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**SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND SECTARIAN DIVISIONS:
ANALYZING *BID'AH* AND TAWHID WITHIN SALAFI
TEACHINGS**

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Abstract: This article examines the social implications of the Salafi understanding of *bid'ah* as well as an analysis of *bid'ah* in the Salafi teachings themselves. The Salafi movement often accuses Muslims outside their group of heresy, but the irony arises when their own doctrine of monotheism is the result of interpretations that are not explicitly found in the Quran and Sunnah. The Salafi concept of monotheism triggers excommunication and disbelief of other Islamic groups and deepens group fanaticism, which has a negative impact on the solidity and social cohesion of Muslims. Salafi Jami, for example, opposes Salafi Ḥarakī or Surūrī, exposing fanaticism and divisions within Salafi itself. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this study finds that unilateral truth claims and sectarian fanaticism within Salafi groups reinforce divisions and prolonged conflicts within the Muslim community. They also have heresy in the context of their *tawḥīd* consisting of *ulūbiyyah*, *rubūbiyyah*, and *al-asma' wa al-sifāt*. This research underscores the importance of studying these groups' interpretations within their social context and subjectivity. As a result, it is difficult for Salafi and other radical groups to unite solidly, and Muslims continue to face divergent views and prolonged conflict.

Keywords: *Salafi, bid'ah, Taqlīdī-Ḥarakī-Jihādī.*

Introduction

The history of Muslim religiosity shows how differences in views on religious issues are a reality that has occurred since the time of the Prophet (PBUH).¹ In principle, differences are part of the diversity of the people who enrich the treasures of Islamic science. But in the next development, differences in views refracted into conflicts that sometimes communicated people and other groups who disagreed. The expressions of *bid'ah*, *keburafat* and the like that Salafi Puritans accuse people or groups outside them, apart from the fact that they are not entirely true, also strongly imply that Puritans claim themselves to be free from *bid'ah*. Their unilateral truth claim is precisely one of their characteristics. Yet in reality, they are not free from views and behaviours that to a certain degree represent or nuance *bid'ah*.

This issue is very interesting to raise because Salafi truth claims have divided Muslim society into binary oppositions. In turn, Islam that provides mercy for all mankind (*rahmat li al-'ālamīn*) is difficult to realize not because of problems outside the ummah, but rather rooted in the group of Muslims themselves. Historically, Salafism emerged as a reaction to what its followers perceived as deviations in religious practice that occurred throughout Islamic history. One of the central sources of Salafism is the thought of Ibn Taimiyah, who drew inspiration from Ibn Hanbal, among others.² Both of these important figures emphasized the importance of literal interpretation of the Qur'an and sunnah, and framed the behaviour of the Prophet, the Companions, and the Companions' followers, as the prime examples representing pure Islam.

In the 18th century, Salafi thought gained new momentum through Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792)-in Saudi Arabia-who is known as one of the main figures in the development of modern-contemporary Salafism.³ 'Abd al-Wahhāb's thought was in line with earlier Salafis in that he

¹ Recent discussions on Islamic diversity are discussed by Lawrence, among others. See Bruce B. Lawrence, *Islam Tidak Tunggal: Melepaskan Islam Dari Kekerasan*, Terj. Harimukti Bagoes Oka (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2004).

² Raihan Ismail, *Rethinking Salafism: the Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama in Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 12.

³ Emad Hamdeh, *Salafism and Traditionalism: Scholarly Authority in Modern Islam* (Cambridge New York (N.Y.): Cambridge university press, 2021), 30.

sought to purify Islam from practices considered *bid'ah* (innovation in religion) and *shirk* (worship of God).⁴ Salafi influence increased in the 20th and 21st centuries, with financial and political support from several Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia. There was massive dissemination of the works of Ibn Taimiyyah, 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī, in the form of books, lecture tapes, and digital media. These supports have made the Salafi influence spread in various lines of Muslim life in various countries.

With their great influence and rigid style of thinking, Salafis have generated a variety of controversies, internally and externally, especially because of their strong views on *bid'ah*. In the Salafi context, *bid'ah* is defined as any innovation in religion that has no basis in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Salafi followers often oppose various religious and cultural practices that have become traditions in Muslim societies, such as maulid celebrations, tahlil, and grave pilgrimages. All of these practices are considered *bid'ah* because they do not find a referential basis in the Qur'an.

