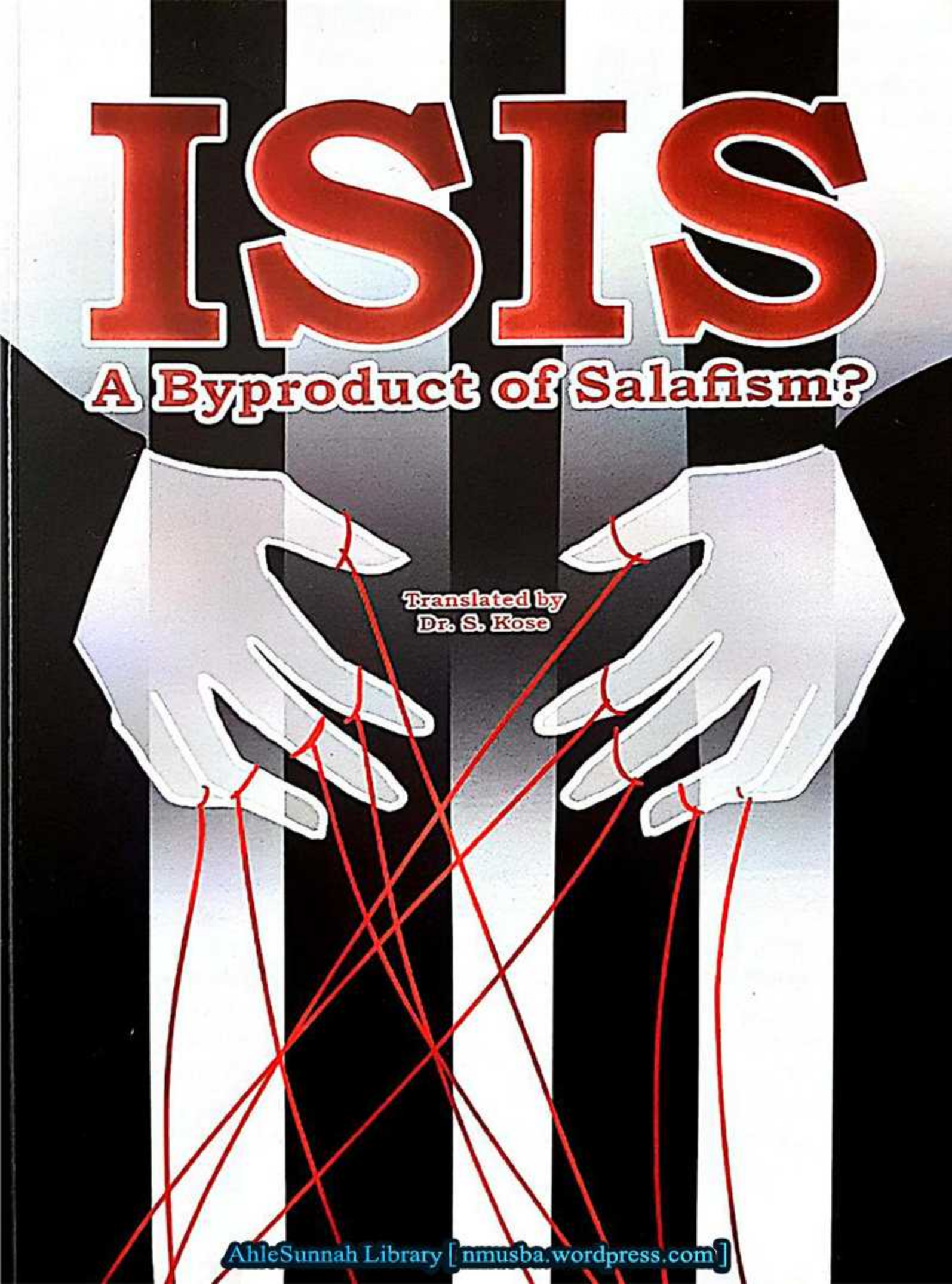
ISIS

A Byproduct of Salafism?



Translated by
Dr. S. Kose

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هل داعش نبتة سلفية؟

ISIS

A Byproduct of Salafism?

Interviews with
Dr. Adil Al-Kalbani
Dr. Haatim Al-Ouuni

Translated by
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2017

Table of Contents

Prerequisites **4**

Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab (1703 – 22 June 1792) 4

Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765) 4

Taqiyyuddeen Ahmad bin Taymiyyah (d. 26 September 1328) 5

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350) 6

Juhayman al-'Utaybi (ca. 1935-1980) 7

Hamad bin Atiq (1812/3-1884) 7

Salafism 8

Kafir 8

Takfir 9

Al-wala' wa-l-bara' 9

Al-Durar Al-Saniyya Fi Al-Ajwiba Al-Najdiyya (The Precious Pearls for Najdi Answers) 10

Sharia 10

Introduction **12**

Prominent Saudi Scholars are confessing the link between ISIS and *Salafism* ***14***

Dr. Adil Al-Kilbaani -Interview 14

Dr. Haatim Al-Ouuni - Interview 16

Conclusion **49**

Prerequisites

The text that follows assumes that the reader is familiar with the contemporary *Salafi* movement and the movement of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab. For those who are not, it is recommended that you review the following short biographies and terminologies before reading the text.

Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab (1703 – 22 June 1792)[1]

Ibn Abdulwahhab was a religious leader in central Arabia from *Najd* who founded the movement now called Wahhabism. He rejected many common Muslim practices because he regarded them to be either a religious innovation (*bid'ah*) or polytheism (*shirk*).

Ibn Abdulwahhab's pact with Muhammad bin Saud helped to establish the Emirate of *Diriyah*, the first Saudi state. Thus began a dynastic alliance and power-sharing arrangement between the two families which continues even today in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The 'Al ash-Sheikh', Saudi Arabia's leading religious family, are the descendants of Ibn Abdulwahhab, and have historically led the scholars in the Saudi state, dominating the state's clerical institutions.

Muhammad bin Saud (d. 1765) [2]

He is also known as Ibn Saud and was the emir of *Diriyah* and is considered the founder of the first Saudi State and

1 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Abd_al-Wahhab

2 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_bin_Saud

the Saud dynasty, which are technically named for his father – Saud ibn Muhammad ibn Muqrin (died 1725). Ibn Saud's family (then known as the Al Muqrin) traced its descent from the tribes of Banu Audi and Hanifa but despite popular misconceptions, Muhammad ibn Saud was neither a nomadic Bedouin nor was he a tribal leader. Rather, he was the chief (*emir*) of an agricultural settlement near modern-day Riyadh, called *Diriyah*. Furthermore, he was a competent and ambitious desert warrior.

Taqiyyuddeen Ahmad bin Taymiyyah (d. 26 September 1328)[3]

He is known as Ibn Taymiyyah for short. He was a controversial medieval Sunni Muslim theologian, jurisconsult, logician, and reformer. A member of the Hanbali school of jurisprudence founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah was also a member of the *Qadiriyya* Sufi order founded by the twelfth-century mystic and saint Abdul-Qadir Gilani. A polarizing figure in his own lifetime, Ibn Taymiyyah's contentious and iconoclastic views on such widely accepted Sunni doctrines of the medieval period such as the intercession of pious people and the veneration of their tombs made him very unpopular with the vast majority of the orthodox religious scholars of the time, under whose orders he was imprisoned several times during his life.

