

**THE ISLAMIC STATE IN ITS MULTIPLICITY:  
AN INVESTIGATION ON THE EVOLVING MEANING OF THE  
ISLAMIC STATE FROM THE EARLY SAUDI (18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY) TO  
ISLAMIC STATE**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Master of Arts

in

Liberal Studies

by

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is the analysis of the religious and political mechanisms behind the creation of Islamic State. This thesis is divided in three major sections First, I examine Islamic State's statehood claims in the context of Islamic laws and customs concerning justice, tribal life, laws of war, territorial division, religious beliefs, slavery, and leadership assignment. I then compare the influence of the Salafi and Wahhabi ideologies on Islamic State and Saudi Arabia. Finally, I correlate Islamic State's path toward statehood with the religious and political formation of the Saudi Arabian state. I conclude that Islamic State is a hybrid political entity with both nationalism and an Islamic-inspired ideology as parents. Moreover, I found out that the nationalist and religious hybrid that gave birth to Islamic State is present in the Saudi Arabian state. This leads me to conclude that Saudi Arabia is a manifestation of Islamic State's religious and nationalistic goals.

## Preface

Dear Reader,

The thesis you are about to read is an analysis of Islamic State's path toward statehood through a comparison of said path with Islamic rules and the statehood of Saudi Arabia. The redaction of this thesis is directed toward the graduation requirement completion of the Master of Arts and Liberal Studies (MALS) at Dartmouth College. I completed this tremendous piece of work with the help and advice of my three readers, Nadav Samin, Donald E. Pease and George Emile Irani.

The motivation behind this research originates from a suicide bombing attack in Al-Sadiq Mosque on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2015 during the Holy month of Ramadan. This terrorist attack cost twenty-seven persons their lives and it wounded 227 individuals. This attack was claimed by Islamic State. The Kuwaiti society was deeply shaken by the barbarity of such an act. Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis were united by their grief for one another, sectarian differences were no more. The whole country went to the Grand Mosque to present their condolences to the victims' families.

I was completing my first year at MALS when those events happened. I was uncertain about the subject of my upcoming independent study, but from that point on I was dedicated to one idea: to understand what pushed this man, whom I refuse the honor to be named, and all the others to accomplish their suicide missions? During two months of independent study researching the history of contemporary terrorism, I dived into the minds of the terrorist recruiters and their recruits. But instead of finding an answer to my question, I

could only ask myself more questions. From where does Islamic State originates? Is it a state?

During the year and a half of redacting my thesis, I could always count on the support and encouragement of my parents and my siblings. They were always by my side when I grew depressed in face of this challenging thesis. They were always a phone call away and always ready to help me. I sincerely thank them for being my rock during this major step in my life.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the al-Sadiq Mosque victims, their families and all the victims of terrorist attacks.

Radia ALFILI,

Dartmouth College, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017

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## Introduction

Islamic State - during the last three years those two words spilled blood and ink all over the world. This entity became the pet peeve of politicians, the main subject of media and the fear of all. The name Islamic State adorned itself with incited me to think critically to understand and define the dynamics behind such a generic nomination. By identifying the reality of this threat, researchers can work on terminating Islamic State while avoiding its return through an ideological resurrection. The first two questions that came to my mind were: How Islamic is Islamic State? And, is Islamic State a state?

The answer to those questions is not as obvious a “No” as one would like to think. The status of Islamic State is that of a complex anomaly. Indeed, this entity is a complex hybrid creation born from the unholy marriage of Islamic religious extremism and an unhealthy sense of militarized nationalism. The birth of this hybrid entity is what makes it an anomaly. Islamic State came to be through territorial conquest, religious immigration, and social discrimination. Those are characteristics I can find, up to a certain degree, in the genesis of Saudi Arabia. The difference between Islamic State and Saudi Arabia is that the first is internationally unrecognized and on the verge of annihilation, while the other is a universally recognized and sovereign country. The goal of this thesis is to understand the creational dynamics behind the birth of Islamic State by comparing it to early Islamic and Saudi Arabia’s legal, religious, social and political institutions. The creation of both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia is based on a similar and strict Islamic-inspired ideology. Moreover, the finalization of Islamic State’s path toward so-called statehood is discernible in the Saudi Arabian religious and national institutions.

The nationalisms involved in the creation of both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia are extremely similar. Islamic State is a came to be through a, today crumbling, in denial<sup>1</sup> poly-national “ideological religious nationalism”<sup>2 3</sup>; while the nationalism blossoming in Saudi Arabia is a

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<sup>1</sup> Even though as demonstrated in this thesis, Islamic State possesses some but not all of the attributes of nationalism and nationalistic feeling, which were created with Islam and Islamic history as an inspiration, first of all it is not a nation according to Smith and secondly Islamic State defines nationalism as a heresy and a denial of God’s unicity Diwan al-Eftaa’ wa al-Buhuth, "Islamic State Treatise on the Syrian Education System Full Text, Translation and Analysis," ed. Islamic State (2016).

<sup>2</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, "The Worldwide Rise of Religious Nationalism," *Journal of International Affairs* 50, no. 1 (1996): 5.

<sup>3</sup> Juergensmeyer defines “ideological religious nationalism” as “an ideological approach to religious nationalism [which] *religionizes* politics” [therefore] compatibility with religious goals becomes the criterion for an acceptable political platform” *ibid*.

“polyethnic”<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> “ideological religious nationalism”<sup>6</sup>. The difference between these two nationalism stands on the fact that Saudi Arabia is older than Islamic State. Even though Saudi Arabia is a young nation, its people identify today as Saudis despite the fact their ancestors’ territories were conquered by force, partly on the base of a religious ideology, in the past. Islamic State members, on the other hand, are divided depending on their countries of origin. In other words, Saudi Arabia is progressively becoming a nation<sup>7</sup>, while going through a pan-Islamist phase; while Islamic State is unable to become a nation nor an *ethnie*<sup>8</sup> because 1) it lacks a homeland<sup>9</sup>, 2) its members lack the common myths and history that every nation possesses<sup>10</sup>. The history Islam carries is only a single part of what makes a nation, as I will demonstrate in this thesis Islam alone cannot be the basis of a nation.

This thesis is organized in three main axes. I begin by presenting Islamic State through its application of Islamic laws and rituals; then I explain the significance of the Salafi and Wahhabi ideology in the daily functioning of Islamic State and Saudi Arabia; and finally, I analyze the influence of nationalism on Islamic State’s attempt toward statehood and on the young but blooming Saudi Arabian nation-state. In my conclusion, I will reflect on the future that awaits the Middle-Eastern region considering Islamic State’s decline.

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<sup>4</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History, Key Concepts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Smith defines “polyethnic nations” as “separate “*ethnies*” that have for one reason or another come together, or been forced together, and have forged a common history and shared political memories” *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Juergensmeyer, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Saudi Arabia possesses all the characteristics of a nation, as described by Smith. Saudi Arabia has a “proper name”, “common myths”, a “shared history”, a “common public culture”, an “occupation of [the] homeland”, “common rights and duties”, and a “single economy” Smith, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Smith defines an “*ethnie*” as a group possessing a “proper name”, common myths of ancestry, etc.”, “shared memories”, “cultural differentia(e)”, a “link [with the] homeland, and “some (elite) solidarity” *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Per the definition of Smith, Islamic State can’t be a nation nor an “*ethnie*”, since in both cases it lacks a homeland. The Syrian and Iraqi territories conquered by Islamic State are not the homeland of Islam as a religion or a culture. Islam was revealed in Mecca and al-Medina, but since this revelation it evolved, developed and accumulated cultural particularities from all over the world. Islam does not have a homeland, it is a religion shared by many “*ethnies*” and nations around the world.

<sup>10</sup> Islam is a religion that developed into its contemporary form in an array of countries through history. The myths and histories created by Islam in each of those locations are not relatable for the other Muslims.