The social implications of Salafi's understanding are significant. In social life, a rigid understanding of heresy can create segregation within the Muslim community. In Indonesia, the Salafi movement is often confronted with local Islamic groups such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) that have a more flexible view of tradition and heresy. This confrontation does not only occur in the theological arena, but also in daily worship practices. Salafi groups in Egypt, for example, have a significant role in the political landscape after the 2011 revolution, with Salafi political parties active in the electoral process. In Saudi Arabia, the conservative Salafi approach influences government policies and social regulations, including issues of women's rights, education, and family law.

Furthermore, the Salafi movement also has implications in a global context. The spread of Salafi ideology is often associated with radicalization and terrorism, although not all Salafi groups support violence. An exclusive understanding can be a factor for individuals to go to extremes, as seen in the actions of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda. The

⁴ 'Azmi Bisarat, *On Salafism: Concepts and Contexts*, Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures (Stanford (Calif.): Stanford university press, 2022), 26.

ideology of both groups is Salafi. This study seeks to explain in more depth how the understanding of Salafi ideology affects social life, as well as how Salafi groups cannot escape the heresy they accuse other groups of.

As a research, this study departs from several previous studies, such as Quintan Wiktorowicz's research which focuses on many issues: Salafism in terms of doctrine,⁵ origins,⁶ spread,⁷ and the jihad movement.⁸ Quintan's "classic" study has provided a solid foundation for the phenomenon of Salafism. Roel Meijer's contribution is also important in looking at the Salafi worldview and its relationship with politics and violence.⁹ Recent research on Salafism has focused more on its relationship with the digital world, such as Bouko's research.¹⁰ More recently, the trend has shifted to regional research, such as by M. de Koning in the Netherlands;¹¹ H. Rane in Australia, who looks at the terrorism movement in general;¹² and Piazza, who focuses on Salafism and politics in Egypt.¹³ These studies reflect Salafi developments in different regions.

The conclusion of the above research has an important contribution to seeing the phenomenon of Salafism as a whole. In the context of contribution, this research will focus on the doctrine of Salafism that is not

⁵ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 3 (Mei 2006): 207–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500497004>.

⁶ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "A Genealogy of Radical Islam," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 2 (16 Februari 2005): 75–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100590905057>.

⁷ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The Salafi Movement in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32, no. 2 (Mei 2000): 219–40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800021097>.

⁸ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Framing Jihad: Intramovement Framing Contests and al-Qaeda's Struggle for Sacred Authority," *International Review of Social History* 49, no. S12 (Desember 2004): 159–77, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859004001683>.

⁹ Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2013).

¹⁰ C. Bouko, "Discourse patterns used by extremist Salafists on Facebook: identifying potential triggers to cognitive biases in radicalized content," *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2021.1879185>.

¹¹ M. de Koning, "The Racialization of Danger: Patterns and Ambiguities in the Relation Between Islam, Security and Secularism in the Netherlands," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2019.1705011>.

¹² H. Rane, "Cogent Religious Instruction?: A Response to the Phenomenon of Radical Islamist Terrorism in Australia," *Religions*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10040246>.

¹³ B. Azaola-Piazza, "The Interplay of Regional and Domestic Politics in Egypt: The Case of Salafism," *Contemporary Politics*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2020.1858565>.

sterile from heresy. In other words, their accusations against others also point to the Salafi entity itself. To parse the data and arrive at the final conclusion, this research uses a descriptive-analytic approach. This means that all written data on Salafism will be assembled and parsed in sub-chapters so that the Salafi doctrine can be parsed as a whole. The data will then be analyzed to unravel the final findings.

The Emergence and Development of Salafi Groups

Indeed, the term Salafi as a group that refers to certain Muslims with certain beliefs is not known in the classical Islamic intellectual treasures. Famous classical historical books that discuss groups of Muslims that are referred to today, such as *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* by al-Baghdadi, *al-Faṣl fī al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* by Ibn Ḥazm and *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* by al-Syahrastānī do not mention the Salafi group at all.¹⁴ This shows that Salafis as a religious group only emerged after the classical period; precisely in medieval Islam.

The term “al-Salaf” with the meaning of predecessor as the root of the word Salafi was first used by Ḥasan al-Bashri (d. 110 AH/ 728 CE) to refer to the companions. After that al-Awzā’ī (d. 157 AH/ 774 AD) used the word salaf with the same meaning as Hasan al-Bashri. Earlier ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-Azīz (d. 101 AH/ 720 CE) used the word *al-Sābiqūn* which is similar to salaf to refer to the Companions. They used the word salaf or something similar to it in connection with their efforts to remind Muslims to adhere only to the teachings conveyed by the Companions¹⁵ and of course also the Prophet (pbuh) in matters of religion.