Often viewed as a minority figure in his own time period and in the centuries that followed, Ibn Taymiyyah has become one of the most influential medieval writers of the present

3 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Taymiyyah

day. His particular interpretations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and his rejection of some aspects of classical Islamic traditions are believed by some scholars to have had considerable influence on contemporary Wahhabism, *Salafism*, and *Jihadism*. Indeed, particular aspects of his teachings had a profound influence on Muhammad bin Abadulwahhab, the founder of a movement in Saudi Arabia that would later come to be known as Wahhabism.

Ibn Taymiyyah did not marry. Living during the troubled times of the Mongol invasions, Ibn Taymiyyah was forced to leave his native *Harran* at the age of six, in order to seek refuge with his father and three brothers in Damascus.

He has influenced the *Salafi (Wahabbi)* movement through his writings on creed and politics, and through *Salafis*' glorification of Ibn Taymiyya as a fierce opponent of any perceived heresy. Some *Salafis* decipher the present fighting in the Muslim world as a reinstatement of bloodshed that occurred during Ibn Taymiyya's era, when Mongol armies captured and threatened Muslim territory in the Middle East. ISIS invokes Ibn Taymiyya frequently to claim his scholarly authority for its highly exclusivist Sunni identity and its embrace of jihad[4].

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350)[5]

He is a major student of Ibn Taymiyya and an accomplished scholar in his own right. Ibn Qayyim is also one of the me-

4 With some modifications from http://tif.ssrc.org/2015/04/20/the-islamic-states-intellectual-genealogy/

5 With some modifications from http://tif.ssrc.org/2015/04/20/the-islamic-states-intellectual-genealogy/

dieval authorities invoked most by ISIS. The *jihadist* group cites Ibn Qayyim when discussing diverse topics but especially in two areas, scriptural interpretation and legal rulings. For example, ISIS quotes at length from Ibn al-Qayyim in discussing the issue of *mubahala*—a session in which two sides invoke God's curse upon whomever is in the wrong (see: Dabiq, issue , pp. 21-22).

Juhayman al-'Utaybi (ca. 1935-1980)[6]

He is famous for leading the two-week siege of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979. Al-'Utaybi was a leader of *al-Jama'a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba* (The *Salafi* Society for Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong), a *Salafi* group that began in Medina in the mid-1960s. Initially supported by senior Saudi scholars, the group's increasingly uncompromising stances and iconoclastic worship practices eventually generated conflict with the scholarly establishment.

In the late 1970s, al-'Utaybi's faction of the Society rejected the Saudi state and came to believe that one of its own members was the Mahdi. This belief inspired its uprising in Mecca. Al-'Utaybi's ideas influenced al-Maqdisi, making al-'Utaybi an indirect influence of ISIS.

Hamad bin Atiq (1812/3-1884)[7]

This scholar from present-day Saudi Arabia epitomized a school of thought within nineteenth-century Wahhabism

6 With some modifications from http://tif.ssrc.org/2015/04/20/the-islamic-states-intellectual-genealogy/

7 With some modifications from http://tif.ssrc.org/2015/04/20/the-islamic-states-intellectual-genealogy/

that rejected any friendly interaction between those considered to be true Muslims and outsiders. This exclusive conception of Muslim identity influenced the thought of al-'Utaybi and al-Maqdisi and, through them, the thought and actions of ISIS.

Salafism[8]

The *Salafi* movement or *Salafist* movement or *Salafism* is an ultra-conservative reform branch or movement within Sunni Islam that developed in Arabia in the first half of the 18th century. It advocated a return to the traditions of the "devout ancestors" (the *salaf*).

The majority of the world's *Salafis* are from Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia. A full 46.87% of Qataris and 44.8% of Emiratis are *Salafis*, while 5.7% of Bahrainis are *Salafis* and 2.17% of Kuwaitis are Salafis.

Only 22.9% of Saudis are *Salafis* thus making them the "dominant minority" in Saudi Arabia. There are 4 million Saudi *Salafis* who are concentrated in *Najd*. The terms '*Salafi*' and '*Wahhabi*" are used interchangeably but some *Salafi's* consider the term '*Wahhabi*" to be derogatory.

Kafir[9]

Kafir (plural: *kuffar*; feminine: *kafirah*) is an Arabic term meaning "unbeliever", or "disbeliever". The term describes a

8 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi_movement

9 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafir

person who rejects or disbelieves in God and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and denies the dominion and authority of God or otherwise does not heed the beliefs held in Islam. It is used as a derogatory term. Unbelief is called *kufr*. *Kafir* is sometimes used interchangeably with *mushrik* (polytheist), another type of religious wrongdoer mentioned frequently in the Qur'an and Islamic works. The practice of declaring another self-professed Muslim a *kafir* is known as *takfir*.

Takfir[10]

In Islamic law, *takfir* refers to the practice of excommunication or one Muslim declaring another Muslim as *kafir* (non-believer). An erroneous or ill-founded *takfir* accusation is a major sin and a forbidden act.

Al-wala' wa-l-bara'[11]

It is an Arabic term meaning "loyalty and disavowal". It signifies loving and hating for the sake of Allah. *Al-wala' wa-l-bara'* is referred to as holding fast to all that is pleasing to Allah, and withdrawing from and opposing all that is displeasing to Allah. Loving for the sake of Allah means to love Allah and to show loyalty to Him by following His Law. It means to love all that is good and permissible in the Qur'an and Sunnah. This type of love requires one to defend Allah's religion and to preserve it. It is to love those who are obedient to Allah and to defend and assist them. Hating for

10 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Takfir

11 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Wala%27_Wal_Bara%27

the sake of Allah signifies showing anger towards those who oppose Allah, His Messenger, His religion.

Al-Durar Al-Saniyya Fi Al-Ajwiba Al-Najdiyya (The Precious Pearls for Najdi Answers)

A 16 volume book (in Arabic) written by a number of scholars and edited by Abdul-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Qaasim Al-Najdi. Often, it is referred to as *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. It is the source for the creed (*aqida*) and the jurisprudence (*fiqh*) of Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab as well as his followers. The book also contains historical documents such as letters written by the Shaykh himself to his friends and foes alike.

Sharia[12]

Sharia, *Sharia* law, or Islamic law is the religious law forming part of the Islamic tradition. It is derived from the religious precepts of Islam, particularly from the Qur'an and Hadith. In Arabic, the term '*sharia*' refers to God's immutable divine law and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) refers to its human scholarly interpretations.

The traditional theory of Islamic jurisprudence recognizes four sources of *sharia*: the Qur'an, sunnah (authentic hadith), *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), and *ijma* (juridical consensus). Different legal schools—of which the most prominent are Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali —developed methodologies for deriving sharia rulings from scriptural sources using a process known as *ijtihad*. Traditional jurisprudence distinguishes two principal branches of law, '*ibadaat* (ritu-

12 With some modifications from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia

als) and *mu'aamalat* (social relations), which together comprise a wide range of topics. Its rulings assign actions to one of five categories: mandatory, recommended, permissible, disliked, and prohibited.

Introduction

In the Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

Whether we like it or not, the savage terrorist group ISIS and its sisters, such as *Al-Qaeda,* associate themselves with Islam. The heinous acts of terrorism that they perpetrate are supposedly done in the name of Islam. We can sit down and claim all day long that the savagery, bloodshed, injustice, wrongdoing and all other inhumane acts they commit not only have nothing to do with Islam but are also condemned in Islam yet the fact remains is that the youth who are the lifeline of these organizations are mostly the children of Muslims.

If we want to put an end to losing our children to these terrorist organizations, we must be honest with ourselves and ask the question: Where have we gone wrong? What ideology among Muslims is responsible for resulting in a generation that is so violent, careless, mindless and savage?

