please, do not be surprised at their disgusting behavior” (al-Misree 2000b:263). Here he uses the example of those who went astray by not practicing their knowledge, so the implication is that many of the well known contemporary scholars of Saudi Arabia are not practicing the knowledge they have acquired, nor do they possess piety, instead they are merely puppets used to prop up apostate regimes. Probably due to the fact that these scholars are known for their outspokenness regarding *takfeer* and rebellion, this makes them a prime target for Aboo Hamza and those who adhere to *Takfeeree* principles.

Aboo Hamza made a lengthy rebuttal of one of the major scholars of this time which illustrates the importance he puts upon refuting scholars that differ with his ideology. He states about Bin Baaz that, “He is asking for Muslims to cooperate with these legislators of *kufir*. This cooperation has four points of major *kufir*” (al-Misree 2000b:268). The researcher will present his claims and refute them in order to make distinction between the *Takfeeree* criticism of the scholars and the *Salafee* position regarding them.

The first claim he makes is that Bin Baaz helps propagate unlawful practices by supporting un-Islamic legislation undermining the sharee’a. Many of the *Takfeerees* criticize the Saudi regime because they allow usury banks to operate in Saudi Arabia.

In this line of reasoning, the criterion for determining the link between action and belief is the pervasiveness of the sin. Because so many people practice usury, a practice that everyone knows was prohibited by the Prophet, the regime must believe it is better than Islam; otherwise they would have adhered to

Islamic law and banned it. The fact that they imprison scholars who point out their acts of sin is used as further evidence that the rulers know that they are rejecting Islam; they are trying to prevent the truth from emerging by silencing their most potent Islamic critics (Wiktorowicz 2005:233).

These are common criticisms made by *Takfeerees* and Aboo Hamza makes the same criticisms of the Saudi regime and Bin Baaz; however his claim has no basis because Bin Baaz is known for his outspokenness against usury, sinfulness, and polytheism. Regarding banks that use interest he said, “As for interest, it is clear and there is no doubt about its prohibition. It is an issue that is proven by the verses of the Noble Qur’aan, and proven by the Sunna and the consensus of the scholars” (Bin Baaz 2003/19:246). Aboo Hamza claims that Bin Baaz is guilty of *istihlaal* (making the prohibited lawful) however, “the issue of *istihlaal* is an issue of the heart [related to belief]” (al-’Utaybee 2005:18). Ibn Taymeeya said, “*Istihlaal* is believing something is lawful” (Ibn Taymeeya 1997/3:971). This shows that classical scholars like Ibn Taymeeya considered *istihlaal* to be related to belief: believing the unlawful to be lawful, not simply committing an unlawful action even if it were committed repetitiously. Aboo Hamza provides no reliable evidence for his claims, but instead he seems to harbor hostility towards the scholars who do not openly admonish the rulers.

Secondly, Aboo Hamza said, “This is a direct contradiction of the statement of the Messenger when he said, ‘Obedience is in righteousness.’ How can Muslims obey a people who are bringing usury banks into the Peninsula and making laws to protect these institutions?” (al-Miṣree 2000b:268). The mere existence of banks that use interest is not a sin that expels one from the fold of Islaam, so in that case it does not nullify obedience to the ruler in all affairs, only in matters where they have commanded sinful acts. Ibn Taymeeya said, “Declaring someone to be sinful and a disbeliever are sharee’a rulings, and these rulings are not to be undermined by reasoning. Therefore, a disbeliever is whoever Allah and His Messenger declare to be a disbeliever” (cited in al-Raḥaylee 2006:225). According to Ibn Taymeeya’s statement, Aboo Hamza cannot make *takfeer* upon individuals based upon his reasoning, but rather it is based upon what is legislated by the Qur’aan and Sunna and consensus of orthodox scholars.

Thirdly, according to Aboo Hamza the leaders have nullified their right to be followed through treachery. Again this is a baseless claim. Even if a leader had fallen

into treachery, corruption or exhibits oppression it does not nullify his right to be obeyed in lawful commands, unless his action is open indisputable disbelief, and this has been detailed in the section on *takfeer* in chapter two.

Fourthly, Aboo Hamza claimed the leaders are apostates and supporting them is tantamount to cooperation with non-Muslims. Aboo Hamza's criticisms are based upon the premise that the rulers have engaged in such a high level of corruption and treachery that they are guilty of apostasy. He states:

Cooperating with and obeying the *kaafir* rulers means that we would go against the Victorious Party (*Mujaahidin*) who are striving to remove them from power, as Allah said and ordered. If we then cooperate against them with the rulers, then that means that we are helping non-Muslims to kill Muslims. This act alone takes one out of the fold of Islam, according to the *fatwa* that Ibn Baz wrote himself above about assisting *kufaar* against Muslims (al-Misree 2000b: 268).

Aboo Hamza seems to use a myriad of circular reasoning in order to prove his claim that the leaders should be fought because they are disbelievers and by supporting them the general society becomes guilty of supporting non-Muslims against Muslims. This statement is full of assumptions such as assuming the ruler is an apostate and that support for him is an act of apostasy in all cases. Al-Reis explains on an audio cassette, "Whoever does not call a disbeliever a disbeliever then he becomes a disbeliever. Then what disbelief is this? This is for the disbeliever by origin: Jews and Christians or whoever is considered a disbeliever by consensus" (al-Reis 2005b).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> The meaning of this statement is that if a Muslim denies the disbelief of someone or a group who Allah or the Prophet has described as disbelievers, then they become a disbeliever because they have denied the Qur'aan and Sunna.

Aboo Hamza's world view resembles that of Sayyid Qutb and his declaration of *takfeer* upon Muslim societies due to their tacit support for the leadership. "Sayyid Qutb makes *takfeer* of the people in a way that no Muslim scholar condones. He speaks randomly about the issue of *al-hakameeya* and he makes *takfeer* of the general people without sins, without establishing the proof, and disregards the conditions the scholars' have established regarding the issue" (al-Madkhalee 2006:18). Aboo Hamza also appears to follow Qutb's methodology regarding *takfeer*. For example, assuming Aboo Hamza was correct in his declaration of *takfeer* upon a particular leader, it does not necessitate *takfeer* of the rest of the society, as they may possess the excuse of ignorance, or the inability to change the apostate leader. Therefore, it is an extremely dangerous claim to make *takfeer* of a society that claims to adhere to Islaam, or those who follow the ruler, without verifying the conditions of *takfeer*, and this requires the judgment of a scholar.

Aboo Hamza attacks the character and credibility of contemporary scholars who disagree with his methodology and creed. He accused Bin Baaz of dishonesty and mental deficiency which illustrate his animosity towards those who hold the *Salafee* creed. He claimed:

We can see from his *fatwa* that he is still calling those who rule and legislate Muslims, which is going against his own *fatwa* and the statements of Allah, as well as the *Sahaaba* and the scholars, which proves that he is either insane or dishonest. The scholars that we mentioned before show us how we should deal with these types of people (al-Misree 2000b:268).

This shows Aboo Hamza's misunderstanding of this principle of *takfeer* because this Aboo Hamza spends much of his efforts attacking the credibility of those whose ruling is applicable to those who are indisputable disbelievers. Therefore, it is not verdicts he disagrees with. Aboo Hamza charged several Saudi scholars with permissibility to make a ruling of *takfeer* on those who do not support his ruling or hypocrisy. As previously mentioned he directed his attacks against many scholars of judgment of *takfeer*. The early scholars were meticulous about holding fast to the Saudi Arabia particularly Bin Baaz. Bin Baaz issued a very controversial verdict Qur'aan and Sunna and leaving their opinions when making verdicts unlike Aboo allowing American troops to enter Saudi Arabia in 1991 to defend the kingdom from Hamza. Imaam Aboo Haneefa said, "If I said something which contradicts the book, Saddaam Hussayn and the Iraqi army." Aboo Hamza said regarding this verdict that, of Allah and the saying of the Messenger then leave my saying" (al-Humaydee

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<sup>19</sup> 1999:18). Not all *Salafee* scholars agreed with this verdict. However, those that disagreed with Shaikh Bin Baaz's opinion did not criticize or attack his character, but rather expressed disagreement with his verdict. Those scholars who agreed with his edict cite several reasons for doing so. First, the harm that the Muslims faced from Saddaam and his Ba'thist army was much greater than the harm of hosting American troops to defend the holy sites. American soldiers did not spread their ideology or religious beliefs in Saudi Arabia; however the Ba'thists, like most communist regimes, are openly hostile to fundamental religious ideals and practices. In addition, hosting an army by mutual agreement is potentially less intrusive than being occupied by an invading hostile force. Second, the Saudi army was

“this *fatwa* is nothing but a piece of satanic paperwork that has been handed out to destroy the *Ummah*” (al-Misree 2000b:277). He claimed the verdict did not contain a verse of the Qur’aan or *hadeeth* of the Prophet. He also said there was no “...evidence from scholars of the past, which he could mention to support his evil *fatwa*” (al-Misree 2000b:277).<sup>182</sup>

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ill-equipped and unprepared to defend against the threat of invasion from Iraq’s superior army. Third, the risk of losing the two holiest places in Islaam to the Ba’thists was unimaginable. Finally, instability in the holy lands should be avoided at all cost. This is essentially the argument of the *Salafee* scholars who supported Bin Baaz’s edict; however it is difficult to predict based upon empirical evidence whether Iraq posed a greater threat than American forces.

<sup>182</sup> “The Saudi regime’s decision to rely on American military forces during the 1990-91 Gulf War to defend the Peninsula against potential Iraqi aggression radicalized the leading figures of the *sahwa* [Islaamic awakening]... Salman al-Awdah and Safar al-Hawali. They gained widespread popularity criticizing the regime by circulating taped audiocassettes of their fiery sermons around the kingdom” (Jones 2005:10). It seems most of the internal opposition to US troop presence came from clerics like Salman al-‘Awdah and Safar al-Hawaalee and they essentially cited corruption of the regime, subservience to the US and its interest in oil in the region, and general charges that the Americans would spread corruption in the holy lands. Zuhur states, “Shaikh Al-Hawali has a background in Islamic studies and argues, as had bin Ladin, against Western influence and modernization. Unlike bin Ladin, he did not personalize his attacks against the royal family or question its authority. Al-Hawali decried America’s pursuit of its interest, including access to oil in the region, to be achieved with alliances with moderate, secularist Arab regimes, as well as with Israel” (Zuhur 2005:25).



about Saddam Hussayn and he made *takfeer* of him due to his “not distancing himself from the Ba’thist secular principles” (Bin Baaz 2001/6:155).<sup>185</sup>

Aboo Hamza falls short of openly making *takfeer* of one of the major scholars of this era and commented, “Until now, children are still being killed in Iraq due to this *fatwa*. On top of that, Ibn Baaz died unrepentant and without retracting a single part of this *fatwa*. He simply was not told by his master to do so” (al-Misree 2000b:277). Aboo Hamza warns against the major scholars as he claims they fortify apostate rulers and it seems that he wants to replace them by attacking them. If the major scholars are removed there will be a void in knowledge and ignorant people will be able to misguide the Muslim community with false judgments (‘Aseeree 2007:134). Aboo Hamza said that the Muslims should not refer to the major scholars, “and if we do have to ask them for something, we should treat our inquiry as if we are eating pork in the desert. In other words, this should be our last resort... to learn from the classical scholars directly from the books will sever the umbilical cord of *kufir* that these people have attached to the Muslim masses” (al-Misree 2000b:279). This is a sign of the deviant sects who went astray by leaving the scholars and misinterpreting the texts, severing the bond that protects the Islaamic creed.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> It is well known that the Ba’thists derive their primary ideology from communist/nationalist principles with the state and party being the supreme legislative body along secularist doctrine. Secondly, Ba’thist doctrine supersedes Islaamic principles and legislation and has the tendency to deify the party and its leadership (al-Waadi’ee 1996:200). Thirdly, Lewis observes that “The Ba’th Party has a double ancestry, both Fascist and Communist, and still represents both trends well” (Lewis 2004:167).

<sup>186</sup> This statement is reminiscent of that of Faraj’s when he deemed it necessary to only possess a dictionary to interpret the Qur’aan.



companions. Imaam Ahmad said, “The foundation of the Sunna according to us is adhering to what the companions of the Messenger-may Allah bestow peace and blessings upon him-were upon” (Saalim 2006:10). The accusations made by Aboo Hamza are extremely serious and an outright attack upon the scholars, their character, knowledge and conduct. It becomes evident from this research that Aboo Hamza contradicts the methodology of the orthodox creed and prefers to concentrate his criticisms against the Muslim leadership and scholars, similar to the *Khawaarij* who kept silent regarding the disbelievers instead attacking the believers (‘Awaajee 2002:481).

### 3.3.8 ‘Abd Allah al-Faiṣal

After discussing Aboo Hamza it only seems appropriate to analyze one of the most articulate and fervent leaders in the United Kingdom of the *Takfeeree* movement ‘Abd Allah al-Faiṣal. He is most known amongst English speaking youth for his fiery sermons and his unrestrained misuse of the principles of *takfeer*. Al-Faiṣal is so extreme in his verdicts and abuse of the principles of *takfeer* that Aboo Hamza has written a refutation of him, and Aboo Qataada warned him to be cautious in his application of *Takfeeree* principles.<sup>188</sup>

#### 3.3.8.1 His Call to Islaam

Al-Faiṣal’s call to Islaam is centered on two primary principles and they are *takfeer* and *jihad*. Al-Faiṣal is associated with urging the youth to involve themselves with the political affairs of Muslim rulers, and making *takfeer* of them and those who support them. Al-Faiṣal also devotes many of his lectures to speaking about ~~Hamza goes as faisal~~ <sup>189</sup> declaring them to be wicked sinners and this is a direct slander according to the orthodox creed and claims made without evidence are not accepted in Islaam as Allah says, “Produce your proof if you are truthful” (Qur’aan 1996:2:111). Ultimately, it seems the main reason Aboo Hamza makes *takfeer* of the major scholars is that they do not encourage *jihad* against the leaders. Instead they look at the conditions and scholarly precepts that are part of the religion. This is in accordance with the orthodox creed which is built upon the understanding of the

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<sup>188</sup> Refer to the video entitled *Are the Salafis Muslim or Not?* (al-Faiṣal 1999).

<sup>189</sup> Refer to the audio cassette *Cancers of the Ummah* (al-Faiṣal 2006d).

blatantly and with malice. This was taken to mean anyone who refused to declare a *kaafir* who they thought was a *kaafir* is a *kaafir*” (al-Misree 2005c:2). This is a common mistake that the *Takfeerees* make as they do not establish the proof upon individuals or groups whom they declare to be disbelievers and they make hasty judgments of *takfeer* for major sins (al-Rahaylee 2006:209). Additionally, *takfeer* of an individual or group that is not mentioned by the Qur’aan or Sunna, or the consensus of the scholars is a matter of legal opinion (*ijtihaad*) meaning there will be differences of opinion based upon each individual’s understanding of the texts while making a verdict. So, if another qualified scholar disagrees with that verdict of *takfeer*, he cannot be accused of being an apostate as the judgment was not upon someone whose disbelief is indisputable. For example, Bin Baaz and al-Waadi’ee made *takfeer* of Suddaam Hussayn; however that does not mean that those scholars who disagree with their verdict become disbelievers for not holding the same opinion. In contrast, if a Muslim denies that a Jew, Christian, or a pagan is a disbeliever, then he would in turn become a disbeliever as there is clear evidence from the Qur’aan, the Sunna, and Muslim consensus. Allah says, “Verily, those who disbelieve from amongst the people of the book and the polytheist are in the hell-fire abiding forever” (Qur’aan 1996:98:6).

The second principle that forms al-Faisal’s call is his concept of *jihaad*. Al-Faisal calls to fight against the leaders and those who support them such as the religious scholars. These principles are part of the core belief of the *Khawaarij* and the *Takfeeree* groups that embrace their creed (al-Jazaa’iree 2005:60-62).

### 3.3.8.2 His Concept of Takfeer

and declaring religious verdicts against many Islaamic groups. A main characteristic of the *Khawaarij* and the *Takfeeree* sects is that they make accusing them of being apostates. Oddly enough, Aboo Hamza refutes one of al-Faisal’s main principles, and criticizes those who attempt to misuse a statement made *takfeer* upon their opponents with disregard for the principles of *takfeer* (al-Suhaymee 2005:94). Al-Faisal tends to issue hasty religious verdicts against the Muslim leaders and regimes. On an audio cassette entitled *Exposing the Mushrikun* (pagans), or he doubts their *kufir*, or the truth of their *Hypocrites* (al-Faisal 2006a), al-Faisal, similar to Aboo Hamza, accused the regime of Saudi Arabia of apostasy and hypocrisy for their imprisonment of some scholars who were known to incite the youth to rebel against the rulers through their books and speeches. Al-Faisal said, “These people abused this rule who were known to incite the youth to rebel against the rulers through their books and speeches. Al-Faisal said, “So these great scholars we are not able to benefit from their

knowledge anymore because of the *Kaafirs* (non-Muslims), and the hypocrites, and the tyrants, which have seized power and dominated the lives of the believers” (al-Faiṣal 2006a). Here al-Faiṣal made reference to the Saudi government accusing them of being apostates from the religion in part due to their imprisonment of scholars like Salman ‘Awdah, Safar Ḥawaalee, and ‘Aieed al-Qarnee, who were warned by the major scholars to abandon their overly political stance which, according to *Salafee* scholars, emanated from thinkers like Sayyid Qutb.<sup>190</sup> Also implicit in al-Faiṣal’s statement is the charge of hypocrisy against the major scholars for their alleged role in authorizing their imprisonment. ‘Awdah, Ḥawaalee and al-Qarnee were imprisoned after several warnings to cease their activism, the premise being that it would preserve Muslim unity and protect the Islaamic state from rebellion (al-Jazaa’iree 2005:52).

Al-Faiṣal uses every opportunity during his lectures to criticize and make *takfeer* of the leaders. On one of his audio cassettes, after discussing the imprisonment of a group of scholars who opposed the government, he commented, “but leaders who throw the scholars in prison and kill other scholars, like Hosni Mubarak, and King Fraud (Fahad), and Qaddafi, you don’t hold them by the hand (to advise). You show them your Kalashnikov! This is supposed to be your stance towards them” (al-Faiṣal 2006c). In contrast, the *Salafee* creed exhorts patience with the mistakes and corruption that might occur from the ruler, but al-Faiṣal calls for their violent overthrow. Imaam Aḥmad said “Patience upon what we are upon is better than trials” (cited in Saalim 2006:265). The orthodox position regarding the oppressive leader and the trials he may bring is to be patient and attempt to advise the leader, due to the possibility that rebellion may cause chaos and bloodshed.

Many Muslims accuse al-Faiṣal of being severe in his accusations of *takfeer* and hypocrisy and some of his statements appear to support this premise. He stated on one

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<sup>190</sup> Bin ‘Uthaymeen was asked about the differences between Salmaan and Safar’s call and that of the orthodox creed and he replied, “There is a difference in creed because it is from the foundation of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa’a* that we do not make *takfeer* of someone for their sins” (al-Jazaa’iree 2005:52). According to the claims of Bin Baaz and Bin ‘Uthaymeen, the individuals mentioned tend to differ with classical interpretations of *jihad* and strayed from established orthodox principles regarding *takfeer*. This illustrates that scholars change their position with regards to important issues and can fall into error sometimes to the extent of innovation (al-Barbahaaree 1997:68). Wiktorowicz refers to scholars like Salmaan and Safar as *politicos* saying, “The *politicos* argued that they have a better understanding of contemporary issues and are therefore better situated to apply the Salafi creed to the modern context. They generally stop short of declaring revolution, unlike the jihadis, but are highly critical of incumbent regimes” (Wiktorowicz 2005:221).

of his audio cassettes that, “I wouldn’t be surprised if eight in every ten Muslims today are hypocrites” (al-Faiṣal 2006a). Similar to some of his *Takfeeree* predecessors, al-Faiṣal is prone to issuing judgments of hypocrisy against most of the Muslim nation instead of acknowledging that Muslims have many sins, but also possess good as a community as well. The problem with such statements is that they are so general they indict the whole Muslim community as Sayyid Qutb did when he said, “These societies that claim that they are Muslim all enter into the pre-Islaamic category” (al-Madkhalee 2006:13). These types of statements lead many ignorant people to make judgments and verdicts against other Muslims like the *Khawaarij* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). For example, al-Faiṣal is often referred to by his followers as Shaikh Faiṣal and when he makes a general judgment, his followers begin to accuse and look for fault in other Muslims until they begin to make *takfeer* of them. This type of behavior the researcher has personally witnessed on numerous occasions due to statements and verdicts issued by students of both Aboo Ḥamza and al-Faiṣal.<sup>191</sup>

Al-Faiṣal has issued many verdicts and statements of *takfeer* and accusations of hypocrisy against his opponents which illustrates his ignorance of the principles of *takfeer*. He stated in one of his audio cassettes, “There is no difference between the hypocrites and the people of desires. They are all hypocrites!” (al-Faiṣal 2006a). Evidence suggests that this statement is flawed and potentially dangerous because if one is accused of being a hypocrite, it is like saying that he is an apostate, and innovation has different levels: some actions or sayings that expel one outside the fold of Islaam and others do not. For example, the heresy of the one who says the Qur’aan is created is disbelief, however the one who makes it a point to fast everyday has innovated, but still remains in the religion (al-Rahaylee 2002/1:104). So, al-Faiṣal actually introduces a new principle into the religion when he declares all innovators as hypocrites, and this claim has no textual evidence to support it or precedence from classical scholars except the *Khawaarij* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). It appears that according to his own criterion he himself would become suspect to hypocrisy. Al-Faiṣal’s circular reasoning is potentially very dangerous as it may lead to verdicts which are not sharee’a based and encourage violence. In another example, al-Faiṣal

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<sup>191</sup> Refer to the case of James Ujaama a Seattle area resident accused of allegedly supporting al-Qaeda, and he was a known student of Aboo Ḥamza and al-Faiṣal (Mcgain 2004:1). This researcher has personally discussed with Ujaama on numerous occasions the orthodox position regarding *takfeer* and *jihaaad*.

on one of his cassettes explained that if a hypocrite migrates to a non-Muslim country to take residence “then it is incumbent upon Muslims to send an assassin to kill him, so you have to terrorize them wherever they are. Even if they are in the Buckingham Palace” (al-Faiṣal 2006a). This exhortation to violence has no basis in the sharee’a: to determine and judge someone of being a hypocrite. This is a matter for the Islaamic judge, and to assassinate someone who lives in a non-Muslim land only causes a greater harm for the Muslims residing in that land and it sets a dangerous precedence of possible arbitrary killing. Therefore, the punishment for hypocrites or extreme heretics “...will be based on the legal opinion of the ruler or judges from the Muslim leaders, and those who occupy that position, this principle has been established by the scholars” (al-Raḥaylee 2001/2:626). Therefore, al-Faiṣal’s call for assassination, and his abuse of the principles of *takfeer* have no basis in the principles and rulings of Islaamic law, in fact his principles seem incoherent. To illustrate, on one of his audio cassettes he said that “for Israel to be in the middle of the Muslim world and you have Muslim countries around it, and Israel is surviving it means that the countries around it are *Kaafirs* (disbelievers)” (al-Faiṣal 2006d). This shows that his principles of *takfeer* are inconsistent as he claims that the countries surrounding Israel are no longer Muslim lands because they have not taken over Israel. He disregards the fact that they may not be capable of fighting Israel, or have a treaty with it, which are both permissible options in Islaam.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> “For fundamentalists there can be no treaty relationships---peace can only occur when the entire world has submitted to Islam” (DeLong-Bas 2004:243). Refer to chapter one the section on *Daar al-Harb* also chapter three Sayyid Quṭb and *Daar al-Harb*.

Islamic shari'ah to varying degrees which is evidenced through their laws and social codes (Chene and Jennett 2007:2). The second aspect of his claim is equally erroneous and would require some sort of evidence (statements or overt actions) from the leaders of those various countries to substantiate his claim. In addition, the principles of *takfeer* warrant that the claimant looks at each society and leader individually before establishing the judgment regarding them.<sup>193</sup>

Al-Faiṣal's zeal for making *takfeer* and his misunderstanding of its application has led him to belittle the companions of the Prophet. Al-Faiṣal gives the topic of *takfeer* the utmost importance, and in one of his audio lectures he emphasized various reasons for making *takfeer*. Then he gave an example of how not making *takfeer* can be harmful to the Muslim community and he illustrated this point with an example from the Prophet's companions. Al-Faiṣal said, "...and as I said on many occasions 'Umar (the second caliph) was killed by a fire worshipper because they (the companions) did not apply the rules of *takfeer* on him" (al-Faiṣal 2006c). The implication of such a statement is that the companions were negligent in making *takfeer* and acknowledging its principles, although they are regarded as the best of the Muslim community according to the orthodox creed. Ibn Mas'ood a companion said, "Whoever seeks solace, then find consolation in the companions of Muḥammad...For verily, they possessed the most pious hearts of the Ummah and they were the obligation of the Muslim community" (Ibn Mas'ood 2006: 12) as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) said, "This is possessed established principle of the Qur'an and the example of the absence of the ability to *jihad* is not a sin, but a knowledge of the Sunnah and the affairs of the Prophet, which is almost of the same consequence as the possession of *Hakfeer* 2005 of the Ummah illustrates how the apostasy of the companions was not a sin, but a failure to fight for the cause of the Prophet, but refused to do so, which is the same as the apostasy of the Prophet himself. By the way, Al-Faiṣal alleged that the reason the governments are not believers is because they do not have any share in charity, their wills are not shared, and they do not share the (al-Faiṣal 2006d). A claim *such as*<sup>194</sup> that must be proven by clear evidence. It is evident that although the countries of the Middle East have their shortcomings most countries retain aspects of the

<sup>193</sup> See the section on *takfeer* and its rulings in chapter two.

<sup>194</sup> A dry measurement equivalent to a half bushel.

companions were inept or inattentive to the details of *takfeer* reflects a misunderstanding of an important foundation of the religion and the orthodox creed. This deprecation of the companions, although it may seem like a light criticism, draws parallels with the *Khawaarij*'s disparagement of the companions; only they made *takfeer* and fought them in their extremism.