Taking the source of religious teachings only from the Companions was also a view affirmed by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. But after Ibn Ḥanbal’s time, his followers did not limit it to the Companions, but also the Tābi‘īn and the leaders of the Hadith experts, of which one of the leaders was Ibn Ḥanbal himself.¹⁶ This means that the word salaf has developed and expanded in meaning.

¹⁴ Karīm Shātī al-Sarrāj, “al-Salafīyah: Nash’atu wa al-Taṭawwur: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah,” *al-‘Aqīdah* 6 (Oktober 2015): 19, <https://aqeeda.iicss.iq/?id=42&sid=40>.

¹⁵ See Ibid., 20– 22.

¹⁶ See Ibid., 22.

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Since then, the term *al-salaf*, which is usually coupled with the adjective *al-ṣāliḥ*, has become *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, referring to the first three generations of Muslims. They are the first generation of Companions, of which the last of the Companions died around 690 CE, the second generation of *Tābi'īn*, of which the last of the *Tābi'īn* died around 750 CE, and the third generation of *Aṭbā' al-Tābi'īn* (followers of the *Tābi'īn*), of which the last of them died around 810 CE. These first three generations are the Muslims who are believed to have had the first experience of the development of Islam and are considered to be the models of righteousness in life for subsequent Muslims.¹⁷ Even in the hands of Ismā'īl al-Ṣābūnī (d 449 AH/1057 CE), one of Ibn Ḥanbal's staunchest followers, the term *Salaf* includes all of al-Ṣābūnī's predecessors from the Hadith scholars and their leaders.¹⁸

A new development took place in the ninth century AD (four Hijri). At this time the followers of Ibn Ḥanbal (Hanbalites) became a group that attributed themselves to the *salaf*. They claimed to be the supporters and defenders of Ibn Hanbal, (the last scholar of the *Salaf* generation from among the *Tābi'īn*). They call themselves *Salafis*; following the *Salaf* and being *salaf* like their predecessors in *aqidah* and in practising religion.¹⁹

Then in the thirteenth century AD (seventh Hijriyah), after the Mongol invasion of Baghdad and the condition of Muslims deteriorated in various fields, Ibn Taymiyah revived the teaching with its own characteristics. He and his student, Ibn Jawziyah, established the principles and benchmarks of *Salafism* so that Ibn Taymiyah is truly considered the founder and formulator of the basic structure of *Salafi* teachings.²⁰ Through Ibn Taymiyah's thinking, *Salafi* is not just a group that seeks to understand the Qur'an and *Sunnah* literally but has developed into a school with its own

¹⁷ 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-Ḥāmid al-Atsarī, *al-Wajīz fī 'Aqidah al-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ: Abl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ab* (Istanbul: Ghurabā', 2014), 27–28; Bandingkan dengan Meijer, *Global salafism*, 3.

¹⁸ Shāṭi al-Sarrāj, "al-Salafīyah: Nash'atu wa al-Taṭawwur: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah," 23.

¹⁹ Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Tarikh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah: fī al-Siyāsīyah wa al-'Aqāid wa Tarikh al-Madhāhib al-Fiqhīyah* (Kairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, t.t.), 177.

²⁰ Shāṭi al-Sarrāj, "al-Salafīyah: Nash'atu wa al-Taṭawwur: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah," 35.

ideology.²¹ Ibn Taymiyyah is regarded as the figure who made Salafi teachings a systematic teaching and made it a sect in its own right.

Ibn Taimiyah's teachings were further developed by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (d. 1206/1792 AD) from Nejd Arabia and later became the Wahabi group. The most prominent characteristic of this group is its teaching in the field of *aqidah* which is even stricter than its predecessor, Ibn Taymiyyah.²² In addition, the difference with the previous Salafis was the view and movement that linked religion with the state. With the presence of the Wahabi group, Salafi is not just a teaching but has developed into a movement supported by the state.

Characteristics of Salafi Groups

All Muslims, in fact, have almost the same view in placing the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet and the tradition or *qawl* of the companions as the main reference in religious matters. However, unlike most Muslims, especially the Ahli Sunnah wal Jama'ah in understanding the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, the Salafi group approaches them literally and abandons the use of reason, opinion, and interpretation,²³ including *qiyas*. This textual reading is the basic method and principle for them in understanding religion. However, in emergencies, they also accept it under strict conditions.