It turns out that two of the renowned Saudi Scholars have already responded to this question and I wanted to share their answers with the English speaking reader. It is refreshing to see that the Saudi Scholars are openly talking about this; for the realization of the problem can be half of the solution.

May Allah make this little effort a means by which the truth can be understood. Ameen!

All praise is due to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammed, upon his Family, his Com-

panions and upon those who follow in their footsteps until the day of judgment. Ameen!

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2017

Prominent Saudi Scholars are confessing the link between ISIS and *Salafism*

In this section, we will quote from two of the Saudi Scholars who admit that ISIS is a byproduct of *Salafism* and its ideology.

Dr. Adil Al-Kalbani[13] *-Interview*

The following is a partial transcript of an interview[14] with Al-Kilbaani:

Journalist: You said that ISIS is a byproduct of *Salafism*?

Al-Kilbaani: Indeed.

Journalist: How so?

Al-Kalbani: Look! Some of our brothers claim that ISIS was established by various intelligence organizations. In fact, intelligence services do not establish new ideologies but they take advantage of existing [suitable] ones. The ideology of ISIS is the ideology of *Salafism*[15]. It is not the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Qutbism*[16], Sufism nor of the *Asha'arism*. Rather, ISIS justifies its way or methodology using our own books (*Salafism*). That is why you will find that

13 Dr. Al-Kalbani was one of the Imams of Masjid Al-Haram in Mecca.

14 https://youtu.be/Y0ygQqlwY8c

15 The *Salafi* preacher Adnaan Al-Arur's praise of ISIS is confirming Al-Kilbaani's view. Al-Arur said: "Ninety nine percent of our brothers in ISIS are believers, Muslims, sincere people (*mukhlisoon*), truthful people (*saadiqoon*), be it inside or outside Syria, and they are there to defend [Islam]." (The video is available on https://twitter.com/al3uny)

16 In reference to the Egyptian author Sayyid Qutob.

most of our [*Salafi*] brothers who criticize ISIS, only criticize their application, not their ideology. We must refute their ideology as well. Take for example the case of an apostate. We must make it clear who an apostate is, and who has the right to judge and apply the law etc. Once again, most of us criticize their savage ways of killing and bloodshed because it ruins our reputation in front of the other nations. What this means is that if they applied their ideology in a way that did not cause embarrassment to us as Muslims, we would be at ease with ISIS. Yes, once again, ISIS is a byproduct of *Salafi* teachings. It is true that there may be [foreign] intelligent services who exploit them pave the way for them, support them with weaponry and made it easy for them to become who they are now. But they exploit what exists in our [*Salafi*]books in print or circulation today. There are those amongst us who adapted these ways that are present in our books but they don't come out and always express it openly. In fact, because of some specific fatwas, we have seen some journalists assassinated. These were in fact *Salafi* fatwas and no other.

Dr. Haatim[17] *Al-Ouuni*[18] *- Interview*

This is the partial transcript of the program called *liqaa al-jumu'ah* where Dr. Al-Ouuni gave the following interview after an article on the very subject was published in *Al-Hayah*:

Journalist: You said in "*Al-Hayah*":

> "The denial of the relationship of an ill-founded *takfir* with *Salafism* (of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*), not the *Salafism* of the righteous ancestors, is what keeps this thought alive among us, threatening us at every moment, destroying minds and dragging our children into the hell of extremism and radicalism. This gives us the opportunity to respond to their ideology as soon as possible. When they fancy the weakness of the security forces, to turn on the homeland and the citizens, as they did in Iraq and Syria, which betrayal of the nation and the homeland is greater than covering up such a thought by denying that it exists especially at such a dangerous times as today?"

Could you tell me more about this?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: The idea of extremism, in fact, existed in our Islamic history. All of us know about the *Kharijites* who fought Othmaan (ra) and then Ali (ra) and killed him. They weakened the Muslim Ummah by causing division. Extremism is not just found in our religion but also in others such as Christianity and Judaism. Certain people, for various reasons, are attracted to extremism. But we are talking about

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17 An academic at Umm Al-Qura University, a former member of the *Shura* Council.

18 https://youtu.be/FPG0inv45-8

the extremism that shed a lot of blood all over the Muslim world. In particular, we are talking about ISIS and what is referred to as other *jihadist* movements in places such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, Algeria and Tunisia. Everyone agrees that these groups or organizations are extremists. But the questions we must ask ourselves is: What is their ideology built upon?

You will find that, irrespective of their name or locality, they associate themselves with *Salafism* [and rely on the *Salafi* sources]. Specifically, you will find that they rely upon the methodology of the *Najdi* Movement taken from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. This is not a secret at all. You will find in their documents, books or publications that they rely upon the clear statements from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* in declaring people disbelievers (*takfir*) or excommunicating them and permitting themselves to kill those people. Al-Maqdisi and others who have been writing on the subject for 20 years all adopted the methodology of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.

Journalist: Those who disagree with you do so from two points of view. First, they say that what you are claiming is incorrect. That the *jihadist* groups such as *Al-Qaida*, ISIS and other have adapted the methodology of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* needs evidence. Prove to us that their methodology is indeed taken from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Of course, we can provide some proof and examples. First we need to talk about their link to *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* and the erroneous or ill-founded *takfir* that is found in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Then, if you wish, we can talk

about the issues related to *takfir*. First, the name "*Salfi jihaidst* groups" is clearly indicating that these people are not related to Sufism or *As'aris* or others but they are related to *Salafism*. They claim that they follow what is in the Qur'an and Sunnah, the contemporary *Salafi* scholars, as well as those from the past. If you look at the texts ISIS and other *jihadist* groups use, and into the content they teach, you will find them to be the same as what the *Najdi* Movement uses such as *Kitaab Al-Tawheed* which by the way does not contain this *takfeer*- it came in other books. If you see their propaganda vehicles, you will find the same "10 nullifiers of Islam (*nawaaqid al-Islaam al-ashara*)" [as found in the *Najdi* Movement.].

More importantly, I say to those who disagree with me: "What is your view of the *takfir* that ISIS adapted?" What is your view of *takfir al-Haakimiyya, al-wala' wa-l-bara'* with ignorance not being an acceptable excuse (for someone)? You will find that their answers match exactly those of ISIS and other terrorist organizations. Aren't all of these types of *takfir* present in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*? How can anyone deny the link between ISIS and it?

Journalist: What I am understanding from you is that ISIS is only executing what is in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* and what is adapted and accepted by all [*Salafi*] scholars of today?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: It's not true that all scholars accept it.

Journalist: You said:" There are scholars who conceal their agreement with the methodology of ISIS even if they differ in

terms of political affiliation."

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Correct. I am not saying that all the Saudi scholars are in agreement with ISIS. Some may agree with them in certain areas but disagree in other areas. When we came back to *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* which contains the *takfir* that ISIS adopted, we find that there is a lack of will in accepting the mistakes in *Al-Durar Al-Thaniyya*.

Journalist: Let me make sure I am understanding you correctly. Are you saying that ISIS is applying what these scholars concluded but they were unable to apply or the principles and the rules are there but the understanding of ISIS is the extreme one?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: In fact, about seven years ago I was asked concerning the *takfir* found in the History of Ibn Bishr and the History of Ibn Ghannaam and its relation to the movement of Al-Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab (may Allah have mercy on him). I answered, long before ISIS and others [appeared] that in the movement of Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab there is good and there are also scientific mistakes (*akhtaa i'lmiyya*) in *takfir*.