## Chapter 1: Islam's Rules through Islamic State's Lenses

Islam, like any other religion, specifies certain rules and beliefs to organize the devotees' life. However, Islam is not only a religion; it has developed its own system of political thought based on this same canon. The rules developed from this system organize everything from justice in wars and daily matters to succession protocols. Those rules are the basis of the Islamic society from its conception. The rules and beliefs, which are today an essential part of the Muslim world, are the results and interpretations on Islamic matters made by thousands of Muslim scholars over time. Muslim countries all around the world follow those regulations and dogmata, more or less faithfully, including Islamic State, the militant movement that today rules large parts of Iraq and Syria.

In the context of this thesis I will discuss Islamic State as an entity that is imposing its own rules and laws on the territories it conquered and controls by force; an entity that is not influenced by any external power<sup>11</sup>. Islamic State is a recently created political and military entity. It tries to emulate the Islamic societal, political, financial, religious, judicial and cultural concepts forged by the Prophet and his successors. This section will explain the origins of the Islamic rules and principles Islamic State claims to follow, and their application by Islamic State in the territory it controls in Iraq and Syria. Those rules and creeds organize all the facets of the Islamic society. Therefore, if it appears that Islamic State is faithfully applying the precepts per which the Prophet modelled the organization of his original society, then this would strengthen Islamic State's claim as a successor and extension of the past caliphates. The description and analysis of each historical concept will be followed by an examination of its mirroring notion in Islamic State. I will focus on

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<sup>11</sup> Islamic State is funded by private individuals in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. "How Our Allies in Kuwait and Qatar Funded Islamic State," *The Telegraph*, September 6 2014.; Daniel; Stout Wagner, Alex, "Why There Is No Stopping the Funding of the Islamic State," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-wagner/why-there-is-no-stopping-\\_b\\_7518012.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daniel-wagner/why-there-is-no-stopping-_b_7518012.html). Some of Islamic State members are Gulf nationals, including Saudi Arabian individuals, Fahad Nazer, "Clinton, Trump, and Riyadh: How Saudi Arabia Sees the U.S. Presidential Election," *Foreign Affairs* (2016). Alexandre Del Valle, "L'arabie Saoudite Et Le Wahhabisme: Matrice Du Totalitarisme Islamiste," *Atlantico*, August 19 2016. Others have a dual nationality or at least a dual culture; Mohammed Emwazi for example is a Kuwaiti born with a British nationality, Dominic Casciani, "Islamic State: Profile of Mohammed Emwazi Aka 'Jihadi John'," <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-31641569>. Despite all those global and financial links to the Gulf and Arabic region, Islamic State bombed among other countries Saudi Arabia and Kuwait Associated Press, "Islamic State Claims Responsibility for Deadly Blast at Kuwait City Mosque," <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/26/islamic-state-claim-responsibility-deadly-blast-kuwait-city-mosque>. Shiraz Maher, "Why So-Called Islamic State Chooses to Bomb During Ramadan," <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36703874>.

the periods of history when the political thoughts and religious principles that I can find today in Islamic State developed.

### **Muhammad, Founder of a New Society:**

Islamic political thought has gone through a long and arduous evolutionary process since the revelation made to Muhammad by God. The Prophet imagined the Muslim society, and his successors added to it the political components to make a political entity or entities out of the primary community. Muhammad was a legal-orphan, whose life was protected by his familial and tribal ties to Abu Talib. His paternal uncle was the leader of the Banu Hashim clan in the Meccan tribe of Quraysh. Those tribal ties were heavily based on the nomadic way of life, and formed the center of the pre-Islamic society<sup>12</sup>

. After the revelation of Islam, Muhammad merged those commonly accepted laws to Islam. His strategy had two goals: 1) to ease the acceptance of Islam and 2) to avoid the creation of completely new regulations which would have ostracized Islam. The nomadic system of values and ethics is based on family and honor. It was unanimously followed by all, monotheistic and pagan, nomad and sedentary<sup>13</sup>. Those unwritten laws covered justice, frontiers, family relations, treatment of foreigners and booty management. The following overview will compare and contrast the early version of those rules used by Muhammad and his successors to organize the Islamic society, and the application made by Islamic State of those same rules.

### **Qisas and its ingrate cousin Tamthil:**

#### Qisas:

The pre-Islamic and Early-Islamic societies did not have a unique leader. Each tribe had its chief who doubled as a military leader<sup>14</sup>. He, however, did not have the monopoly over the religious or judicial tasks. Justice was based on the “principle of the retaliatory blood-feud” (qisas). In other words, if one committed murder, he was to be killed by the victim’s tribe, unless he or his tribe could provide a material compensation<sup>15</sup> that was divided by the clan of the victim<sup>16</sup>. However, in the Quran (*Al-Baqarrah* 2.178)<sup>17</sup>, one can read that the man who pardons his brother’s action

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<sup>12</sup> Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 150.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195125580.001.0001/acref-9780195125580></p>. 7334.

<sup>17</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, trans. Marmaduke Pickthall (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976), 33.

should be rewarded for his good action. In another verse, *Al-Nahal* (16.126)<sup>18</sup>, as explained below, God prefers Muslims to be patient when faced with the option of revenge. It seems that the Quran gives forgiveness and patience toward a guilty individual much more value than the punishment of such a person.

#### Islamic State and Tamthil:

The contemporary Islamic State movement is known for its extremely rigorous application of punishment. An application that ignores the idea of forgiveness and patience as taught by God, Muhammad, and Ibn Taymiyyah who they revere as one of the ultimate Islamic scholars. Islamic State disregards God's authority, despite claiming to follow His will in all their actions. The best-known case was made public by Islamic State on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2015 when it released a twenty-two-minute-long professionally produced video. The video titled "Healing of the Believers Chest" (شفاء الصدور), begins with a black screen with the statement "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate"<sup>19</sup>. Muath al-Kasasbeh, Jordanian pilot, is the only individual speaking; he seems to be reading a speech. He presents himself and tells the audience information about the coalition<sup>20</sup> plane fleet. Toward the end of the video he dissuades all Jordanian aviators' families to allow their sons to go on their missions if they want them to remain alive. The video shows burned men and children, people helplessly trying to save victims buried under rubble, an infant screaming. Those people are presented as victims of the airplane coalition force. He is then shown walking into the rubbles of the houses he and other aviators, according to the narrator, bombed. The next sequence shows him in a cage, his orange shirt and pants drenched in a liquid. A man, his face hidden with a cloth, wearing a khaki military suit, uses a torch to set fire to a fuel trail that leads directly to Muath al-Kasasbeh. His body catches fire instantly due to the fuel on his clothes and skin. He walks frantically in the cage, panicking, holding his head and screaming. He falls on his knees, holding on to the cage, and he stops moving. This scene lasts less than fifteen seconds. An excavator pours sand on him, his solidified body falls backward, partially buried. The excavator runs over the cage; a calcined hand is filmed among the remains of the cage<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 362.

<sup>19</sup> By using this statement, they claim that the punishment they give is to be seen as the image of the compassion and mercy that God Himself applies through them.

<sup>20</sup> For a complete list of the coalition force as of November, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> 2014 please refer to the Foreign Policy article by Justine Drennan in the bibliography.

<sup>21</sup> Islamic State, *Healing the Believers' Chest* (Mu'sasat al-Furqan li al-Intaj al-Ilami, 2015).

Islamic State encaged and burned alive Muath al-Kasasbeh as a “punishment for what he had done of burning Muslims with the fire of his plane”<sup>22</sup>. When Muath al-Kasasbeh fell on his knees, a text appeared on the screen<sup>23</sup>, “Ibn Taymiyyah, who rests in God’s peace, said: ‘If in [...] permissible *tamthil* there is a call to [the unbelievers] to believe or a deterrence for them from hostility, then it is here [a matter of] carrying out the prescribed punishments and legal jihad’.” (tld by Hoover)<sup>24 25</sup>

This quote is an extract from the rubric titled “Al-Tamthil” in Ibn Taymiyyah’s compiled writings on “Jihad”:

The Muslims are allowed to use *mithlah* on the pagans, they have to do so in the likeness it was done to them, to claim their revenge. But they should not, because patience is better. And this is because *tamthil* will not increase the extent of their jihad and they will not be severely punished for applying *tamthil* in an equal way (my translation). If in public exemplary punishment (*tamthil*) there is a call to [the unbelievers] to believe or a deterrence for them from hostility, then it is here [a matter of] carrying out the prescribed punishments and legal jihad (tld by Hoover). However, this is not the case and this why patience is preferred. But if application of *mithlah* is God’s Almighty right<sup>26</sup>, then patience will be a duty, as it is the case when there is no victory possible. And fear is forbidden. It is done” (my translation).<sup>27</sup>

*Mithlah* is an Arabic word signifying the action of applying *tamthil* (mutilation) on a living person or a corpse as a revenge for a death. Al-Sulami defines *tamthil* as “the cutting off the limbs, the

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<sup>22</sup> Terrence McCoy and Adam Taylor, "Islamic State Says Immolation Was Justified; Experts on Islam Say No," *The Washington Post*, February 4 2015.