Based on such a pattern of understanding, they develop teaching principles or views in creed, law, and matters relating to life as a whole. One of the main principles of Salafi groups is the principle of the oneness of God in the form of *tawḥīd rubūbiyyah*, *tawḥīd ulūhiyyah*, and *tawḥīd al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt*. *Tawḥīd rubūbiyyah* is the belief that every Muslim must have that the universe and everything in it were created by the Creator who has the nature of the Most Perfect who perfectly organizes the universe. The *tawḥīd ulūhiyyah* in the Salafi perspective is the necessity for Muslims to devote all their worship to Allah alone. Meanwhile, *tawḥīd al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt* in Salafi circles is the

²¹ Bashīr M. Nāfi', "Salafīyah: Ishkālīyyah al-Muṣṭalah, al-Tarīkh wa al-Tajāllīyyāt al-Muta'addīyah," dalam *al-Zahīriyyah al-Salafīyyah: al-Ta'addudīyyah al-Tandhīmīyyah wa al-Sīyāsāt*, Bashīr M. Nāfi' (ed) (Beirut: Markaz al-Jazirah li al-Dirāsah, 2014), 17.

²² Shāhī al-Sarrāj, "al-Salafīyyah: Nash'atu wa al-Taṭawwur: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah," 39.

²³ Muḥammad Imarah, *Al-Salafīyah* (Sousse: Dār al-Ma'ārif li al-Ṭība'ah wa al-Naṣr, t.t.), 27.

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obligation of Muslims not to associate partners with Allah in the attributes and names of Allah.²⁴ Through such *tawhīd*, Salafis tend to or easily accuse other Muslims outside their group of disbelief or shirk.

Another principle on which they have a firm grip is *al-Ittibā'*. Based on this teaching, Salafis emphasize the importance of following the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and adhering to the views of the early Companions in religious matters.²⁵ In addition, Salafis hold the view that their school is the correct school. This is because, according to them, the Salaf only conveyed the truth and only from the teachings contained in the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet.²⁶ With this principle, in addition to blaming the concept of *taqlīd* (following one of the four madhhabs), they consider *bid'ah* various traditions and activities of Muslims that exist outside their group.

The principle they hold dear makes them see religion and religiousness with a binary opposition view; *Islām-Kāfir*, *Ittibā'-Bid'ah*, and so on. In line with that, they always assume that only their group has the truth, and groups other than theirs are wrong. Some of them even disbelieve other Muslims outside their group.

Variety of Salafi Groups: Debates on Faith, Politics, and Jihad

From time to time the Salafi group developed and became several schools. Broadly speaking, Salafi groups are divided into three schools. The first is Salafi *Taqīdī*. This group, also called Salafi *'Ilmi*, is a Salafi sect that adheres to the Salafi method in order to realize the Salaf legacy and fight *bid'ah*. They focus on da'wah and educational activities. Its founder was Nasiruddin al-Albani (d. 1999).²⁷ Quintan Wiktorowicz calls this group the

²⁴ Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ Yūnūs Ḍuway, "al-Fikr al-Salafi fī al-Ḥad: Tahawwulatuḥu ba'da Thawrāt al-Rabi' al-'Arabī," dalam *Al-Salafīyyah, Ṭabawwulatuhā wa Mustaqbalahā* (Istanbul: Muntadā al-'Alaqaṭ al-'Arabīyyah wa al-Duwāliyyah, 2018), 434–35.

²⁵ Muḥammad Abū Rummān, *Anā Salafīyyūn: Bahṭhun fī al-Ḥuḥūyyah al-Waqī'īyyah wa al-Mutkabayyalah lada al-Salafīyyi* (Oman: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014), 40.

²⁶ See Muṣṭafā 'Azizī, *Al-Uṣūs al-Ma'raḥīyyah li al-Fikr al-'Aqadī al-Salafi: Dirāsah Taḥlīliyyah Naqdiyyah li Uṣūs al-Fikr as-Salafi al-'Aqadī li Ibnī Taymiyyah* (Iraq: Muassasah ad-Dalil li ad-Dirasati wa al-Buhuts al-'Aqadiyyah, 2018).

²⁷ Taghreed Hanoun Ali, "Salafīyyah: Dirāsah fī Nash'atihā al-Tarīkhiyyah wa al-Ṭayyarātihā," *Majallah Buhuth al-Sharq al-Amsaṭ* 66 (Agustus 2021): 210.