Journalist: What do we say then? Do we say that these principles [of the *Najdi* Movement] are correct but ISIS applies them incorrectly?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No no. That is why I mentioned one of my old fatwas a little while ago. In the methodology and history of the Najdi movement, you will find scientific mistakes and

sometimes the concepts are correct but the applications are wrong. Both of them are found in the reports of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.

Journalist: Let me give you an example. Al-Shaykh Ibraheem Al-Sakran says: "He who compares the killing of extremist to the fight of best of the mujahids under Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab with the grave worshipper is like the one who compares the battles of Hajjaj bin Yusuf to fighting of Abu Bakr Al-Siddeeq with the apostates." He is saying the rules are correct but the application [by ISIS] is wrong.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. I consider this statement condemnations. He called them grave worshipers and declared them disbelievers even though they utter the two testimonies of faith (*shahadatayn*). This is the *takfir* itself. This is one of the examples of ill-founded *takfir*. How can one call these people *kafirs* when they utter the two testimonies of faith, pray five times a day, pay *zakah* and perform Hajj but they make a mistake as to their relationship with the person in the grave. If you ask them: Is the person in this grave a god? They will says: "I seek refuge with Allah. There is no god but He. I don't worship this person at all. I hold him in high regard as he is a friend of God." No doubt that this is wrong and a rejected practice. It should be corrected.

Journalist: It does not constitute shirk?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: It does not make the individual practicing it a disbeliever until it is made clear to him that these actions may lead to shirk.

Journalist: Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab does not declare an individual *kafir*. He says in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*: "An individual is not declared a *kafir* until the Word of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (pbuh) reaches him and he no longer has an excuse (of ignorance)."

Dr. Al-Ouuni: If you want to discuss...

Journalist: I just want to understand.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: These issues have to be studied in depth. I can quote statements [from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*] which are exactly the opposite of what you have quoted. Do you want me to?

Journalist: Please do!

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Muhammed bin Abdulwahhaab says..."Whoever knows that the *tawheed* that we showed people is the religion of Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) and acknowledges that these beliefs in the trees and stones and people which is the religion of the majority of the people which is the shirk that Allah (sw) and His Messenger (pbuh) forbade people from committing..."

He declared in this text majority of the people *mushriks* just because they don't agree with the "*tawheed*" he came up with.

There are other texts which I can read to you if you like where the children and the grandchildren of the Shaykh [Ibn

Abdulwahhab] declare that whoever does these things (e.g., pray at a grave), he is neither *kafir* nor Muslim. He is treated as if he is a *kafir* in this world in that he should be killed, his wealth constitutes a booty, he does not inherit nor is he inherited etc. In the hereafter, he is treated as people of *fitrah*. I have other texts that I can share (as well).

Journalist: If you have something clearer, please share.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: For example, Al-Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahaab said in declaring his teachers disbelievers in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*:

> "I am informing you of myself. By Allah, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship, I studied Islam to the point that those who knew me were convinced that I was knowledgeable but at that time I did not even know the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" nor did I know the religion of Islam before this blessing that Allah bestowed upon me.
>
> Such were my teachers [in that none of them knew the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" nor did they know the religion of Islam.] Whoever claims from among the Scholars of the world [of Islam] that he knew the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" or that he knew the meaning of Islam before this time or claims that any of his teachers knew them, he is lying and uttering falsehood. He is also misleading people. He is praising himself with that which he does not have."

Then he mentions his supporting evidence for the above

claim.

He acknowledges that he did not even know the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" nor did he know Islam before he adapted his methodology later in life. He declared the majority of the Muslims of various localities such as *Hijaaz*, Yemen, Levant and Egypt to be disbelievers. Did the message go to these Muslims [and they refused it] so that he could declare them disbelievers?

Journalist: This is all recorded in [*Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*?]

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, of course, this statement I just read to you where he declared his teachers disbelievers not knowing the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" or the meaning of Islam.

Journalist: There may be possibilities [that you misunderstand the texts]...

Dr. Al-Ouuni: There are many texts where the majority of people are declared to be disbelievers. May Allah protect you. He says:

> "You knew that all those who have knowledge acknowledged that what we explained to the people as *tawheed* is the very *tawheed* that Allah (sw) sent His Messengers (pbut) with."

There is a problem here. Every *ijtihad* that Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab came up with, he claims to be the very thing that Prophet (pbuh) brought.

He says:

> "The belief of the majority of the people today is the shirk that Allah (sw) says that he will forbid the Paradise for them and their abode will be the Hellfire."

He also says that:

> "What existed [in terms of practice] in Mecca and Medina, and exists in Egypt, Levant and other places until now of various forms of shirk is the *kufr* that makes their blood *halal*, their wealth booty, and causes them to stay in Hell forever. Whoever does not enter into this religion[19], practice it, support its adherents, fight its enemies, he is for us a disbeliever in Allah and the last day and it is obligatory on the Caliph and the Muslims to fight him until he repents and enters into this religion."

Journalist: Ok. The Shaykhs such as Ibn Uthaymeen, Ibn Baaz and his Excellence the Mufti Aal-Alshaykh are the followers of this school [of Ibn Abdulwahhab.] They don't talk about the *takfir* in the way that you are quoting from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Quite to the contrary, they are among the first people who opposed *Al-Qaida* and said that they went too far in declaring people disbelievers.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Before I answer your question, I propose a methodology for this dialog. Imam Abdullah bin Mubarek was debating with some jurists of Kufa (or *Ahl Al-Ra'y*, school of Abu Hanifa) regarding the *nabeez* and wheter or not it is haram. He was asked: "Would you say that jurists

19 Islam as understood and preached by Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab. [Tr.]

such as Ibrahim Al-Nakhaai and the like made an intoxicant halal?" He said to them: "Do you say that Ataa, Taawoos and others were declaring *riba al-fadl halal*? or would you say that Abdullah bin Abbas (ra), who declared *nikaah al-mut'ah* permissible, used to make adultery *halal*?" Then he ended the discussion with a beautiful statement saying: "When we are engaged in a scientific discussion, leave out the names of people."

If indeed Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab made mistakes, it is only natural that the others [such as you mentioned above] can also make mistakes.

Al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) used to disagree with the *Salafi* view on what is called the man-made laws in that as long as one does not take those laws as equals with or better than the laws of Allah, one does not become a disbeliever.

Journalist: Just the application of the man-made laws [does not make one a disbeliever?]

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No, just the application, however many, does not necessitate that one becomes a disbeliever.

Journalist: However the great scholars from the family of Al-Shaykh [Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab] including the grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia do not condone any of the *takfir* you are speaking of that's from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. The grand Mufti even declared that organizations such as ISIS are the product of the Muslim Brotherhood and its idea of

al-hakimiyya[20].

Dr. Al-Ouuni: *Al-hakimiyya* is one of the methods by which [the *Salafi*] book *Al-Durara Al-Saniyya* declares Muslims as disbelievers. Attributing the *takfir* by *al-hakimiyya* to only Hasan Al-Banna or Sayyid Qotob, who by the way did promote this idea, [is simply wrong.] *Takfir* by al-*hakimiyya* is, only one of the principles that *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* employs to declare people *kafirs*. Why confuse people in this why?

I have seen futile attempts to deny the link of ISIS with *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Others say they are (part of) the Muslim Brotherhood. Yet ISIS and its peers all declare the Muslim Brotherhood as hypocrites and say that they are more harmful to them than the secularists.