<sup>23</sup> Islamic State (2015).

<sup>24</sup> Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, "الطهارة - الجهاد (Purity - Jihad)," in *المستدرک على مجموع فتاوى شيخ الإسلام أحمد ابن تيمية Erratum on the Fatwas of Islam's Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah*, ed. Qasem Muhammed bin Abd Al-Rahman bin Muhammed bin (Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex, 1997), 223-24.

<sup>25</sup> Jon Hoover, "How to Read the Medieval Scholar the Islamic State Used to Justify Al-Kasasbeh Murder," *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/how-to-read-the-medieval-scholar-the-islamic-state-used-to-justify-al-kasasbeh-murder-37293>.

<sup>26</sup> Sunni schools of law divide “legal acts of claim and liabilities” (Samour 85) into two categories: *Huquq Allah* and *Huquq al ‘abd* (Claims of the slave aka believer). The “claims of God” (Johansen qtd by Samour 86) “include acts of worship (‘abadat), the punishment of crimes (*hudud*), and taxes such as land tax (*kharaj*) and alms tax (*zakat*) and charity (*waqf*).” (Samour 86)

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah (1997) 223-224.

plucking out of eyes, the cutting off noses and such things”<sup>28 29</sup>. I suppose, from the saying of Ali analyzed below, that *mithlah* was applied on both the killer and his family, as an act of extreme revenge, in the early times of Islam.

One can notice that Ibn Taymiyyah was undecided on the path to take concerning the application of *mithlah*. His indecision is explained by the violent and unpredictable environment in which he lived. He lived during the Mongol invasions and was persecuted for his extremist interpretations of the Quran and the Sunnah. He longed for revenge against the Mongols which he did not consider as Muslims<sup>30</sup>. The contested scholar fully understood the unlawfulness of *tamthil* but his troubled mind urged him to create exceptions that allowed him to legalize the destruction of his enemies.

#### The Prophet and Tamthil:

Ibn Taymiyyah’s comments on the application of *tamthil* are loosely based on the verse *Al-Nahal* (16.126)<sup>31</sup>. In this verse, God allows Muhammed to inflict on the pagans the same punishments they have used on the believers, He however adds that patience is the best choice. Therefore, this verse seems to be the illustration of the *qisas* concept (as explained above), not of the *tamthil* of corpses practice, even though the word *qisas* is not mentioned<sup>32</sup>.

*Tamthil* was highly criticized and abhorred by Muhammad himself; in general, he resented the idea of mutilation even outside the context of war<sup>33</sup>. One of the several declarations of the Prophet against body mutilation was repeated by Ali at the eve of his death. He told his progeny:

Oh Banu ‘Abd al-Muttalib<sup>34</sup>, let me not find you plunging into the blood of the Muslims saying, ‘The Commander of the Faithful has been killed! The Commander of the Faithful has been killed!’ No one shall be killed except my killer. Wait and see Hassan. If I die from

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<sup>28</sup> 'Ali ibn Tahrir Al-Sulami, *The Book of the Jihad of 'Ali Ibn Tahrir Al-Sulami (D.1106): Text, Translation and Commentary* (Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 256.

<sup>29</sup> From the different *ahadith* presented in this section, one can safely suppose that even though body burning is not explicitly listed by al-Sulami, it is a sort of mutilation.

<sup>30</sup> Henri Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyyah," Book, Section vols., *Britannica Academic* (2016),

<http://academic.eb.com.dartmouth.idm.oclc.org/levels/collegiate/article/Ibn-Taymiyyah/41931>.

<sup>31</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 362.

<sup>32</sup> In the “Tafsir al-Jalalayn” (Jalal al-Din Al-Mahalli and Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti), it is explained that the Nahl 16.126 was revealed after the death and mutilation of Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib. The prophet declared his intention to mutilate 70 of the pagan adversaries to avenge his uncle. After the verse revelation Muhammad abstained from taking his revenge to the extreme. (Tafsir al-Jalalayn, 2016, tld by Feras Hamza)

<sup>33</sup> Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazid Ibn Majah Al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn-I-Majah*, vol. 2, Sunan Ibn-I-Majah (Pakistan: Kazi Publications, 1994), 559-460.

<sup>34</sup> He included all the branches descending from Abd Al-Muttalib bin Hashem bin Abdel Manaf.

this blow of his, then inflict him blow for blow. But do not inflict mutilation on the man, for I heard the Messenger of God say, ‘Avoid mutilation, even on a vicious dog.’<sup>35</sup>

Based on a Prophetic statement, Ali forbids his sons from desecrating the body of his killer, despite the gravity of his crime. Through this clear interdiction, he is also trying to avoid a conflict escalation that could result in an intra-Muslim war.

#### Tamthil, War and Fire Fatwa:

A war between Muslims, the ultimate fear of Ali, is a burning reality today. An example among others was instigated by Islamic State’s publicizing of Muath Al-Kasasbeh death by *mithlah*. It appears that the retaliatory revenge initiated by King Abdallah of Jordan is motivated by several reasons. King Abdallah is the leader of a state in the modern sense of the term, but this state is highly dependent on its tribal dynamics. Jordan is a member of the coalition combatting Islamic State and as such, the kingdom participates in the airstrikes. The Jordanian public opinion does not appreciate those “airstrikes against fellow Muslims”<sup>36</sup>. The King, in an effort to keep the people on his side, catalyzed the national and tribal grief for Muath’s death, which the population views as martyrdom, on retaliatory revenge. The need for a revenge was expressed by the Jordanian army spokesman Colonel Mamdouh al-Ameri when he said that Jordan’s “revenge will be as big as the calamity that has hit Jordan” and “our punishment and revenge will be as huge as the loss of the Jordanians”<sup>37</sup>. However, the most symbolic and nationally/tribally unifying shout for revenge is probably the one made by Safi al-Kaseasbeh, Muath’s father;

I ask that this should not end with Sajida al-Rishawi and Ziad Karbouli [see below], I expect the government to seek revenge, severe revenge for the blood of [my son] against this horrid organization, this criminal organization, this organization that is far from Islam and the spirit of Islam. The pain is deep. My son isn't just the son of Safi al-Kaseasbeh; he is the son of every Jordanian. Grief is now in the hearts of every Jordanian mother and every Jordanian father.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir Al-Tabari, *The First Civil War*, ed. Ehsan Yar-Shater, vol. 17, The History of Al-Tabari (Ta'rikh Al-Rusul Wa'l Muluk) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

<sup>36</sup> Karin Laub, "Jordan Committed to Anti-Is Coalition, Despite Hostage Drama," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 31 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Eline Gordts, "New Isis Video Appears to Show Jordanian Pilot Muath Al-Kaseasbeh Burned Alive," *The Huffington Post*, February 3, 2015 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Jane Onyanga-Omara, "Pilot's Father Calls for Jordan to Avenge Son's Slaying," *USA Today*, February 4 2015.



The Jordanian king vowed that the fight against IS will only be stopped by the depletion of “fuel and bullets” (King Abdullah of Jordan on FoxNews.com). The royal promise was followed by the hanging of two Al-Qaeda terrorists; Sajida al-Rishawi<sup>39</sup> and Ziad al-Karbouly<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, on the day after the video publication, Jordan killed 55 Islamic State fighters including “[an Islamic State] top commander known as the ‘Prince of Nineveh’”<sup>41</sup>. The reaction of King Abdallah could not be properly defined as *qisas*, even though it was a retaliation act. It is a political necessity for him to retaliate in an extreme fashion, a political action that falls under the retaliatory tribal honor codes<sup>42</sup>.