Salafi Puritans. The Puritans do not see themselves as a political movement, in fact, they reject the term *harakat* because it has political connotations. Their preaching and education are aimed at realizing the vision of maintaining the purity of *tawhīd* and Islam so that it is sterile from Western and enemy influences.²⁸

The obsession with maintaining pure-authentic Islam led Salafi *Taqlīdīs* to isolate their group from infidels and Western culture. Any interaction with non-believers is seen as an opportunity for infidels to infect Muslims. They see interfaith dialogue as having little benefit, as all guidance is perfectly available in the Qur'an, and the disbelievers have nothing to offer. Therefore, European Salafis try to limit interaction with the wider community.²⁹ Unlike the Ḥarakī and Jihādī Salafis, the Salafi *Taqlīdīs* view that the Salafi creed must go hand in hand with a proper method of applying the creed. If the creed is related to the science of monotheism, then the method talks about how the Prophet practised the creed.³⁰

Salafi *Taqlīdīs* reject political and jihad methods as an implementation of spreading the creed. They believe that spreading the faith through politics and jihad has not found any referential support from either the Prophet or the Companions. The Prophet never organized a demonstration or planned a revolution against the ruler.³¹ Instead, the Prophet gave personal advice to the rulers. *Taqlīdī-puritan* Salafis, therefore, criticize both Ḥarakī Salafis and Jihadi Salafis. The political (Salafi Ḥarakī) and revolutionary (Salafi Jihādī) tendencies, genealogically, are seen as products of America, France and Marxism. The *Taqlīdī* Salafis see that Salafi schools outside them have been contaminated by Western ideas so that the purity of their creed is not connected to the correct method of *da'wah*.

Moreover, Salafi *Taqlīdī* views political engagement through peaceful parties as also having the potential to fall into heresy. The Western style of parties and democracy can put the interests of the party above the interests of God. They also see political parties as umbrellas that can shelter various

²⁸ Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement," 218.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

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sects, thus increasing the cross-fertilization with outside groups. This is clearly seen as a threat to the purity of monotheism. In Quintan's view, the failure of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn is clear proof that involvement in politics is not the right choice. This reality has always been an argument for Salafi Taqlīdī to establish themselves in the method of *da'wah*-tarbiyah.

From their *manhaj* paradigm, Taqlīdī Salafis take the position of criticizing political and jihadist Salafis in at least two ways. First, other Salafis have done *irjā'*—like the Murji'ah in the past (separating belief and action). Second, other Salafis have prioritized rationality and human interests over the interests of Allah and religion. The flow is to set a strategic political agenda, and then produce religious arguments that fit the political agenda. For Taqlīdī, other Salafis have gone beyond the provisions of the Qur'an and sunnah so that other factions can be equated with Mu'tazilah, Ash'ariyyah, Shia, and so on—rationalist groups that Salafis strongly condemn. Both of these criticisms are serious accusations because they remove other Salafis from the purity of the faith and make Taqlīdīs believe that only they can maintain the existence of pure *tawhīd*.

Some observers claim that Salafi Taqlīdī is the same as Salafi Wahabi. But some other experts distinguish between the two. Wahabi Salafis are considered stricter in matters of aqidah, worship and tradition. Through this doctrinal system, the world is divided in a black and white antagonistic binary; the world of disbelief and polytheism on the one hand, and the world of Islam with true faith on the other. This concept further developed into the view of *al-Walā' wa al-Barā'* (loyalty to Allah and the Prophet, and detachment from the enemies of Allah). Through this teaching principle, Wahabis hold that all worship, prayers, efforts to approach Allah, and social behaviour must not in the least provide opportunities for disbelief, polytheism or allegations that cause disbelief or polytheism.³² Because in the Wahabi view, it will bring disbelief or real polytheism.

The second Salafi faction is the Ḥarakī Salafis, who combine the Wahabi aqidah and the thought of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn. It emerged in the eighties of the twentieth century. This movement is also often called Salafi

³² Miloud, "al-Ḥarakah al-Salafiyyah wa Ṭayyarātihā baina al-Naḥariyyah wa Waqi'i al-Mummarasah al-Ijtima'iyyah fi al-Wasat al-Jami'i: Dirāsah Midāniyyah," 87–89.