Journalist: But ISIS agrees with Sayyid Qotob as far as *al-hakimiyya* is concerned.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes. It is also in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Even now, you see publications and articles in Saudi Arabia that declare anyone, who applies man-made laws, a disbeliever.

Journalist: The *takfir* that you are talking about, what is its origin? Is it really from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*, from the methodology of Al-Shaykh Ibn Abdulwahhab, Ibn Taymiyya or from the *Salaf* themselves that you are opposing?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: I seek refuge with Allah that I oppose the way of [true] *Salaf*. Is there a Muslim that opposes the way of

20 Declaring anyone, who rules by other than the laws of Allah, disbeliever.

Salaf? How is that possible? The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) praised them. All of the Sunni groups who respect the righteous predecessors do not oppose their ways even if they don't call themselves *Salafi*.

Secondly, *takfir* is not new. Imaam Al-Ghazali (d. 505) states in his book called *Al-Iqtisaad* that all the Islamic groups have problems with *takfir*.

Journalist: If it is the case that *takfir* is common then...

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Then, why are we concentrating on *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*? This is because we are suffering at the moment from the consequences of the teaching of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.

Journalist: Sufyaan bin Uyayna and Yazeed bin Haroon for example said whosoever says that the Qur'an is created is *kafir*. Whoever does not declare such a person *kafir* is a *kafir* himself. Whoever has doubts in such a person being a *kafir* is a *kafir*. Qaadi Iyad Al-Maaliki...Calling people kafirs existed in our history. Why single out *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: First, none of the people or groups you cited make shedding the blood of the Muslims halal as did ISIS on the basis of what is in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Did the Qaadi Iyaad or the Malikis declare it halal to shed Muslim blood as ISIS did? Muslim blood has never been shed in this way by any other Muslim group in all of history as ISIS is shedding blood based on the principles they use from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.

Furthermore, let's come back to what goes on in our day. Does ISIS declare Muslims [who do not agree with them] *kafirs* based on what Qaadi Iyaad said or based on what is in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*? [The answer is based on *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*.]Therefore, the issue is not whether or not *takfir* existed in the past. It did exist in every group. Some may have done it more than others. But the real issue is today who is calling Muslims *kafir* and permitting the shedding of the Muslim blood?

Journalist: If we open *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya,* we will surely find teaching of *tawheed* and perhaps clear statements (*muhkam*) against *takfir*. Why do we cling to the ambiguous (*mutashabih*) statements like you quoted a little while ago? Why don't we refer back to the clear statements (*muhkam*) in order to understand the ambiguous (*mutashabih*) statements properly?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: First, to try to explain the matter by dividing the statements into clear (*muhkam*) and ambiguous (*mutashabih*) is a wishful thinking. If a statement is clear cut promoting the *takfir* of Muslims then that is the end. What you attempted to classify as ambiguous is not one or two examples. My brother, I brought here with me 40 pages [of *takfir*].

Journalist: 40 pages?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, all of these 40 pages are from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. These are but a small selection of examples. By Allah, there are much more in the book. I plead with

my brothers to read only the first seventy pages of the first volume from *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. As long as one has the correct understanding, one will notice immediately the mistakes therein. Let my brother read half or even the forth of the book of *Taarikh Ibn Bishr* or *Taarikh Ibn Mughannam*, they will discover clear takfir immediately. You will see them declaring whole villages to be apostates!

Journalist: These are historical events and we can classify them as mistakes. But they are not condoned are they are not part of the principle of the movement.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. The *takfir* is part and partial of the foundation of the movement. My brother, let's for the moment leave aside *Al-Duarar Al-Saniya* and look at the Salfism. Today, *takfir* by *Al-hakimiyya* and *takfir* by *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* exists. You see articles and scientific papers from Saudi Universities coming out affirming it. People are called grave worshipers and declared *mushriks*. No doubt they are ignorant, mistaken and should stop the practice but calling them *mushrisk* is going too far.

Two years ago, a book was published clearly calling *Ash'aris kuffar*. They use statements of Abdullah bin Abdurrahman and others from *Al-Duarar Al-Saniyya* declaring Ash'aris kafir. This exists today and it is not just a piece of history. That is why I told you there is a difference between what existed of *takfir* historically and what exists and practiced today. We are not discussing or debating the history today rather we are discussing the practice that is threatening us this very day.

Journalist: OK. I have a question for you. Al-Juhayman, perpetrators of 9/11 and ISIS, all of these sprang from the same source?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: More or less yes. As far as takfir is concerned, they all rely on what is in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. These three examples you gave fall under the *Salafi jihadist* movement and what is common between them is they adapted the understanding of *Salafism* as found in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. All you have to do is look at their book [and compare it with what is in *Al-Durar al_Saniyya*]. Their books are available out there.

Journalist: With respect to the 10 nullifiers of Islam (*nawqaqis al-Islam al-ashara*) of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab (may Allah have mercy on him), is he the one who came up with them? No other scholar before him mentioned them?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. Not all of them in the way that they are expressed, understood, interpreted and applied. Some of them are correct and came before and others are wrong.

Journalist: For example?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: There are number of them. For example, doubting the disbelief of a disbeliever (*shakk fi kufri kaafir*). If this is regarding the disbelief of a polytheist or a true *kafir*, no one will disagree with that.

For example one who nullifies the two testimonies of faith,

he is a true *kafir*... Like the polytheists of Mecca who used to say, "You have no partner except the one whom you took as partner." First part is *tawheed* but they nullified it with the second part of their statement. But they went beyond this and called anyone *kafir* who did not agree with them declaring a person *kafir*.

Another example has to do with *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*. The Egyptian army that entered *Diriyah* for them were *kafirs*. And those that helped the Egyptian army was for them *kafir*. Whoever doubted that helpers of the Egyptian army was *kafir* was declared *kafir*.

Journalist: Then, the disagreement between you and them is in the fundamentals and principles

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Indeed, we disagree on the fundamentals. . For example, with regards to the *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* where a person helps disbelievers against Muslims, if it is not out of being pleased with the religion of the disbelievers and being hateful of Islam, even though it is one of the biggest crimes yet it does not take one out of the circle of Islam.

[The same goes with *al-hakimiyya* where someone rules with the man-made laws but does not uphold those above the laws of Allah nor does he look down upon the laws of Allah, it is a sin but does not take one out of the circle of Islam.] I have written a book on this subject published in the year 1426 *hijri*.

Journalist: I don't want to talk about what happens be-

tween the different factions fighting in Syria. I want to come back here [Saudi Arabia]. Does the *takfir* you talked about [and disprove of] exist here in Saudi Arabia?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes it does.

Journalist: It does?!

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, it does in its clearest form. The difference is that the people who adapted this idea of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia keep quiet due to political and other reasons. We do not have access to see what is in the hearts of people but our evidence is the books they currently publish and edit right here in Saudi Arabia. They declare people *kafir* falsely [just as it is done in *Al-Durar Al-Saniiay* and by ISIS].

Journalist: What do you say to those who would says: "O my brother, I did not come up with *takfir* myself. Allah (sw) calls people *kafir* and so does His Messenger"?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Here one has to begin a deep discussion to see if indeed their *takfir* is the same as what Allah (sw) and His Messenger did or do they incorrectly attribute their ill-founded *takfir* to Allah and His Messenger? Before we go into a detailed analysis, let our brother acknowledge that the way he declares people *kafir* is the way that ISIS declares people *kafir.* The difference is that ISIS is able to apply *takfir* in the field but our brother here hasn't had the chance to.