Despite Islamic State’s claims of applying *mithlah* as prescribed by Ibn Taymiyyah, the way they punished Al-Kasasbeh was not equal to the way the people shown in the video were supposedly killed by the Jordanian pilot and his colleagues. It could be presumed that by encasing him Islamic State wanted to simulate the inability of the victims to avoid the bombs by running and by drenching him in fuel they probably wanted to imitate the strength of a fire explosion. However, firstly there is no proof that this particular pilot or any of his colleagues killed any of the people shown in the video or any of the additional victims. Secondly, those victims were those who unfortunately did not have the chance to flee when they sensed the military airplanes. Thirdly, those victims were most likely not covered in fuel, a fire accelerator, at the time of their death. Moreover, Ibn Taymiyyah, despite the exceptions he added to the prophet’s interdiction, included the notion that *tamthil* should not be applied<sup>43</sup>. Islamic State disregarded the parts of the Ibn Taymiyyan text mentioning the interdiction, ignored the Prophet’s numerous prohibitions, and they omitted the divine preference toward patience.

In addition to picking and ignoring the texts, Islamic State’s Diwan al-Eftaa’ wa al-Buhuth published a document to justify the way it killed Muath Al-Kasasbeh<sup>44</sup>. This text was leaked and revealed by Aymenn al-Tamimi<sup>45</sup>. The Diwan answers its rhetorical question: “What is the ruling

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<sup>39</sup> Imprisoned for being one of the three bombers in a hotel attack that claimed the life of 60 individuals in Amman in 2005 (Silva in IBTimes.com 2015). The Islamic State tried to negotiate her liberation in exchange for Muath Al-Kasasbeh, she was member of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Fields in ViceNews.com 2015).

<sup>40</sup> An Iraqi aide to Al-Zarqawi (FoxNews.com).

<sup>41</sup> Silva (2015)

<sup>42</sup> His actions and their consequences resemble *mithlah*, one could even say that he acted in the way Muhammed refrained from.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah (1997) 224-225.

<sup>44</sup> Diwan al-Eftaa’ wa al-Buhuth, "Islamic State Justification for Burning Alive the Jordanian Pilot: Translation and Analysis," ed. Islamic State (2015).

<sup>45</sup> Al-Tamimi is what the media calls a *jihadi* hunter; he investigates *jihadi* organization on social media to acquire information from within the terrorists’ cells (Bryant, Vice News). However, his closeness to

on burning the kafir [disbeliever] with fire until he dies?” by quoting the commentary of Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani on Bukhari<sup>46</sup>. The prophet once said: “Only God is to torture with fire”, however it appears that several oral transmitters understood the prohibition as a call toward human humbleness in the use of fire, but not as an ultimate and complete interdiction of the use of fire in retaliatory revenges<sup>47</sup>. The commentator continues by arguing that the use of fire was normalized, through the use made by the Companions (namely Khalid Bin Walid and Abu Bakr) in the cases of “paganism, war or qisas”<sup>48</sup>. He finalizes his demonstration by quoting Al-Muhallab who said: This interdiction’s purpose is not prohibition, but humility” (my translation). He then confirms the permissibility of using fire in a retaliatory action by mentioning the way the Prophet burned the eyes of the Urainans as a punishment<sup>49 50</sup>, by using red hot iron<sup>51 52 53</sup>. Even though Islamic State chose to ignore it, Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani continued his commentary by explaining the heated debates surrounding the use of fire in retaliation; especially due to the Prophet and companions’ contradictory actions<sup>54 55</sup> (175).

On a parallel note, it seems that Islamic State is not the only organization that aspires to statehood in the region; Jabhat al-Nusra<sup>56</sup> is also running its territory with the help of institutions. Similarly,

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Islamic State the IS members on social media made of him a suspected terrorist sympathizer (Rosen for Business Insider). One can also be intrigued by the clarity and immense number of photographed documents he presents on his website. In this thesis, I only use Islamic State documents he presents on his website as primary sources, I do not use his own analysis of said documents.

<sup>46</sup> Ahmad ibn 'Ali Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari. Selections*, vol. 6, Fath Al-Bari (Lebanon: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1959), 174.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Muhammad ibn Isma'il Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, vol. 5, Sahih Al-Bukhari (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1978), 5.505.

<sup>50</sup> The Urainans were a Bedouin tribe. When the ones in question first arrived to Medina, they were sick due the climate, the Prophet sent them to his shepherd so they could take the camels’ milk and urine as medication. After getting better they rejected Islam and went to their previous belief of Heathenism, murdered the shepherd and stole the camels herd. Upon learning this the Prophet ordered “their eyes [to be] branded with pieces of iron and their hands and legs [to be] cut off. Finally they were [to be] left away in Harra till they died in that state of theirs.” (Bukhari 5.505)

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, 6, 174.

<sup>52</sup> Muhammad ibn Isma'il Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, vol. 9, Sahih Al-Bukhari (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1979), 9.57.

<sup>53</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri and Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami'-Us-Sahih*, vol. 4 (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1971), 16.4130-37.

<sup>54</sup> In Bukhari (9.57), Ali ordered the burning of atheists. A choice of punishment Abbas opposed, he stated that the Prophet forbids the use of Allah exclusive punishment, the fire. Abbas declares he would have, simply, killed them for their apostasy.

<sup>55</sup> Bukhari, 9, 9.57.

<sup>56</sup> The Al-Qaeda branch in Syria and Iraq.

to Islamic State's Diwan al-Eftaa' wa al-Buhuth, Jabhat al-Nusra administers justice in its territories through Dar al-Qada or a judicial system. What follows is an extract of a ruling made by the Jabhat Al-Nusra local judicial council<sup>57</sup> in the city of Huraitan (Aleppo Province). "The Dar al-Qada [...] has implemented the ruling of killing in retaliation with respect to the one called Ahmad Hamoud Abd al-Majid for his aggravated assault on Mustafa Hamoud bin Abd al-Qadir<sup>58 59</sup>".

The council introduced the ruling by quoting a verse of the Quran "And there is life for you in retaliation, O men of understanding, that ye may ward off (evil)" (*Al-Baqarah* 2.179)<sup>60</sup>. It is important to note that, like Islamic State, they quote only the verses that serve their intentions; no mention of forgiveness or material retribution is made. Moreover, in another document leaked by al-Tamimi<sup>61</sup> it is stated that human rights are a Western invention which was created "in order to defame the rulings of the religion, turn away the people from the doctrine of *al-wala' and al-bara'*, and make the Muslims despise the Shari'i rulings."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, to condemn "the Shari'i hudud: like qisas"<sup>63</sup> means that one is a disbeliever who "deem(s) the Qur'an to be false and condemns its rulings"<sup>64</sup>. Their idea of Islamic justice implements two goals; the first is to apply what they believe was the justice implanted by the Prophet and the 'ulama that followed him and the second is to separate themselves from both the West and the ones they consider heretical Muslims. It appears however that Islamic State failed to emulate the past caliphates in its application of justice.

### **Tribal System in Early Islam:**

One of the strongest influence on political life and thought came from the Arabian-Bedouin tribes. The importance of the tribal/clan and lineage system before and under Islam cannot be repeated enough. The tribal organization was divided into three groups, the tribes, the clans and the individuals. A tribe was formed of several assembled clans; individuals were included in the clans even though they can be independent. The harsh environment they lived in made Bedouins very keen on equality and solidarity<sup>65</sup>. "Hereditary economic and social solidarity" between the groups

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<sup>57</sup> He is only designed as the Sheikh Abu Sahrif, although it is impossible to verify if this is really his name and if he has a valid claim to this religious nomination.

<sup>58</sup> The possible family relation was not confirmed in the text.

<sup>59</sup> Sheikh Abu Sharif, "Archive of Jabhat Al-Nusra Dar Al-Qada Documents Specimen M: Implementation of Death Panalty: Qisas [Retaliation]: Hureitan, Aleppo Province," (2015).

<sup>60</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 33.