Hasty verdicts of *takfeer* contradict the orthodox understanding of Islaam and lead to extremism, and calls for extremist action (al-Suḥaymee 2004:79). Al-Faiṣal appears to use religious texts to draw unwarranted conclusions which contradict the orthodox creed and show a propensity for violent extremism. In an audio cassette, al-Faiṣal claimed, "A major hypocrite is a person who denies what is known of Islaam by necessity. So based upon that definition every member of the Saudi *Salafees*<sup>195</sup> is a major hypocrite because they deny *tawḥeed al-ḥakameeya*" (al-Faiṣal 2006a). Here al-Faiṣal gives the impression that he is making the total *takfeer* of a particular group because they do not emphasize, nor categorize this aspect of Allah's rulership in the same way his sect does. Furthermore, this statement exemplifies Sayyid Qutb's methodology

...of not holding people accountable except if they differ regarding *al-ḥakameeya* and his interpretation of 'there is no God worthy of worship except Allah' centers upon nothing except *al-ḥakameeya*, authority, and lordship, voiding 'there is no God except Allah' of its essential meaning that all the books and messengers came with (al-Madkhalee 2006:18).

Al-Faiṣal's declaration of *takfeer* upon the *Salafees* has far reaching implications such as the nullification of the various rights afforded to them as Muslims. On another cassette al-Faiṣal said, "The greatest enemies of Islaam are the Muslims themselves...because most of them have apostated so they don't want Islaam" (al-Faiṣal 2006e). Al-Faiṣal's outlook appears very negative regarding the Muslims and their state of affairs and this tends to be a motivating factor for all the *Takfeerees*: desperate situations bring about extreme reactions. Al-Faiṣal declared, "In Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan where they are one hundred percent Muslim, or even half a *mudd* spent by one of them" (al-Nawawee 1997/15:306). This why is there no sharee'a?! Because they are the enemies of Islaam themselves!" (al-shows the esteem of the Prophet's companions and the prohibition of criticizing them, and it highlights the mistake inherent in al-Faiṣal's statement. To imply that the

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<sup>195</sup> This is a term coined by al-Faiṣal and his contemporaries to refer to those Muslims who ascribe themselves to *Salafeeya* and do not criticize the ruling Saudi regime. Al-Faiṣal uses this term in a derogatory way against those he believes to be their beneficiaries.

Faiṣal 2006e). Al-Faiṣal tends to use very strong language and make dismal conclusions about Muslims which leads him to make verdicts of *takfeer*.<sup>196</sup>

Al-Faiṣal appears to establish new criteria for *takfeer*, and those who disagree with his opinions and creed are the target of his enmity and considered by him to be apostates and this absoluteness is similar to the extremism exhibited by the *Khawarij* (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115). In an audio lecture he said, “The Talibaan is rejected by the hypocrites” (al-Faiṣal 2006a). According to al-Faiṣal acceptance of the Talibaan is part of the criterion for a sound Muslim creed and to reject them is hypocrisy. There are three problems with this claim. Firstly, there is no basis Islaamicly for this statement: no proof that allegiance to the Talibaan is linked to faith and some authors allege that the Talibaan “adhered to the narrow Deobandi<sup>197</sup> Salafism they had been taught in their medressas in Pakistan and Afghanistan” (Burke 2004:121). Secondly, this statement contradicts the principle of loving and hating for Allah’s sake.<sup>198</sup> On several occasions al-Faiṣal has attempted to make the case that the *Salafees* do not practice this principle, when in fact this statement illustrates his disregard for the very principle he fervently espouses. Al-Faiṣal aligns himself and expresses love for the Talibaan because they establish sharee’a laws, but at the same time accuses all other Islaamic states of being heretical.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Al-Faiṣal on the same audio tape declared, “We are about to expose a disease, a fatal disease, this disease is worse than cancer, worse than aids, worse than any disease you can think of and unfortunately ninety five percent of the Muslims are suffering from this disease... irjaa’a (liberalism)” (al-Faiṣal 2006e).

<sup>197</sup> The *Deobandi* are an Islaamic sect which has some of its core beliefs rooted in mysticism and highly literal interpretation of doctrine. *Deobandi*’s are generally known to follow the jurisprudence of Imaam Aboo Ḥaneefa (Ṭaalib al-Rahmaan 1998:26). According to Allen, *Deobandis* “propagate the strict pro-tawhid, pro-ulema, anti-innovation, anti-polytheist, fundamentalist revivalism first initiated in Syria by Ibn Taymiyyah, in Arabia by Al-Wahhab, and in India by Shah Waliullah” (Allen 2006:262). Here Allen highlights some of the similarities between those various revivalist movements; however *tawheed* as espoused by *Deobandi* scholars differs with the concepts espoused by Ibn Taymeeya and Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab and the details of the *Deobandi* sect is beyond the scope of this research.

<sup>198</sup> The principle of loving and hating for Allah’s sake states that Muslims love all the things ordered by Allah and the Prophet Muḥammad and hate all things they forbade.

<sup>199</sup> The Talibaan can best be described as a movement comprised primarily of adherents to the *Deobandi* sect who have conservative Islaamic values, Peter Marsden claims, “Mawdoodee’s ultra-conservative view on the seclusion of women provided ideological justification for the position taken by the Taliban” (2002:82-83). The Talibaan cannot be classified as a sect with a uniform creed.

be recognized by the United Nations a kufr organization” (Burke 2004:184).<sup>200</sup> So, the neo-*Takfeerees* have many internal contradictions in their creed which does not seem apparent amongst the original *Khawaarij*.<sup>201</sup> Finally, al-Faiṣal appears to contradict the very principles he defends by declaring all those who do not accept the Talibaan movement to be hypocrites. This position demonstrates his eagerness to apply judgments when he is not considered a scholar of Islaam or an authority to be consulted concerning the orthodox creed.

Al-Faiṣal’s extremist conclusions appear to be the result of his lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of the religious texts and principles. The very traits that al-Faiṣal accuses his enemies of he often exhibits due to his own extremism. Al-Faiṣal, in one of his audio lectures, was discussing how the Jews killed their Prophets and the Muslims kill their scholars and concluded by saying, “do you agree with me that we are no better than the Jews?” (al-Faiṣal 2006b). According to the orthodox creed a statement like this could amount to disbelief as he did not clarify his meaning when he declared that Muslims are equal to non-Muslims. This statement demonstrates his rashness when making verdicts and conclusions. He went on to say, “The Jews used to kill the prophets because they brought the truth and today the Muslims kill the scholars who are the inheritors of the Prophet, the Talibaan are no different from the Jews” (al-Faiṣal 2006b). This many *Takfeer* verdicts of hypocrisy. For he compared the Muslim and Bin Laden believers. Al-Faiṣal described the Yahood as apostates by isolation of the Yahood *Takfeer* and ignoring the Muslim they wanted to point he proceeded to say, “This is why we are cursed just like them! This is why we can’t do nothing! This is why our third holy mosque is in their hands and we can’t do absolutely nothing about it” (al-Faiṣal 2006b). Al-Faiṣal suggests dismal conclusions for the Muslim nation and is eager to accuse the leaders and contemporary scholars for failing to offer viable solutions. On another audio cassette, al-Faiṣal said about those who disagree with him, “so the *Salafees* because they are the Yahood (Jews) of

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<sup>200</sup> To resolve this criticism Bin Laaden appealed to Aboo Qataada to arbitrate and he decided in favor of Bin Laaden and the Talibaan, and he concluded his lengthy verdict by saying, “...not just anyone can make such a decision. Only Islamic scholars” (cited in Burke 2004:184). Here Aboo Qataada was referring to making *takfeer* and that the one who makes such verdicts should be a scholar.

<sup>201</sup> The original *Khawaarij* were known for their truthfulness and “made *takfeer* for lying, and now (*Takfeerees*) consider themselves religious by using deception” (al-Rahaylee 2006b). Here al-Rahaylee explains how the *Takfeeree* groups conceal their creed as a religious principle to achieve their ‘*jihaa*d’ and this potentially poses a greater danger than the original sect as was witnessed in the assassination of Sadaat. Refer to section on ‘Abd al-Salaam Faraj.

the *Umma*, they have all the qualities that the Jews have” (al-Faiṣal 2006d). Here, he compares the *Salafees* to the Jews and claims that they possess the same qualities which implies that they are no longer Muslim, but instead hypocrites outside the fold of the Islaamic religion. This edict echoes the verdicts of *takfeer* the early *Khawaarij* made regarding their foes (al-Shahrastanee 1984:115).

Al-Faiṣal’s general statements often give credence to accusations against him as a major *Takfeeree* ideologue. For example, in one of his cassettes, al-Faiṣal decried that the hypocrites hate the truth, and then he berated many of the contemporary scholars and preachers, accusing them of hiding the truth. He said:

It is the same way the hypocrites in our midst today slander us, *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamaa’a*, when you open your mouth and preach militant *tawḥeed*, radical *tawḥeed*, authentic *tawḥeed*. Topics like *al-Walaa wa al-Baraa* loving and hating for Allah, *tawḥeed al-ḥakameeya*, and *jihad*. (All of these) radical topics they slander you and call you a deviant, but don’t think they hate you. It’s not you the deviants hate. They hate Qur’aan and Sunna (al-Faiṣal 2006b).

Al-Faiṣal’s accusations and conclusions seem harsh and they lead to *takfeer* of his opponents. Al-Faiṣal makes most of his claims in response to allegations made against him. He also appears to radicalize Islaam into a militant religion which calls for armed struggle as the only viable means to its establishment and existence. This is a common claim of many secularists and the Western media against Islaam, which will be discussed in chapter four. Another problem with al-Faiṣal’s statement is that he emphasizes the principle of Allah’s rulership (*al-ḥakameeya*) to such an extent that he regards it as the only authentic category of monotheism, which implies the other aspects of lordship, his oneness in worship, and divine names and attributes are less authentic, or in fact unimportant.<sup>202</sup> However, such a statement shows the political agenda and aspirations of the *Takfeeree* ideologues and groups who tend to radicalize Islaam in conjunction with their revolutionary paradigm, by calling for *jihad* against the leaders.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Many contemporary scholars regard *al-ḥakameeya* as a part of Allah’s Lordship not as a separate category of *tawḥeed* (monotheism). According to many contemporary *Salafee* scholars *tawḥeed* is classified into three categories: lordship, worship, and divine names and attributes.

<sup>203</sup> Al-Faiṣal does not seem to come with any new ideas regarding *jihadist* principles, but rather his concept of a global *jihad* beginning with the leaders actually has roots in Qutb’s theories and the *Jihaadee* principles espoused by Faraj. Gerges claims, “Faraj’s call to jihad against the near enemy

### 3.3.8.3 His Jihaad

Like many of his predecessors, al-Faiṣal believes that *jihad* should begin with the rulers of Islamic countries in order to restore the shari'ah, however, at the same time it seems that he holds *jihad* as the ultimate goal. With regards to *jihadist* theory, al-Faiṣal departs from the more classical interpretation which posited *jihad* as both defensive and offensive which should be conducted alongside the Muslim leader. Al-Faiṣal believes that removing the Muslim leader whom he deems an apostate is the starting point of a more global struggle that is a duty both of the individual and group. Such a stance is similar to theories of Qutb and Faraj. Regarding Faraj's theory Gerges states:

The importance of Faraj's operational dictum does not lie in defining jihad as an individual and permanent obligation and refuting the classical view regarding the collective and defensive nature of jihad. Qutb and others had already made that argument very eloquently and powerfully. Rather, Faraj posited a new paradigm, assigning a much higher priority to jihad against the near enemy than against the far enemy (Gerges 2005:10).

Most of what al-Faiṣal, and in fact most of the contemporary thinkers discussed in this research share in common is the perception that *jihad* is a permanent institution that should be waged against whomever they consider as an illegitimate Muslim ruler. Al-Faiṣal, like Faraj and many of his successors, appears to raise the status of *jihad* to a level that was unparalleled amongst classical scholars. Whereas, al-Faiṣal considers *jihad* a permanent obligation on the entire Muslim community, the four major Sunni schools of thought hold *jihad* to be an obligation upon every individual under certain specific circumstances.<sup>204</sup>

Al-Faiṣal claimed that Islam spread by the sword, and that the Muslim community today should leave off calling to Islam and fight *jihad* to spread the religion. Al-Faiṣal uses as proof for his claim that the Prophet called to monotheism for thirteen years and only a couple of hundred people had embraced Islam, but after

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resonated with most jihadis and informed their rhetoric and action throughout the 1980s and 1990s. For a lack of a better term, these jihadis...believed that seizing power at home by armed struggle was the swiftest and most effective way to Islamicize state and society" (Gerges 2005:11).

<sup>204</sup> The Hanafee, Maliki, Shaafi'ee and Hanbalee scholars agree that *jihad* is an obligation on all individuals if the Muslim leader calls for it, or if a Muslim is on the battlefield when two armies confront each other, or if invaders intrude upon a Muslim country it becomes an obligation on those in that vicinity to defend that land (al-Muneef 2005:66-70).

the conquest of Makka two thousand had embraced Islaam. However, al-Faiṣal appears to be ignoring most of Islaamic history and the fact that:

The largest Muslim country in the world today is Indonesia, having over 200 million citizens, never saw a Muslim soldier. Islaam spread there and in Malaysia and Philippines by trade. That was also the case of Islaam's spread in West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Chad and Niger. Also, Islaam is the fastest growing religion in America today with anywhere between 300 and 500 converts daily. This is taking place without any soldiers or even missionaries (Philips 2006b:1).

The call for *jihad* in order to replace the call to Islaam is not in accordance with the orthodox creed and it resembles the *Jihaadee* call to revolution. Islaam recognizes that at times *jihad* is an obligation and in this case it would supersede calling to Islaam. However, regarding leaving off the duty to call to Islaam all together al-Waadi'ee said, "We receive respect and love from the Muslims and for the propagation of Islaam and the caller. So after all of this we should rest in our houses and leave the society?! No by Allah...This is not permissible" (al-Waadi'ee 2005b/1:70). Al-Waadi'ee's statement illustrates the importance of inviting to Islaam and teaching Muslims and non-Muslims alike about the orthodox creed at all times. Al-Faiṣal and many of the *Jihaadee* groups propose that *jihad* is the means for revolution and that this is the true call; however Faraj, the main reviver of *Jihaadee* thought in contemporary times also recognized the importance of Islaamic propagation (Faraj 1981:13). On the other hand, al-Waadi'ee explains, "...We do not want you to stand and call the people to revolution, and overthrowing (of governments). The Muslim youth and the Muslims need someone to clarify for them Islaam....so calling to Allah is what repels the people of falsehood" (al-Waadi'ee 2005b/1:71). This statement indicates that for *Salafee* scholars Islaamic propagation is the primary means for upholding the truth and repelling evil, and that the rectification of the Muslim community depends upon it (al-Waadi'ee 2005/1:71). This contradicts what al-Faiṣal and his predecessors allege regarding *jihad*.

#### 3.3.8.4 His Belittlement of the Scholars

Al-Faiṣal claims that it is hypocritical to make it conditional to have a caliph before performing *jihad*. He then mentioned the followers of two major *Salafee* scholars of this time Muḥammad Amaan al-Jaamee and Rabee'a al-Madkhalee and

falsely attributed this condition to them. This claim is not true as it is known that they believe having a leader, not necessarily the caliph, as a condition for offensive *jihad*. Imaam al-Shawkaanee<sup>205</sup> said, “*Jihad* is an obligation upon a group of Muslims [as long as they fulfill the obligation, there is no sin upon the rest of the Muslims] with every pious or wicked leader” (Halaq 1993:333). This condition for *jihad* is mentioned throughout the books of jurisprudence: in order to conduct offensive *jihad* it requires a leader, to sustain order and prevent chaos.<sup>206</sup>

Al-Faiṣal, like Aboo Ḥamza, claimed that the scholars made it permissible to take non-Muslims as protectors and supporters. The orthodox creed holds that out of necessity it is permissible to seek assistance from non-Muslims.<sup>207</sup> While discussing the rulings regarding *jihad*, al-Shawkaanee said, “They cannot seek help from the *Mushrikeen* (pagans or any religion besides Islaam) except out of necessity and it is an obligation upon the soldiers to have obedience to their leader, except if he commands disobedience to Allah” (Halaq 1993:334). This statement of al-Shawkaanee contains several important points. The first point being that it is permissible, out of extreme necessity, to rely upon non-Muslims in *jihad*. The second point is that leadership is required during *jihad*. As a final point, obedience is to the ruler in all affairs, including *jihad*, except if he commands disobedience to Allah.

In contrast, al-Faiṣal is extremely critical of the Saudi regime and the Muslim leaders in general. He claimed in one of his audio lectures that they took America, the greatest enemy of Islaam (in his view), as a supporter to kill Saddam Ḥussayn and Iraqis and allowed them to occupy the holy lands, which is similar to the Jews who took atheists as supporters to kill the prophets (al-Faiṣal 2006c). This criticism seems like an extreme comparison which many of the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* groups make regarding the Muslim leaders and scholars.

Al-Faiṣal tends to mock the verdicts of the contemporary scholars of Saudi Arabia, and on one of his audio cassettes he said regarding the scholars who issued

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<sup>205</sup> He was a major orthodox scholar from Sana’a Yemen in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>206</sup> Even *Jihaadees* like Faraj acknowledged this point, whereas al-Faiṣal seems to criticize his detractors on this issue which is well documented in the books of jurisprudence (Faraj 1981:20-21).

<sup>207</sup> See the section on Aboo Ḥamza.

the religious verdict that allowed American soldiers to enter Saudi Arabia that “they are all opportunists! When they are passing a *fatwa* they don’t care if a million Muslims will die in the process... that is not their concern. Their concern is that they will get a salary and they will be promoted!” (al-Faiṣal 2006c). Al-Faiṣal accuses the scholars of appeasement and complacency and looking out for their own self interests, and it is upon him as the claimant to verify and prove his accusations. In one of his audio cassettes he claimed that “the *Salafees* were set up to destroy the Islaamic sharee’a” (al-Faiṣal 2006d). He offers no justification or evidence for his attack upon the *Salafees* except that in his view they protect and help ‘apostate regimes’ stay in power. King ‘Abd al-Azeez, the former king of Saudi Arabia said, “The reality is that we as *Salafees* protect our religion and follow the Book of Allah and the Sunna of his Messenger” (cited in Suḥaymee 2004:39). Al-Faiṣal also asserts while criticizing the *Salafees* that “they hate *jihad* and the people of *jihad*” (al-Faiṣal 2006d). This criticism is both misleading and an attempt to group all the individuals who claim to be *Salafee* into a single category. The adherents to the *Salafee* creed vary with regards to their levels of knowledge, and the general adherents are not like the scholars who are less prone to mistakes in creed and major issues such as *jihad* and *takfeer*. It is vital when discussing the creed and methodology of any given sect to analyze their scholars’ creed and the sources they derive their verdicts from before making a judgment upon them. In an audio interview, Shaikh Sa’eed al-‘Amr was asked by this researcher about the claims of al-Faiṣal against the *Salafees* pertaining to *jihad*. His response was that the knowledgeable *Salafees* are the most adherent to the orthodox creed and methodology and are more aware of the rulings and legislation pertaining to *jihad*: they know when it is legislated, and when its conditions are not met (al-‘Amr 2006). To make the claim that a Muslim hates *jihad*, as al-Faiṣal did, means that he is either a hypocrite or an apostate from the religion or completely ignorant as he hates something prescribed by Islaam.

Many of the allegations made by al-Faiṣal, against the scholars and many of the contemporary propagators of Islaam in the West, illustrate another striking difference from the orthodox creed, which is a trait of the deviant sects (‘Aseeree 2007:134).<sup>208</sup> Al-Faiṣal claimed in an audio cassette, “Whenever *Salafees* write books about

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<sup>208</sup> See the section on Aboo Ḥamza’s position regarding scholars.

*tawheed* they skip *tawheed al-hakameeya*, because they don't want to offend their *kaafir* pay masters, so they love money more than Allah. They love their salaries more than Allah. They prefer to offend Allah [rather] than their *kaafir* pay masters that they sign on with" (al-Faiṣal 2006b). This statement is equivalent to making *takfeer* as he claimed the *Salafees* have committed a type of polytheism and hypocrisy. In another audio he claimed they despise *jihad* and possess cowardice, because their scholars refute many of the *Jihaadee* groups.<sup>209</sup> Al-Faiṣal concluded, "This is clear evidence that the *Salafees* are like the army of Musaylama<sup>210</sup> and they are outside the fold of Islaam. *Salafees* are *Kaafirs* i.e.... a *Salafee* who knows the leader to be a *Kaafir*, and in spite of him knowing the leader to be a *Kaafir*, he cements the throne of the apostate leader" (al-Faiṣal 2006d). Al-Faiṣal appears to be consumed by the creed of *takfeer* to such an extent that he haphazardly pronounces *takfeer* and issues verdicts based upon his perception of what people intend in their hearts.

Al-Faiṣal devoted a significant portion of his lectures to exposing what he referred to as 'wicked scholars' and their treachery upon the Muslim community.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> This term refers to those whose main call is to *jihad* and differs with the classical view regarding its principles and status in the religion. This should not be confused with those who legitimately fight *jihad* according to the Qur'aan and the Sunna. In contemporary times in places like Chechnya, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Bosnia, orthodox scholars have issued support for defensive *jihad* and those *Mujahideen* (fighters in Allah's cause) who fight according to the correct creed and methodology.

<sup>210</sup> Musaylama was an apostate from the religion who claimed Prophethood after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.

<sup>211</sup> Wicked scholars are those scholars who hide the truth and are deviant in their understanding of Islaam. However, al-Faiṣal uses the term to denote those who disagree with his paradigm.

(al-Shahrastaanee 1984:111). In al-Faiṣal’s case, he creates an atmosphere of distrust between the youth and the scholars when they are the most knowledgeable of the *Umma* in this time. For example, Allah mentions, “...and the Angels and those who possess knowledge (also bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah)” (Qur’aan 1996/3:18). Many classical scholars like Ibn Katheer, and Ibn al-Qayyim explain that this verse shows the position, esteem and benefit of the scholars over the rest of creation. Allah also mentions in another verse that those who fear him the most amongst his servants are the scholars because they truly know him, and how to worship him properly, and this evokes suspicion about al-Faiṣal’s claims against the scholars.<sup>212</sup> Further, al-Faiṣal’s audio tapes are filled with mythical scenarios in which the leaders and scholars contrive to deceive the Muslim community. He said:

So they claim that we have enough money to cover up Islaam, that revolutionary religion Islaam. We can put a stop to it. We will put all the bonafide scholars behind bars, in prison, all the upright scholars in prison. And all the scholars outside of prison will tow the line. So they have to preach what we want them to preach...then we will command our scholars to write books and give the watered down version of al-Islaam (al-Faiṣal 2006c). However,

after careful scrutiny of his charges and statements it appears they are generally The ‘bonafide’ scholars according to al-Faiṣal are those who call to overthrow the unfounded claims. Al-Faiṣal’s allegations are similar to the claims the *Khawaarij* government and who are imprisoned. For many *Takfeerees* imprisonment is the main made against ‘Alee, the fourth caliph, when they accused him of making false sign of a scholar’s authenticity. This is not the orthodox view, although many scholars judgments and this was because of their limited understanding (al-Shahrastaanee 1984:115). Al-Faiṣal said in an audio tape that “the wicked scholars spy for their evil of the past have been punished for standing up for the truth in creed.”<sup>213</sup> pay masters. They spy on the *Umma*, so they write a report on a monthly basis to the organization that pays them, the country that pays them, whether it is Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, wherever the money is coming from” (al-Faiṣal 2006c). Al-Faiṣal’s assertions exhibit paranoia and his accusations of treachery are similar to how the *Khawaarij* charged ‘Alee with apostasy for using men to arbitrate his dispute with Mu’aawiyah. In the case of ‘Alee it was apparent that he was more knowledgeable than the *Khawaarij* and had the support of the most noble of the Muslims: the companions

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<sup>212</sup> Allah says, “It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah” (1996/35:28).

<sup>213</sup> Imaam Shaafi’ee, Imaam Ahmad, Ibn Taymeeyah are just a few examples amongst many scholars who were persecuted for upholding the orthodox creed (‘Abd al-Kareem 2001:32).

they considered one's piety, truthfulness, wisdom and knowledge as standards to measure one's authenticity (al-Lawayhiq 2002:19-24). Wiktorowicz maintains that:

The jihadi critique is thus based on judgments about the purists' inability or unwillingness to reveal the truth about context to the people. In jihadi reasoning, if purists were willing or able to come forward and explain the truth about the regime, everyone would recognize that certain oppositional actions become operative, according to shared Salafi precepts. The critique is not about belief; it is about unwillingness of the purists to put this belief into practice by addressing the injustices of the regime and its American (and Zionist) masters (Wiktorowicz 2005:227-228).