Journalist: Once again, the brother will say that this is the religion of Allah who divided people into believers and kafirs.

It is not my concoction. The rules of the Qur'an and the laws of Allah must be applied.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No Muslim has a problem with this statement. Do you know any Muslim on the face of the earth who denies that there are people who are *kafirs*? Doe such Muslims exist? For example, Al-Azhar disagrees with the *Salafism* of Saudi Arabia. Do Azhar graduates say that there is nothing called kafir? The issue is not whether or not there are *kafirs* in the world. Rather, the issue is that these people declare Muslims *kafirs* and wrongfully attribute it to Allah and His Messenger or the Qur'an and Sunnah. Even the original Kharijites, who declared Ali (ra) *kafir*, used to say we only call *kafir* those that Allah and His Messenger call *kafir*. They used to accuse our righteous predecessors (Companions, Followers and Successors) as having altered or betrayed the religion. They would see themselves as true Muslims and look down upon their contenders including the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh)... (God Forbid!)

Journalist: Are the people of ISIS *Kharijites*? Do they display the characteristics of *Kharijites*? Some people went further and a certain shaykh is said to have declared them *kafirs*. What do you say?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: As far as the name *Kharijites* is concerned, it did not came as is in the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh). As for the hadith that "*Kharijites* are the dogs of the people of the Hellfire", the authentic version is such that the narrator mentioned the name *Kharijites* and that he said that the Prophet (pbuh) said about people who fit the description of

Kharijites that they are the dogs of the people of Hellfire. Among the characteristics of these people is:

- extremism
- bloodshed: They leave the disbelievers alone but they kill the polytheists.
- vanity, pride and ostentation
- effective speech: They quote the words of the best of the creation but leave Islam as the arrow leaves the pray (animal).

What we know about *Kharijites*, who declared Ali (ra) *kafirs*, only declared believers *kafirs* using the *al-hakimiyya* principle. Calling people disbelievers due to a sin did not exist among the Kharijites that were contemporaries to Ali (ra). By the way, there is good research by brother Yaasir Al-Matraafi where he came up with very useful conclusions.

Journalist: It is the history of the development of *Kaharijite* ideology?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes. I can try to summarize his research quickly as follows. It is not only the people of ISIS that deserve to be referred to as *Kahirijites* about whom the Propheet (pbuh) warned us but also the extremist Shiite groups who kill Al-Hawiyya. *Kharijites* are not limited to the people of Sunnah, there are extreme Shiite groups who are also *Kharijites.* In general, any group who allows themselves or consider it permissible to shed the Muslim blood based on ill-founded *takfir* with whatever evidence they use deserves to be called *Kharijite*, terrorist (*tafjeeri*), *Wahhabi*, criminal or any other blameworthy description.

Journalist: Are the *Kahrijites* disbelievers (*kuffar*)?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: There is no doubt that calling them *kafir* is one of the biggest mistakes. In fact, I had a follow up on the fatwa of Al-Shaykh Al-Shitri that what he did [when he called them *kafirs*] is a really big mistake. Those *Kharijites* that fought Ali (ra), the Companions had consensus that they are not kafirs. This consensus of the Companions is narrated by many scholars including Imam Al-Tabari, Al-Khattaabi and Ibn Taymiyya. In fact, Ibn Taymiyya says that no one doubts that the Companions did not consider *Kharijites* disbelievers (*kafirs*).

Journalist: Did Al-Shaykh Ibn Baz not called them disbelievers (*kuffar*)?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: It is said that he did but then it is reported that he abstained from it. I would say that even abstention is a mistake as I told you the Companions had unanimous consensus over the fact that they are not disbelievers (*'adam takfeerihim*). In addition, Ali bin Abi Taalib (ra) was asked about them (the *Kharijites*). He was asked if they were *mushriks*? He said: "They ran away from shirk." Look, they declared Ali (ra) and his companions disbelievers and fought them, yet Ali (ra) is saying they are not *mushriks*. [Dr. Al-Ouuni did not complete this narration but at the end Ali (ra) said: " They are who people transgressed against us."]

We are people of moderation. We don't call people disbelievers just because they call us [wrongfully] disbelievers. We talk about them as *Kahrijites*, terrorist etc. but we do not

say that they are disbelievers.

Journalist: We do not called them disbelievers?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. We don't. The statement of the Al-Shitri is a big mistake. He says they are worse disbelievers than the Jews, Christians and idol worshipers. Are they worse than the idol worshipers?

Journalist: What is the Islamic verdict on ISIS? What do you say?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: I would say that they are *Kharijites* considering the shedding of the Muslim blood *halal*. They are criminals (*mujrimoon*). We should fight them and we should save mankind from their torture (*dzolm*) and transgression (*baghy*) and stop their bloodshed. This is what I would say.

Journalist: However they are not disbelievers (kuffar)?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. They are not. Not everyone who has enmity toward us automatically becomes a disbeliever.

Journalist: What is the result of extremism in *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* in these Salafi *jihadists* groups or those before them?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: They start to call people disbelievers who help the enemy openly (i.e., fights in the rank of the enemy) or secretly (i.e., as a spy). With this approach, they declare the majority of the society disbelievers. How? Take for example a civil servant of a country they consider *kafir*. This civil ser-

vant works for the *kafir* state and so in their eyes he is helping it and so he becomes *kafir*. Even those who live there and implicitly are accepting the *kafir* state as such they are helping it and so they are also *kafir*. *Takfir* spreads very quickly to the majority of the citizens of the state.

Journalist: But they consider the immediate or direct helpers of a state disbelievers such as the police.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: They do start with the police but it quickly spreads to the civil servants and the merchants because in their opinion one must have nothing to do (*al-bara'*) with a *kafir* state. No doubt they declare the majority of Muslims *kuffar* under the pretext of *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* without paying any attention to the state of the individual or where his heart lies, and this is against the consensus of the Muslim nation.

Journalist: What is the consensus of Muslims as far as *al-wala' wa-l-bara'* is concerned?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: I give you an example regarding spying against Muslims. Is there anything worse than spying as far as betrayal and the harm to the Muslims is concerned? The hadith of Hatib bin Abi Balt'a is clear and his treatment of the Prophet (pbuh). He was not declared a disbeliever. All of the *madhabs* have consensus that the spy is not a disbeliever. Even Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Al-Qayyim made it clear that a spy, who works for the disbelievers against Muslims, does not become a disbeliever.

The four *madhabs* disagreed on if he should be killed. Imagine, Imam Ahmad abstained from giving verdict that he should be killed. Imam Malik said it is up to the leader of the Muslims. Imam Al-Shafii explicitly stated that he should not be killed but punished.

Journalist: In the books of the *Jihadist Salafi* movements Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya is mentioned often. Does what you say about Al-Durara Al-Saniyya apply to him as well?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No, never, quite the opposite. Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya many a times warns against *takfir*. Let me give you an example regarding worshiping other than Allah according to the usage of *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*. Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya clearly states that those who circumambulate around the graves are not *kafirs*. Rather they are ignorant. Including those who sacrifice for the dead or do *istighatha*, according to Ibn Taymiyya are not *kuffar*. In his response to Bakri, who called Ibn Taymiyya *kafir*, he told Bakri while discussing the topic of *istighaatha* to be exact: "I don't consider you *kafir* because you have doubts and uncertainties that prevent me from declaring you *kafir*."