<sup>61</sup> al-Eftaa' wa al-Buhuth, "Islamic State Treatise on the Syrian Education System Full Text, Translation and Analysis."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Hodgson, 1, 148-49.

formed by the tribes and clans was not based on “territorial proximity” or direct “functional relations”, but on “common responsibility” no matter the fortune<sup>66</sup>. The tribes and clans formed large groups to 1) gain economic stability and 2) “political strength” in which decision were made; even though every group enjoyed “internal autonomy”<sup>67</sup>. The tribes were all linked on an even larger level by their descent (real or fictive). This link was concretized by the use of the word children (bin, ibn) in their names<sup>68</sup>; an individual was known and existed in the society only due to his/her familial relations. Those tribal values were highly respected by the settled population of the Arabian Peninsula and were the societal base of the towns<sup>69</sup>

#### The Meccan Society:

Mecca’s societal organization was an adaptation of the nomad tribal system and values to a settled society. There was neither a monarchy nor a municipal system. Quraysh led the city through “an assembly of notables of all the clans for non-binding consultation”<sup>70</sup>. Despite being a settled community, Mecca did not form any additional institutions. The system worked without a centralized authority that could imprison Muhammad and his followers over the accusations of treachery or “public nuisance”<sup>71</sup>. Moreover, when Muhammad was persecuted, he was protected by his tribal links to the Banu Hashim. The tribal system was organized and intricate, but ultimately it was a limited system of rule that cannot be characterized as a state.

#### Islam and the Tribal System:

Islam started off as religion but also as a new tribe, “the Arab ummah, which Muhammad had originally taken for granted, was only created by him after much hard work. If it at first represented a community of Arabs, this was more or less a secondary phenomenon. The essential thing was the religious foundation on which it was based. The ummah of the Arabs was transformed into an *ummah* of the Muslims.”<sup>72</sup>

People from different origins and classes were from that point on united by their religion, beliefs and rituals. The *ummah* unites people of different states and nations, but it also puts the accent on the inherent differences between the Muslims in one hand and the Jews and the Christians on the other hand. This difference is symbolized by the Muslims changing their *qiblah*, the prayer

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony Nutting, *The Arabs: A Narrative History from Muhammed to the Present* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1964), 11.

<sup>69</sup> Hodgson, 1, 150.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>72</sup> Rudi Paret, "Ummah," in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb, and J. H. Kramers (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press., 1953), 604.

direction, from Jerusalem to Mecca (*Al-Baqarrah* 2.142-143)<sup>73</sup>. *Al-Imran* 3.110<sup>74</sup> explicitly defines the Muslims as a single religious community, the religion and the community became one. The concept of the *ummah* is another word for the “group feeling” described by Ibn Khaldun<sup>75</sup> as will be seen in the Leadership and Caliphate section. Islam survived and flourished thanks to its renewal of the tribal system and sense of belonging; those rules opened the doors for new converts and their territories and resources.

Despite, its apparent simplicity, the neo-tribal system mixing religion and community worked wonders for Islam’s expansion. The tribes allowed the inclusion of multiple communities in the *ummah*; the new tribes needed to be linked to one of the Arabic tribes to enter the *ummah*, but they nonetheless kept their own structures<sup>76</sup>. Those tribal links and relationships were so strong that their influence was felt in the organization of armies and later in the urban social life. Moreover, the meaning of the tribal values was increased when they were integrated in the religion. In the Quran one can read that “the owners of kinship are closer one to another in the ordinance of Allah than (other) believers and the fugitives (who fled Mecca), except that ye should do kindness to your friends” (*Al-Ahzab* 33.6)<sup>77</sup>. This verse states that blood will always be thicker than water, but it is also subtly emphasizing the importance of the whole community. The *ummah* was tightly knit by its adherence to the values of justice and unity. “‘*Asabiya* (*clannishness*, group spirit) in the sense of helping ‘your own people in an unjust cause’” was forbidden because it could have divided the community and separate them from God<sup>78</sup>. All the tribe members must prioritize justice over family ties; the individual’s virtue and value are proportional to their fear and respect of God and His laws (*Al-Hujurat* 49.9-13)<sup>79</sup> <sup>80</sup>. Due to their importance in the organization of social and religious life, the tribal values did not disappear, but adapted to the advent of modern statehood and nationalism values in the Levant and Arabian Peninsula.

### **Modern tribes and the Ascendance of Islamic State:**

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<sup>73</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 26-27.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>75</sup> Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah; an Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 398-402.

<sup>76</sup> Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, 2 ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 11.

<sup>77</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 548-49.

<sup>78</sup> Izutsu, Toshihiko. *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur’ān*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1966), 155-6 and Othman, Ali I. *The Concept of Man in the Writings of al-Ghazali*. (Cairo: Dar-al-Maaref, 1960), 100, quoted in Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2011), 11.

<sup>79</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 684-86.

<sup>80</sup> Black, 11.

Islamic State became an active and publicly known player on the Syrian-Iraqi scene in 2014, the dynamics between the two states and their tribes were already too broken to function properly. This disturbance was the result of a long history that began with the fall of the Sick Man and the redistribution of his territories between the French and British colonial powers. Their opposing and violent strategic plans to impose colonial rule in the Levant and Middle-East. The Western powers each imposed their ideas of statehood and borders on a land that was never truly tamed by the Ottoman Empire, a land that only knew the rule of tribalism. With borders and statehood came the idea of nationalism. The tribes had to surrender a part of their sovereignty to the state who in exchange would offer modern services.

Ba'athism was a movement that emerged in Syria in the 40's and in the 50's. in Iraq. The Syrian Ba'ath party described its ideology as "national (Pan-Arab), socialist, popular and revolutionary."<sup>81</sup> Ba'athist values clashed culturally with the Bedouin traditionalist values which were based "family, individual prestige, and religion rather than on the nebulous notions of nationhood"<sup>82</sup>. The only way the states of Syria and Iraq could insert those tribes into the system was to create "mutual economic interests" which provided to the tribes' financial needs and politically empowered the tribe's leader. The tribe, from the basis to the leadership, was therefore loyal to the state patron. Most were loyal to both Baghdad and Damascus<sup>83</sup>. Al-Assad and Hussain used those tribes to counteract the Islamist movements<sup>84 85</sup>. The situation remained unchanged until the Iraq war in 2003, when the fragile balance was broken. The Sunni tribes which were highly linked to Saddam's regime and the Ba'ath party were removed from their political and military position. Baghdad had fallen and could no longer support the tribal leadership. Moreover, due to their association with the previous government, the Sunni tribes were extensively targeted by the American army during the invasion. This isolation was only extended with the empowerment of the Shi'i population in Iraq who was oppressed under Saddam's reign. In Syria, the Alawites Shi'i branch that was empowered during the French mandate was controlling the country through the Assad family<sup>86</sup>. Their leadership was viewed as oppressive, unjust and illegitimate by the Sunni

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<sup>81</sup> Stefan Brooks and Sherifa Zuhur, "Baath Party," (ABC-CLIO, 2010).

<sup>82</sup> Scott Ritter, "A Tribal Solution to the Islamic State," *The Huffington Post* 2015.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Jamal J. Halaby, "Sunni Tribes Split over Isis: Abdul-Aziz Al-Taei, Criminal Law Professor, Says There Are Several Factors That Made Sunni Tribes in Syria and Iraq Fertile Ground for Isis.," *The Arab Weekly*, October 23, 2015 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

majority<sup>87</sup>. This sentiment was truly intense when Bashar Al-Assad dismissed the balance created by his father and replaced the tribesmen in crucial position by Alawites. To this first imbalance is added the fact that the tribes suffered from the drought which affected their herd and ultimately livelihood. The tribes left the eastern part of Syria (Raqa, Hassakeh and Homs' countryside) to live in major cities like Damascus and Homs<sup>88</sup>.