### 3.3.9 Usaama Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda

In modern times no individual evokes more fear and controversy than the alleged mastermind of the September Eleventh attacks on the World Trade Center, Usaama Bin Laaden. He is both revered and despised throughout the world by both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and he is considered to be one of the most notorious figureheads of the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* groups in contemporary times. The movement most closely associated with Bin Laaden is known as al-Qaeda, a loose web of groups and individuals linked together by common ideologies but yet they operate as separate cells and all have a propensity for violence. Burke offers insight into the movement when he said, "Bin Laden and al-Qaeda are the radical, extremist fringe of the broad movement that is modern Islamic militancy. Their grievances are political but articulated in religious terms and with reference to a religious worldview." (Burke 2004:xxv). However, the classical scholars were not people who called for revolutions and coups against the leaders, but instead they defended the orthodox creed and this is how they differ with those revolutionary minded *Takfeerees* of today. Al-Faisal claimed in the same audio

#### 3.3.9.1 Creed and Ideology

tape that the so-called wicked scholars have a hidden agenda by defending the Muslim state, and this criticism is similar to what Bin Laaden claims, which will be discussed in the next section. Analyzing the ideology of such a massive network of organizations is a huge and complicated task, so for the purpose of this research the analysis will cover only Bin Laaden and the general creed of the al-Qaeda organization as articulated through its *kaafir* pay masters" (al-Faisal 2006c). To al-Faisal and the *Takfeeree* groups, a scholar's legitimacy can only be attained if he is a recipient of brutality, or religious cleric is one of the key thinkers amongst *Jihaadees*, and *Takfeerees*, and his imprisonment, because it shows that he opposes the government and their policies. speeches and treatises are often cited by *Jihaadees* around the world including al-Qaeda. This is not the criterion set by the orthodox scholars of the past, or present, but instead "Within the Jihadis' core constituency, the most influential living thinkers are al-Maqdasi in Jordan, Abu Basir al-Tartusi and Abu Qatada in England, 'Abd al-Qadar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz in Egypt, and several Saudi clerics" (McCants, Brachman, and

Felter 2006:6). Al-Maqdasee's writings symbolize much of the core creed of al-Qaeda, and both Bin Laden and Zarqawee are thought to be his longtime associates (Brisard 2005:37). Al-Maqdasee writes extensively about *tawheed*, *takfeer*, and *jihad*, and like Mawdoodee and Qutb he emphasizes *al-hakameeya* and the struggle to eliminate what he deems as disbelieving leadership. He states, "We believe it is obligatory to rebel against the Imams of Kufr from the disbelieving rulers that are placed over the necks of the Muslims. We believe that they have apostated from the Din due to their replacement of the Shariah and legislation with Allah, and seeking judgment from... and allying with the enemies of Allah and harboring enmity towards His Din and His allies" (al-Maqdasee 2003:27).<sup>214</sup> This statement illustrates the core belief of al-Qaeda: the apostate regimes are dismantling the sharee'a and allying themselves with non-Muslims against Islaam. Al-Maqdasee goes on to say about the leaders:

And we believe that fighting them is foremost rather than fighting other than them, because the Kufr of apostasy is more severe than original Kufr according to consensus. Also, because preserving the capitol and wealth is given precedence over profit and because defensive Jihad is given precedence over offensive Jihad, because beginning with Jihad against those who are closer to us from the Kuffar is foremost rather than waging Jihad against those who are farther away (al-Maqdasee 2003:27).

This is essentially the argument of many of the contemporary *Jihaadees* and organizations like al-Qaeda: they argue that *jihad* should begin with the enemy closest to them (i.e. the leaders); however it appears they have misconstrued this, like the *Khawarij*, to mean those leaders who oppose their ideology (al-Asha'ree 1999/1:170). When they begin their so-called *jihad* it is almost always at the expense of Muslims' lives and property. "Jihadis contend that the violence they do to their own people, governments, and resources are 1) necessary, 2) religiously sanctioned, and 3) really the fault of the West, Israel, and apostate regimes" (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:6).

Although al-Qaeda and Bin Laden differ tremendously from classical scholars and contemporary *Salafees* regarding their methodology, evidence suggests their

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<sup>214</sup> This quote was taken from the English translation of al-Maqdasee's writing which accounts for the difference in spellings and transliteration system used.

general goals of a broader Islaamic state and aspirations to liberate the Muslim lands are matters of concern to the greater Muslim community (Esposito 2002:158). Bin Laaden states, “It should not be hidden from you that the people of Islam had suffered from aggression, iniquity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist/Crusaders alliance and their collaborators; to the extent that the Muslims’ blood became cheap and their wealth became as loot in the hands of the enemies” (Bin Laaden 1996b).<sup>215</sup> The propensity for violence and extremism distinguishes Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda from the *Salafee* creed and their methodology has more in common with that of the *Khawaarij*. Al-Waadi’ee stated about him, “We distanced ourselves from him and his actions a long time ago. And the reality is that the Muslims in the Western countries are witnessing pressure upon them because of the activities of those who proceeded him like *Ikhwaan al-Mufliseen* (the bankrupt brotherhood) or other than them, may Allah help us” (cited in al-Suḥaymee 2005b:207). So, many contemporary scholars like al-Waadi’ee consider Bin Laaden a “trial and tribulation upon the Muslim community, and his actions to be evil” (cited in Suḥaymee 2005b:207). “Jihadis lose credibility among mainstream Muslims when they attack women, children, and the elderly; damage the sources of a nation’s wealth (such as tourism and oil); kill other Muslims; and declare other Muslims apostates” (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:6).

Al-Qaeda lists among the characteristics one must possess in order to be a member of their group, sacrifice and obedience, and “the member has to be willing to do the work and undergo martyrdom for the purpose of achieving the goal and establishing the religion of Majestic Allah on earth” (al-Qaeda 2005:16). This type of sacrifice and dedication is important to maintain loyalty to the leadership and ideology. However, this group’s ideology is extremely dangerous and the Prophet warned about sectarianism and following methodologies other than his Sunna and that of the four righteous caliphs.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> There are various different spellings for Bin Laaden. The researcher has maintained the various spellings in accordance with the sources cited. However, this research maintains the spelling of the transliteration scheme.

<sup>216</sup> Refer back to the section on the orthodox creed in chapter two.

resembles that of many of the modern cults, Islaamic sects, and groups and this differs radically from the *Salafee* position which states that the pledge of allegiance is given to the Muslim ruler; either the caliph or ruler of a country (al-Suhaymee 2005:126).

### 3.3.9.2 The Bai'a

This issue of the oath of allegiance (*bai'a*) is one of great controversy in contemporary times as many Islaamic groups advocate this pledge to their leaders, so it becomes necessary to look into the classical position regarding this issue. The *bai'a* is a type of agreement or pledge of “goodness between the people and the caliph, or imaam, or the prince, or ruler” (Qurayshee 1992:492). The *bai'a* is of seven types as mentioned in the books of jurisprudence, *hadeeth*, and politics by the scholars in those fields. There is the pledge to Islaam, for emigration from the land of disbelief, for *jihad*, for death, to do the deeds of Islaam, to assist, and the pledge of obedience (Qurayshee 1992:492). These various types of *bai'a* are derived from the religious texts by the classical scholars. There are also many conditions and obligations the leader who receives the pledge must be able to fulfill. The groups who call for this pledge often go astray because they are unable to fulfill these conditions. Imaam Maawardee, a scholar from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, mentioned that some of the most important obligations of the leader that receives this pledge are that he can protect the foundation of the religion according to the pious predecessors understanding, he can provide protection, security, and justice. Also, he is able to implement the sharee'a punishments, and he must be able to carry out *jihad* when its conditions are met. These are some of the conditions for the *bai'a* (Qurayshee 1992:492).

Al-Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra* all implement the *bai'a* without effectively fulfilling its conditions. *Jamaa'a al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra* claim, “The *bai'a* and the group are necessary conditions of faith and it is a requirement of Islaam to give allegiance to the imaam or leader of a group” (Qurayshee 1992:489). Many of the groups that call for *bai'a* cannot protect their members, nor do they possess authority to call for legitimate *jihad*, and they are unable to implement the sharee'a law, or provide safety for their group members. What is worth noting is that al-Qaeda asks for complete obedience from their members but they nullify the obedience to the Muslim leaders as “expressed by how the member obeys the communities, nor do they possess authority to call for legitimate *jihad*, and they are orders given to him” (al-Qaeda 2005:16). These secret oaths given to group leaders are unable to implement the sharee'a law, or provide safety for their group members.

Therefore, they have no legitimate right to call for *bai'a* as the conditions of leadership are not in place. Al-Hilaalee mentions that the Muslim Brotherhood and

groups like al-Qaeda stipulate in their pledge of allegiance *jihad* according to their methodology, and obedience to the group leader. Then he goes on to state “the conditions mentioned in this *bai’a* are not given to anyone except the overall ruler of the believers and the leader of their group” (al-Hilaalee 2004:216). In support of this he referenced the *hadeeth* of ‘Ubaadah Bin Saamit who said, “We gave the oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah to hear and obey, in that which we like and dislike, and in times of difficulty and ease” (al-Nawawee 1997/12:432). So, the *Salafee* view is that this oath of allegiance is to the general leader of the Muslims not to individual groups like al-Qaeda which fragment the main body of Muslims due to their blind obedience to their leadership, exclusionary practices, and general misuse of the *bai’a* to wage what they consider to be *jihad* (al-Suhaymee 2005:126).

### 3.3.9.3 **Jihad and Terrorism**

For Bin Laden and many of his predecessors *jihad* has two primary objectives: to overthrow ‘apostate regimes’ and to terrorize non-Muslims who oppose them and their objectives. Bin Laden seems to hold nothing sacred when waging his so-called *jihad*. Many of the operations authorized by him took place on Muslim soil, and irrespective of the position of the Muslim authority: whether they have a peace treaty or not with non-Muslim states (‘Aseere 2007:162). Bin Laden praised “...the strain which has eventuated in the relationship between America and the countries of the region in the footsteps of the jihad missions against the Americans in Riyadh and as a result of the fear of these regimes that their own lands might witness similar jihad missions” (Bin Laden 1996:1). *Jihad* to Bin Laden is a political weapon to be used to influence policy of the Muslim regime and this description of *jihad* is not substantiated by religious texts or the methodology of the classical scholars. Esposito observes:

Today the term jihad has become comprehensive; resistance and liberation struggles and militant jihads, holy and unholy wars, are all declared to be jihads. Jihad is waged at home not only against unjust rulers in the Muslim world but also against a broad spectrum of civilians.... Terrorist such as bin Laden and others go beyond classical Islam’s criterion for a just jihad and recognize no limits but their own; employing any weapons or means (2002:157).

Ibn Taymeeya concludes, that one must “consider the view of sound scholars of the religion in the affairs of *jihad*. They are those who have experience in worldly affairs,

unlike those people who are overtaken by worldly matters and only know the superficial matters of the religion. So do not take their opinions or the opinions of the scholars who have no worldly experience” (cited in al-Badr 2005:24).

It seems that the solution to Muslim grievances according to Bin Laden is *jihad* against the rulers particularly the destabilization of Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden expresses great concern for the sanctity of the holy lands and Muslim blood and honor; however he is quick to advocate violence against Muslims, their properties, and the agreements they have with non-Muslims which are binding according to Islamic law (al-Ahmadee 2004/1:156). He said, “Today our brothers and sons, the sons of the two holy places, have started their jihad in the cause of Allah, to expel the occupying enemy out of the country of the two holy places. And there is no doubt that you would like to carry out this mission too, in order to re-establish the greatness of this Ummah and to liberate its occupied sanctuaries” (Bin Laden 1996b:1). It seems that Bin Laden’s view of *jihad* is what is commonly considered terrorism and sabotage. Many of his operations take place on Muslim soil: rebelling against the leader, and violating the government’s treaty obligations and these actions are reminiscent of the *Khawarij* (al-Asha’aree 1999/1:169-170). Shaikh Naasir Bin Hamad said about these operations that “the devastation to life is shocking. Incredibly shocking! I saw the mosque that was destroyed in Ramadan and I saw the Sudanese guard, the father of five children, and I saw all of the Egyptian and Jordanian families. Likewise this is wickedness on the earth and has nothing to do with *jihad*” (al-Mawjaan 2004:216). Shaikh Naasir had previously supported these operations until he witnessed the devastation and the loss of Muslim life from the so-called *jihad* missions of al-Qaeda. Still Bin Laden’s call to *jihad* is mistaken from another point of view and that is because “righteousness and stability are both desired everywhere. Especially in the Arab peninsula which in reality is the Islamic peninsula...and it is not permissible to spread wickedness anywhere on the earth and especially in this peninsula which is the stronghold of Islam” (al-‘Abbaad 2005:15). However, Bin Laden was persistent in calling to his so-called *jihad*. He said:

When we compared this to your killing of hundreds of thousands of Muslims and occupying their sanctuaries, it is now clear that those who claim that the blood of the American soldiers should be protected are merely repeating what is imposed on them by the regime; fearing aggression and (their own) interest in

saving themselves. It is now a duty on every tribe in the Arab Peninsula to fight jihad in the cause of Allah and to cleanse the land from those occupiers (Bin Laaden 1996b:2).

In his efforts to undermine the Saudi regime, Bin Laaden claimed *jihad* was an obligatory duty against Saudi Arabia because of the presence of American troops and what he considered as rampant corruption by the Saudi royal family. Saudi Arabia, an established Islamic state with a Muslim ruler should not be fought against as *jihad* is waged against hypocrites and non-Muslims according to shari'a principles (al-Muneef 2005:31-35). Bin Laaden's declaration of *jihad* seems problematic: he is calling to fight in the holy lands against Muslims. Al-Albaanee commented after the Afghan *jihad* saying, "There is no *jihad* in the Muslim world at all. There is fighting in many lands; but as for *jihad*, it is under the flag of Islam and it is based upon the Islamic rulings, and among these rulings is that the soldier does not act of his own accord, but instead according to his commander's orders" (cited in Jabeer 1995:79). Here al-Albaanee explained that *jihad* is not legitimate if it does not meet the conditions and criterion for *jihad*. Al-Albaanee made his statement in the period after the Afghan *jihad* and he was describing the resistance in places like Palestine where many different movements fight and compete for an Arab state, or a nationalist identity, instead of Islam. The above statement also illustrates the importance of leadership during *jihad* and that fighting is a collective duty. Bin Laaden assumes both the position of a scholar and leader by decreeing *jihad* as a duty which he has no legitimacy to do. Al-Fawzaan said, "The scholars make pronouncements of *jihad*...because they know its rulings, its conditions, and its importance. So the ignorant one does not declare *jihad*, and if he goes for *jihad* without its criterion being met, then that is proof that he does not possess correct knowledge of *jihad*" (al-Hussayn 2005:80).

Al-Qaeda make *takfir* of all the present day leaders and advocate removing them through violence with complete disregard for the implications of their judgments and the shari'a rulings, and this is what they consider *jihad*. According to an al-Qaeda spokesman, "It is the same unbelief that drove Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, Gadhafi, Hafez Assad, Saleh, Fahed-Allah's curse be upon the non-believing leaders-and all the apostate Arab rulers to torture, kill, imprison, and torment Moslems" (al-Qaeda 2005:9). *Takferees* believe that the above leaders are apostates and it is incumbent

upon Muslims to resist and remove them from authority. This judgment disregards the established principles of *takfeer* and undermines the authority of the Islaamic state.<sup>217</sup>

Bin ‘Uthaymeen said, “There are some people that do not deter (evil) except through violence. However, violence that does not serve a purpose and only serves to make the situation worse is not permissible” (Saleem 2004:102). It seems that groups like al-Qaeda have no real long term goal for establishing Islaam or the sharee’a after removing the leaders and what separates them from many of their predecessors is the particularly violent nature of their organization. Moreover, their documents and statements tend to show they have a rather shortsighted vision based upon violence and terror with disregard for Muslim society, sanctity and property, which are all protected by the sharee’a.<sup>218</sup>

Bin Laaden responded to the claims of terrorism made against him by describing *jihaad* against America and the Muslim leaders as a religious obligation. According to Bin Laaden this religious duty entails terrorizing them and fighting them by any means. Bin Laaden said:

... we were accused of funding terrorism, and being members of an international terrorist organization. Their aims in making these allegations were to place psychological pressure on the Mujahideen and their supporters so they would forsake the obligation of jihad and the resistance of oppression [due to] American and Israeli occupation of Islamic sacred lands. However, our gratitude to Allah, their campaign was not successful, as terrorizing the American occupiers is a religious and logical obligation (Bin Laaden 1996:2).

By framing the expulsion of American troops as a religious duty, this allowed for Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda to gain new recruits for their global *jihaad* by establishing themselves as the sole defender of the faith. Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda emphasized the expulsion of American troops from the Arabian Peninsula to such an extent that they contradict other well established religious principles. For example, the zeal they have regarding this issue supersedes their obedience to the Muslim authority which authorized the stationing of American troops. Bin Laaden’s objection and violent reaction incites rebellion against the Muslim leader, a trait all the *Khawaarij* sects

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<sup>217</sup> Refer to the section on rebelling against the leaders.

<sup>218</sup> Gerges points out that since the 1990s the *Jihaadees* have redefined their enemies and have emphasized more operations against non-Muslim targets like the United States and Britain (Gerges 2005:14).

possess (al-Asha'ree 1999/1:169-170). In addition, Bin Laaden made *takfeer* of the rulers due to his misunderstanding of the Prophetic tradition which calls for the expulsion of Jews and Christians from the Arab Peninsula. This was a general command from the Prophet and he himself allowed Jews to stay and work in the Arab Peninsula, which continued after his death. From this example some scholars deduce that it is permissible for Muslims to seek support from non-Muslims during war out of necessity. Therefore, "it is permissible for them to enter the Arab Peninsula with the authorization of the imaam if there is benefit"<sup>219</sup> ('Ubaykaan 2004:6). However, Bin Laaden staunchly objects to allowing American troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia and insisted upon their removal by any means: rebellion, and terrorist attacks. Bin Laaden stated, "Clearly, after belief (*imaan*) there is no more important duty than pushing the American enemy out of the holy land" (Bin Laaden 1996b:2). This is in contrast to the claims of *Salafee* scholars who maintain that purification of one's belief and seeking knowledge are amongst the primary concerns of today.<sup>220</sup>

Bin Laaden seems to use religious texts to support his vision of global *jihad*, *takfeer*, and terrorism. Misconstruing the religious texts and statements of the scholars is characteristic of the *Khawaarij* specifically and the deviant sects in general.<sup>221</sup> Bin Laaden used a verdict issued by Ibn Taymeeya to justify his expulsion of American troops by any means. Ibn Taymeeya said, "To fight in defense of religion and belief is a collective duty; there is no other duty after belief than fighting the enemy who is corrupting life itself and the religion. There is no precondition for this duty and the enemy should be fought with one's abilities" (cited in Bin Laaden 1996b:2). Firstly, Bin Laaden misuses this quote of Ibn Taymeeya as it refers to the obligatory *jihad* which becomes incumbent upon those who have been invaded in accordance with their ability to resist their enemy. Therefore, if they do not possess the power to resist, then they are not held accountable, nor should they resist, as it may result in a greater harm and oppression of the Muslims. Secondly, the American troops were not invaders; instead, they were given permission by the Muslim authority to help defend them against what they perceived to be a greater harm: Saddam Hussayn and the

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<sup>219</sup> This principle has been discussed in the preceding subchapter.

<sup>220</sup> Al-Waadi'ee mentions sincerity to Allah, patience and God consciousness, mercifulness between Muslims, and education and purification of the soul, and seeking knowledge from the major scholars (2002:16).

<sup>221</sup> Refer back to the *Khawaarij* creed in chapter one and the subsection on Mawdoodee in chapter three.

Iraqi forces. Thirdly, Bin Laaden's application of this quote to justify his resistance to the Muslim authority and their American counterparts violates an important principle of jurisprudence: "The obligations are interrelated to the ability to perform them. Therefore, there is no obligation upon a person if he is unable to perform what is required of him, and something is not prohibited when there is a necessity for it" (al-Sa'dee 2005:93). So, even if the American troops had invaded Saudi Arabia, the duty to resist is only contingent upon the ability of those who are occupied to resist. Al-Hussayn explains that if "the Muslims have the capability to fight against non-Muslims, and they possess the strength and ability to fight, then they must fight. So if they do not possess the capability or the strength to fight, then they are not responsible for *jihad*" (al-Hussayn 2005:78). A characteristic inherent to the *Jihaadee* groups is that they possess a zeal for confrontation and ignore the conditions for *jihad*. Even the "Prophet and his companions were in Makka before immigration, and *jihad* was not legislated for them because they were unable to fight" (al-Hussayn 2005:78). This is proof that ability is a condition for *jihad* and that the solution to all conflicts and oppression is not through violent confrontation. However, the rulers gave consent to American troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia, and they should be obeyed in their decision.<sup>222</sup> Finally, due to a lack of understanding of the religious texts, and disregard for the verdicts of most of the contemporary scholars, Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda have assumed religious authority and called for the nullification of the oath of allegiance to the present rulers. These grave mistakes are inherent in the *Khawaarij* creed and are a primary cause for the extremist beliefs espoused by Bin Laaden ('Aseeree 2007:134).

Al-Qaeda believes in violent confrontation with its foes and this strategy is a major part of its campaign to overthrow existing Muslim regimes and terrorize their allies. Bin Laaden stated, "Terrorizing you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanded duty. It is a legitimate right well known to all humans and other creatures. Your example and our example is like a snake which entered into a house of a man and got killed by him" (Bin Laaden 1996b:1). Bin Laaden likened his campaign of terror and rebellion against the Muslim authority to

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<sup>222</sup> This is essentially the argument of those *Salafee* scholars who agreed with that position: if the leader deemed that there was benefit in the stationing of American troops on Saudi soil and this decision did not contradict the foundation of the religion (as there was a precedent from classical jurists regarding using non-Muslims out of necessity) then it is permissible however controversial it may seem.

that of a legitimate resistance campaign when in fact it is un-Islamic to resist the Muslim authority unless the leader has apostated and the conditions for rebellion are met.<sup>223</sup>

A favorite tactic of many of the *Jihaadee* groups is suicide bombings. Majority of the contemporary Sunni scholars hold that Islaam does not condone suicide bombings as the *Takfeerees* advocate. “Suicide missions are completely impermissible. It is possible that the bomber will reside permanently in the hell-fire for his action” (cited in Jabeer 1995:79). This was a statement from al-Albaanee, which illustrates the position most of the *Salafee* scholars of this time hold. However, some *Salafee* scholars say it is permissible with the condition that the bomber “inflicts the maximum loss of life upon the enemy lines and he knows who he kills. This is a legitimate act of *jihad* and the man killed (while committing that act) is a martyr God willing” (cited in Jabeer 1995:83). The above statement was the opinion of ‘Abd Allah Bin Muḥammad Bin Ḥameed another *Salafee* scholar, however the correct opinion lies with the strongest evidence from the Qur’aan and Sunna. Allah states, “And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is most merciful to you. And whoever, commits that through aggression and injustice, we shall cast him into the fire, and that is easy for Allah” (Qur’aan 1996:4:30). Here there is a strong admonishment from Allah about killing oneself and many of the scholars use this as a proof of the impermissibility of suicide missions. The Prophet also warned against suicide saying, “Whoever commits suicide with a piece of iron, will be punished with that same piece of iron in the hell-fire.” He also said in another narration in al-Bukhaaree that “A man was inflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so Allah said: My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid paradise for him” (al-Bukhaaree 1970:4/95). There are many narrations that prohibit killing oneself in Islaam and the term suicide bombing from its very connotation implies killing oneself even if the aim was to inflict maximum loss of life upon the enemy.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> See section on orthodox creed and rebelling against the leader.

<sup>224</sup> Many *Takfeerees* use the term “martyrdom operations” instead of suicide missions, probably in order to make the term more palatable and remove the stigma associated with the term suicide, and to emphasize that the purpose is to inflict maximum damage to their opponents not suicide.

bombings actually cause a greater harm than benefit as they incite public opinion against the cause of the bombers when innocent lives are taken. In addition, these actions cannot be equated with the battles of the companions who were determined to fight to death and were martyred as they did not kill themselves with their own hands unlike the suicide operations often employed today.

It seems according to textual evidence and the general consensus of *Salafee* scholars that it is impermissible to perform suicide operations in which a person is the cause of killing himself even if he targets his enemies. This position is radically different from the *Jihaadee* position which holds it to be a preferred act of aggression and resistance as will be explored in the section about Aboo Mus'ab Zarqaawee and those fighting in Iraq.

The al-Qaeda manual states a list of ideological aspects of the organization and the means for achieving its objective by using a campaign of terror, assassination and kidnapping. Its number one objective seems to be:

...the overthrow of the godless regimes and their replacement with an Islamic regime. Other missions consist of the following: gathering information about the enemy, the land, the installations, and the neighbors. Kidnapping enemy personnel, documents, secrets, and arms. Assassinating enemy personnel as well as foreign tourists. Freeing the brothers who are captured by the enemy. Spreading rumors and writing statements that instigate people against the enemy. Blasting and destroying the places of amusement, immorality, and sin; not a vital target. Blasting and destroying the embassies and attacking vital economic centers. Blasting and destroying bridges leading into and out of the cities (al-Qaeda 2005:13).

Al-Qaeda appears to have resorted to a policy of achieving its objective by any means at its disposal, particularly violence and extremism. It purports that the reasoning behind establishing a military wing is the "removal of those personalities that block the call's path" (al-Qaeda 2005:13). This strategy of destroying those who oppose Bin 'Uthaymeen stated, "Killing oneself has no benefit for Islaam because if the bomber kills ten including himself, or even one to two hundred of the enemy, it does not benefit Islaam" (cited in Jabser 1995:83). Bin 'Uthaymeen believed that suicide However, it appears that the modern day groups like al-Qaeda are much more extreme

and sophisticated<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Gerges mentions how Bin Laden was both charismatic and effective at recruiting members to his organization, also al-Qaeda was highly mobile and sophisticated in carrying out operations (Gerges 2005:178).

is by raising the issue and the Muslim authorities in the system of justice of their enemies and implement the beard of their champions of terror. Bin Baz al-Khazri, Islamic law and codes in permissible of kill. Firstly, Muslim target is left for foreign grantist his clearly the obtaining of Islamic laws that are used for the protection of the Muslim authority and fear the increase of the Islamic to reside in the country, the judge of the Islamic is not (Shadden 2004:110). Therefore, Bin Baz said that it is through misdeed to kill or create aggression towards the society, according to Bin Baz and Al-Farooq, [by the Allah's law] they entered in part (Qur'an surah 9:65-66) for the sake of the harm with the act. As for the said that it is then it should not be dropped physically but rather it should be spoken and they should raise the voice with the leader of the prohibition in 2005 act 6. This Non-Muslim prohibition is a in a Muslim country have rights and ability to change from the Muslims with the *Takfeere* and the ideology of the school of the Islamic to give the prohibition to kill and through the important (Al-Farooq 2002:438) when the Prophet clearly stated,

“Whoever kills someone who is protected [under the Muslim authority] will never smell the fragrance of paradise” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/4:256). These *Takfeere* groups Bin Laaden's grievances are many and he presents a strong indictment against United States foreign policy. His response to accusations of terror made against him is accuse their opponents of not ruling by Allah's law when in fact it appears they are that the United States is “accusing others with their own affliction in order to fool the the most obvious violators of the shara'a. Secondly, al-Qaeda targets sinful places masses. The evidence overwhelmingly shows America and Israel killing the weaker like discos and bars, and they consider this enjoining good and forbidding evil. men, women, and children in the Muslim world, and elsewhere” (Bin Laaden 1996:2). However, they violate the conditions that were established in chapter two regarding Then Bin Laaden mentioned the massacres in Lebanon by Israeli troops, the six enjoining good and forbidding evil and one of the most important aspects is not hundred thousand Iraqi children who have perished because of economic sanctions causing a greater harm by removing something harmful. Many innocent people are imposed by America and the United Nations and “their withholding of arms from the killed when bombing such establishments, and it causes instability in the Muslim state Muslims of Bosnia Herzegovina leaving them prey to the Christian Serbians who and rebellion against the authority. Also, these actions foster chaos and lawlessness massacred and raped in a manner not seen in contemporary history. Not to forget the and the usurping of the legitimate authority by taking the law into their own hands. A dropping of the H bombs on cities with their entire populations of children, elderly, prime example is the Bali bombing in 2002 of an Indonesian night club which killed and women, on purpose, and in a premeditated manner...” (Bin Laaden 1996:3). Bin two hundred and two people; Western tourists and locals (Burke 2004:265). This Laaden appears to be very politically astute and observant of history in his claims bombing although motivated by the determination to “rid the adulterous practices of against the United States in an attempt to justify his terror. Although George Bush and the white people” only caused greater animosity towards Islaam and was an Tony Blair both claim that Bin Laaden is attacking freedom and democracy, Bin illegitimate act of violence showing blatant disregard for the Muslim authority (Burke Laaden's statements and actions show otherwise.. Bin Laaden retorted with stinging 2004:164). Adultery and the activities condoned in those nightclubs are strictly criticism when he said “...America continues to claim that it is upholding the banner prohibited in Islaam. However, the proper means for addressing these sinful practices of freedom and humanity, whilst these deeds which they did, you would find that the most ravenous of animals would not descend to” (Bin Laaden 1996:4). For Bin

Laaden the spilling of Muslim blood necessitates retaliation by any means and he holds a long list of grievances against the West and its allies. AbuKhalil states:

Many abhor the indiscriminate violence of al-Qaeda, but fiercely oppose U.S. actions and policies of the region. And this Manichean vision is increasingly pitting the U.S. government against the Muslim and Arab world, despite the assertion by Bush and other American officials that its war is not against the Islamic faith. Yet what Americans must understand is that all rhetorical devices of the administration evaporate in the face of civilian Muslims killed by U.S. bombs... (Abukhalil 2002:84).