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya says that even the matters of creed (*aqida*) people can have excuses that prevent them from being declared disbelievers. He even mentions the story of the man [which was told by the Prophet (pbuh) in a hadith where a man among the Children of Israel] who doubted the power of Allah (sw) and ordered his kids to cremate him. The Prophet (pbuh) did not declare this man *kafir* and based on

this hadith Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya used this hadith as evidence that even though he who doubts the power of Allah is a *kafir* yet in this case due to his ignorance he wasn't declared a disbeliever.

Journalist: With regards to Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab, his students his grand kids etc, are they all on the same page with as far as *takfir* is concerned?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab has in general less mistakes in wrongfully declaring the people *kafirs* than those who came after him. This is the truth that needs to be told.

For example, the sons of the shaykh himself have forms of *takfir* that the Shaykh did not have. They call those Muslims *kafir* that did not yet receive the call of their father (*da'wa najdiyya*). This absurdity has never been seen before them in that a person who utters the two testimonies of faith, prays, fasts, performs Hajj and perhaps spends the nights praying - yet, for the sons of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab, they are *kafir* in this world since their dad's call hasn't reached them and so their blood is halal, their wives and kids are to be enslaved and their matter in the hereafter is up to Allah (sw). This was not done by the shaykh himself, but as it is recorded in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya*, his kids and grandkids applied this rule.

Journalist: What about the generation that followed the grandkids of the Shaykh?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, for example, Ibn Atiq with respect to *al-wala' wa-l-bara'*, in his book "*Sabeel Al-Najaat Wa Al-Fakaak*" you find a monstrous use of *takfir* that you will not find anywhere else or anything like it in our Islamic heritage. I challenge anyone to show me that the terribly audacious *takfir* that exists in this book existed anywhere in our Islamic heritage before? [That is an open challenge!] As such there was an evolution in *takfir* from the Shaykh himself down through the generations.

Journalist: When did we start talking about correcting [this ill-founded *takfir*]?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: To be perfectly honest with you, we started talking about the correction when we became a target and at the receiving end of the wrongdoings of this ideology. When the *Salfis* themselves were being threatened by the products of this ideology, they started feeling embarrassed and started questioning where they have gone wrong. For example, Ibn Baz did not agree with the *Salafi* School regarding *takfir* of *Al-Hakimiyya*.

Journalist: Did the process of correction start with Ibn Baaz or before him by likes of Shaykh Muhammed Ibrahim?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: In my opinion it started with Shaykh Abdulaziz bin Baz who disagreed openly regarding some issues with the *Salafi* School. I guarantee you that if Shaykh Abdulaziz bin Baaz were with us today, he would make more corrections in may areas.

In the history of Islam, there have been many that declared people *kafir* throughout their lives but when the time came for them to leave this world they changed their view and declared their innocence from declaring any believer *kafir*.

Two examples of this are two Imams with many follower, namely Abu Al-Hasan Al-Ash'ari and Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya. It is narrated from Al-Dhabai who said that one of the last statements transmitted from Taqiyyuddeen bin Taymiyya is his saying: "Bear witness that I don't declare anyone who makes *wudu* and prays *kafir*."

Journalist: Let us go a little far and talk about politics. Hamza Al-Saalim wrote in Al-Jazeera saying that *Salafism* is on its death bed. He called upon the state to get rid of the *Salafism*. He said that the movement of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab does not play a key role anymore in Saudi Arabia, as it used to be the sole authority and source of glory, but now it has became totally backward in all areas of life especially within the last decades. In your view, what is the right way, getting rid of the movement of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab or making corrections to it as necessary?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: The first thing is that in the methodology of Shaykh Muhammed bin Andulwahhab, there are many things which are correct but there are also things that are wrong.

The second thing is that I want to make a correction that we have been taking its validity for granted incorrectly. The

alliance that took place between Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab and Muhammed bin Saud was an alliance for the victory of Islam not the views of Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab. Shaykh Muhammed bin Abduilwahhab does not represent Islam from a to z. Nor is there any scholar that represent Islam by himself. The sole person who can represent Islam totally is the Prophet (pbuh) himself.

Journalist: Correct.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: The alliance can only be between a state and Islam itself and we must seek the truth from the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet (pbuh) himself. This is the origin of the movement of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab.

Journalist: That is a corrective movement to spread Islam?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, it was a corrective movement to spread Islam but its verdicts and principles are not infallible. They have to constantly be reviewed and if a principle or a rule is found to be incorrect we should abandon it [or correct it].

By Allah, I believe that those who wrote *Al-Durar Al-saniyya* were sincere people and if they were shown the truth and it was proven to them that some of what they believed is false or incorrect they would correct it themselves or abandon what is wrong.

Journalist: The New York times says that the alliance between the state of Saudi Arabia and the two Imams of Muahmmed bin Saud and Muhamed bin Abdulwahhab should

end.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: If it was up to New York Times they would want to end the alliance between Saudi Arabia and Islam itself.

Journalist: I am talking about the alliance between the state and the ideology of Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab that the state takes Islam from this movement.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: The alliance has to be for the victory of Islam. It cannot be otherwise. Can you imagine someone claiming that Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab represents Islam 100% with his verdicts in all possible areas? Let alone the Shaykh himself, has there been anyone [in the history of Islam] who made such a bold claim?

Journalist: No, not like that.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Then we ask the state and the family of the Shaykh to perform the necessary corrections. Once again the alliance can only exist for the sake of Islam, not based upon the personal views or verdicts of an individual.

...

Journalist: In Jedda, ten Arabic countries in addition to the US and Turkey came together against ISIS. One of the ten nullifiers of Islam (*nawaaqid al-Islam*) of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab is 'helping the disbelievers against believers."

You acknowledged that the people of ISIS are Muslims a little while ago.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes, it is so. The Companions had consensus [that the *Kharijites* were Muslims.]

Journalist: Now, when Muslims ask for the help of Americans who are *mushriks*, right?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Right.

Journalist: Then, when we establish alliance with the *mushriks*, the Americans, against the Muslims of ISIS, isn't it one of the nullifiers of Islam according to the 10 nullifiers that Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab came up with?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: It is as you say according to the nullifiers of the Shaykh. That is why during the first Golf war, one of the strongest oppositions of the *Salafis* against the Saudi Arabia was regarding its alliance with US against Saddam. *Salafis* made it clear through their written publications and lessons that what the state did is against one of the nullifiers of Islam of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab.

Journalist: Is it one of the nullifiers of Islam in your opinion?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: No. We need to look at the heart and belief of the Muslim in this alliance. Does he consider the religion of the disbelievers superior to Islam? Is he working with *kuffar* because he detests Islam? We can't just look at the apparent alliance based on mutual worldly benefit and call it a nullifier of Islam. This worldly alliance could be permissible or it could even be obligatory if the Muslims are being threat-

ened.

Journalist: What do you say about the current alliance between the the US and Muslim countries against ISIS?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: I wish the Muslim countries were capable of fighting ISIS and eliminating the threat by themselves so that a foreign country wouldn't be present in this region. I do not have any doubt that the Muslim states would wish that they were capable of settling this matter without any foreign intervention...

To me, finishing of ISIS is a matter that is absolute Islamic necessity. If we are unable to accomplish this necessary task without the help of the enemy or of the west, then it is a must that we seek their help.

Journalist: As the rule says 'what is needed to complete a *wajib* (mandatory) task is also mandatory.'

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Yes.

Journalist: What should be the role of the Council of Senior Scholars in addressing the issues you stated?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: By Allah, I see two paths. One, the scholars should have a serious sincere come back and make corrections in our *Salafi* heritage. Some says that we went overboard and others say that other groups do *takfir* as well which implies that he is acknowledging that there is a problem.