Sururi attributed to its founder Muḥammad Surūr Zayn al-‘Ābidīn bin Nayf, one of the leaders of the Syrian al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn. The existence of Surūr Salafism is regarded as a bridge and intellectual link between Osamah bin Laden (the founder of al-Qaeda) and Sayyid Qutb (the main ideologue of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn). Similarly, it is a link to Salafī Taqlīdī, although this group does not hesitate to criticize Wahabis who are considered to be limited to the physical aspects of Islam and do not reach the essence of the teachings. This Ḥarakī group is also often a teacher and reference for the Salafī Jihadi group.³³

Ḥarakī Salafis emerged in the context of a challenge by young Salafī clerics to influential senior Salafī clerics in the Taqlīdī faction. They considered Taqlīdī ineffective because it ignored politics. Ḥarakī Salafī clerics argued that they had a better understanding of contemporary issues and were better able to apply the Salafī creed to modern life. The initial penetration of political groups occurred when the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn came to Saudi Arabia after the crackdown of Gamal Nasser in Egypt. The Saudi government welcomed the educated among them and gave them places in several universities. In the 1970s, the group intensified the dissemination of their works to the extent that almost every bookstore carried works by Ikhwān al-Muslimīn members.³⁴

Ikhwān al-Muslimīn has had a long history in politics and so they have a better understanding than the Salafī Taqlīdī, especially in the context of international politics and the world outside Saudi Arabia. Therefore, Saudi youth who wanted to understand the modern world enthusiastically welcomed the ideas of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn. The Ikhwān al-Muslimīn’s rational and simple approach was clearly not compatible with the Salafī culture of Saudi Arabia, but they managed to spread political ideas through the thought of Sayyid Qutb and his disciples. Theoretically, Sayyid Qutb’s ideas were connected to Ibn Taymiyah and Abd al-Wahhāb so that the Salafī orientation was accommodated in Qutb’s political ideas. In this regard, Quintan comments:

³³ Miloud, “al-Ḥarakah al-Salafiyyah wa Ṭayyarātihā baina al-Naẓariyyah wa Waqi’i al-Mummarasah al-Ijtima’iyyah fī al-Wasat al-Jami’i: Dirāsah Midāniyyah,” 83..

³⁴ Lihat Wiktorowicz, “Anatomy of the Salafī Movement”; Wiktorowicz, “Framing Jihad.”

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“Although Salafis to this day continue to debate whether Qutb was a ‘Salafi’ at a minimum he held a number of Salafi precepts. This produced political arguments framed by the Salafi creed and its various principles, which eased its introduction into the predominantly purist environment by using locally acceptable religious discourse.”³⁵

Muḥammad Surūr along with Muḥammad Qutb and other former Ikhwanis produced students who found a platform in Arab politics, one of whom was Salman al-Awdah. Salafi Ḥarakī succeeded in producing scholars who believed that they had a political responsibility and criticized the authorities when they issued policies against Islam. With this orientation, Ḥarakī Salafis continue to hold the monotheistic faith as Taqlīdīs, but they extend their influence to issues outside the religious context. The purity of monotheism which is the main vision of Salafis must be translated into practical political agendas. If Salafi groups enter the political sphere, then the ruler can be kept from making policies that are against Islam.

Ḥarakī Salafis argue that Taqlīdīs live in a different age and are completely isolated from the outside world and international politics. This reality, for Ḥarakī, left the Taqlīdīs without the capacity to produce fatwas on politics. Taqlīdī’s reputation deteriorated further when Albani issued a fatwa that Palestine was no longer Dār al-Islām because Israel occupied the territory. The consequence of this fatwa was that Palestinians had to move to a Muslim country. After issuing this fatwa, Albani and the Taqlīdī group were considered to have no knowledge of the situation on the ground because Palestinian Muslims could still worship and the Islamic state was still attached to them. Salafi Ḥarakī got the momentum to offer to take over the political issue.³⁶

Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Awdah complain about the Taqlīdī orientation that only focuses on purifying the faith, while the Islamic world is facing a series of crises of thought and ideology. The da’wah vision of the last days, the beyond, heaven, hell, and other eschatological concepts has lost relevance in the midst of Israel’s insistence on Palestine, or America’s

³⁵ Ibid., 222.