The Sunni resentment against the Alawites, the Iraqi government and the American force was an ideal soil for al-Qaeda and then its successor Islamic State to plant the seeds of discord and revenge. However, it is important to clarify that Islamic State did not adopt the same strategies when dealing with the Iraqi and Syrian tribes. The Iraqi tribes are divided along sectarian lines. Islamic State allied itself with the Sunni tribes against Maliki's rule, though this fact is disputed by the Sunni rebel group spokesman, Abu Abed al-Naimi. Al-Naimi denies any alliance with Islamic State due to their illegitimacy and Sharia contradictions. His allegations are opposed by an activist who confirms the alliance with Islamic State<sup>89</sup>. Due to the extremely intricate kinship ties in both countries and with their extended tribes and allies in the Gulf, the tribesmen can be protected and financed by other members in the countryside or from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia<sup>90</sup>.

One clan, the Sheitat, was massacred and displaced for refusing Islamic State's rule in favor of Jabhat al-Nusra. Islamic State competes with Jabhat al-Nusra to impose its rule over the conquered territories, especially those that house the oil reserves. However not all the tribes joined Islamic State out of fear. Some tribes claimed allegiance to Islamic State because they truly believe in Islamic State ideology. The latter is mostly composed of young tribesmen who worked in Saudi Arabia and brought back with them the Salafi ideology. They see a future in the system proposed by Islamic State<sup>91</sup>. Finally, a third group is only using Islamic State as an alliance of convenience. They provide them with protection and subsistence for the time being until a better government is instituted in Damascus. Those opportunistic tribes are afraid that, in the case of a defeat of Islamic State by the Western coalition, the Alawites will take back the power and enforce their revenge on them. However, it has to be specified that even within tribes, individual members and tribe leaders pledge different allegiances and those divergences in loyalties are only enhancing the complexity of the tribal situation<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> Ayse Tekdal Fildis, "Roots of Alawite-Sunni Rivalry in Syria," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 2 (2012): 154-55.

<sup>88</sup> Dylan Collins, "Tribal 'Blood Ties' and Syria's Civil War: Q&A," *News Deeply*, December 11 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Hadi Salama, "عشائر سورية بايعت 'داعش'... وأخرى عراقية ستحاربه" [How Isis Changed Its Plans in Iraq], *Al-Hayat*, July 11 2014.

<sup>90</sup> A notable number has passports from Syria and Kuwait or Saudi Arabia (Collins 2015).

<sup>91</sup> Collins (2015).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Islamic State is using tribal kinship to form voluntary and involuntary alliances with the Iraqi and Syrian tribes. Still, it did not take into account the true essence of tribalism and its strong links with both Baghdad and Damascus. Tribes, people of the desert used to its harsh living conditions, have and will always choose the party which will most likely guarantee their survival. The loyalty of the tribe goes first and foremost to its members; therefore, the alliances will depend on which party the leader and or the tribe views as the most secure. Moreover, the tribes over the last century have lived under the leadership of states. These were not permanently stable states, but states that nonetheless provided them with protection and economic and infrastructural development<sup>93</sup>. Most of the tribes seem to be either opposing Islamic State or unwillingly and/or opportunistically following Islamic State. In other words, Islamic State seems to underestimate the effect of a stable life when compared to the war state Islamic State's territory claimed is in.

### **Frontiers:**

There was no notion of boundaries in the Prophet's Arabia as we know them today. There were "recognized pasturing grounds" belonging to such and such sovereign tribe, but this did not mean that travelers were prohibited from wandering through those territories<sup>94</sup>. The tribes travelled around their territory, the "dirah"<sup>95</sup>, depending on the season. The clans of each tribe went their own ways on the dirah<sup>96</sup>. The dirah is indisputably a tribal property, including the wells, pastures and grazing rights; this meant that thievery was a part of life. However, the economy of theft was structured under a "code of conduct"<sup>97</sup>. Blood was never to be spilled when pillaging another clan or tribe, except in an utter emergency. The stronger tribes were bound to protect the weaker, but only for a retribution of some sorts. The golden rule was hospitality toward the stranger; the Arab honor would be soiled if a guest were refused food and shelter or if he was harmed. The passing travelers were not to be attacked on the honor of the tribe<sup>98</sup>. The tribal code of old preformed the role of today's diplomatic and sovereignty laws.

One of Islamic State's most mediatized actions was destroying the boundaries between Syria and Iraq and conquering the border control office. By doing so they claimed to have destroyed the Sykes-Picot agreement and the division of the Ottoman empire/caliphate it imposed<sup>99</sup>. The territory they claim to be Islamic State is truly overlapping on both Syria and Iraq and they are proud to declare that they did not need to be in possession of passports or visas to enter or leave

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Hodgson, 1, 149.

<sup>95</sup> Nutting, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Medyan Dairieh, *The Islamic State (Part 5)* (Vice News, 2014), Video.



Syria and Iraq. Even though they dropped the mention of Syria and Iraq in the entity's name to universalize their message, Islamic State members can be seen in the same video mentioned above, pointing to Syria and Iraq as two lands. By uniting both lands, they hope to emulate the unity and freedom of movement they believe that Muslims had in the past. Their claim is undermined by the fact that the Muslim world was never truly united in the past.

Islamic State is an organization that deems itself the rightful successor of the previous caliphates. It therefore tries to emulate their functioning in terms of military salaries and booty distribution. It has revived the 'ata' that Umar had put in place<sup>100</sup> as seen below. Apparently, Islamic State fighters are paid depending on their rankings and country/province of origin. The fact that fighters are classified as locals (Syrian and Iraqi) and foreigners (Western in most the cases) shows that Islamic State is not united. If it was truly one state, there would be no mention of one's previous nationality. However, there is, and it even appears that the resentment between the locals and foreigners is mutual and doubled with culture clash<sup>101</sup>. The local fighters complain about the Westerners lack of fighting skills and will to fight, the latter prefer to be in the Religious Police<sup>102</sup>. This division might be Islamic State's Achilles tendon, a weakness hidden in plain sight, in the claim toward statehood. The fighters do not identify themselves as Islamic State's "citizens" and the State discriminates between them. It seems that the breakage of Sykes-Picot did not erase the nationhood sentiment built in the last century focus. Islam, apparently, is not the strong unifying core it used to be; this is demonstrated by the belief of an Islamic State's fighter who said "I swear Sharia can't be established without weapons"<sup>103</sup>. In the mind of this man, Islam can only unite its believers through sheer violence, force and fear. It seems that Islamic State is fueled by this certainty. The strength and pride Islamic State finds in the diverse backgrounds of its members, constitutes its weakness. The fighters from Syria, Iraq and the Western world share a singular vision of an Islamic State, but their vision is null and void due to their different national and cultural backgrounds. The only conceivable way Islamic State possess to be formed is a violent and definitive imposition of its ideology. Islam on its own cannot unite people. Even if they agree on being Muslims, Muslims from Syria and Muslims from Indonesia, for example, do not share the

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<sup>100</sup> Sean W. Anthony, "Umar B. Al-Khattab (Ca. 580-644)," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Gerhard Böwering, Patricia Crone, and Mahan Mirza (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013), 581; *ibid*.

<sup>101</sup> Anat Agron, "Cracks in the Caliphate: Western Isis Members Complain About Life in the Islamic State," in *Inquiry and Analysis* (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2015).

<sup>102</sup> Maria Abi-Habib, "Islamic State Splitting over Cash, Graft and Foreign Fighters," *The Australian March* 11 2015

<sup>103</sup> Dairieh, 5.

exact same religious and cultural experiences. Nationalism and cultural difference are forces that will divide them, despite their idealistic view of the fraternal harmony of Islamic State<sup>104</sup>.

### **Apocalypticism:**

Muslim concern for the End of Days has its roots in Muslim theology and early Islamic history. This apocalypticism has been revived by Islamic State and made a central part of their theology. Up to this point we saw that Islam under the reign of the Prophet depended highly on its periplasmic tribal heritage to define the dynamics of its politics. Yet, all that changed when Muhammad died. The Prophet was the cornerstone of Islam. His death was in the back on everyone's mind, but nonetheless, it surprised all the community. The *ummah* lost its political, military, religious leader; the conflict mediator was no more, the imam was gone, the father and husband left his family on their own. The community panicked and denied the Prophet's death; after all he had announced his death as one of the signs of the end of the world<sup>105</sup>. The end of the world did not come upon the *ummah* at that hour, but the fear of it significantly paved the way toward power for his successors.