What I want for the scholars is to make it clear as to where the mistakes are. I want them to open the communication with the scholars of the rest of the Muslim worlds so that we have discussions containing constructive criticism instead of only associating with those that are of *Salafi* view. If the scholars only exchange within the *Salafi* circle, they will not know what some of the criticism is out there put forth by the rest of the scholars of the Muslim world.

Journalist: What would you say about out curriculum in the education system?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: To be honest with you I do not know the materials used in the curriculum as I studied long time ago. But I can almost guarantee that there are mistakes that need to be corrected.

Journalist: Like the book of *Al-Tawheed* that is studied?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: Let's talk about the ideas not individuals or specifics.

Journalist: OK. What do you think the state has to do?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: I hope that the state correct the alliance to be between the state and Islam not between the state and the views of Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahhab. The views of the Shaykh contains that which is right and that which is wrong. We must make clear what is right and what is wrong because this is a trust (*amaanah*) that we will be asked in the hereafter.

Secondly, we should be open, transparent, and sincere in our attempt to correct what is wrong in our *Salafi* Sunni heritage especially as it appears in Al-Durar Al-Saniyya.

Journalist: You are a bit harsh in your criticism. For example you said in Al-Hayah of the people who uphold *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* as either ignorant of what is in it, or hypocrite or practices *taqiyya* or draws worldly benefit by keeping quiet. [Some criticized you about these statements]. Don't you think you went overboard?

Journalist: No. I did not. He who defends the ill-founded *takfir* found in *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* can only fall in one of the above three categories. The majority of the scholars [in Saudi Arabia] acknowledge the existence of the mistakes even if they only do it in their private circles. I know this for a fact.

...

Do you know any extremist Sufi group? I don't know of any. If someone does please let me know. Do you know any *jihadi* group based on *Ash'ari aqida* (creed) which considers the bloodshed of Muslims halal? Isn't it the reality that all the terrorist groups associated with Islam considers themselves *Salafis*? It is not just a matter of name but in their publications you will see clear link between them and the *Salafi* ideology. That is why we talk about these *jihadist* terrorist groups who misunderstood the methodology of the *Salaf* incorrectly and are threatening us...

Journalist: What message do you want to send and to whom [as we end the program]?

Dr. Al-Ouuni: By Allah, as I am a student of knowledge, my

message is to the scholars. They have responsibilities and trustees. Part of what they are entrusted with is that they should not treat the heritage of any person or persons, no matter how knowledgeable they are, as sacred and infallible.

The scholars must undertake the task of correction of the mistakes in the *Salafi* ideology with complete clarity and communicate it to the people. If we leave it as is, it will continue to be a roadblock in getting the Muslims united and prevent the progress of Muslims and more importantly it is a roadblock in the way of people understanding pure Islam that was left behind by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

Journalist: Thank you Shaykh Haatim.

Dr. Al-Ouuni: You are very welcome.

Conclusion

The terrorist groups such as ISIS justify their tyranny towards other Muslims and their excommunication based on several principles they borrow from the *Salafi* sources such as *Al-Durar Al-Saniyya* as was explained by Dr Al-Kalbani and Dr. Al-Ouuni in what you have just read.

They excommunicate at three levels, namely at a state level, at the level of a madhab and at an individual level.

At the state level, they declare an entire state *kafir* based on what is called *al-hakimiyya*. That is the state may be secular being ruled with man-made laws instead of Divine laws. Consequently, the ruler of such a state is also declared *kafir* since he is accepting to rule with other than the Islamic law.

Any civil servant of the state from the police force, to the military all the way to the sanitary workers are declared *kafir* since they are working for or helping a *kafir* state. Thus their *takfir* or excommunication spreads to all citizens of the state like a rapid cancer.

Therefore, for ISIS, all the Muslim countries of the world are fair targets as, in their eyes, all of those countries are actually committing shirk and *kufr* and they must be fought until their version of Islam is established. Ironically, they don't consider Saudi Arabia to be an Islamic state either[21].

At the *madhhab* level, they consider the *Ash'aris* to be *kuf-*

21 As the Arabic saying goes: "The black magic of the magician came back to haunt him."

far while *Ash'aris*[22] along with *Maturidis*[23] constitute 95% of mainstream Muslims (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jama'ah*).

At an individual level, they excommunicate or declare anyone who does *tawassul* through the Prophets (pbut) after they pass away, or the righteous people (*awliyaa*) kafir. They consider the above forms of *tawassul*[24] as a form of worship and hence for them it is shirk.

In short, according the Salafies, the majority of the Muslims today are disbelievers either because they live in a *kafir* state, or they are *Ash'aris* or they are grave worshipers. That leaves ISIS and those who pay allegiance to them to be the only "true" Muslims. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'oon*!

Do you see any parallels between what ISIS does and what Al-Shaykh Muhammed bin Abdulwahaab says in declaring his teachers disbelievers in *Al-Durara Al-Saniyya* as follows?

> "I am informing you of myself. By Allah, besides Whom there is none worthy of worship, I studied Islam to the point those who knew me were convinced that I was knowledgeable but at that time I did not even know the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" nor did I know the religion of Islam before this blessing that Allah bestowed upon me. Such were my teachers [in that none of them

22 In reference to the followers of the madhab of Al-Imam Abu Al-Hasan Al-Ashaari which are the Shafiis, the Malikis and traditional Hanbalis.

23 In reference the followers of the madhab of Al-Imam Abu Mansoor Al-Maturidi which are the Hanafis.

24 See our booklet called " The Bid'ah and Perils of Trinity of Tawheed" for a treatise on tawassul by Al-Shaykh Al-Allama Yusif Al-Dajwi Al-Maliki Al-Azhari.

knew meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" nor did they know the religion of Islam.] Whoever claims from among the Scholars of the world [of Islam] that he knew the meaning of "*la ilaha illa Allah*" or he knew the meaning of Islam before this time or claims that any of his teachers knew them, he is lying and uttering falsehood. He is also misleading people. He is praising himself with that which he does not have."

Each one claims to have the monopoly of Islam and the overwhelming majority (*al-sawaad al-a'dzam) of Muslims* is excommunicated even though the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said in no uncertain terms that his Ummah will not unite on misguidance. Meaning, there will be misguided members of the Muslim nation but the Ummah as a whole will not go astray. If you compare this Prophetic pearl with the above claims of Ibn Abdulwahhab, you should know where lies the truth.

All praise is due to Allah and may His peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammed, upon his Family, his Companions and upon those who follow in their footsteps until the day of judgment. Ameen!

About the Booklet

Whether we like it or not, the savage terrorist group ISIS and its sisters, such as Al-Qaeda, associate themselves with Islam. The heinous acts of terrorism that they perpetrate are supposedly done in the name of Islam. We can sit down and claim all day long that the savagery, bloodshed, injustice, wrongdoing and all other inhumane acts they commit not only have nothing to do with Islam but are also condemned in Islam yet the fact remains is that the youth who are the lifeline of these organizations are mostly the children of Muslims.

If we want to put an end to losing our children to these terrorist organizations, we must be honest with ourselves and ask the question: Where have we gone wrong? What ideology among Muslims is responsible for resulting in a generation that is so violent, careless, mindless and savage?

It turns out that two of the renowned Saudi Scholars have already responded to this question and I wanted to share their answers with the English speaking reader. It is refreshing to see that the Saudi Scholars are openly talking about this; for the realization of the problem can be half of the solution.

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