Bin Laaden states, "Their blood was spilled in Palestine and Iraq. The horrifying pictures of the massacre of Qana, in Lebanon, are still fresh in our memory. Massacres in Tajikistan, Burma, Kashmir, Assam, Philippines, Fatani, Ogaden, Somalia, Eritrea, Chechnya and Bosnia ... massacres that send shivers through the body and shake the conscience" (Bin Laaden 1996b:2). These speeches underline Bin Laaden's call for violent action which he sees as the only solution to the current tribulations that the Muslims are undergoing today.

#### 3.3.9.4 **His Takfeer**

Like Aboo Qataada, and al-Maqdasee, al-Qaeda seem to hold making *takfeer* an important pillar of faith. Al-Maqdasee's argument can be summarized as follows:

what is the benefit of deeming people who submit to tyrants to be disbelievers? The author answers: it is not up to us to determine the benefit of it; we must do it because we are commanded to do it. In order to dissociate from disbelievers; we must be able to identify them. We cannot prefer national and social unity over the greater unity that is true monotheism. Differentiating between believing and disbelieving people is the way to protect true monotheism (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006a:190).

For al-Qaeda and Bin Laaden it is a religious duty to scrutinize the leaders and those who work closely with them in order to determine their Islaamic legitimacy, and they view this as a means of protecting true *tawheed*. Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda accuse the king of Saudi Arabia of being an apostate, so one of the suicide bombers who attacked the military installation in Khobar Saudi Arabia said, as narrated by Bin Laaden, "My death is victory. I did not betray that king, he did betray our Qiblah. And he permitted in the holy country the filthiest sort of humans. I have made an oath to Allah, the Great, to fight whoever rejected the faith" (Bin Laaden 1996b). In the view of al-

Qaeda, the king has apostated thus nullifying his legitimacy to rule. It only follows that this leaves a void in leadership and responsibility for the affairs of the Muslims, and warrants executing those affairs by any means. This is blatant *Takfeeree* thinking and they fail to provide sufficient evidence against the accused by declaring disbelief for actions which do not warrant *takfeer*. In contrast, Imaam al-Aajooree <sup>226</sup> said, “It is not permissible for whoever possesses a *Khawaarij* world view to rebel against a righteous imaam or oppressive one, gathering his followers, raising their weapons and making it lawful to kill Muslims” (1999/1:345). Bin Laaden, al-Qaeda and the other *Takfeeree* groups seem to have no inhibitions about making *takfeer* and spilling the blood of Muslims. Their ideology seems to restrict their logic which is expressed in absolutist terms. Al-Maqdasee maintains that “to claim to believe in God while embracing tyrants is hypocrisy and an aspect of disbelief. The hukkam (Arab rulers) believe in the tyrants and their profane laws (namely the UN), so they are hypocrites and have a share in disbelief. Moreover, they themselves are tyrants who are ‘worshipped’ by their followers” (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006a:189). It is this uncompromising stance which allows for *Takfeerees*, like Bin Laaden, to make *takfeer* of all of those who assist or obey the government that they deem to be apostate, which in their minds legitimizes the violence they call for in Muslim societies. Another important point is that al-Maqdasee makes *takfeer* of the Saudi regime for its participation in the UN when the Talibaan themselves, whom al-Qaeda once heralded as the model Islaamic system, were once seeking recognition from that very same organization, and this is why some elements in the *Takfeeree* movement accused the Talibaan of illegitimacy (Burke 2004:184). <sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> He was a classical scholar who died 940 A.D.

<sup>227</sup> Admittedly, al-Maqdasee in his writings does not appear to be as sporadic in his call to *jihad* and *takfeer*. He acknowledges the conditions for *takfeer* and distances himself from some of the violence and carelessness of some of the other thinkers mentioned in this research (al-Maqdasee 2003:23-25). He like Aboo Qataada and ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Rahmaan, has a background in Islaamic training and tends to be more knowledgeable and cautious than those who do not have a scholarly background. It seems “...there has been a shift in intellectual influence from laymen in Egypt (like Sayyid Qutb) to formally trained clerics from Palestine (often living in Jordan) and Saudi Arabia. While it is unclear if this correlates with new developments in Jihadi theory, it certainly indicates a trend toward shoring up that theory with religious credentials” (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:6).



sectarianism, and they terrorize and make *takfeer* of most of those who oppose them (al-Mawjaan 2004:86).

Bin Laaden made the total *takfeer* like Sayyid Quṭb did of all the Muslim regimes, which is a common theme amongst the *Takfeerees* and *Jihaadees*. In the words of Bin Laaden, “Afghanistan is the only Islaamic state. Pakistan follows the English common law and I do not consider Saudi Arabia an Islaamic state” (Majmoo’ 2006:44). Bin Laaden considered the government of the Ṭalibaan as the only authentic Islaamic state, which is similar to the assertion al-Faiṣal made when he declared all of those who do not support the Ṭalibaan to be hypocrites (al-Faiṣal 2006a).

### 3.3.9.5 Bin Laaden on Contemporary Regimes

Bin Laaden and al-Qaeda seem to have immense enmity towards the existing Muslim regimes like the early *Khawaarij* (al-Suḥaymee 2004:79). “The confrontation we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals, nor Aristotelian diplomacy, but it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing and destruction, and the diplomacy of the canon and the machine gun” (al-Qaeda 20005:4). Bin Baaz mentioned that these groups believe in “killing the people and attacking without justification from the sharee’a. These people are terrorists, they are wicked, and they violate security and spread wickedness throughout society” (cited in Suḥaymee 2004:19). Al-Qaeda’s call to violence is in violation of the sharee’a principles and many of their attacks are on Muslim soil and directed against Muslims. From May 14, 2004 until December 6, of the same year there were at least 14 terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia ranging from bombings to shootouts, assassinations, and beheadings, all attributed to al-Qaeda (al-Ḥarbee 2005:1). The Prophet clearly stated that Muslims’ blood, wealth, and honor are sacred and in a *ḥadeeth* tradition he said, “Abusing a Muslim is an act of disobedience and killing him is disbelief” (al-Nawawee 1997/2:242). The actions of al-Qaeda are considered heretical and extremely sinful according to the Qur’aan and Sunna and therefore cannot be attributed to Islaam whatsoever. Al-Qaeda claims, “After the fall of our orthodox caliphates on March 3, 1924 and after expelling the colonialists, our Islamic nation was afflicted with apostate rulers who took over in the Moslem nation. These rulers turned out to be more infidel and criminal than the colonialists

themselves” (2005:8). Al-Qaeda’s theory for rectifying the current crisis in leadership is similar to Faraj’s who said:

The main foundation of colonialism that exists in Muslim countries is these leaders, so beginning by dismantling colonialism would be ineffective, unbeneficial and a waste of time. Therefore, it is upon us to settle our affairs Islaamically by establishing the divine law first in our countries: making Allah’s word superior and no doubt *jihad* is required to remove these apostate leaders and replace them with a total Islaamic system and this is where liberation begins (Faraj 1981:116).

Bin Laden accused the Muslim governments of apostasy as is common with all the *Takfeeree* groups and ideologues that preceded him and follow his methodology. In his critique of the Saudi regime he said, “The regime does not cease to cry in the open over the matters affecting the Muslims without making any serious effort to serve the interests of the Muslim community apart from small efforts in order to confuse people and throw some dust into their eyes” (Bin Laden 1996:2). To Bin Laden the Saudi regime is an apostate regime that uses deception to influence and swindle the Muslim masses. Like Aboo Hamza, Bin Laden makes *takfeer* for what he perceives as ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the Saudi regime and these are not among the conditions that render a ruler to be an unbeliever. On the contrary, Saudi Arabia is known for its Islaamic philanthropy and “state financed international Islaamic organizations to promote its Wahhabi-based, pan-Islaamic vision and ideology.... financing the building of mosques, schools, libraries, hospitals, and clinics. It trained and supported imams for mosques, distributed tens of millions of Saudi-approved translations of the Quran and religious literature” (Esposito 2002:107). Bin Laden disregarded the service Saudi Arabia has put forth in Islaamic causes instead he viewed their accomplishments as a facade to cover up their disbelief and excesses.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> The researcher is not claiming that Saudi Arabia is free from sin or that there are no shortcomings in rulership. However, whatever faults, or oppression that may take place does not warrant *takfeer* of the leaders as the *Takfeerees'* allege.



Bin Laden is more politically astute than most of his predecessors. He laid out his program for the reformation of the leadership in Saudi Arabia when he said, “There are several choices for the regime, one of these is reconciliation with all the different sections of the public, by releasing the scholars, and offering essential changes, the most important of these is to bring back Islamic law, and to practice real *Shura* (consultative government)” (Bin Laden 1996:3). Bin Laden, like Aboo Qataada, seems to have a more flexible stance with the Muslim government of Saudi Arabia compared to the other ideologues discussed in this research as they seem to advocate the potential for reform and return to what they consider Islaamic rule, however they both declare the regime to be apostate.<sup>231</sup> Bin Laden appears to have more concern for Arab and Muslim public opinion so as not to alienate those who may sympathize with his cause. Unlike many of the *Takfeerees* mentioned in this research, he still seems to offer a political alternative to violence: if the regimes conform to his demands.<sup>232</sup>

The establishment and reform of Muslim governments according to the claims of al-Qaeda can only be achieved through violence and killing which reflects their lack of insight and Islaamic knowledge. “Islaamic governments never have and never will be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they always have been, by pen and gun, by word and bullet, by tongue and teeth” (al-Qaeda 2005:4). This statement is incorrect as it does not account for the first Islaamic state of Madina that the Prophet established after migrating from Makka and it was not established through fighting. Bin Baaz stated about those who claim that Islaam was spread by violence that “this saying in general is false. For Islaam was spread by calling to Allah the Almighty and Glorified and was strengthened with the sword” (2003/18:418). It was previously mentioned that Islaam spread to many regions of the world through trade not fighting.<sup>233</sup>

As a justification for its terrorist acts al-Qaeda claims that it operates under the auspices of the sharee’a. “These young men realized that an Islamic government

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<sup>231</sup> Return to the section on Aboo Qataada.

<sup>232</sup> Burke asserts that “Little of bin Laden’s thought is original, most of his ideas can be found repeated in thousands of similar ‘Salafi’ tracts distributed over the last decade. His lack of a clear political programme is a feature of most modern Islamic extremist ideology too” (Burke 2004:164).

<sup>233</sup> Refer back to the section on ‘Abd Allah al-Faigal.

would never be established except by the bomb and rifle. Islam does not coincide or make a truce with unbelief, but rather confronts it” (al-Qaeda 2005:9). Bin Baaz best articulated the position held by the *Salafee* scholars when he said, “The treaty made with the enemy is permissible infinitely and indefinitely if the ruler sees benefit in that. The (proof) is the saying of Allah, the Glorified, ‘But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it, and put your trust in Allah the All-Hearer, the All-Knower’ because the Prophet practiced all of these treaties” (Bin Baaz 2003/18:439). The *Jihaadee* groups strongly reject peace treaties with their enemies especially non-Muslims. However, their inflexibility serves only to distance them from the orthodox creed and permissible actions that Allah legislated and his Prophet practiced. Therefore, the claim that al-Qaeda adheres to the sharee’a is deceptive: they attempt to legitimize their acts of violence in the name of the sharee’a and Islaam, when in reality they contradict many of its principles.<sup>234</sup>

### 3.3.9.6 His Criticism of Contemporary Scholars

Bin Laden and al-Qaeda view the scholars that differ with their world view as mere puppets used to protect the interests of the various Arab regimes. Bin Laden describes a three tier societal structure which comprises of the security apparatus to spy on the general population and protect the leaders from harm. The second sector is the media which is used “to beautify the persons of the leaders, drowse the community, and fulfill the plans of the enemies...” (Bin Laden 1996:3). The third component “...takes priority with the leaders in the Arab world, and is used to take the people astray, and open the door wide for the security factions to fulfill their aforementioned objectives. This is the organization of the scholars of the authorities, as the role of this organization is the most dangerous of roles in the entirety of the Arabic countries” (Bin Laden 1996:3). Bin Laden’s view of the scholars vastly contrasts with the *Salafee* position towards the scholars. Allah says, “It is only those who possess knowledge, who fear Allah amongst his slaves” (Qur’aan 1996:35:28). This is an incredibly important verse which shows how Allah regards the scholars as they are the most obedient to his commands and most deserving of his mercy and

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<sup>234</sup> “They call their actions *jihad* in order to make them acceptable to common people; however they are *Takfeere*, and even the *Khawarij* called their warfare waged against the companions' *jihad*. Likewise it is not correct to call this thought *Salafee*, because it differs with the methodology of the *Salaf* in creed and method, rather it is deception to mix the truth with falsehood and to deceive those who are ignorant” (al-Suhaymee 2005:204).

favor after the prophets. Allah's statement forms the foundation of the orthodox creed and therefore Bin Laaden and those who insult the scholars have misunderstood an important aspect of the Islaamic creed. Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Surely if the one who is firmly grounded in knowledge comes across doubtful matters, even if they were as many as the waves of the sea, they would not remove his certainty. Nor would they make him doubtful.... Instead if they come to him, he refutes the doubts leaving them shackled and defeated with knowledge as his guardian and soldier" (cited in al-Lawayhiq 2002:25). This illustrates the importance of acquiring knowledge in Islaam and that the orthodox scholars firmly adhere to Islaamic principles. However, Bin Laaden claimed those scholars who are known for their knowledge and service to Islaam are mere puppets of the Arab regimes and his analysis is not supported by evidence. Ibn Taymeeya said about those scholars who are known for their "truthfulness in general and are praised by the majority of the people in the Muslim community, that they are the leaders of guidance, the lights in the darkness" (Ibn Taymeeya 1989/11:43).<sup>235</sup> It seems dubious that Bin Laaden who claims to adhere to the orthodox creed could attack the scholars in such a way as to invalidate an important aspect of creed. Bin Laaden in a way similar to Aboo Qataada, Aboo Hamza, and al-Faiṣal; accuses many of the contemporary scholars of Saudi Arabia of concealing the truth by saying:

At the same time that some of the leaders are engaging in the major *kufr*, which takes them out of the fold of Islam in broad daylight and in front of all the people, you will find a *fatwa* from their religious organization. In particular, the role of the religious organization in the country of the two sacred mosques is of the most ominous of roles, this is overlooking whether it fulfilled this role intentionally or unintentionally, the harm which eventuated from their efforts is no different from the role of the most ardent enemies of the nation (Bin Laaden 1996:3).

Bin Laaden insulted the scholars describing them as beneath their immediate predecessors in knowledge and esteem. He also said, "During the preceding two decades, the regime enlarged the role of Bin Baz [former grand *Muftee*] because of what it knows of his weakness and flexibility and the ease of influencing him with the various means which the interior ministry practices through providing him with false

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<sup>235</sup> This quote was introduced to show that classical scholars emphasized the importance of scholarship and that in general those scholars Bin Laaden criticizes have contributed a vast amount of literature dedicated to the revival of the classical Islaamic creed.

information” (Bin Laaden 1996:4). Firstly, it seems from this statement that Bin Laaden places himself in the position to pass judgments upon the scholars. Imaam Maalik said, “It is not permissible for a man who sees himself to be from a group of people (scholars) until he asks those who are more knowledgeable than him” (cited in al-Lawayhiq 2002:27). This statement refutes the position of Bin Laaden who issues verdicts when he does not possess scholarly credentials. Secondly, it is worth noting that Bin Laaden’s criticism differs from the blatant accusations of *takfeer* issued by ideologues like al-Faiṣal and Aboo Ḥamza, which seems to show that they differ in their levels of deviance from the orthodox creed. Bin Laaden accuses Bin Baaz of being decrepit and unable to discern truth from falsehood when he states:

After this the government began to strike with the cane of Bin Baz, every corrective program which the honest scholars put forward. Furthermore, it extracted a fatwa to hand over Palestine to the Jews, and before this, to permit entry in to the country of the two sacred mosques to the modern day crusaders under the rule of necessity, then it relied on a letter from him to the minister for internal affairs and placed the honest scholars in jail (Bin Laaden 1996:3).

This statement appears to be an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the major scholars in a way similar to how the original *Khawaarij* began to sow discord amongst the army of ‘Alee the second caliph until a group amongst them eventually made *takfeer* of him and fought against him, as illustrated in chapter one. Furthermore, the ‘honest’ scholars Bin Laaden referred to were the same ones who were accused of inciting the youth of Saudi Arabia to speak out and change the leadership. Scholars like Salmaan al-‘Awdah and Safar al-Ḥawaalee who were known for making general statements of *takfeer* against Muslim governments and espouse Qutbism. Shaikh Saaliḥ al-Fawzaan was asked about some general statements Salmaan al-‘Awdah made regarding the absence of the Muslim nation and replied by stating, “This saying ‘the Muslim nation is absent’ entails the *takfeer* of all the Muslim nations, since it implies that there is no Islaamic state, and this is in opposition to the statement of the Messenger, ‘There will never cease to be a victorious group from my nation holding fast to the truth’” (al-‘Adnaanee 2004:146). Most of the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* groups tend to quote from the same scholars and ideologues that hold their position and creed, and it follows that they oppose many of the contemporary scholars who affirm the principles established by the companions and *Taabi’een*, especially regarding *jihaad* and *takfeer* (al-Suḥaymee 2005b:79).

### 3.3.10 Aboo Muṣ'ab al-Zarqaawee

Bin Laden's counterpart who has gained notoriety for his resistance in Iraq is none other than Aboo Muṣ'ab al-Zarqaawee. Zarqaawee like many other *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* ideologues was radicalized after fighting in the Afghani *Jihaad*. In Afghanistan he came into contact with 'Abd Allah 'Azzam, Bin Laden, and Aboo Muhammad al-Maqdasee another extremist *Takfeeree* currently in prison in Jordan. Zarqaawee was recently killed in Iraq; however his ideals and support for his movement continue to thrive in Iraq and throughout the world.

Zarqaawee had a long history of terrorist activities and exhibited a zeal for *jihad* and was incarcerated for his activities. Brisard mentions, "His jihad could wait no longer; the fanatic Islamist was impatient to make up for the time lost in Jordanian prisons. He made more and more contacts, renewing his ties with his former friends from the time of the mujahidin" (2005:61). Zarqaawee benefited from a general amnesty from King 'Abd Allah of Jordan which was insisted upon by the Jordanian faction of the Muslim Brotherhood and this allowed for many radical ideologues to be freed, which the Jordanian intelligence services would later regret (Brisard 2005:57). Zarqaawee began to establish himself amongst the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* circles and by 2000 "... Zarqawi had proved himself an important part of al-Qaeda apparatus in Afghanistan, and in 2001 he took the oath of allegiance to Bin Laden" (Brisard 2005:67). Zarqaawee later became independent from al-Qaeda and Bin Laden and began to build his terrorist infrastructure in preparation for the invasion of Iraq. One of his lieutenants, Azmi al-Jayusi, who was captured in Jordan, would later confess "At heart I started training for Abu Musab. The training included handling high-level explosives and learning about poisons. I then took the oath of allegiance to Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi and agreed to work for him without questions" (Brisard 2005:77).

#### 3.3.10.1 His Creed

Al-Zarqaawee was clouded in controversy; however he was not new to the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* methodology and as previously mentioned he had a history of *jihadist* activities. The three primary components of Zarqaawee's creed relevant to this research are his ideals regarding *jihad*, *takfeer*, and leadership.

Orthodox scholars hold refuting religious innovation and mistakes in creed as imperative in preserving the religion and protecting the general Muslims from the harms of religious innovation as discussed in the beginning of chapter three. Therefore, groups like al-Qaeda and *Jihaadees* like Zarqaawee should be analyzed and their mistakes refuted as they are a huge trial and test upon the Muslim nation and according to Ibn Taymeeya “they present a greater harm than the disbelievers” (Ibn Taymeeya 1989b/5:247). This statement is referring to the evil from within the Muslim community, particularly that of the *Khawaarij*, as they deceive the Muslims from within their ranks. However, the fact that they are Muslims means in the hereafter they are better off than disbelievers, who according to orthodox scholars, abide in the hell-fire eternally. In this regard Allah says, “Verily, those who disbelieve from amongst the people of the scripture and polytheists will abide in the fire of hell. They are the worst of creatures” (Qur’aan 1996:98:6). Therefore, although innovation in worship, and the *Khawaarij* creed in particular, are sinful according to the orthodox creed it is possible to repent and have redemption unlike those who perish while disbelieving. The implication is that it is dangerous to hold unorthodox beliefs in Islaam and it is a duty to warn against those who hold deviant creeds, and this is a type of *jihad*. Imaam Ahmad said, “According to us the foundation of the Sunna is adhering to what the companions of the Prophet adhered to and leaving innovation. Every innovation is misguidance, therefore, avoid arguing about religion and sitting with innovators” (al-Muhammadee 2005:6-7).

### 3.3.10.2 **Zarqaawee on Jihad**

*Jihad* to Zarqaawee was the primary means to achieve and return the lost prestige of the Muslim community; however as we will see *jihad* to Zarqaawee differed from that of the orthodox creed. Ibn Taymeeya said regarding the preparation for *jihad* “then the strength of the religion is with the Book of guidance (Qur’aan) and using the sword for assistance” (Ibn Taymeeya 1989/28:234). This statement shows the importance of establishing the religion by correcting the creed wherein the sword is secondary for strengthening that foundation. Another benefit of this statement is that it illustrates that *jihad* is not the end result; instead it is a means for assisting Allah’s religion if it is performed in accordance with its correct conditions. Allah says, “And verily it is a right upon us to help the believers” (Qur’aan 1996:30:47). It can be

inferred that, according to the orthodox belief, Allah's assistance and victory comes through obedience to him and following the Sunna of the Prophet, not through terror, ignorance of religious principles and heretical methodologies. The Prophet said, as collected by Imaam Ahmad, that "The *mujaahid* is the one who struggles within himself to be obedient to Allah. And the immigrant is the one who flees from what Allah has prohibited" (Ibn Hanbal 1996/3:21). Ibn al-Qayyim commented on this *hadeeth* as follows: "*Jihaad* against oneself comes before *jihaad* against the external enemy and it is its foundation. Whoever does not fight his desires to do what he was commanded to do and leave what he was prohibited from for Allah's sake will never accomplish *jihaad* against his external enemies" (cited in al-Jazaa'iree 2004:56). These statements give insight into the classical view regarding *jihaad*, and it is a refutation of the position of Zarqaawee who seemed to emphasize that *jihaad* of the sword comes before correcting one's creed. Zarqaawee's *jihaad* seemed to be based upon brutality and this appears similar to the allegations many made against the Taliban's rule of Afghanistan. Some allege the Taliban were unable to establish themselves amongst the Afghani population and for this reason during the American bombing campaign many of their Afghani counterparts fled to the opposing side (Hammidov 2004:40-46).<sup>236</sup> The fall of the Taliban draws a parallel to Zarqaawee's campaign in Iraq, which does not appear to have the support of the Iraqi masses (Burke 2004:270-271). Brisard claims that Afghanistan and Iraq are both important campaigns to *Jihaadee* groups. "In the former, Bin Laden got himself accepted on the basis of his strategic intelligence; in the latter, Zarqawi predominates mainly by force. Bin Laden worked out the pragmatic position; Zarqawi advocates chaos as a form of political pressure. Bin Laden thinks of himself as bringing people together; Zarqawi is exclusionary" (2005:1). Zarqaawee's terror and wanton violence appeared to have alienated him from the Iraqi populace which is not in accordance with Islaamic *jihaad* espoused by classical scholars nor is it a strategy likely to bring about a sustained campaign to attain its objectives.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Islaam emphasizes leniency and wisdom especially in application of the sharee'a. Evidence suggests that the Taliban were excessive in their attempts to implement sharee'a especially in regards to the ban on women's education and the creation of a climate of fear in Afghanistan from their policies (Marsden 2002:94-98).