³⁶ Ibid., 223.

insistence on the Muslim world. Taqlīdī preaching does not violate the Salafi vision, but Ḥarakī's Salafi contributions can complement Taqlīdī Salafism, according to al-Hawali. Ḥarakī's set of ideas was criticized by various parties. In the nineties, Salafi Jami emerged in Medina, Saudi Arabia. This sect, which is attributed to its founder Sheikh Muhammad Aman al-Jami, aims to criticize Salafi Ḥarakī, which is considered incompatible with true Salafi values. In addition, Ḥarakī Salafis were considered not truly Salafi because they emerged outside Saudi Arabia.³⁷

The last faction is the Jihadi Salafis. Besides being called Jihadi, it is also called Salafi Takfiri, extreme Salafi, and even referred to as Salafi al-Musallahah al-Qataliyah (fighting force). Its emergence, similar to the emergence of other Salafis, was triggered by religious, political, or social events in the Arab (Muslim) world that in their opinion made Muslims increasingly distant from Islam and the prevalence of heresy. This made the sect psychologically frustrated, and politically resistant, especially with the Soviet Union's entry into Afghanistan.³⁸ This Jihadi Salafi, as stated by one of its main figures, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, synergizes between efforts to realize the teachings of *tawḥīd* and jihad against *ṭaghūt* (anything worshipped besides Allah).³⁹ This sect has been spreading terrorism since the beginning of this century and continues to this day.⁴⁰

Jihadi Salafism emerged when the Saudi government froze Hawali and Awdah—two important figures of Ḥarakī Salafism—which was also a sign that Ḥarakī Salafism was under pressure. The Taqlīdī group even asked clerics to review Salafi Ḥarakī's lectures. The senior clerics decided that Hawali and Awdah must repent in front of the clerics and their lectures would be boycotted if they refused.⁴¹ Since then, many Ḥarakī leaders have gone to prison, while their teachings have been absorbed by jihadists on the battlefields of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. As a result, the jihadists

³⁷ Ali, "Salafīyyah: Dirāsah fī Nash'atihā al-Tarīkhiyyah wa al-Ṭayyarātihā," 214.

³⁸ Ibid., 214 -215.

³⁹ Rummān, *Anā Salafīyyūn: Baḥṭhun fī al-Ḥawāliyyah al-Waqi'īyyah wa al-Mutkhabayyalah lada al-Salafīyyī*, 35.

⁴⁰ Lihat Frazer Egerton, *Jihad in the West: The Rise of Militant Salafism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8-22.

⁴¹ Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", 225.

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associated the Ḥarakī movement within the context of warfare. When the Ḥarakī clerics were suspended, Jihadists surfaced to criticize the senior clerics in Salafī Taqlīdī. The Jihadists saw that the Taqlīdī Salafis did not understand political dynamics, or they understood politics but deliberately deceived the public about the reality of what was actually happening in society.

As the 2000s approached, Jihadi Salafis drew a line with the Taqlīdī group believing that the Taqlīdī Salafī clerics were only agents of the Saudi government supporting America. When Taqlīdī-puritan groups refused to defend al-Qaeda in the aftermath of the 2001 attacks on America, Jihadi Salafis increasingly asserted a divisive stance towards other Salafis. Senior clerics from Taqlīdī Salafis, for al-Qaeda, are nothing more than royal clerics, palace henchmen, corrupt clerics, and other such negative criticisms. Meanwhile, Jihadi Salafis frame their group with a heroic narrative, that only they are willing to take the role of martyrs, with actions that invite international criticism.⁴² Furthermore, they built a doctrine that only true clerics would defend jihad against America.⁴³

Variety of *Bid'ah* in the View of Salafi Groups

From the variety and characteristics inherent in Salafī groups, we find that they cannot escape the heresy that they accuse Muslims outside them of. One of their heresies lies in the teaching of tawḥīd consisting of *ulūbiyyah*, *rubūbiyyah* and *tawḥīd asmā wa al-ṣifāt*. These teachings are purely the result of their thinking or their interpretation of the Holy Text and the Sunnah of the Messenger (pbuh). These two sources do not explicitly mention tawḥeed as they have promoted and spread it everywhere.

This heresy of monotheism is a crucial issue because it has a far-reaching impact on the solidity of Muslims, and humanity as a whole. Through this Salafī monotheism, they are not only excommunicating Muslims outside of them, but they may even disbelieve other Muslims.

⁴² Philip M. Seib dan Dana M. Janbek, *Global Terrorism and New Media: the Post-Al Qaeda Generation*, Media, war and security (London ; New York: Routledge, 2011), 105.

⁴³ Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafī Movement", 227.