End of the world prophecies are found throughout Muslim history. The first mentions were made by the Judeo-Christian community in Mecca who saw in Muhammed the Prophet of the end of time. A rabbi, in 634, wrote to his brother living in Carthage that Muhammad was a messenger announcing the coming of the Messiah<sup>106</sup>. Muhammed was believed to be Paraclet, a prophet announced by Jesus in the New Testament; others saw him as Hemda/Hemed<sup>107</sup> whose arrival was predicted in the Old Testament<sup>108</sup>. The Quran mentions multiple times the end of days and the way it is ignored by the believers (*Al-Anbiya* ' 21.1-2)<sup>109</sup>. Later the warning is repeated due to people's incredulity (*Al-Nahl* 16.1)<sup>110</sup>. The end of the world was mentioned forty-five times in the Quran; however, Muslim apocalypticists omit those verses, for unclear reasons<sup>111</sup>. A number of Muhammad's Sayings (sing: *hadith*; pl: *ahadith*) highly endorse the apocalyptic prophecy. The predicted near apocalypse explains the Mo'ata and Tabuk, early Islamic military expeditions. Campaigns that were intended to conquer Jerusalem in preparation for the Last Judgment<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> Al-Hayat Media Center, *The Legacy of the Prophetic Methodology* (2015).

<sup>105</sup> Hela Ouardi, *Les Derniers Jours De Muhammad* (France: Albin Michel, 2016), 199-201.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 201-02.

<sup>107</sup> The desired one in Hebrew (Ouardi 202).

<sup>108</sup> Ouardi, 202.

<sup>109</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 419.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>111</sup> Ahmad ibn 'Ali Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Bulugh Al-Maram: Min Adillat Al-Ahkam*, ed. Selma Cook (El-Mansoura, Egypt: Dar al-Manarah, 2003), 271.

<sup>112</sup> Ouardi, 202.

It seems that the apocalyptic narrative used by Islamic State is particularly based on a *hadith* situating the beginning of the end of the world in Dabiq. This *hadith* is in the Sahih Muslim; it tells the details of those events as such:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The Last Hour would not come until the Romans [the Rum aka the Christians] would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans would say: Do not stand between us and those (Muslims) who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them; and the Muslims would say: Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them. They will then fight and a third (part) of the army would run away, whom Allah will never forgive. A third (part of the army). which would be constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah's eye, would be killed and the third who would never be put to trial would win and they would be conquerors of Constantinople. And as they would be busy in distributing the spoils of war (amongst themselves) after hanging their swords by the olive trees, the Satan would cry: The Dajjal [the fake Messiah] has taken your place among your family. They would then come out, but it would be of no avail. And when they would come to Syria, he would come out while they would be still preparing themselves for battle drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (disappear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood on his lance (the lance of Jesus Christ)<sup>113</sup>.

Islamic State, is apparently trying to accelerate the accomplishment of this apocalyptic *hadith* by forcibly putting in place all its components. This apocalyptic tactic was and is still used by both Christian and Jewish communities<sup>114</sup>; it seems that the believers are eager to reach the end of history<sup>115 116</sup>. Islamic State was eager to witness the end of the world when the ones it imagines as

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<sup>113</sup> Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri and Siddiqui, 4.

<sup>114</sup> William Faizi McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015). 398.

<sup>115</sup> Ouardi, 19.

<sup>116</sup> One could even wonder if this accelerated race is not a certain kind of blasphemy, after all it would be up to God to choose the timing of the Apocalypse and not to the believers no matter how zealous they are.

the Rum (Christians), aka the United States, prepared to attack the entity in Syria after the latter took Dabiq from the Syrian rebels in 2014<sup>117</sup>. McCants even adds that Islamic State believes that the Christians will have eighty allies at the end, however, the United States only had thirty allies at the time of the attack. The foundation of Islamic State gains a new dimension, when the apocalypse is added to the equation. This entity is not only preparing for the end of the world by purifying Islam from what it sees as corruption. It is also attacking the Western world, the Rum, on all fronts to make sure that the alliance<sup>118</sup> against it will grow larger in view of accomplishing the prophecy of the end of times.

### **The Muslim Jesus and the Mahdi:**

The Mahdi, the Muslim messianic figure, was thought to be a legendary man, announced in prophecies attributed to the Prophet, but more likely originating with the people oppressed by the Umayyads<sup>119</sup>. The non-Arabs (including the Zoroastrians) and Jewish converts to Islam, were thought to have kept their end of the world legends of a savior alive in Islam<sup>120</sup>. The converts sided with the Shi'a probably due to their shared position as victims of the Umayyad injustices. The idea of a strong, charismatic and powerful figure who would come right the wrongs of the Umayyad's, seduced many people, Sunnis included<sup>121</sup>. This group waged a war against the Umayyads, and a black flag was raised during battle. Blackness was meant to signify both the mourning for the Prophet's family and the vengeance against the usurpers, meaning the Umayyad. Those revolutionary movements were used by an imam, a descendant of Abbas ibn al-Muttalib<sup>122</sup>, to rise to power. His agent, Abu Muslim, led the insurrection that resulted in the end of the Umayyad reign<sup>123</sup>. The victors raised the black flag in Iran and wore black robes; they pledged their allegiance to Al-Saffah, brother of the executed imam. From then on, the Abbasid dynasty and dawla was set to rule<sup>124</sup>. This dawla or state was the model chosen by Islamic State leaders to create their own dawla. McCants adds that Islamic State is modeled after the "symbols and colors, apocalyptic

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<sup>117</sup> William Faizi McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Leader of the Islamic State," *The Brookings Essay* (2015).

<sup>118</sup> By attacking the Western world, the Islamic State is creating and increasing religious, ethnic and national tensions.

<sup>119</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 398.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 417.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 398.

<sup>122</sup> The prophet's youngest uncle.

<sup>123</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 435.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 454.

propaganda, clandestine networks, and an insurgency in Syria and Iraq<sup>125</sup>. The coup and justification that created Islamic State were created centuries ago by the Abbasids<sup>126</sup>.

### **'Ata' and Booty:**

Islam, through the Quran, validated the loot distribution acquired during tribal and warfare raids<sup>127</sup>. The Quran specified that one-fifth of the loot was God's property, of which the management was left to the Prophet. However, it was specified that he had to spend it on his family, the poor, the orphans and the travelers (*Al-Anfal* 8.41)<sup>128</sup>. The booty was divided into two categories: the *ghanima*, which is taken by force, and the *fay'*, which is taken without using force<sup>129</sup>. During his time, Ibn Al-Khattab distributed the loots and plunders a "registry of warriors" (the *diwan*) through "a system of regularized salaried pay (the '*ata* ')"<sup>130</sup>. The earlier the conversion and conquest participation (*sabiqa*) the higher the pay was. Consequently, rivalries began between the conquerors' elites and the local tribes' elite<sup>131</sup>. The four schools of *fiqh* have different opinions of the protocols and timings of the division. *Ghanima* was made up of captured war enemies (women, children and soldiers) and movable objects, the whole of which had to be divided between the warriors and the leader. Immovable objects, like lands and buildings, raise a debate. The Shafi'i argue that they should be distributed as are movable objects, the Malikis and the Shi'a affirm that the lands become property of the state, while the Hanafis and Hanbalis trust the chief to make the best decision for the Muslim interest<sup>132</sup>. The land could either be divided as a *ghanima* or left to the farmers who must pay the land tax (*kharaj*), which in turn is to be spent on the whole community<sup>133</sup>. The *ghanima* was only to be given to free adult male who participate in the battle, even if they did not fight. According to the Hanbalis and Shafi'is, the soldiers were entitled to the personal property of the individuals they killed. The Malikis, Shi'a and Hanafi specify that those goods can only be taken after the agreement of the chief. When it comes to *fay'* which is composed of the *kharāj* and *jizya*, the tributes specified in treaties, and the goods left by the fled population<sup>134</sup> the Quran specified that *fay'* was for the Prophet, his family, the orphans, the needy and the travelers "so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among [the Muslims] (*Al-Hashr* 59.7)<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Rudolph Peters, "Booty," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Kate Fleet, et al. (2016).