<sup>237</sup> Burke asserts that Zarqaawee's targeting of the U.N., several foreign embassies, and the Red Cross is much different than typical al-Qaeda strategy and the tactics of Bin Laden, who is more concerned about Muslim public opinion, whereas Zarqaawee is more alienating as illustrated in his attacks against Iraqi Shae'a (Burke 2004:271).

For Zarqaawee and indeed most Muslims, the invasion by the U.S. of Iraq was an unjustifiable act of aggression. This is extremely important to understand as it offers insight into Zarqaawee's motivation to fight and terrorize the coalition forces, the new Iraqi government, and those perceived as cooperating with them. Zarqaawee stated:

America came to change the nation's principles, twist its words, and change its curricula. It came to do away with the fountains of goodness that are bursting in the conscience of the Islamic nation and block the way to a new awakening and true return to Islam. America came to spread obscenity and vice and establish its decadence and ribald culture in the name of freedom and democracy. It hopes to remold the region and change its political, religious, and cultural map according to its personal interests (Zarqaawee 2005a:2).

Zarqaawee envisioned the invasion as a part of a larger quest for empire and influence in the area as well as a type of cultural imperialism to destroy Islaamic values and statehood.<sup>238</sup> This is a common perception in the greater Muslim world which seems to leave many Muslims ambivalent about the proper reaction to U.S. aggression, Zarqaawee, and those who resist American occupation. Zarqaawee framed the war in Iraq in religious terms and with concepts that resonate throughout the Muslim world.

In November 5, 2004, on the eve of the U.S. siege on the Iraqi city of Falluja, 26 Saudi clerics, including both al-Awdah and al-Hawali, signed an 'open letter to the Iraqi people' that called for Iraqis to join in a defensive jihad against the U.S. military occupation. The fatwa has received considerable attention, although little analysis, let alone consideration of its significance in the Saudi domestic political arena. The fatwa made the case for violence against U.S. forces in Iraq, noting that 'jihad against the occupation was mandatory for those who were able.' For those unable to participate themselves, the statement did forbid 'harming any member of the resistance,' which the clerics did not bother to define, as well as forbidding 'any Muslim from providing support or assistance to military operations on behalf of the occupying soldiers.' The fatwa has widely been interpreted as an endorsement of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi and his operations in Iraq (Jones 2005:5).

To many Muslims the situation in Iraq is unacceptable and the statement issued by the above mentioned Saudi clerics illustrates the tensions many Muslims face: paradox of supporting the U.S. "War on Terror", highly perceived as a war against Islaam, and

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<sup>238</sup> Former US Ambassador Madeliene Albright was asked if the deaths of half a million Iraqi children were a price worth paying for economic sanctions against Iraq under Saddam Hussayn and replied, "We think the price is worth it..." (Pilger 2003:48). In general, Muslim public opinion views US policy throughout the Muslim world as callous, demoralizing, and intrusive, and this plays into the hands of extremists like Zarqaawee (Lewis 2003:165).

the wanton acts of violence attributed to Zarqaawee and groups that espouse his vision of global *jihad*.<sup>239</sup> This statement also shows the internal tensions many Muslims societies like Saudi Arabia face as the regime must balance between two opposing forces which threaten their legitimacy: allying itself with Western interests or the interests of their Muslim constituencies, and by choosing the former their legitimacy to rule, and in fact, their Islamic authenticity is open to challenge.

Zarqaawee claimed that “Iraq in the Talmudic prophecies, which the neo-conservative rulers in Washington and London uphold, is the land of evil, whose city, and first enemy of the Israelites. The prophecies call for killing Iraqis, raping their women, smashing the heads of their children, and pouring death on their heads, as they have actually done” (Zarqaawee 2005a:2). This actually seemed to be a plea to the Muslim masses to come to defend the land of Iraq from oppression and tyranny and this gave him legitimacy amongst *Jihaadee* circles. Zarqaawee’s struggle was perceived by some moderates as legitimate due to the inadequate case the U.S. made for invading Iraq. Mamdani concludes about the U.S. motivations for invading Iraq after discussing the staged rescue of Jessica Lynch, an army Private, that:

her rescue is as much of a lie as the two major reasons given for launching the war on Iraq: Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or the links between the Iraqi regime and al-Qaeda. The very notion of ‘weapons of mass destruction’ was invented as a scare to go alongside the notion of an ‘evil’ regime whose arsenal must evoke deep fear (2005:198).

It has become accepted amongst many that there is no concrete evidence to support the invasion of Iraq and that sufficient evidence never really existed. This gives additional fuel to Zarqaawee’s accusations and the perception amongst some that he was a resistance fighter, now martyr, rather than an extreme terrorist.

Zarqaawee called the Muslim nation to rally behind his *jihad*, but he was not an authority to call for *jihad*, and his zeal was not sufficient to justify his actions in Iraq. Zarqaawee stated, “God be praised, we are invading them, as they are invading us, attacking them as they are attacking us, and inflicting losses on them as they are

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<sup>239</sup> Other non-Saudi clerics, like Yusuf al-Qardawi, also find the U.S. invasion of Iraq unacceptable and view it as open aggression and thus legitimate *jihad*. Al-Qardawi believes that *jihad* against aggressive non-Muslim states takes precedence in contemporary times and that freeing Muslim lands is a duty upon all Muslims (al-Qardawi 2000:1/297-298).

inflicting losses on us. Yet, we are not the same. Our dead go to paradise and theirs go to hell” (Zarqaawee 2005a:3). Zarqaawee urged the Muslim nation to fight without the scholarly credentials to do so or the backing of a legitimate Muslim authority.

Regardless of this Zarqaawee declared:

They are aware that if the Islamic giant wakes up it will not be satisfied with less than the gates of Rome, Washington, Paris, and London. They tried before to hide the truth of the battle and to distort the image of the pure jihad flag. They deluded the world into believing that it is the remnants of the defunct regime and the elements of the infidel Ba'th that are waging the resistance operations so that the nation would not back the battle and hail the epic (Zarqaawee 2005a:3).

For Zarqaawee, Iraq was a starting point for his global *jihad*, and he aspired to export his concepts to much of the Western world. Bin ‘Uthaymeen was asked about those who advocate this vision of global *jihad* and he replied:

This saying is foolishness: that it is obligatory upon us to fight America, France, Britain, and Russia. How can we fight refusing the wisdom of Allah the Almighty and rejecting his sharee’a? However, it is obligatory upon us that we do what Allah the Almighty has commanded us to do ‘And prepare for them as much as you are able from strength’...And the most important strength we can prepare is faith and God consciousness (al-Reis 2003:25).

The principles regarding *jihad* as espoused by Bin ‘Uthaymeen are to prepare oneself through worship and building faith and the fruit of that strength is God consciousness: fearing his punishment and hoping for his mercy. Second, it is preparation physically and militarily. This statement illustrates a radically different approach to Zarqaawee’s, who saw strength and the ability to influence through violence as the most effective means of accomplishing his goals.

Zarqaawee believed that the struggle in Iraq constituted pure *jihad* but no major contemporary scholars<sup>240</sup> supported him in his endeavors or decreed his actions as

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<sup>240</sup> Some scholars like Yusuf al-Qardawi, the Muftee of Qatar, support suicide bombings and consider Iraq a legitimate *jihad*. However, al-Qardawi is known as one of the head scholars of the Muslim Brotherhood and is accused by many *Salafee* scholars of straying from the orthodox creed, methodology, and jurisprudence. “Qardawi opposes the Qur’aan and the Sunna and the understanding of the companions in many of his sayings and actions” (al-‘Adenee 2004:226). What is significant here is the process of reconstructing Iraq and how to regain stability for a country fragmented on the brink of civil war. The invasion of Iraq, in general was not supported by Muslims, and in accordance with the evidence presented in this research, and empirical evidence Saddam Hussayn and his regime were a greater source of stability for Iraq than the occupation by America and coalition forces and the consequences of removing Saddam Hussayn, no matter how contested his legitimacy was, has proven to be disastrous for the Iraqi people (Pilger 2003:49-53).

legitimate. *Jihaad* must be in accordance with the Prophet's Sunna and for the sake of uplifting Allah's word. This according to orthodox scholars is achieved through knowledge of the conditions of *jihaad*. Al-Badr states that "...worship is not correct unless it is with knowledge and understanding of the religion. With regard to this, 'Umar Bin 'Abd al-'Azeez, a *Taabi'ee*, said: Whoever, worships Allah without knowledge then he has spoiled more than he has rectified" (al-Badr 2005: 23). Al-'Abbaad a major *hadeeth* scholar, who teaches in the Prophet's Mosque in Madina Saudi Arabia, declared that the situation in Iraq is chaotic and not reflective of Islaamic *jihaad*. He stated, "What is the result of that chaos (invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan) and fighting between the people of those two regions?! No doubt that the removal of the Ba'thist Party in Iraq is a great blessing for the people of Iraq, however, the siege that continues is a great catastrophe" (al-'Abbaad 2005:52). It is common for the *Jihaadee* groups to consult with those scholars who hold their world view and methodology. Al-Maqdasee, who Zarqaawee often sought religious verdicts from, articulates the belief of many contemporary *Jihaadees* when he states:

And if standing up to them [apostate rulers] and hastening to replace them is not obligatory except upon the one who is capable, then the condition for it being an obligation is not a condition for its permissibility. Hence, it is permissible for a person to fight them even if by himself and even if he is certain of martyrdom and not gaining victory. Jihad is an act of worship and an obligation that is legislated until the Day of Judgment. Nothing invalidates it. It is permissible to perform it any time such as charity when compared to Zakah (al-Maqdasee 2003:27).

It seems odd that someone with the background that al-Maqdasee has would make a statement which appears to void important principles of *jihaad*. Al-Maqdasee considers *jihaad* as both a goal and a means to achieve a political end. In addition, his vision of *jihaad* does not include an analysis of the benefit or harm that may result from fighting which must be taken into consideration as it is an established principle from the sharee'a as was previously mentioned (al-Sidlaan 1999:528).<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Al-Sidlaan mentions several examples regarding this principle with the specific case of *jihaad*. One of the examples was the treaty of Hudaibiya where the Prophet saw benefit in giving up the right to make the lesser pilgrimage and returning any Muslims that escaped from the polytheists, which seemed to compromise the situation of the Muslims considerably in favor of avoiding bloodshed in Makka and the harm it would have caused to the Muslims living amongst the pagans (al-Sidlaan 1999:528-529).

some of the *Khawaarij* sects ('Awaajee 2002:448). Al-Waadi'ee states, "We possess the book of Allah, and Sunna of the Prophet of Allah... We do not need innovation which Allah has not authorized from any one, rather innovation is considered more harmful than sinfulness" (al-Waadi'ee 2004: 66). The implication is that the religion is perfect and complete and unorthodoxy challenges these premises, so it is imperative to adhere to the orthodox creed and refer to the major scholars in order to prevent chaos and misguidance. In addition, the major scholars possess the knowledge and wisdom on how to deal with difficult situations and great tribulations such as the war in Iraq and other major world events, and this is essentially the *Salafee* argument. Regrettably, Zarqaawee referred only to those who agree with his actions and creed which contradicts the Prophet's statement when he said, "I fear the most for my nation the hypocrite who possesses the knowledgeable tongue" (cited in al-Waadi'ee 2004:42). This is not to say Zarqaawee was a hypocrite nor those he referred to for religious verdicts, but rather this is an indictment against them as they seemed to possess eloquent speech inciting to violence without the proper understanding of the religion.

Zarqaawee urged the Muslims to spend and support those fighting in Iraq under the banner of *jihad* when in fact his call resembled a call to more chaos and anarchy. Allah says, "Surely, Satan is an enemy to you, so treat him as an enemy. He only invites you to his group (*hizb*) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing fire" (Qur'aan 1996:35:6). Al-'Abbaad mentions about the above verse that "Satan entered upon all the people of innovation and desires by the means of doubtful matters which he made seem beautiful to them. Then they continue to practice innovation thinking they are on the truth when in fact they are on falsehood" (al-'Abbaad 2005:6). This description appears to fit Zarqaawee as he called the whole Islaamic nation to fight under his banner of *jihad* without legitimacy or support from major scholars or adhering to the principles espoused by classical scholars. Zarqaawee said, "A Nation of Islam, as our statements show, has jihad in Iraq before the Islamic jihad basis, *jihad al-raqbi* or by God, which is the source of the strength of jihad, is engaged in it, if the breath of jihad weakens, and if the pockets of jihad in Iraq are closed, the Islamic nation will not rise until God wills it to rise" (Zarqaawee 2005a:4). Zarqaawee's call to chaos was not in accordance with any principles of *jihad*, but instead an exhortation to increased harm upon the Iraqi populace. Allah says, "Do not spread

wickedness throughout the earth after its rectification” (Qur’aan 1996:7:56). It is in accordance with the *Khawaarij* creed to spread chaos and instability in the attempt to remove the leaders, or under the guise of commanding the good and forbidding the evil (‘Awaajee 2002:437). Al-‘Abbaad states, “In reality, to cause the spread of wickedness throughout the earth while at the same time calling for rectification is a characteristic of the hypocrites” (al-‘Abbaad 2005:15).

Terror was the preferred weapon of Zarqaawee and the actions he endorsed were used to incite sectarian violence in Iraq in order to destabilize the new Iraqi regime. Zarqaawee’s war on the Shee’a must be scrutinized carefully to deduce the *Salafee* position regarding his declarations and actions. Firstly, he built his case against the *Raafida* by summing up their general creed, he said:

O nation of Islam, you must know that the Shiite creed and Islam only meet as Jews and Christians meet under the name of the people of the book. The Shiites have distorted the Koran, insulted the prophet's companions, stabbed the mothers of the faithful, repudiated the people of Islam and spilled their blood, committed great sins and engaged in all kinds of superstitions, falsehoods, and myths (Zarqaawee 2005a:4).

According to the orthodox creed the *Raafida* sect is not considered Muslim; however the rules of *takfeer* apply to them as individuals before one can accuse an individual from amongst them to be non-Muslim, this is due in part because they consider themselves Muslims and associate themselves with Islaam and amongst them are some who may be ignorant of the orthodox creed (Ibn Taymeeya 1989b/1:68).<sup>242</sup> Zarqaawee in his self-declared war against the Shee’a made it lawful to kill anyone amongst them and bomb their places of worship: mosques and places of pilgrimage. In order to build his case against the *Raafida* and gain support from Sunni Muslims Zarqaawee claimed:

Ari’el Sharon says in his memoirs: We spoke a great deal about the relations with the other communities, especially the Shia and Druze. I personally asked Israelis to strengthen ties with these two minority communities. I even suggested giving them some of the weapons that Israel acquired as a token to the Shiites, who also suffered from serious problems with the PLO (cited in Zarqaawee 2005a:5).

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<sup>242</sup> Refer to the section on the conditions of *takfeer* in chapter two.

This quote Zarqaawee attributed to Ariel Sharon the prime minister of Israel is sufficient to strengthen his case against the *Raafida* as they have a long history of treachery, fighting against and assisting the enemies of Sunni Islaam. Ibn Taymeeya said while comparing the unorthodoxy of the *Khawaarij* to that of the *Raafida* that the *Khawaarij*'s "...innovation was not from atheism and apostasy, but instead from misguidance and ignorance of the meaning of the book (Qur'aan). As for the *Raafida*, then the foundation of their innovation is from apostasy, disbelief, and lying intentionally" (Ibn Taymeeya 1989b/1:68). So, the politics of Ariel Sharon and the history and creed of the *Raafida* both give credence to Zarqaawee's self-declared *jihad*. Although he has no backing of the scholars or Muslim rulers, he can attract recruits for his campaign as both Sharon and the *Raafida* are seen as hostile towards Muslims. Furthermore, he said:

Still, let the world know that we were not the first to start the fighting. They are the ones who killed the *mujahidin*, assassinated the refugees, and the eyes and ears of the Americans. Many *mujahidin* were killed by treacherous bullets that came from behind their backs at the hands of these people. They also stormed mosques and turned them into dens for paganism and infidelity. They raped women and violated sanctities and are now killing and liquidating *Sunni* preachers, *ulema*, and men of learning (Zarqaawee 2005a:5).

Zarqaawee continued to build a strong case against the Shee'a and appears to be successful in inciting sectarian rivalries. However, Zarqaawee was neither a scholar nor a leader representative of the Muslim community. Therefore, he had no legitimacy for his terror campaign under the guise of *jihad*. Even, "Bin Laden and those closely associated with him have always shunned attacks on co-religionists, even issuing apologies for Muslim collateral damage on several occasions in 2003..." (Burke 2004:271).<sup>243</sup>

Zarqaawee's history is rife with plots to terrorize those who oppose his views and particularly the Muslim governments and those he felt are collaborators and enemies of Islaam. Zarqaawee had planned several attacks against Israel and was also indicted in the Millennium plot to blow up the Radisson Hotel in Jordan and the King Hussayn Bridge which connects Jordan and Israel. "From now on Zarqawi would represent a

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<sup>243</sup> It seems dubious that on one hand Bin Laaden incites attacks against Saudi Arabia and other Muslim targets, and on the other hand, he seems to hold *Raafida*, traditional rivalries to Sunni Islaam, as sacred co-religionists.

serious threat, as became evident in several attacks and attempted attacks organized in the Middle East between 1999 and 2004” (Brisard 2005:81). These terrorist actions and attempted plots show the animosity and the commonality that Zarqaawee has with the original *Khawaarij* who “rebelled against the Muslims and their leaders and made it permissible to kill Muslims” (al-Aajooree 1999: 1/336). Zarqaawee and his group *Tawheed wa al-Jihaad* misused the verses of the Qur’aan to substantiate their terror and exhortation to violence, which also resembles the methodology of the original *Khawaarij* who were “a people who misinterpreted the Qur’aan according to their desires weakening the Muslims, and Allah the Almighty warned against them, as well as the Prophet, also we were warned against them by the rightly guided caliphs and the companions” (al-Aajooree 1999: 1/325). There are two important points that need to be highlighted in this statement which described the *Khawaarij* over 1100 years ago. Firstly, the original *Khawaarij* misused the Qur’aan to sow rebellion and discord amongst the Muslims much in the same way Zarqaawee and the *Takfeerees* misrepresent the Qur’aan and Islaam. Brisard offers a stinging criticism of Zarqaawee’s persona and motivations for terror when he states:

When it comes to violence, Zarqawi brings terrorism back to its original meaning: terror. Always one war behind, he never succeeded in his undertaking until he found in the Iraqi conflict an outlet for his frustrations and complexes and a way to undo his failures. Draped in his personal religious convictions, he has declared war against the world and everyone in it (Brisard 2005: preface).

Secondly, the above statement illustrates the importance of warning against the *Khawaarij* and groups that hold common ideals, and this is the position of orthodox scholars both classic and contemporary (al-Suhaymee 2005:9-17).

Zarqaawee used assassination and beheadings as a means to strike terror into his adversaries. Zarqaawee said before beheading Nicholas Berg the American private contractor working in Iraq, “You will see the way your warrior brothers hang the head of this infidel from one of the bridges in Baghdad, so that no one will forget the way we treat infidels. May he bear witness to the honor of the Muslims” (Brisard 2005: 131). For Zarqaawee honor and prestige will come to the Muslim nation by killing and sacrificing those perceived to hamper the progress of the Muslims. Brisard states,

“Zarqawi is not a great strategist. His prominence is due to his brute force against the American ‘invader’. His coalition has no actual coherence other than its savagery, nor does it have a political point of view” (Brisard 2005: 133). Brisard’s criticism offers insight into Zarqaawee’s prominence, however he has shown his military astuteness, and until recently, his ability to elude capture, and that he did possess political goals: destabilization of the new Iraqi regime, expulsion of the coalition forces, and incitement of the Muslim world into a greater conflict with the Western world and its allies.

Zarqaawee’s group staged numerous ambushes upon Iraqi police and military recruits and justified these actions by claiming they are collaborators with the American infidels. Zarqaawee stated, “If John Abizaid escaped our swords this time, we will be lying in wait for him, for Bremer, for their generals and soldiers, and their collaborators” (Zarqaawee 2005a:3). Here he refers to those who work for the newly established Iraqi government, support them, or even recognize them as illustrated with the numerous killings and beheadings of civilian contractors. In October 2004, fifty five Iraqi recruits were slaughtered and “Zarqawi took credit for the action the very next day, stating that his group had killed ‘corrupt men’ and had managed to ‘steal two vehicles and the salaries the soldiers had just received from their masters’” (Brisard 2005:138). Zarqaawee and *Tawheed wa al-Jihaad* made no distinction when terrorizing and killing their foes whether they were Muslim or not, and this was the main tactic of his self-declared *jihaad*. It is important to keep in mind that none of the *Salafee* scholars have declared Zarqaawee’s military operations a legitimate *jihaad* and like the original *Khawaarij* they have no support from those who adhere to the orthodox creed and methodology (‘Awaajee 2002:46). Al-‘Abbaad states about those Muslim youth who create chaos and terror in the name of *jihaad*, “If only those youth would struggle against their desires in obedience to Allah to leave their mistakes and sins, and not harm the Muslims with their tongues and hands, and make the people feel safe in their wealth and persons. Instead they follow their group leaders and distance themselves from the scholars” (al-‘Abbaad 2005:46). Zarqaawee’s terror campaign resulted in chaos and regime destabilization, whereas the goals of *jihaad* according to scholars like Ibn Taymeeya is “that the word of Allah reign supreme and that the religion is solely for Allah. So its purpose is to establish the religion of

Allah...” (cited in al-Badr 2005:18). On the contrary, Zarqaawee boasted of his military achievements as primarily the result of suicide bombings by saying:

God honored us and so we harvested their heads and torn up their bodies in many places: The United Nations in Baghdad; the coalition forces in Karbala; the Italians in Al-Nasiriyah; the US forces on Al-Khalidiyah Bridge; the US intelligence in Al-Shahin Hotel and the Republican Palace in Baghdad; the CIA in Al-Rashid Hotel; and the Polish forces in Al-Hillah (Zarqaawee 2005a:3).

Suicide bombing as already mentioned is not permissible and according to al-Albaanee is “something we know from the Japanese and others, when a man would plunge his airplane into an American warship and blow up himself with his plane” (al-Haarithee 2003:76). This is not in accordance with the Islaamic creed instead it is a form of suicide and it resembles the way of the non-Muslims instead of the Prophet Muḥammad and his companions. Al-Jaaberee explained that these bombings in general are a type of suicide, and furthermore what takes place between the Palestinians and Israelis is only harmful to the Muslims as they are the recipients of Israeli wrath after such bombings. Then he said, “Those ignorant ones never establish a firm criterion to judge by, nor improve their politics and learn the correct *jihad* by returning to the scholars” (al-Haarithee 2003:82). It seems that *Salafee* scholars expound upon the importance of leadership and returning to the opinion of the major scholars when looking at complex issues like *jihad* because it is considered a form of worship in Islaam, and it has conditions as all acts of worship do.

Zarqaawee used terror as a political tool to expel the coalition forces from Iraq and for him the end justified the means.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Brisard states, “Zarqawi has tried several times in his writings and speeches to justify his barbaric acts, in particular after some religious Iraqis distanced themselves from his group or condemned him outright. He holds that these vile murders are justified by the Koran and that the people he kills are spies” (Brisard 2005:144).

hand attacked innocent people to achieve his aims. “Zarqawi knows he will win this war primarily by mobilizing public opinion in the West against the occupation. Thus civilians have become the organization’s main targets” (Brisard 2005:138). To kill civilians and particularly women, children, and priests is strictly forbidden in Islaam. In a narration collected in Muslim, ‘Abd Allah Bin ‘Umar a companion of the Prophet narrated, “A woman was killed in one of the raids, so the Messenger of Allah forbade killing women and children” (al-Nawawee 1997/12:275).

Brutality and wanton violence are common tactics used by Zarqaawee against his enemies and so-called collaborators. In one such incident an Egyptian hostage had his tongue cut out for allegations of supplying American soldiers with prostitutes, and publicly displaying animosity towards Zarqaawee’s resistance. “He then stuffed the Egyptian’s mouth with cotton and read a statement in the form of a judicial sentence.... He was then beheaded” (Brisard 2005:140). Zarqaawee meted out punishment swiftly against those who violated his sense of justice, and this resembles the *Khawaarij* methodology: how they dealt with those who did not hold their world view and concept of justice (al-‘Aqal 1998:111). Evidence suggests that the main difference between Zarqaawee’s tactics and that of the *Khawaarij* is that Zarqaawee was considerably more brutal and commonly targeted civilians.

Zarqaawee and his group are selective in their kidnapping and executions, mainly targeting Westerners and their ‘collaborators’ (Brisard 2005:142). This shows that Zarqaawee and his group *al-Tawheed wa al-Jihaad* do have political motives which disprove the claims of those who say they are simply terrorists randomly killing to instill fear and chaos. However, Islaam plays a part in every aspect of life and the purpose of actions is to come closer to Allah, therefore it is not permissible, nor acceptable to Allah to use any means to worship him except that because of the barbarity they display and the terror they inspire. This is just what which was acceptable to the Prophet. The Prophet said, “Whoever seeks other than Zarqawi is counting on” (Brisard 2005:143). Zarqaawee was indeed effective at terrorizing his opponents and the evidence shows that he had a political agenda: to the purpose of *jihaad* is to raise the word of Allah, defend and spread the religion of export his vision of a greater global *jihaad* and destabilize his enemies; however if he had achieved his aims it is difficult to determine what type of system he might have results will not be considered worship or acceptable in Islaam. Zarqaawee on the other advocated if any.

Zarqaawee had a tendency to violate established Islaamic principles by misinterpreting verses of the Qur’aan to support his view in contradiction of other

verses and the understanding of the pious predecessors. Zarqaawee appeared to misinterpret the verse of the Qur'aan in which Allah states, "And those who, when an oppressive wrong is done to them, take revenge. The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah. Verily, He likes not the oppressors" (Qur'aan 1996:42:40). Zarqaawee deduced from that verse that "God permits us to do the same thing to (the infidels) in return, with the same means they employ. If they kill our women, we will kill their women" (cited in Brisard 2005:144). Firstly, according to the orthodox creed there is no contradiction in religious texts and it is not permissible to reinterpret the meaning to suit one's desires. Secondly, the verse was specific in meaning and there is evidence which prohibits killing the women and children and imitating the way of the enemy. Thirdly, the end of the verse urges forgiveness and illustrates that Allah dislikes those who transgress the religious boundaries. The religious boundaries were clearly demarcated by the Prophet, and it is very evident that he prohibited retaliation through wanton violence. For example, after the battle of Uhud seventy of his companions were slain and some were mutilated and the Prophet did not return the act of barbarity (al-Nawawee 1997/12:358). Imaam Shawkaanee stated, "It is not permissible to kill women, children, and the old, except out of necessity. Nor is it permissible to torture (mutilation) or burn by fire" (Haalaq 1993:336). Therefore, Zarqaawee appears to have misunderstood the text and his application of the aforementioned verse was not in accordance with the understanding of the Prophet, his companions, nor classical scholars.