In addition, they are to a certain degree attached to the group fanaticism that the Prophet (pbuh) used to strongly condemn. The emergence of Salafi Jami is just one example of their attachment to such fanaticism. Salafi Jami emerged in line with the strengthening of Salafi Ḥarakī initiated by Muhammad Surur Zainul Abidin bin Nayf, Syria. Salafi Jami considers Salafi Ḥarakī or Sururi, not an authentic Salafi group. One of the bases is because it was initiated and led by people outside Saudi Arabia.

Of course, many other heresies exist among them. But here we will focus on the heresy of monotheism and sectarian fanaticism because these two things have a far-reaching impact on Muslims as a whole. The existence of heresies among them is not at all surprising. For, as Olivier Roy points out, if we are to study Salafi groups and the like, we should be studying not what is actually narrated in the Qur'an (or the Sunnah of the Prophet, pen), but what the group says in comparison with what the Qur'an says.⁴⁴ In other words, when we read the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, they are inseparable from the subjectivity of the group and the social phenomena that surround them.

Their inherent reality makes it impossible for Salafi groups in particular, and radical groups in general, to unite into one solid group. As long as they prioritize one-sided truth claims, as long as they are lulled by group fanaticism and the like, they will be open to being compartmentalized in a frame of their own making. More than that, Muslims will not only be in different views but will also be carried away by prolonged conflict.

Conclusion

The Salafi group has evolved into several schools that differ significantly in their views on faith, politics and jihad. The first school, Salafi Taqlīdī, also known as Salafi 'Ilmi, was spearheaded by Nasiruddin al-Albani. They focus on da'wah and education to maintain the purity of *tamhīd* and fight heresy without engaging in politics or jihad. They isolate themselves from Western culture and interaction with non-Muslims, believing that all guidance is perfectly available in the Qur'an and that such interaction could

⁴⁴ Oliver Roy, *Genealogi Islam Radikal*, Terj Nasrullah Ompu Bana (Yogyakarta: Genta Press, 2005), 141.

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threaten the purity of Islam. They criticize Ḥarakī Salafis and Jihadi Salafis for being contaminated by Western influences and deviating from the methods of the Prophet. Taqlīdī Salafis reject politics and jihad as methods of spreading the faith because there is no referential basis from the Prophet or the Companions. They see that politics and jihad tend to lead to heresy and prioritize human interests over religion. As a result, they strongly criticize other Salafis who are considered to have gone beyond the provisions of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Ḥarakī Salafis, emerging in the late 20th century, combined the Wahabi creed with Ikhwān al-Muslimīn thought and were spearheaded by Muhammad Surur Zayn al-'Abidin. They see the importance of political involvement and criticism of rulers who contradict Islamic values. They considered Taqlīdī Salafis ineffective because they ignored politics and did not understand contemporary issues. Ḥarakī Salafis managed to spread political ideas through the thoughts of Sayyid Qutb, which merged with the Salafi orientation. Figures like Safar al-Hawali and Salman al-Awdah became scholars who believed in the responsibility of politics and criticized the authorities. However, Ḥarakī Salafis faced criticism from Jami Salafis who considered them inauthentic for not conforming to genuine Salafi values. Jihadi Salafis, emerging as a reaction to oppression and invasion, synergize the teachings of *tawḥīd* with jihad against *ṭāghūt*. This group, which engages in acts of terrorism, regards Salafi Taqlīdī clerics as government agents supporting America and asserts itself as a defender of jihad against America. These internal differences and criticisms show that Salafi groups, despite claiming the purity of *tawḥīd*, remain trapped in heresy and fanaticism that they accuse other groups of, resulting in division and prolonged conflict within Muslims.

Salafis often accuse Muslims outside of them of heresy, but they themselves are not entirely free of heresy. One of the heresies in their teachings is the concept of *tawḥīd* consisting of *ulūbiyyah*, *rubūbiyyah* and *al-asmā' wa al-sifāt*, the result of their interpretation of sacred texts and Sunnah that are not explicitly mentioned. This concept leads to excommunication and disbelief of other groups and creates fanaticism as seen in the feud between Salafi Jami and Salafi Ḥarakī. This heresy of monotheism and

fanaticism led to division and prolonged conflict within Muslims. On that side, we can see that a name can be claimed by anyone and any group. But what can determine whether the name is in accordance with what is named, is the substance of the teachings, views and movements manifested by a group or sect. Similarly, one group claims to be anti-*bid'ah* and considers other groups to be full of bad innovation, *khurafāt* and the like, but in reality, it is the anti-*bid'ah* group that is actually full of heresy.

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