### 3.3.10.3 **Zarqaawee's Criticism of the Scholars**

A common link which binds the creed of the *Takfeeree* groups is their position regarding the *Salafee* scholars and Zarqaawee was no exception. Zarqaawee was critical of the scholars for not supporting him in his military campaign which he strove to give legitimacy under the guise of *jihaad*. Zarqaawee stated:

Unfortunately, all this is taking place while the *Sunnis* are asleep due to lies told by their so-called wise men and ulema that drugged the nation and let it down. They were the bridge, which the enemies crossed to kill the nation. Whenever the nation wanted to wake up and avenge for the humiliation of its religion and honor, they told it: Stay asleep and don't wake up. Do you want it to be a sectarian war? (Zarqaawee 2005a:5).

Zarqaawee envisioned that the Sunni Muslim community would benefit from a sectarian war in Iraq. It seems Zarqaawee and his predecessors believed that chaos and bloodshed is the price for victory: by creating a sectarian war it would draw more Sunni Islaamic support into the conflict with the possibility of a greater Sunni coalition. However, his vision is not shared by contemporary scholars nor does he offer an example from the classical scholars in which Islaam benefited from chaos. Due to his harshness with the scholars and distance from them it seems he went further astray from the orthodox position regarding *jihad* and the rectification of the Muslim nation. A common criticism expressed by many *Takfeerees* is that many contemporary scholars are ignorant of current affairs and cannot offer viable solutions to contemporary problems.

Frustrated by the purist scholars' insistence on remaining outside of politics, some of the politicians coined a number of colorful pejoratives to deride the purist focus on rituals, including the "scholars of trivialities," "the scholars of menstruation" (referring to purist fatwas about the permissibility of sexual relations during menstruation), and the "scholars of toilet manners." Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq, the leader of the Turath movement in Kuwait, was particularly vocal in this regard. He derided the senior purist scholars as "mummified," "a collection of blind men who have given themselves the roles of leading the ummah in giving verdicts," and "those who live in the Middle Ages" (Wiktorowicz 2005:224).<sup>245</sup>

*Takfeerees* often voice these types of criticisms against contemporary scholars whom they disagree with which is a trait inherent to the creed of the original *Khawaarij* and Zarqaawee is no exception. Zarqaawee said, "Where are the Islamic ulema? Why have you deviated from the right path, stopped leading the marchers, surrendered to vain desires, and kept sitting complacently on the ground?" (Zarqaawee 2005a). He claimed the scholars are overwhelmed with complacency when in fact it appears they are the most concerned with Muslim issues and most knowledgeable of the religion (al-Lawayhiq 2002:119). It is wise to know when and how to conduct the affairs of the Muslims and when *jihad* and other acts of worship are legislated. At times there is wisdom in concessions, or patience during adversity, and a clear example of this was the treaty of Hudaibiya where the Prophet made concessions to the pagans of Makka and was not allowed to stay in Makka. The Prophet could have resisted but

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<sup>245</sup> This highlights the differences in approach and in fact rift between those politically active scholars and the *Salafees* who tend to shun political activism.

instead out of his wisdom made the concessions knowing that victory was sure to come (al-Nawawee 1997:12/348). This is indisputable evidence that rectification of the issues confronting the Muslim community does not always come through fighting, and that at times it is wise to be patient.

The actions and statements of Zarqaawee seems to suggest that he possessed a lack of patience, and his willingness to pursue violent means to achieve his goals shows he was disposed to place himself in the position of the scholars. The companions and the early scholars considered making religious verdicts a very serious matter, and were fearful of the consequences of such verdicts. ‘Abd al-Rahmaan Bin Abee Laila, a *Taabi’ee*, said, “I met one hundred and twenty of the *Ansaar*<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> They were the companions who resided in Madina and gave refuge to the emigrants.

hands and our swords, and soon, God willing (Zarqaawee 2005a:5).

Zarqaawee was highly critical of the Arab governments for their assistance in attacking Iraq; however these issues are extremely sensitive and complex and do not warrant simple analysis. Zarqaawee's criticism was based upon stinging rhetoric and claims which account for his general *takfeer* of all the Arab leaders. Even if Zarqaawee were correct in his analysis that the leaders had fallen into an act of disbelief he disregards the possibility they might be excused by those things which prohibit making *takfeer* (al-Rahaylee 2006: 116). Zarqaawee's pronouncement of *takfeer* upon the leaders was unsubstantiated and "takfeer is not pronounced upon a specific individual until the proof is established upon him" (al-Rahaylee 2006: 116).

So it can be deduced that "the general *takfeer* is really a description of a saying, or from the companions of the Messenger of Allah, and one of them would ask about an issue, then one would action, or creed that is *kufir* (disbelief), or a description of a sect which is well-known refer to another and another to another, until the question returned to the first one" for possessing one of the characteristics of disbelief" (al-Rahaylee 2006:253). From (cited in al-Yoobe 2005:14). This account shows the hesitancy and fearfulness of the this statement it can be construed that Zarqaawee's *takfeer* of the leaders was without companions of assuming responsibility for a mistake in a religious verdict. They merit, as the Arab or Muslim leaders are not known as a specific group which holds a considered it a trust and something they would be held accountable for in front of particular set of beliefs that warrants their *takfeer*. Even if for the sake of argument Allah. This is in great contrast to the *Takfeere* ideologues that seem to never cease in they all performed an act of disbelief that was clear, open, and agreed upon, the proof expressing hasty opinions and issue verdicts of *takfeer* and *jihaad*. Ibn Mas'ood would still have to be presented to each individual leader before making *takfeer* of another companion of the Prophet said, "Whoever issues a verdict for everything the him." Al-Rahaylee said, "Evidence seems to suggest from the Qur'aan and the people ask about is crazy" (cited in al-Yoobe 2005:14).

Summa regarding this issue that Allah the Almighty does not punish anyone from his creation for his actions of disbelief or sins that he meets Allah with, until the proof has been established upon him that he is deserving of punishment" (2006:253).

Finally, Zarqaawee's over simplistic world view seemed reminiscent of the paradigm of the early *Khawarij*. However, his inclination towards violence, and the misuse of *Khawarij* methodology, and Zarqaawee exhibited a zeal for *takfeer* and fighting, rather than the knowledge and wisdom necessary to wage authentic *jihaad*.

Zarqaawee issued death threats and made *takfeer* of the Muslim leaders especially those in the Arab world. Zarqaawee said addressing the Arab leaders:

As for you, O Arab rulers, you have accepted to be shoes for the supporters of falsehood and a base in the background from which planes of killing and contribution to the risk of. You are still tasks and supplies, logistics, flow, and equipment. We tell you: Saddaam has gone, unsung and unlamented. He was a tyrant and characteristics inherent in most of the extremist groups and ideologues can be traced the enemy of God and of the Messenger. He has gone at the hands of his US masters. You will go too. However, we pray to God that you will go by our

<sup>247</sup> Unless the act of disbelief or saying is well known in the religion to be an act of disbelief; however the conditions of *takfeer* must be in place before declaring someone an apostate.

to the creed of the early *Khawaarij* sect. Nevertheless, there are some significant differences that can be observed between the *Khawaarij* and *neo-Takfeerees*. *Neo-Takfeerees*, especially the post-*Qutbists* tend to be more violent and reactionary as they developed many of their ideas as a reaction to colonialism.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Delong-Bas observes, “In the case of the modernists, the environment was complicated by the presence of the Western colonial powers, which had seized control over Muslim lands. The modernist call to revival and renewal of faith was thus as much of a response to colonialism as it was an observation of the indigenous condition” (Delong-Bas 2004:238).

vary in Islaam and the adulterer, thief, one who misleads others, the alcoholic, and murderer would all receive equal punishment (al-Mawjaan 2004:58).

The *Takfeeree* methodology can be summed up in the following points:

- 1) They make *takfeer* for major sins.
- 2) They make *takfeer* of those who differ with them especially religious scholars.
- 3) Some of them like Qutb and Mustafa declare whole societies to be apostate.
- 4) They declare all contemporary leaders to be apostates.
- 5) They view other Muslims with suspicion especially those outside of their group.
- 6) Another trend observed in this section was that latter thinkers tend to be more prone to violence especially Bin Laaden<sup>249</sup> and Zarqaawee ('Aseeree 2007:134).
- 7) They offer no real political solution or articulate a clear vision or program as a final result of their *jihad* (Burke 2004:164).
- 8) Esposito observes:

They reject Islamic regulations regarding the goals and means of a valid jihad (that violence must be proportional and that only the necessary amount of force should be used to repel the enemy), that innocent civilians should not be targeted, and that jihad must be declared by the ruler or head of state. Today, individuals and groups, religious and lay, seize the right to declare and legitimate unholy wars in the name of Islam (Esposito 2002:157).

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<sup>249</sup> Bin Laaden stated, "Those youths will not ask you (William Perry former U.S defense secretary). They will tell you, singing, there is nothing between us that needs to be explained, there is only killing and neck-smiting" (Bin Laaden 1996b:2). Bin Laaden and many of the *Takfeerees* analyzed in this research tend to see violence as the main means for political change whether by suicide bombings or attacks on civilian soil. He said, "Your problem will be how to convince your troops to fight, while our problem will be how to restrain our youth to wait for their turn in fighting and operations" (Bin Laaden 1996b:3).

## Chapter Four

### Contemporary Misconceptions about Islaam and Terrorism

In general, it seems

#### 4.1 Introduction

the neo-*Takfeeres* view rebellion and *jihaad* as a political necessity and religious

obligation in order to restore the sharia in the case of its dismemberment, and implement it in the case of its absence. This helps to explain the dual front of ideas of reform, according to contemporary *Saafefe* scholars, seem to contain some of the same extremist elements as those of the neo-*Khawaarij*, and appear to have been a major factor in the rise of many contemporary radical movements (al-Rahayee 2004:265). Also, throughout this chapter the harm associated with rebellion against the Muslim leader was reiterated with some of the biggest reasons being the loss of life, security, and property, and general instability it causes in society (al-Mawjaan 2004:130). In addition, some of the contemporary misconceptions about Islaam and its link to terrorism as perpetuated by Western media and policy think tanks will be presented and refuted. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion of the role of United States foreign policy in contributing to the growth of terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda.<sup>250</sup>

In this chapter various ideologues and groups were compared and analyzed with some of the major characteristics of the *Khawaarij*, and it seems that they differ with

regards to their commonality to the original sect. While some like Mawdoodee

emphasized rebellion against corrupt leadership, he does not possess the same extremism as Qutb per se. Qutb on the other hand, declared the leaders of his time to be not only illegitimate, but apostates. *Takfeer* of the leadership seems to be a consistent trend in subsequent ideologues and movements, with thinkers like Umar al-Abd al-Rahmaan, fitting somewhere between Mawdoodee and Qutb regarding accusations against the religion . . . “date back to the early days of Islam. Aggressions against the religion . . . consistent trend in subsequent ideologues and movements, with thinkers like Umar al-Abd al-Rahmaan, fitting somewhere between Mawdoodee and Qutb regarding Renaissance Europe” (Marrouki 2006:4). The more recent cartoon caricatures of the *takfeer*, but he is a major advocate of *jihaadist* theory. However, “whoever holds Prophet Muhammad illustrate the great pains that some Western media organizations *Khawaarij*-like beliefs is classified as *Khawaarij* and the one who does an action or take to violate religious sanctity citing the freedom of expression. Another exhibits a characteristic similar to them is associated with them by that action or contemporary example of Western denigration of Islaamic symbols is that of Salman characteristic and should be observed [to determine similarity in creed]” (al-Mawjaan 2004:135). The Satanic Verses, Marrouki, a contemporary critic of Western ideologues in this chapter show similar characteristics and tend to make *takfeer* for major sins like the original *Khawaarij*; however if sin

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<sup>250</sup> Still nullified faith completely and the sinner became a disbeliever then sin and apostasy would be considered the same thing, the sinner would be labeled an apostate, and his punishment would be equal. Therefore, penalties would not seem largely from a deep structural developmental crisis facing the Arab world, in both socio-economic and institutional terms; it is a crisis of governance and political economy, not of culture or foreign policy” (Gerges 2005:272). Gerges’ analysis is valuable and offers additional insight into the complexity of trying to pinpoint the exact causes for the rise of the neo-*Takfeere*/*Jihaadee* movements. However, as this research posits there are a number of factors that contribute to the problem and probably the single most important cause for the rise of these movements is that they possess ideological roots similar to the original *Khawaarij*.

distorted image of Islam and Islamic history, assorted with degrading misrepresentations, disgusting images which disgrace the Prophet's memory, defame the sacred text, and dishonour the Prophet and his wives. It equally questions the integrity of the Qur'an" (Marrouki 2006:10). Rushdie's critique of Islaam is precisely what many contemporary scholars consider to be a part of the modern secularist onslaught used to portray Islaam and its core values as backward and barbarous.<sup>251</sup>

Rushdie the author of  
literature, offers his analysis of the text by stating, "The Satanic Verses offers a

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<sup>251</sup> Marrouki says, "For some media and political circles in the West, Islam and Muslims represent a threat to Western values as if freedom, justice, peace and human rights were the *apanage*, or customary prerequisite of the West" (2006:32).

Islaam is based upon the Qur'aan and Sunna; this foundation forms the creed, methodology, and practice of the religion. According to al-Rahaylee, many detractors of Islaam are familiar with its principles and believe that through reforming some practices and understanding of the divine text they can essentially destroy the every day practices of Islaam and its institutions (al-Rahaylee 2003:14). Both *Salafee* scholars and neo-*Takfeerees* are equally skeptical of secularism: the reforms the secularists advocate lead to disbelief as many of the proponents of that ideology bear witness to.

It is because of such distortions of the faith by secularists in the Islamic world that the fundamentalists are opposed to secularism; they are prepared to compromise with opening up fundamental Islamic principles to the fundamentalists a truly Islamic state is the antithesis of a secular state. They believe that a secular state is a by-product of the Christian and Secular and Hindu, in particular, they argue that secularism whatever its form, is basically materialistic and a negation of spirituality (Zakaria 1989:141). Islam is a broad church that certainly includes millions of tolerant, civilized men and women, but also encompasses many whose views on women's rights are antediluvian, Secularists, like Rushdie, believe Islaam must liberalize itself and accommodate who think of homosexuality as ungodly, who have little time for real freedom of Western concepts of morality to free itself from the bonds of tradition. Rushdie was expression,..." (Rushdie 2006:1). Rushdie's statement has several important points amongst a list of writers and political activists who used the recent violence that that need to be highlighted. First, he begins by praising those who he considers 'tolerant' as 'civilized' which seems to be a narrow criterion, for one to be considered highlight their "need to fight for secular values and freedom" (BBC 2006:1). These civilized: reform minded, open to heresy, and willingness to challenge the religious activists who issued this statement constitute a list of secularists, primarily those who texts and creed in order to distance themselves from tradition. Second, he implies that came from Muslim families, and some who have openly renounced Islaam and whose Islaamic tradition, culture, and values are inherently backward, which illustrates his political agenda of 'reform' is considered by many contemporary scholars as one of the most evil and heretical onslaughts against Islaam.

according to the Islaamic faith and is a punishable offence. There are clear undisputed texts and evidence, to support this view. Allah has promised, right and liberties-partly, of course, because its arrival coincided with the triumph of remember Lot when he said to his people: Do you commit the worst sin such as none Western armies, but more importantly because...it has best served to guarantee preceding the youth of the founded in creation? Truly, you profane Muslim us in our time, Christians and Jews, whose support helped the foreigners to establish their instead of women. Nay, but you are a people transgressing beyond bounds domination. The Trojan horse of secularism is seen, above all, as the most (Qur' an 1996:7s 8f-8e). What Bride said, "Whenever, which has the track of the actualial of the people of Lot, then execute the one who does it and the one who participates in normative Muslim system (Burgat 2003:44).

it" (al-Dhahabee 1988:55). The people of Lot practiced homosexuality and sodomy, and to attempt to refute that this is a prohibited act in Islaam is like attempting to refute the Qur'aan and Sunna, and consensus of Muslim scholars. Fourth, freedom of

<sup>252</sup> Refer to chapter three the section on secularism.

expression to Rushdie seems to imply the right to attack, transgress, and redefine religious traditions. Finally, some scholars allege that Rushdie and those who incline towards secularism actually want to redefine the very essence of Islaam which means “to submit to Allah’s oneness, and adhering to Him in strict obedience and distancing oneself from polytheism and polytheists” (al-‘Uthaymeen 2005:68). Islaam is by its very nature based upon submission to the will of Allah, not man, or man’s desires and whims. The aforementioned claims made by Rushdie appear to be an attempt at redefining Islaam and could be perceived as an attempt to undermine Allah’s sovereignty in rulership.<sup>253</sup> Rushdie’s assertion of his opinions under the guise of freedom of expression have no basis in Islaam and constitute a deviation greater than that of the *Khawarij* as he advocates disbelief by his reforms. Rushdie’s critique appears extreme, according to contemporary scholars, and may lead one to believe he is attacking the very creed and values of the Islaamic faith. Rushdie claims:

What is needed is a move beyond tradition-nothing less than a reform movement to bring the core concepts of Islam into the modern age, a Muslim reformation to combat not only the jihadi ideologues but also the dusty stifling seminaries of the traditionalists, throwing open the windows of the closed communities to let in much needed fresh air ( Rushdie 2006:3).

Reformist values are often seen as a type of extremism to *Salafee* scholars and extremists alike, as freedom of expression and democratic values do not take precedence over religious orthodoxy and tradition (Lewis 2003: 104-105). Rushdie’s reforms seem more like an imposition upon Islaam rather than suggestion for reform, and he challenges all the sacredly held tenets of Islaam, he says, “The insistence within Islam that the Koranic text is the infallible, uncreated word of God renders analytical scholarly discourse all but impossible. Why would God be influenced by the socioeconomics of 7<sup>th</sup>-century Arabia, after all? Why would the Messenger’s personal circumstances have anything to do with the Message?” (Rushdie 2006:3). His whole discourse is based upon challenging core tenets of the Islaamic creed and faith, and in fact questioning the Qur’aan itself, and there is no doubt in accordance with the evidence presented in this research that Salman Rushdie has a plethora of statements that call into question his Islaamic legitimacy. Primarily, this is due to his putting his analysis and logic before the religious texts in order to reinvent Islaam to

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<sup>253</sup> One of the most telling reasons secularist thought is opposed by *Takfeerees* is because its base premise is to separate religious life from the state and subvert divine law to human law, and this is essentially the argument of all the ideologues surveyed in this study.

suit his whims which is a premise of the heretics (al-Barbahaaree 1997:66-67). “These questions are meant to challenge any given knowledge, especially that which is divinely revealed, and deride it by giving it the title ‘dogma’, thereby paving the way for them (secularist, philosophers) to wholly rely on the human intellect...” (Sani 2006:2). This practice is common to all the deviated sects, especially the *Khawaarij*, as was mentioned in the section of Qur’aanic misinterpretation. However, the difference between the *Khawaarij* and secularists like Rushdie, is the *Khawaarij* use the verses to fit their paradigm, whereas secularist tend to devalue the texts and reinterpret them altogether retaining only that which suits their notion.<sup>254</sup> Rushdie states, “If the Koran were seen as a historical document, then it would be legitimate to reinterpret it to suit the new conditions of successive new ages. Laws made in the 7<sup>th</sup> century could finally give way to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup>. The Islamic Reformation has to begin here, with an acceptance that all ideas, even sacred ones, must adapt to altered realities” (Rushdie 2006:3). It appears that secularists like Rushdie want to redefine and reinterpret Muslim identity and religious faith in order to conform to the present times, until nothing remains of Islaamic values and creed except its name.<sup>255</sup> Even the *Khawaarij* were less harmful to the Islaamic religion and possessed a greater respect for Islaamic traditions than secularists like Salman Rushdie.

Many *Takfeeree* groups have actually developed as a response to secular extremism and this highlights the pragmatic problems of secularism.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> “The secularists try to interpret the Qur’anic texts and hadith liberally but fundamentalists oppose this on the ground that it amounts to bidat or innovation, which is as bad as heresy. Nevertheless, both swear by Islam” (Zakaria 1989:7).

<sup>255</sup> Even *Takfeerees* like al-Faiṣal realize the inherent dangers posed by secularist thought and are extremely critical of the secularist movement as it calls for the dismantling of Islaamic institutions and poses ideas that are contrary to traditional thought and interpretation of the texts (al-Faiṣal 2006e). Zakaria observes, “The secularists (who are also variously called liberals, reformists, or modernists), claim to be as faithful to the spirit of Islam as the fundamentalists, but want to bring about reforms to make religion more materialistic and worldly” (Zakaria 1989:8).

<sup>256</sup> See chapter three of the present study, the section on secularism.

religious totalitarianism and for the promotion of freedom, equal opportunity and secular values for all” (BBC 2006:2). Their claim is based upon the tenet that Muslims have the right to choose secularism and choose to do as they please without the constraints of culture and tradition. This statement is perceived as a declaration of war against Islamic values by orthodox Muslims (al-Rahaylee 2003:14). In addition, the extremists are equally opposed to secularism and the secularist state. These trends have given rise to the extremist ideologues due to the fact that “in Islam, according to the fundamentalists, there is no place for such a state. Many Muslims consider secularism ‘a sub-facet of specifically Christian heresy’ or an aid to the establishment of a godless society, with its emphasis on materialism” (Zakaria 1989:18). Secularism as an ideology is alien to Islam as the religion’s foundation is built upon the concept that Allah is the law giver and the state is administered as such. All of the extremist ideologues discussed in chapter three either developed in part as a reaction to secularism or as a result of their perception of the Muslim state and leadership’s move toward secularism away from divine law.

Nevertheless, according to *Salafee* scholars, secularist ideals and the *Takfeeree* paradigm both share in common a form of extremism when interpreting Islam. For example, in court ‘Umar ‘Abdul al-Rahmaan was questioned about the tenets of *jihad* in his trial by the attorney general, who commented that “Jihad is not killing. This is not Islam’s teaching. Jihad is a spiritual fight against evil, poverty, sickness and sin. Killing is only from the devil” (cited in Gabriel 2002:160). This highlights the misunderstanding of the principles of *jihad* by those oriented towards a secularist interpretation of the tenets of *jihad*. However, ‘Umar rebutted in his mordant yet clever style, when he said, “Are there verses of the Quran that I don’t know about that say jihad is a spiritual fight against evil, poverty, sickness and sin? Perhaps there is new revelation from Allah that our attorney general received recently and the rest of the Muslims do not yet know about” (cited in Gabriel 2002:160). ‘Umar’s concept of *jihad* has been expounded upon in chapter three. This quote demonstrates the clash inherent between the two ideologies: secularism and fanaticism, and although both ideologies are contrary to one another, they both constitute a form of radical departure from the orthodox methodology and understanding of Islam (Lewis 2003:106).

### 4.3 Misconceptions of Islaamic Jihaad

*Jihaad* as was previously mentioned throughout this research is a subject of great contention for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. There are many who misunderstand the purpose and meaning of *jihaad* in Islaam as was made clear in the previous chapter. I will define my discussion to the views expounded by Mark Gabriel who epitomizes all the misconceptions about *jihaad*. Gabriel defines *jihaad* to mean “...that Muslims must fight the enemy of Allah until the enemy dies or the Muslims die” (Gabriel 2002:28).<sup>257</sup> According to Ibn Taymeeya the general definition of *jihaad* is “striving to attain faith and good deeds that Allah loves and defending against the disbelief, wickedness and sin that Allah hates” (al-Badr 2005:5).<sup>258</sup> This is a general definition according to Ibn Taymeeya’s view of the sharee’a which it seems Gabriel somehow misunderstood in his studies before becoming a professor in Islaamic history. Gabriel says, “I was teaching what they taught me, but inside I was confused about the truth of Islam” (Gabriel 2002:2). It seems implausible that Gabriel would have become clearer about *jihaad* and Islaam after converting to Christianity and leaving the quest for knowledge of the religion, especially considering he was confused as a mosque preacher and professor. Another misconception held by those who are misinformed about the Islaamic religion is that “...dying in jihad is the only way a Muslim can be assured of entering paradise at all” (Gabriel 2002:29). This is another fallacious claim regarding Islaam and there are literally dozens of proofs that openly dispute his claim. For the purpose of being succinct, the researcher will mention only a few. Allah says, “By the time. Verily, mankind is in a loss. Except those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and call to the truth and call to patience” (Qur’aan 1996/103:3). Allah also said, “Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward with their lord is Eden, paradise underneath which rivers flow” (Qur’aan 1996/98:8). Allah also mentions that “Those who are faithfully true to their trusts and to their covenants; and those who strictly guard their prayers, these are indeed the inheritors. Those who inherit paradise (*Firdaus*) shall dwell therein forever” (Qur’aan 1996/18:11). On one occasion, the

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<sup>257</sup> Mark A. Gabriel was a former professor of Islaamic history from al-Azhar University who converted to Christianity and wrote a ‘refutation against Islaam’ declaring it to be essentially from its roots a terrorist religion. The researcher of this study finds Gabriel a somewhat dubious character as he is a PH.D holder and the work at hand is full of glaring errors regarding Islaam, and very speculative, lacking in academic merit.

<sup>258</sup> For the conditions and levels of *jihaad* refer back to the sections on Bin Laaden and Zarqaawee.

Prophet was asked by a nomad if he embraced Islaam and performed only the five pillars, and nothing more, would he be successful. The Prophet answered, “If what he said is true he will enter paradise” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/1:38). In all of the above examples, there were no references to *jihad* being the reason to enter paradise or even a condition for it: although it is considered one of the best deeds in Islaam, it is not a prerequisite for paradise as Gabriel claims.

On another occasion Gabriel alleges, “The focus of jihad is to overcome people who do not accept Islam” (Gabriel 2002:33). However, Allah says, “There is no compulsion in religion” (Qur’aan 1996/2:256). According to Ibn Katheer, a 14<sup>th</sup> century scholar,<sup>259</sup> this verse refers to the fact that “You should not force anyone to enter in the religion of Islaam, for verily it is clear and manifest, its evidences and proofs unmistakable, and it does not need to force anyone into entering it” (Ibn Katheer 1997/1:299).<sup>260</sup> Gabriel goes on to state, “Jihad is carried out in order to achieve the ultimate goal of Islam-to establish Islamic authority over the whole world” (Gabriel 2002:37). Comments like this are to be expected from someone who is not familiar with the religion as Allah clearly states the purpose of life when he said, “I have not created men and jinn except for the purpose of worshipping me” (Qur’aan 1996/51:56). This researcher has not come across a single verse, or *hadeeth* narration, or statement from one of the companions that substantiates Gabriel’s claim that Muslims are commanded to focus their attention on rulership, or that the goal of *jihad* is to establish their concept of reform challenges the sanctity of Islaam and opens the gateway for extremists as the secularists are seen as assaulting the principles of the religion (Al-Ruhayfi 2003:14). This statement is issued by a group of people who are not Islamicists, if they declare that “After having done one Fascism, Nazism, and Satanic, the People now asked about global threat: Islamism” (BBC 2006c). The polytheist war to avert a night “With their prohibitions, exposing their, valiant and children to danger. The Prophet replied, ‘they are from them (polytheist parents)’” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/4:159). The explanation of this narration given by Gabriel is “in

<sup>259</sup> His explanation of the Qur’aan is considered one of the most authentic and widely used by orthodox scholars.

<sup>260</sup> Islaam allows for truces between Muslim and non-Muslim forces and does not call for forced conversion. “According to shari’a, tolerance of religions based on previous divine revelations was not a merit but a duty” (Lewis 2004:95).

<sup>261</sup> These are the exact claims that Mawdoodee and Qutb made and it appears Gabriel refers to their thought instead of the actual religious texts and orthodox creed. Refer to section on Mawdoodee.

other words if the parents were infidels, then it was permissible to kill their children. Because the Prophet of Islam believed this, this is what Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda believe about killing women and children” (Gabriel 2002:105). The mistake of this reasoning and attributing wanton killing to the Prophet is the result of shoddy scholarship or it would appear Gabriel has an agenda and is willing to deceive his readers to fulfill his aims. Firstly, he misquotes the narration and this is the reason it was introduced for a second time during this study. Secondly, inherent in the text is the context in which the Prophet was asked: attacking an enemy at night with the probability of killing women and children. This illustrates the fact that Islaam safeguards the lives of non-combatants. However, if due to circumstances fighting occurs at night and non-combatants are unintentionally killed then this is considered unavoidable. Thirdly, in this narration as well as on many other occasions “Allah’s Messenger disapproved the killing of women and children” (al-Bukhaaree 1970/4:160). In a situation where women and children are killed unintentionally during legitimate *jihad* the fighters are not held accountable, and there is overwhelming evidence, and consensus, that proves the impermissibility of killing women and children as long as they are not fighters (al-Faasee 2003:1018-1020).

Gabriel not only attributes extremism and violence to the *Jihaadees*, but he claims that unjustifiable violence is inherent to the Islaamic faith, however the evidence suggests otherwise, and in fact many major world religions have been distorted by adherents to their teachings (Juergensmeyer 2003:4). For example, to many in the West, Christianity symbolizes a faith that encourages brotherly love and peacefulness with exhortations to turn the other cheek in response to oppression and aggressiveness. What is interesting though is that many of the proponents of this vision of Christianity hold that Islaam is a violent religion calling for the killing of infidels. Gabriel coined the phrase ‘Christianized Islaam’ meaning the concept that Islaam is being presented to people as being ‘Christian like’ in its adherence to peaceful values. Gabriel says, “I could continue to embrace the ‘Christianized’ Islam- the Islam of peace, love, forgiveness and compassion, the Islam tailor made to fit Egyptian government, politics and culture- thereby keeping my job and status” (Gabriel 2002:3). It seems odd that he would make such a statement considering the history of the crusades and the church: the moral justification for enslavement of

Africans,<sup>262</sup> the colonialism of non-Christian peoples during the 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>263</sup> and the Catholic Church's role in the genocide of the Jews by Nazi Germany. The above examples illustrate how sometimes a religious minority can distort the teachings and principles of religion.

#### 4.4 The Concept of the Right to Rebel

Another commonly held misconception that many Muslims have is that they possess the right to overthrow corrupt leadership. Although many who propose this view are not considered *Takfeeree*, they share this tenet of the *Khawaarij* creed and perhaps this is a result of the revolutionary movements and traditions established during the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the present. Zakaria defends the 'right to rebel' and he attempts to refute the orthodox position by saying, "Of course, there are many hadith to the contrary, but since the *Murji'ites* were principally concerned with upholding the temporal power of the Umayyads against attacks by the orthodox and puritans they concocted several hadith to buttress their arguments" (Zacharia 1988:22). Sadly, it seems to be an unfortunate trend amongst some Muslim intellectuals to override research and findings of traditional Islaamic scholarship to expand theories and ideologies that, while sounding scholarly, are merely reworded renditions of contentious philosophic theories garbed in an Islaamic mantle. Zakaria has several claims that are contrary to the position of the majority of classical scholars and there is plethora of evidence supporting the orthodox position. Still others argue that irrespective of this principle there is growing discontent among many Muslims with their leaders.

For growing numbers, the issue is not religion or nationality, not this or that frontier or territory, but freedom- the right to live their own lives, in a free and open society under a representative and responsible government. For them the prime enemy is not the outsider, be he defined as foreigner, as infidel, or imperialist, but their own rulers, regimes that sustain themselves by tyranny at home and terrorism abroad and have failed by every measure of governmental achievement except survival (Lewis 2003:165).

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<sup>262</sup> The import of African slaves to the Americas was justified by the church "because 'the law of nations for Christian powers' sanctioned such status for 'prisoners in war with heathen and infidel nations'" (Frederickson 1981:76).

<sup>263</sup> In the case of the African continent it was opened up in what Stanely Livingstone coined the "3c's: Commerce, Christianity, and Civilization, a triple alliance of Mammon, God and social progress" (Parkenham 1991: xxii).

Sa'id Hawwa, a Syrian leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, best articulates the growing discontent of those who assert their 'right to rebel', when he says:

Many an ignoramus Shaikh considers opposition to any political regime a sin smacking of Kharijite heresy. One realizes how boorish are such ulama when one considers that if they are right, then Abraham and Moses have sinned in resisting Nimrod and Pharaoh....Any revolt against an illegitimate ruler is justified. Isn't it then right to combat a ruler who does not apply the laws set in the Koran? Isn't it forbidden to flee, even when outnumbered, when the fight is one between infidelity and the true faith? Doesn't Allah help those who help themselves? (cited in Sivan 1985:105).

This illustrates how many of the groups distort the meaning of the Qur'aan to support their creed, instead of deriving their beliefs from the texts and understanding of the companions. Here Hawwa likens Abraham and Moses to rebels, corroborating with Qutb's claims; as if they were sent with the purpose of overthrowing tyranny instead of calling to the worship of Allah alone. Allah says, "And verily, we have sent among every nation a messenger (proclaiming): Worship Allah and avoid all false deities" (Qur'aan 1996:16:36). The statement of Hawwa gives an indication of how wide spread and influential Qutbist ideas have become. In contrast, al-Qardawi, who also has ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and supports the use of suicide bombings as a means of resistance to occupation, believes that Muslim leadership should not be fought against which conforms to the opinion held by majority of *Salafee* scholars both classic and contemporary (al-Qardawi 2000:1/297-300).<sup>264</sup>

#### 4.5 Terrorism: its Types and Motivations

Terrorism as defined by orthodox scholars has already been discussed in this research and it has been proven that it is a tactic of many of the *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* ideologues, and groups like al-Qaeda (Burke 2004:291-292). However, it is necessary to attempt to redefine the meaning of terrorism in a broader context when discussing its motivations.

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<sup>264</sup> Qardawi states, "I consider this type of martyrdom operation as an indication of the justice of Allah Almighty. Allah is just. Through His infinite wisdom He has given the weak what the strong do not possess and that is the ability to turn their bodies into bombs like the Palestinians do" (BBC 2004:2). When asked about Iraq he replied, "If the Iraqis can confront the enemy, there is no need for these acts of martyrdom. If they don't have the means, acts of martyrdom are allowed. I didn't say that the Iraqis cannot, it depends on their need" (BBC 2004:2).

Defining terrorism is a task in and of itself as there are various definitions and it has changed to mean something different over time. Initially, terrorism as a term, in the context of Western civilization, was derived from the terror campaign of the government during the French Revolution. Originally, terrorism was used to describe state persecution of its citizens instead of what is now commonly accepted as terrorism. Hoffman states:

Terrorism, in the most widely accepted contemporary usage of the term, is fundamentally and inherently political. It is also ineluctably about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change. Terrorism is thus violence-or equally important, the threat of violence-used and directed in pursuit of, or in service of, a political aim (1998:14).

This definition encompasses both the actions and statements of the neo-*Khawarij* groups who possess both goals of secular political revolution infused with Islaamic principles and concepts of *jihaad*. However, it is necessary to show that there are different categories of terrorism, and that this extremism is not exclusive to groups that associate with Islaam. For the purpose of this research we will narrow our focus of terrorism to two types: state sponsored and religious.<sup>265</sup>

Many states have at some time in their history been sponsors of terrorism. What most commonly comes to mind is the United State's accusations against Syria, Sudan, North Korea, Iran and Iraq. Juergensmeyer states:

It is true that some terrorist acts are committed by public officials invoking a sort of "state terrorism" in order to subjugate the populace. The pogroms of Stalin, the government-supported death squads in El Salvador, the genocidal killings of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, and government spurred violence of the Hutus and Tutsis in Central Africa all come to mind. The United States has rightfully been accused of terrorism in the atrocities committed during the Vietnam War, and there is some basis for considering the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as terrorist acts (2003:5).

As is witnessed by the above statement, the United States which considers itself the defender of freedom and the main advocate of the 'war on terror' has been implicated on many occasions for its role in sponsoring and supporting terrorists and terrorist

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<sup>265</sup> These two categories of terrorism may be somewhat misleading as they can, and indeed often do overlap. For example, a state could terrorize through religious prosecutions similar to the inquisition or Sadaam Hussayn's massacre and oppression of the Shee'a.

activities. “The sad fact is that the emergence of the United States as the world’s only superpower has gone hand and hand with its demand to be exempt from any international rule of law” (Mamdani 2005:208). The purpose of highlighting this fact is that it offers insight into the political motivations of terrorism and shows that states and groups both operate in support of their political, religious aims and those who use terror choose to achieve their goals by violence or the threat of violence. The perception of who is a terrorist is equally important and each state or group has its own definition. For example, if one asks Usaama bin Laaden or Zarqaawee who a terrorist is, they would most definitely list the United States as the most extreme sponsor of terrorist activity, which in the eyes of some, would not be an unfounded claim considering the actions taken against Iraq since 1991, and more recently Afghanistan, with threats against Syria, North Korea and Iran. On the other hand, some claim that the United States “is a government ‘of the people, by the people and for the people,’ which makes it a heathen government in Muslim thinking because Allah is to be the head of all government” (Gabriel 2002:178). This claim of Gabriel’s is not entirely true as he uses this argument to support his claim that all Muslims hate America and the *Takfeeree* groups want to destroy it because of its love for freedom and democracy. However, his conclusion is problematic, as the evidence suggests that those groups target America more for its claim to those principles, and their perception of America’s double standards: unilateral pressure to democratize the world according to its own concept of democracy, and history of both human and civil rights abuses.<sup>266</sup>

As was mentioned in chapter three, the groups and ideologues mentioned in this research possess common traits of *takfeer* and are inclined toward violent means to achieve their aims. Obviously, these *Takfeeree* movements are religious in nature and advocate revolution and terror in the name of Islaam. However, it is important to highlight that the changing perception of who constitutes a terrorist, by state entities

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<sup>266</sup> America’s foreign policy and its impact on radicalizing particular Muslim groups was mentioned throughout chapter three. However, its domestic record of oppression, tyranny, and terror is equally appalling when analyzing the genocide, and displacement of the Native American peoples and the genocide, enslavement, and disenfranchisement of African Americans. Malcolm X, an African American Muslim, summed up the hypocrisy inherent in the American political system when he said, “There is no system more corrupt than a system that represents itself as the example of freedom, the example of democracy, and can go all over the earth telling other people how to straighten out their house, when you have citizens of this country who have to use bullets if they want to cast a ballot” (1966:50).

like the United States, is what is portrayed throughout the media influencing public opinion. This accounts for one of the reasons Islaam is portrayed as a terrorist religion. For example, "In 1980 the U.S State Department roster of international terrorist groups listed scarcely a single religious organization. Almost twenty years later, at the end of the twentieth century, over half were religious" (Juergensmeyer 2003: 6). Islaamic groups were among the many groups that were considered religious terrorists. Juergensmeyer says, "They were Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist. If one added to this list other violent religious groups around the world, including the many Christian militia and other paramilitary organizations found domestically in the United States, the number of religious terrorist groups would be considerable" (Juergensmeyer 2003:6). Some of the reasons the US now includes more religious groups and more specifically Islaamic ones is probably a reflection of changing US interests in the Middle East and a shift in policy after the fall of the Soviet Union with Islaamic 'fundamentalism' being the new target internationally and domestically. This helps to account for the negative portrayal of Islaam by the media and policy advocates in the US.

Terrorism and wanton acts of violence contradict basic Islaamic principles and many contemporary Islaamic scholars from an array of different perspectives agree upon this. When commenting on the World Trade Center attacks al-Qardawi said:

Our hearts bleed for the attacks that has targeted the World Trade Center, as well as other institutions in the United States despite our strong oppositions to the American biased policy towards Israel on military, political and economic fronts. Islam, the religion of tolerance, holds the human soul in high esteem, and considers the attack against innocent human beings a grave sin (cited in Kurzman 2008:3).

Tahirul Qadari, head of the Awami Tehrik Party, Pakistan said regarding terrorist attacks, "Bombing embassies or destroying non-military installations like the World Trade Center is no jihad. ...Those who launched the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks not only killed thousands of innocent people in the United States but also put the lives of Muslims across the world at risk (cited in Kurzman 2008:3). Bernard Haykel, assistant professor of Islamic Law at New York University, although not an Islaamic scholar, offered a more academic criticism of Bin Laden and his justification for violence under the rubric of *Jihaad* when he said:

Individuals and organizations cannot declare a jihad, only states can; 2) One cannot kill innocent women and children when conducting a jihad; 3) One cannot kill Muslims in a jihad; 4) One cannot fight a jihad against a country in which Muslim can freely practice their religion and proselytize Islam; 5) Prominent Muslim jurists around the world have condemned these attacks and their condemnation forms a juristic consensus (*ijma'*) against Bin Laden's actions (This consensus renders his actions un-Islamic); 6) The welfare and interest of the Muslim community (*maslaha*) is being harmed by Bin Laden's actions and this equally makes them un-Islamic (cited in Kurzman 2008:16-17).

Nuh Ha Mim Keller states, "Muslims have nothing to be ashamed of, and nothing to hide, and should simply tell people what their scholars and religious leaders have always said: first, that the Wahhabi sect has nothing to do with orthodox Islam, for its lack of tolerance is a perversion of traditional values; and second, that killing civilians is wrong and immoral" (cited in Kurzman 2008:7).<sup>267</sup> It appears to be a fairly strong consensus amongst Muslims, with the exception of those who hold *Khawaarij* like beliefs, that terrorism and unjustifiable violence contradict basic Islaamic values and principles and should be denounced.

#### 4.6 The Media and the Image of Islaam

Many groups, including terrorists, use the media as a means to make their demands and generate sympathy for their cause. As was mentioned in chapter three, both Bin Laaden and Zarqaawee use the media very effectively to gain support for their cause, although the latter is less effective and seems to alienate many of his potential constituency through wanton violence. "Despite the many differences, however, all terrorist groups have one trait in common: none commits actions randomly or senselessly. Each wants maximum publicity to be generated by its actions and, moreover, aims at intimidation and subjection to attain its objectives" (Hoffman 1998:131). Publicity is crucial to communicate their message, therefore "the modern news media, as the principal conduit of information about such actions, thus play a vital part in the terrorist's calculus. Indeed without the media's coverage the actions impact is arguably wasted, remaining narrowly confined to the immediate victim(s) of the attack rather than reaching the wider 'target audience'" (Hoffman 1998:132).

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<sup>267</sup> Keller's statement also points to the controversy around the concept of "orthodoxy" in Islaam and the difficulty with which some Muslims face in determining who is a legitimate scholar representative of the correct creed. During the course of this research some of those concepts have been explored by analyzing classical texts to provide definitions consistent with *hadeeth* literature.

Everything from the fierce battles fought in Falluja, Iraq, to the killing of Shee'a by Zarqaawee and his alliance of *Jihaadee* groups has been broadcast over the internet and radio in order to encourage other *Jihaadees* to participate in the struggle as well as defy the United States and its allies.

On July 28, 2004, a radio message broadcast by Tawhid wal Jihad was attributed to Al-Shami. Pushing the strategy of chaos advocated by Zarqawi to its limit, he declared that 'if infidels take Muslims as protectors, and these Muslims refuse to fight, it is permitted to kill these Muslims.' Thus he attacks the Shiites, 'who have made an alliance with the infidels' (Brisard 2005:135).

The media is a very effective tool for generating sympathy and achieving political aims. For example, Bin Laaden used the news media on several occasions to rally support for his cause and make clear his stance towards US intervention in Iraq and the causes and justification for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the World Trade Center. He said:

This means the oppressing and embargoing to death of millions as Bush Sr did in Iraq which is the greatest mass slaughter of children that mankind has ever known, and it means throwing millions of pounds of bombs and explosives at millions of children, also in Iraq, as Bush Jr did, in order to remove an old agent and replace him with a new puppet to assist in the pilfering of Iraq's oil and other outrages. So with these images and their like as background, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> came as a reply to those great wrongs, should a man be blamed for defending his sanctuary? Is defending oneself and punishing the aggressor in kind, objectionable terrorism? If it is such then it is unavoidable for us. This is the message I sought to communicate to you in word and deed, repeatedly, before September 11<sup>th</sup>. And you can read this if you wish in my interview with Scott in Time Magazine in 1996, or with Peter Arnett on CNN in 1997, or my meeting with John Weiner in 1998 (2005:2).

Media coverage has a profound impact upon terrorists' decisions, and some suggest it may even contribute to the cause of these actions or make some targets more attractive than others. Hoffman cites one of the "...reasons why terrorists find American targets so attractive, a salient consideration has always been the unparalleled opportunities for publicity and exposure that terrorists the world over know they will get from the extensive US news media" (Hoffman 1998:137). This manipulation of the news media can best be summed up by the statement of terrorist analyst J. Bower Bell when he said, "Don't shoot, Abdul! We're not on prime time!" (cited in Hoffman 1998:142). This quote displays the dubious relationship between

media sensationalism and terrorist activity, and it also gives insight into the media's portrayal of Islaam as somehow responsible for all catastrophes around the world.

Islaam, as perceived by the Western media-and indeed world media-is inherently terrorist or prone to violence. Edward Said articulates this Islaamaphobia quite eloquently when he says, "Indeed, Islam's roles in hijackings and terrorism, descriptions of the way in which overtly Muslim countries like Iran threaten 'us' and our way of life, and speculations about the latest conspiracy to blow up buildings, sabotage commercial airliners, and poison water supplies seem to play increasingly on Western consciousness" (Said 1997:xi). These images of violence and extremist activities shape the way much of the world sees Islaam, and this is in part a result of the media's negative portrayal of Islaam. Said says, "Yet there is a consensus on 'Islam' as a kind of scapegoat for everything we do not happen to like about the world's new political, social, and economic patterns" (Said 1997:iv). However, this is not to say that there has not been incitement of terrorist activities by *Jihaadees* as was mentioned in chapter three, but it is imperative to distinguish between Islaam and the actions of those who adhere to the *Khawaarij* methodology, and it is incorrect to associate Islaam as the cause for the world's calumnies. In addition, it is equally erroneous to associate the actions of a few to the Islaamic faith or Muslims as a whole. "Of course no one has equated the Jonestown massacre or the destructive horror of the Oklahoma bombing or the devastation of Indochina with Christianity, or with Western or American culture at large; that sort of equation has been reserved for 'Islam'" (Said 1997:9).

An outgrowth of Islaam's association with terrorism has produced "a corps of 'experts' on the Islamic world (which) has grown to prominence, and during a crisis they are brought out to pontificate on formulaic ideas about Islam on news programs or talk shows" (Said 1997:xi). This shadow cabinet of Islaamic 'experts' consists of orientalist, Middle Eastern policy professionals, and ill-informed reporters who often have little or no knowledge of orthodox Islaam, but yet they are the ones who are brought in to articulate Islaam to the Western world. Said cites "well-known and mainstream journalism such as *The New Republic* and *The Atlantic*, the former owned by Martin Peretz, the latter by Morton Zuckerman, both of them great supporters of Israel, and therefore biased against Islam" (Said 1997:xxii). There are mountains of

evidence to suggest that much of the media bias in coverage and the negative stereotyping of Islaam is in part the result of those who are influenced by their support for the state of Israel, or Jewish lobbyists who hold a strong position in American politics as will be discussed in the next section. Said mentions that none surpasses Peretz's expressions of "... racial hatred and contempt against a given culture and people as he has about Islam and the Arabs. Part of his venom is certainly derived from his relentless drive to defend Israel at all costs...and his columns of unadulterated, irrational, and vulgar defamation are truly unsurpassed anywhere" (Said 1997:xxii). An example that illustrates Peretz's open prejudices and biases in coverage is that

Peretz first justifies Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's brazen politics of force, then adds that, after all, Israel has to deal with Arab countries in which there is no 'cultural disposition for scientific and industrial takeoff. Alas, these are societies which cannot make a brick let alone a microchip.' Peretz pursues this idea (which of course resembles his views about African-Americans, that they are historically doomed to inferiority) (Said 1997:xxiv).

Viorst, a writer of many articles on the Middle east for the New Yorker Magazine, said that Islaam "...succeeded where Christianity failed in shackling man's power of reasoning....Arabs have often noted an intrinsic disposition to conservatism, if not to fatalism, within their culture. They are uncomfortable with intellectual challenge" (Said 1997:xxv). These are the types of statements the so-called experts on Islaam make in order to prove their theories of Western superiority and Islaamic degradation. If these are some of the spokesmen who defend Islaam and portray it to the Western public, then there is no wonder there is such resentment and open hostility from many towards Islaam and Muslims. Said says:

What matters to 'experts' like Miller, Huntington, Martin Kramer, Daniel Pipes, and Barry Rubin, plus a whole battery of Israeli academics, is to make sure that the 'threat' is kept before our eyes, the better to excoriate Islam for its terror, despotism, and violence, while assuring themselves profitable consultancies, frequent television appearances, and book contracts (Said 1997:xxxiv).

Evidence suggests that the media is shaped by journalists and commentators who are openly hostile to Islaam in part, "because most American commentators are pro-Israel" (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:20).

Many of those who are considered experts in representing Islaam have a tendency for incompetent journalism. Judith Miller, a journalist who has covered the Middle East and authored several books about Islaam and the Middle East, makes many glaring errors in reporting and research. For example, when writing about the Prophet Muḥammad, “she does not quote one Muslim source on Mohammed and relies completely on the dyspeptic debunkings of Western Orientalists; just imagine a book published in Europe or the United States on Jesus or Moses that makes no use of a single Judaic or Christian authority” (Said 1997:xxxviii).

When portraying Islaam in the media, there is often blatantly biased reporting to depict Muslims as perpetrators of terrorist actions. Often language is carefully selected to represent Muslims in all situations as terrorists. In Qana, South Lebanon, Israel bombed a United Nations post, which was a civilian shelter, killing over a hundred people despite being warned by the UN that it contained civilians and they were told to stop the bombing but continued. These actions puzzled some from the media as they “‘could not understand why Israel would deliberately hit civilians,’ a view which ... reflects the general United States media view that whereas Muslim terrorists are fully capable of acts of deliberate violence against innocents, Israel, which is like us, is not” (Said 1997:xlvi). The current crisis in Lebanon also illustrates how Israel in its campaign to destroy Hezbollah has blatant disregard for civilian casualties and infrastructure. Unfortunately, most Western media organizations offer only light criticism over the plight of the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples.

#### **4.7 US Policy and its Effect on Muslims**

One-sided reporting of Islaam and its portrayal as a terrorist religion has important policy implications, although it seems difficult to determine whether the media or policy or a combination of both, are responsible. For example, the U.S. policy towards Israel at the expense of its neighbors has profound effects upon public opinion, and the media fosters negative publicity towards Islaam and helps to justify those policies. “Thus Israel has appeared as a bastion of Western civilization hewn (with much approbation and self-congratulation) out of the Islamic wilderness. Secondly, Israel’s security in American eyes has become conveniently interchangeable with fending off Islam...” (Said 1997:43). The other implication of biased policy in favor of Israel, and

the demonizing of Islaam, is that it strengthens groups like al-Qaeda. Both Muslims and non-Muslims alike feel marginalized by such policies and begin to empathize with groups like al-Qaeda even if they disagree with their tactics. “Most recently, the Bush Administration’s attempt to transform the region into a community of democracies has helped produce a resilient insurgency in Iraq, a sharp rise in world oil prices, and terrorist bombings in Madrid, London, and Amman” (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:1). The cause for much of the bias in “...U.S. policy in the region is due almost entirely to U.S. domestic politics, and especially to the activities of the ‘Israeli Lobby’” (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:1).

The Israeli Lobby in the U.S. is a powerful one which helps to dictate Middle East policy and influence public opinion. “In addition to influencing government policy directly, the Lobby strives to shape public perceptions about Israel and the Middle East. It does not want an open debate on issues involving Israel, because an open debate might cause Americans to question the level of support that they currently provide” (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:20). This absence of debate seems contradictory in a nation which claims to hold democracy so dear that it believes in enforcing its policies of pro-democratization upon other nations. This demonstrates the overall power such lobbies hold in American politics. “Accordingly, pro-Israel organizations work hard to influence the media, think tanks, and academia, because these institutions are critical in shaping popular opinion” (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:20). The influence of the Israeli lobby has an enormous impact upon relations between the United States and Muslim states. Moreover, the general perception of Muslims world wide is that the United States is biased and anti-Muslim in its policies. In addition, both Israel and the U.S. claim common allies and foes, and this alliance is often perceived as a threat against Islaam and Muslims.

Beginning in the 1990’s, and especially after 9/11, U.S. support for Israel has been justified by the claim that both states are threatened by terrorist groups originating in the Arab or Islamic world....This rationale implies that Washington should give Israel a free hand in dealing with the Palestinians and not press Israel to make concessions until all Palestinians terrorists are imprisoned or dead (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:4).

This close relationship between Israel and the United States actually fosters terrorism. Muslim opinion overwhelmingly views United States policy and interests as unified

with that of Israel. This serves to bolster support for those voices in the Muslim community that call for a violent solution to the ills of the Muslim community, such as Zarqawee and Bin Laden.

There is no question, for example, that many al Qaeda leaders, including bin Laden, are motivated by Israel's presence in Jerusalem and the plight of the Palestinians. According to the U.S 9/11 Commission, bin Laden explicitly sought to punish the United States for its policies in the Middle East, including its support for Israel, and he even tried to time the attacks to highlight this issue (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:5).

The policies of the United States are reflective of the make up of the administration of "ferverently pro-Israel individuals like Elliot Abrams, John Bolton, Douglas Feith, I. Lewis ("Scooter") Libby, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and David Wurmser. As we shall see, these officials consistently pushed for policies favored by Israel and backed by organizations in the Lobby" (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:20). Even the war on Iraq seems in part as a response to Israeli pressure upon the U.S. from its domestic lobby. "Pressure from Israel and the Lobby was not the only factor behind the U.S. decision to attack Iraq in March 2003, but it was a critical element" (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:30). United States policy and its close relations with Israel serve to alienate Muslims in general and strengthen and legitimize the cause of the *Jihaadee* groups. Furthermore, in the case of the invasion of Iraq, it has become a common perception that oil and neo-colonialism were both contributing factors for the invasion. Mamdani suggests, "The United States seeks to replace defiant regimes and intimidate others, imposing a new regional order by creating pro-American regimes, first in Iraq, and then in an apartheid-style Bantustan like state of Palestine, presenting regime change as a strategy for 'democratization'" (Mamdani 2005:202).

The justifications for U.S. policy toward Israel are many, but the one excuse for this relationship that has proven facetious is the moral argument. This only serves to further enrage the Muslim masses and justify the arguments of ideologues like Bin Laden. The U.S

portrays Israel as a country that has sought peace at every turn and showed restraint even when provoked. The Arabs, by contrast, are said to have acted with great wickedness. This narrative-which is endlessly repeated by Israeli leaders and American apologists such as Alan Dershowitz-is yet another myth. In terms of actual behaviors, Israel's conduct is not morally

distinguishable from the actions of its opponents (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:11).<sup>268</sup>

In addition, the founding of the state of Israel was at the expense of the Palestinians and was based upon a policy of terror; and for the U.S. to deny this and continue its policies which discriminate against Muslim states only further serves terrorists' agendas and aspirations. "Finally, we should not forget that the Zionists used terrorism when they were in a similarly weak position and trying to obtain their own state. Between 1944 and 1947, several Zionist organizations used terrorist bombings to drive the British from Palestine, and took the lives of many innocent civilians along the way" (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:13). The argument that Israel is a pacifist state seeking to defend itself falls apart when analyzing Israeli conduct towards its adversaries in Palestine and Lebanon.

U.S. policy is not just considered favorable towards Israel, but it also appears to defy any aspirations of Muslim statehood. The most recent example of U.S. policy bias is the current conflict taking place in Somalia. There is a growing perception amongst Muslims worldwide that Somalia which has been engaged in civil war and lawlessness since 1991 was beginning to show signs of stability until recent intervention by Ethiopia with tacit U.S. support. The U.S and Ethiopia seem equally opposed to Muslim statehood in the region and the rise of the Islaamic Courts in Somalia appears to threaten their interests. The U.S claims that the Islaamic Courts are led by al-Qaeda members which under the auspices of the 'War on Terrorism' legitimize Ethiopia's intervention into Somalia. John Prendergast, a former U.S. state department official, claims that "tacit U.S. support for Ethiopia's incursion was 'incalculably strengthened' by the Courts' appeal to Somali nationalism..." (Deyoung 2006:2). This is yet another blow to U.S. Muslim relations and further tarnishes the image of America. The result of such policies appears to legitimize the Islaamic Courts and their cause and further marginalize moderate Muslim voices in the greater Muslim community, thus reinforcing the ranks of extremists.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> "This same study also reveals that the creation of Israel in 1947-48 involved explicit acts of ethnic cleansing, including executions, massacres, and rapes by Jews" (Mearshiemer and Walt 2006:12).

<sup>269</sup> The Islaamic Courts in Somalia are an outgrowth of *Jamaa'a al-Itihaad al-Islaamee* and other groups and Ethiopia and the U.S. both label them as a terrorist organization.

## 4.8 Misconceptions about Suicide Bombings

As was previously mentioned, extremists sometimes use suicide bombings as a political weapon and often these tactics are associated with Islaam and Muslims. However, it is important to clear up the myths associated with Islaam with factual evidence. Although groups like al-Qaeda are increasingly using suicide bombings as a tactic, Robert Pape, a professor from the University of Chicago, suggests it is a false presumption to associate Islaam with these activities, and this has also been made clear in the section on Islaam's position regarding suicide bombings. "After studying 315 suicide attacks from 1981-2004, the University of Chicago political science professor concludes that suicide bombers' actions stem from logical military strategies, not their religion -- and especially not Islam" (Schuster 2005:4). Unfortunately, due to media bias Islaam is often characterized as being responsible for these acts of violence and terror. "While American news-watchers may hear more about Israel and Iraq, Pape calls the Tamil Tigers the leading purveyors of suicide attacks over the last two decades -- until now. An adamantly secular group with Hindu roots, the Tamil Tigers are engaged in a struggle for independence and power with the Sri Lankan government" (Schuster 2005:4). There is very little evidence to suggest that Islaam is responsible for terrorist actions, just as Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism are not responsible directly for the actions of their adherents. In general, suicide bombers prefer this tactic because it instills fear in their opponents, the attacks are extremely effective in inflicting casualties at a relatively low cost, and it offers media exposure to their cause. Evidence suggests that "What nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland" (Schuster 2005:4). In the case of Bin Laden that means expelling the U.S. from Saudi Arabia, and for Zarqaawee it means driving them out of Iraq. Karzai suggests:

The greatest impact of Al-Qaeda has been to inspire other groups to adopt their modus operandi. Besides the massive proliferation of the global Jihadi ideology to groups with otherwise local grievances, Al-Qaeda's tactical influence has also manifested itself in the global escalation in suicide bombings; in fact out of more than 700 suicide bombings carried out in history, over 70 percent have taken place since 9/11 (Karzai 2007:36).

In addition to exporting their ideology, al-Qaeda also helps to proliferate a tactic already known to many fringe groups, both religious and secular, which seems more preferred for its effectiveness than for its religious legitimacy. This further serves to bolster Juergensmeyer's theory that religious violence and movements are particular to each moment in history and current socio-political events, although the perpetrators of violence usually claim a precedent for their actions in the past (Juergensmeyer 2003:6). However, as this research shows the neo-*Takfeerees* share some of the traits and creed of the original *Khawaarij* with an even greater propensity for violence than the original sect. The above research offers insight into the causes of terror, its motivations, and the misconception that is commonly held by the Western media, policy makers, and public: Islaam is responsible for terrorism.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Although many of the extremist ideologues surveyed in this research portray Islaam as a violent faith and highly political, this is not unique to Islaamic sectarianism as Hoffman states, "All terrorists, however, have one trait in common: they live in the future, live for that distant ... point in time when they will assuredly triumph over their enemies and attain the ultimate realization of their political destiny" (Hoffman 1998:169).

It seems they were correct in their assumption that the term *Jihaadee* is controversial and somewhat value laden. Contemporary *Salafees* take exception to that word and disassociate themselves from it in the strongest terms. It was previously mentioned in this study that the term *Jihaadee* refers to those Muslims that hold *jihad* to be the highest priority with disregard for its principles and conditions, and this is according to contemporary *Salafee* literature.<sup>271</sup> *Jihad* of the *Takfeeree Jihaadee* groups is seen as illegitimate by contemporary *Salafee* scholars. Al-Suhaymee states, “If they were really on the correct *Salafee* methodology then they would not exhibit malice towards those who disagree with their creed in their books like what has been cited....And how many claim to be so-called *Salafee Jihaadee* movements and in reality they are not *Salafee* or even *Jihaadee*, but rather *Takfeeree, Khaarajee, Tadmeerees* (killers)” (al-Suhaymee 2004:132). This quote displays the contempt contemporary *Salafees*

have of *Western Think Tanks and Jihaadees* it has as a term. Therefore, as this research asserts it does not appear to be accurate to associate *Jihaadees* with *Salafees* as they differ in important aspects of their creed. This illustrates the importance of correct classification in Islam as many sects that differed slightly in aspects of creed based think tanks in defining the discourse around Islamic extremism. Many think tanks and western analysts, although providing useful information, tend to give inaccurate classifications and definitions, from an outsider's perspective, which further serves to distort the image of Islam. Terms like *Jihaadees, Salafees* and *Wahhaabees* can be particularly problematic when defining and making

The Salafi movement (often referred to as the Wahhabis) includes such diverse figures as Osama bin Laden and the Mufti of Saudi Arabia and reflects a broad array of positions regarding issues related to politics and violence. This article explains the sources of unity that connect violent extremists with nonviolent puritans. Although Salafis share a common religious creed, they differ over their assessment of contemporary problems and thus how this creed should be applied. Differences over contextual interpretation have produced three major Salafi factions: purists, politico, and jihadis (Wiktorowicz 2005:207). We recognize that the use of *Jihad* to designate Salafis of a militant stripe is controversial. Some analysts feel that it adds too much to important Salafis to justify their use of the term; they call their movement *al-haraka al-jihadiyyah* (the Jihad Movement) since *Jihad* has positive connotations in Islam. First, it has wide currency in the Western counterterrorism community. Second, the proposed alternatives are either too imprecise or polemically charged to be analytically useful. Third, “Jihadism” indicates the centrality of religious warfare in the militant Salafi world view. Fourth, using the label makes Jihadis accountable for giving the term a bad name and for not living up to the high standard of conduct associated with jihad. Finally, the term is used in Arab media and was coined by a devout Saudi Muslim who is hostile to the ideology, so it is not a Western neologism (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:5). This analysis is not consistent with the evidences presented in this research. One of the main premises of this dissertation is that the *Khawarij* sect and contemporary groups differ in important aspects of creed when compared to the orthodox scholars, so it is not a Western neologism (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:5). Throughout this research contemporary *Salafee* sources were used to highlight those inherent differences between *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* groups, classical scholars and

<sup>271</sup> Al-Fawzaan states, “Unfortunately in our times there is a lot of controversy around this major issue. People who have no understanding or knowledge speak about *jihad* and they tend to be either fervent extremists or weak and excessively liberal” (al-Fawzaan 2005:79).

contemporary *Salafee* scholars, with the latter seeming to hold a similar creed and methodology to the classicists. In contrast, Wiktorowicz believes:

The different contextual readings have produced three major factions in the community: the purists, the politicians, and the jihadis. The purists emphasize a focus on nonviolent methods of propagation, purification, and education. They view politics as a diversion that encourages deviancy. Politicians, in contrast, emphasize application of the Salafi creed to the political arena, which they view as particularly important because it dramatically impacts social justice and the right of God alone to legislate. Jihadis take a more militant position and argue that the current context calls for violence and revolution. All three factions share a common creed but offer different explanations of the contemporary world and its concomitant problems and thus propose different solutions. The splits are about contextual analysis, not belief (Wiktorowicz 2005:208).

Wiktorowicz's scrutiny of the *Salafee* movement offers a broad classification that can help define the wide-ranging trends in contemporary Islaamic thought; however it is a serious flaw to group those contemporary groups under the banner of the *Salafee* creed.<sup>272</sup> For example, *Salafees* would argue that *Jihaadees* distort the concept of Islaamic *jihaad*, and even classicists like Ibn Taymeeya described those who deviate in their concept of *jihaad* as sinful and unorthodox which shows that this issue is both a matter of jurisprudence and creed. He stated,

The Qur'aan and the Sunna are filled with the command to fight *jihaad* and its benefits. However, it is a must to understand the legislated *jihaad* that Allah and His Messenger commanded from the heretical *jihaad* that the misguided people fight in obedience to the devil, and they think they are fighting in obedience to al-Rahmaan...like the *Khawaarij* who fight the people of Islaam (Ibn Taymeeya 1997a:473-474).

In addition, *Salafees* tend to distance themselves from politics and as this dissertation asserts, contemporary political movements tend to have more in common with the *Khawaarij* view regarding leadership, rebellion, and *takfeer*, especially the post *Qutbists*. All of these differences are not simply variations in approach and

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<sup>272</sup> Even Wiktorowicz concedes that the *Salafee* movement in Saudi Arabia began to fragment with the influx of members of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1970's bringing with them "a more politically oriented agenda and awareness to the predominantly purist Saudi context. They had a long history of political engagement and enjoyed a sophisticated understanding of political events, international affairs, and the world outside of Saudi Arabia" (2005:222). It is these very trends that helped to produce a radicalization of the *Salafee* movement and a departure from a once coherent creed and methodology, thus producing thinkers and groups that no longer could consider themselves *Salafee* as their ideas and concepts began to coincide more with the *Qutbist* methodology (al-Suhaymee 2004:210).

methodology, but a divergence in belief. This seems to be the most accurate assessment of these classifications as the books of jurisprudence and creed are both filled with the issues of *jihad*, recognizing the leadership, and *takfeer*.<sup>273</sup>

Some define *Salafees* as, “Sunni Muslims who want to establish and govern Islamic states based solely on the Qur’an and the example of the Prophet as understood by the first generations of Muslims close to Muhammad” (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:6). This is an accurate description as the evidence suggests they share a common creed with orthodox classical scholars and cite them as their main sources for understanding Islaam; however *Jihaadees* and *Takfeerees* also cite the same sources.

Not surprisingly, the most influential medieval Muslim authors are largely scholars known for their conservative and uncompromising interpretations of Islamic law and theology. Most of these scholars are also highly influential among mainstream Salafis, which reinforces the notion that the Jihadi Movement is a violent subset of the broader Salafi Movement (largely indistinguishable today from Wahhabism) (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:7).

DeLong-Bas makes a similar analysis when she states, “Bin Laden’s vision of global jihad is rooted in the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, and Sayyid Qutb” (2004:273). She also claims that contemporary extremists gained their concept of *takfeer*, *al-hakameeya*, and *jihad* as a revolutionary struggle from Ibn Taymeeya along with Qutb (DeLong-Bas 2004:242-243). Both *Salafees* and *Jihaadee/Takfeeree* groups use classical sources to justify their approach in understanding Islaam, however interpretation is radically different in key issues of creed. “The most important points they differ over are who has the right to call for jihad, who can excommunicate Muslims, and whether violent revolt against a Muslim ruler is legitimate. Jihadi ideologues are most threatened by prominent Wahhabi scholars since they both draw their legitimacy from the same tradition and have the same core religious constituency” (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:8). This is a fairly accurate assessment; however *Jihaadee* groups often disregard important religious

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<sup>273</sup> Some of the classical books in creed that detail these issues are (al-Barbaharee 1997), (al-Qaaree 1997), and among the books of jurisprudence (al-Shaafi’ee 2005), (al-Nawawee 2002).

principles established by classical scholars regarding *jihad* or *takfeer*.<sup>274</sup> McCants, Brachman, and Felter go on to state:

Finally, are the Jihadis, the holy warriors and today's most prominent terrorists, whose movement is part of the larger Salafi Movement (but note that most Salafis are not Jihadis). Since Jihadi thinkers draw their legitimacy from the same tradition as Salafis, Salafi scholars-particularly Saudi clerics-are best positioned to discredit the movement amongst other Salafis (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:6).

This statement seems problematic due to its overgeneralization. This research shows that although *Salafees* and *Jihaadees* tend to refer to classical scholars they are quite distinct in essential aspects of creed which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) *Jihaadee Takfeerees* tend to make *takfeer* based upon unorthodox criterions and principles, for example they accuse all the leaders of apostasy without exception, and<sup>275</sup>
- 2) encourage and perpetuate violence: refer to the case of al-Qaeda, Bin Laden and Zarqaawee,
- 3) declare *jihad* based upon an unorthodox methodology and tend to see it as a continuous revolutionary struggle for both the individual and groups,
- 4) use the secret *bai'a* and separate themselves from the general Muslim community, while encouraging rebellion against Muslim rulers,
- 5) make *takfeer* and are highly critical of the scholars who do not share their world view,
- 6) cannot be classified as rebels but rather *Takfeeree/Jihaadee* as they share similarities; the principles, methodology and creed of the *Khawaarij*, and<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> This researcher asked Saudi cleric Shaikh Sa'eed al-'Amr what the difference was between *Salafees* and *Takfeerees* when they both quote the same sources? He replied, "No doubt the heretics, as Ibn Taymeeya said, use evidences which in reality are against them, due to their understanding of the texts and misusing them as proofs for their arguments when really they refute them. The *Khawaarij* used the Qur'aan and at the same time spilled Muslim blood, so they are not the first to use the Qur'aan and Sunna and statements of the *Salaf al-Saalih*; however they use the evidences outside of their context" (al-'Amr 2007).

<sup>275</sup> The original *Khawaarij* and the *Takfeeree* ideologues both are quick in making *takfeer* and judgments upon other Muslims without establishing the proof upon them.

<sup>276</sup> Most of these groups "evolved from Sayyid Qutb, whose creed, methodology and politics developed from the *Khawaarij*, the *Raafida*, *Mu'tazila* and *Jahmeeya*, especially in the issue of *takfeer* based upon ignorance and oppression. Therefore, all societies to him were ignorant guilty of extreme apostasy" (al-Madkhalee 2007:104).

- 7) the end result of their dawa (propagation) usually results in loss of life and property of both Muslims and non-Muslims (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:10).
- 8) They exhibit extremism in their statements, actions and ideology (refer to chapter three post-Mawdoodee thinkers).
- 9) They tend to place a major emphasis on political issues rather than matters central to the religion.<sup>277</sup>

#### 4.10 Conclusion

Secularists, the Western media, and policy makers all have a role in perpetuating negative stereotypes about Islaam and Muslims. The portrayal of Islaam as a terrorist religion and United States foreign policy play a huge role in alienating Muslims worldwide, creating an environment of mutual distrust and anger, which creates the conditions for extremist ideologues to rise.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> “Then came the political groups in our time, whose creed and methodology were effected by these groups. Therefore nothing became more important to them than politics, and they did not regard rectification of the beliefs and knowledge of the community as being important, so they do not think about returning the community back to the Qur’aan and Sunna with the understanding of the *Salaf* in every aspect of the religion” (al-Madkhalee 2007:104-105).

<sup>278</sup> Gerges argues that the role of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East must be rethought and reshaped to address the needs of those who are marginalized in those societies to further isolate al-Qaeda and their ideology. Gerges states, “A strategy of institutional partnership with Muslim civil society requires more than redressing foreign policy; there is an urgent need to address socioeconomic grievances and respond to the vacuum of legitimate authority in the region” (Gerges 2005:275). Ultimately, Gerges concludes that the U.S could better combat extremists by encouraging its Arab allies to power share in their countries and encourage a larger middleclass to combat marginalization of huge groups in their societies which may be considered a breeding ground for extremism. These changes ultimately must come from Arab and Muslim societies themselves; however it is noteworthy that with the impending change in US presidency there is a possibility of strengthening US/Muslim relations but this depends upon whether US policy will move from intervention to a less aggressive policy particularly with regards to Muslim states.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions and Observations

#### 5.1 Conclusions and Observations

This dissertation shows the relationship between the early *Khawaarij* sect and modern day extremists who attribute their actions with Islaam. The creed of the *Khawaarij* sect has a strong impact on modern day *Takfeeree* and *Jihaadee* extremists, and the terrorist actions they advocate under the guise of *jihaad*. The actions of many of these groups and ideologues are un-Islaamic by nature, and unfortunately are exploited by the media to reinforce the negative image of Islaam. However, it is important to consider the motivations for terror and violence as these groups do not commit these actions without a purpose or simply due to their ideological ties to the *Khawaarij*; but rather they are often influenced by political events and their aspirations to effect change as this dissertation shows. Some of the events that contributed to the rise in radicalism in the Muslim world are the fall of the Islaamic caliphate, increase in secularist thought as a challenge to traditionalist expressions of Islaam, regime repression, and an increasing non-Muslim presence in Muslim lands along with U.S. aspirations and intervention in Muslim affairs. However, these historical and political factors do not completely account for the increase in Muslim extremism.

In chapter one the original *Khawaarij* sect was analyzed along with essential elements of their creed. *Hadeeth* traditions and statements of the classical scholars show that the *Khawaarij* are an Islaamic sect that exhibits traits of extremism in worship and creed. Due to ignorance, blind following their leaders, and misinterpretation of Qur'aanic verses the *Khawaarij* sect deviated from the orthodox creed resulting in the ideology of *takfeer*, rebellion against Muslim rulership, and excommunicating themselves from Muslim society. All of the traits analyzed in this section show that there is a direct relationship between the original *Khawaarij* sect and the *Takfeeree* groups scrutinized in chapter three; because both hold similar beliefs and exhibit comparable behavior with the potential for violence.

Chapter two introduces and contrasts the concepts and principles of the orthodox creed with that of the *Khawarij*. Key elements of the orthodox creed are looked at to show the inherent contradictions in the *Khawarij* methodology and creed. For example, the orthodox creed regards the Prophet's companions with reverence whereas the *Khawarij* reviled them because they perceived them as having shortcomings in understanding the religion. A noteworthy point is that the *Khawarij* regarded themselves as the standard of proper conduct, while the orthodox scholars rely upon the evidence presented in the religious texts in accordance with the understanding and practices of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Also, in this chapter the principles of *takfeer* were introduced and explored showing the complexity of this important creed. In this section the researcher attempted to contrast the *Khawarij* perception of *takfeer*, with that of the classical scholars. The *Khawarij* believed in making *takfeer* of their enemies and those who committed major sins and they based their judgments on the apparent meanings of selected Qur'aanic verses. Chapter two ends with a synopsis of the creed of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab, who is considered by some contemporary scholars as a revivalist ideologue and groups such as al-Qaeda gain legitimacy as the only force active in the religion whose creed and methodology conform to the orthodox one. In the eyes of some Muslims, these ideologues and groups such as al-Qaeda gain legitimacy as the only force active in articulating their frustrations and fighting perceived tyranny.

Chapter three discusses the factors that contribute to the rise in extremist thought. This chapter shows that ideology alone does not account for the deviance in creed and

...there remain political injustices that Western governments and pro-Western regimes in Muslim countries could and should have put right. First among those wrongs is the failure to support the creation of a viable state of Palestine. The ill-conceived invasion of Iraq...is another case in point. By allowing such grievances to continue, the West has done Islamist fundamentalism a huge and continuing favour. It has allowed the extremists to turn to the Muslim umma and say, 'We told you so! Only we can help you. Together we can turn back the secular, Western tide and return to a glorious past' (Allen 2006:297).

Also this chapter analyzes various contemporary ideologues by comparing their creed with that of the *Salafee* one. Although several factors were looked at to determine whether the various thinkers were *Khawarij*-like, or not, the primary variables were their concepts of *takfeer*, *jihad*, and their recognition of Muslim leadership. A significant conclusion derived at by analyzing these ideologues was that they differed in their levels of extremism and conceptualization of political struggle, but at the same

time they proved to be intricately linked by creed especially in regards to their notions of *jihad* and *takfir*.

Finally, chapter four gives insight into how Western media, secularists, U.S. government and think tanks all play a significant role in creating an image of Islam as a terrorist religion, marginalizing Muslims and fueling extremism. It shows how secularist dogma can have a more profound impact on Muslims than the *Takfeere* ideology.

## 5.2 Areas for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to critically analyze, compare and contrast the similarities and differences between various contemporary Islamic thinkers and that of the *Khawarij*. This dissertation offers the reader a glimpse into why some modern day Islamic movements use terror as a means of political expression. However it does not explore the socio-economic background of these individuals who make up these movements, which may offer additional insight as to why individuals choose to join these groups. Another area of interest that could be investigated is possible policy recommendations for Muslim governments to implement in order to curtail *Takfeere* ideology and what role if any, would be appropriate for non-Muslim governments to play.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> "Emasculation of extremist ideologies requires serious and systematic redress of its root causes--- poverty, injustice, authoritarianism, repression, and despair---on a global level" (DeLong-Bas 2004:289). McCants, Brachman, and Felter suggest that Western governments can encourage *Salafees* to renounce *Jihadists*, as well as propagate the negative stereotypes and harm these groups cause in Muslim societies amongst Muslims to discredit these groups. However, a potential problem is that if *Salafees* are seen as cooperating with the West it could be damaging to the movement and give credibility to *Jihadist* and those suspicious of the movement in the greater Muslim community (McCants, Brachman, and Felter 2006:10-11).

unites research with social action to address the underlying problems associated with extremist thought and terrorism.

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Without research into practical solutions "...we will not only face protracted tension and perhaps even war, but we will offer the Muslim world, its various societies and states, the prospect of many wars, unimaginable suffering, and disastrous upheavals, not the least of which would be the victory of an 'Islam' fully ready to play the role prepared for it by reaction..." (Said 1997:173). This is a dismal prediction indeed and it lays the burden upon us as responsible world citizens to counteract such potential catastrophic results with a comprehensive approach that  
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