<sup>128</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 231-32.

<sup>129</sup> Peters, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Anthony, 581.

<sup>131</sup> Anthony.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 729-30.

The schools once again oppose each other. The Shafi'is, basing their argument on the similarity of this verse with the *ghanima* verse, declare that both kinds of booty should be dealt with equally. The other schools would like to see *fay'* spent on the Muslims' needs, meaning defense, infrastructure, state administration and religion. The Shi'i add that the land under Muslim leadership should remain the owners' property but only at the condition of the tax payment<sup>136</sup>.

One of the numerous diwan or administrative councils created by Islamic State is entirely dedicated to the distribution of the loot<sup>137</sup>. The following table is a chronological presentation of Islamic State financial information:

2014	<b>Fighters' salaries:</b> 43.6% of Islamic State total expenditure <sup>138 139</sup>
December 2014-January 2015	<b>Wilayat al Khair expenses on fighters based on their locations<sup>140</sup>:</b> City center: \$600,000 al-Mayadeen and Albukamal: \$480,000 al-Badiya: \$1,360,000
March 2015	<b>Salaries:</b> Foreign fighters: \$800 <sup>141</sup> Syrian fighters: \$400
November-December 2015	<b>All salaries are cut in half<sup>142</sup></b>

Table 1: Islamic State sample spending from 2014-2015

The booty distribution protocols make up a large amount of the leaked documents' content, which is expected in an entity that is based on looting to expand its territories, a strategy it borrows from the Ottoman empire<sup>143</sup>. To attract those fighters, the best Islamic State offers is money and women, both the ones from Earth and the Heavenly virgins. The spoils of war distribution follow the one-fifth rule. However, Islamic State makes exceptions on certain objects due to war needs. Therefore, if a warrior acquires a piece of heavy weaponry, Islamic State takes the weapon and

<sup>136</sup> Peters.

<sup>137</sup> Wilayat Halab, "Specimen 5e: General Notification, Aleppo Province, Jumada Al-Awal 1436 Ah," (2015).

<sup>138</sup> This was during a time when the Islamic Sate fully controlled Dar az-Zor which contains a large part of Syrian resources in oil and gas, *ibid*.

<sup>139</sup> Wilayat al-Kheir's Financial Administration, "The Archivist: Unseen Islamic State Financial Accounts for Deir Az-Zor Province," ed. Islamic State (2015).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>141</sup> *Abi-Habib* (2015).

<sup>142</sup> Wilayat al-Raqqa, "Specimen 12q: Lowering of Salaries for Fighters by 50%," ed. Islamic State (2015).

<sup>143</sup> Julian Adler, "The Ancient Face of Isis," *Impakter*, March 21 2016.

repays him for its value. The same goes for any piece which the authorities judge useful for the cause. If Islamic State lacks funds due to the known circumstance, it reserves the right to keep all the products of the looting.

As seen above, the loot is to be distributed between the warriors and the leader, the latter of whom allocates part of the fifth he receives to the needs of the less fortunate. This charity duty motivated Islamic State's authorities to open the "Office of the Share of Orphans from Spoils and Booty." This office will provide help and care for orphans Muslims "beneath 15 years of age or [who] have not reached puberty among males and have not reached menstruation among females [...] in Wilayat al-Raqqa"<sup>144</sup>. One can only wonder about the tragic and cruel irony of the situation when Islamic State actions are most probably directly or indirectly the cause of the death of the parents.<sup>145</sup>

### **Slavery:**

Slavery "in the early Muslim world [...] acted as a barrier against the ultimate wretchedness: mutilation, torture, gratuitous violence and whimsical power"<sup>146</sup>. Muslim 'ulama view freedom as the natural state for human, however slavery was never forbidden by law in Islam, because it is the result of "accident[s] of history, place and circumstance"<sup>147</sup>. Islam preferred to include the practice of slavery in the society's institutions to control and limit what it could not stop<sup>148</sup>. The slaves were a part of the *ghanima*, the pillage booty. They were therefore subject to the same division process. After the leader took the fifth of the slave for his account and the needs of the community, the remaining four-fifths were to be sold on the market<sup>149</sup>.

However, Islam maintained the idea that God was the master of all. Under his rule, slaves were free men and women. And as free people by nature, they were given rights and protection and the ability to gain their liberty from their human owner. The freedom is granted to the female slave when she bears her owner's sons. She becomes an *umm walad* and is freed upon the death of her owner<sup>150</sup>. She is also a *mudabarah* and has the rights of *tadbir*. A slave could also buy back her

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<sup>144</sup> Wilayat al-Raqqa, "Specimen 13i: Opening of Office for the Share of the Orphans in Spoils and Booty," ed. Islamic State (2016).

<sup>145</sup> Wilayat al-Raqqa (2016).

<sup>146</sup> Lamin Sanneh, "Slavery and Islam," *Historically Speaking* 8, no. 6 (2007): 20.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Khalil 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute to Change the Legal Status of Women: The Case of the Jawari or the Female Slaves," *Al-Qantara* 28, no. 2 (2007): 391.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 386.

freedom through the *kitabah*, on the basis of a sum agreed between both parties. She then becomes a *mukataba*. Sexual intercourse is from then on prohibited between master and ex-slave<sup>151</sup>.

After comparing several seemingly common characteristics between the Islamic society and Islamic State, I was surprised to find out that the matters and rules of slavery imposed in Islam are strictly followed by Islamic State. Islamic State twisted the words of God, Muhammed and several the ‘ulama to fit their own interest, but it seems that the rulings about slaves, specifically jarari (sex slaves), correspond to at a superficial level to Islamic precepts. However, deeper research showed once again multiple discrepancies between Islamic State idealistic followings of Muslim teachings and the reality of their actions. It appears from the documents concerning Islamic State that they do not keep men as slave, men and old women are killed upon capture and only women and children are enslaved<sup>152</sup>.

Islamic State retained from the historical caliphate the practice of slavery and the selling of slaves. They apply a strict protocol for the trade and treatment of the sex slaves whom they call *sarari*, an old Arabic term for women captured in war<sup>153</sup> <sup>154</sup>. Islamic State arguments<sup>155</sup> for enslavement are as follows: 1) by enslaving the women of the disbelievers<sup>156</sup>, they save them from “waste and desolation, [...] they [protect] them from atrocities and find protectors for them and their offspring” and, 2) they allow them to learn Islam in the heart of the Islamic society, meaning an Islamic family<sup>157</sup>. In other words, by taking those so-called disbeliever women as slaves, Islamic State claims to have mercy over them both physically and spiritually. The process of acquiring those slaves is highly organized and hierarchized. The caliph is the only one who can decide whether the captured women will become slaves, exchanged for ransom or freed.

Any warrior who desires to buy a slave “must register their names with the admin official of the battalion or sector.”<sup>158</sup> Those who are unable to do so due to their fighting schedule will be provided with an authorization to register from their leader, as long as they do so in the ten days

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<sup>151</sup> Sanneh, 20.

<sup>152</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, *How Islamic State Systematically Turns Girls into Sex Slaves*, vol. Web (August 132015), Video.

<sup>153</sup> The Buhuth and Iftaa Committee clarifies the difference between the sabaya (prisoners), the jarari (slaves) and the sarari (sex slaves). The Imam (caliph) makes the sabaya into jarari when he distributes them among the fighters. If the fighters decided to use them for sexual intercourse they become sarari.

<sup>154</sup> Diwan al-Eftaa’ wa al-Buhuth, "Unseen Islamic State Pamphlet on Slavery," ed. Islamic State (2015).

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> They exclude the Muslim, Jewish and Christian women “since the reason for enslavement is disbelief” Buhuth and Iftaa Commiettee 2015.

<sup>157</sup> al-Eftaa’ wa al-Buhuth, "Unseen Islamic State Pamphlet on Slavery."

<sup>158</sup> Wilayat Homs, "Specimen 13y: Notice on Buying Sex Slaves, Homs Province," (2015).



from the publication of that decision<sup>159</sup>. The unregistered ones are banned from participating in the market auctions. The bids are sealed in an envelope and the highest bidder is required to buy the slave<sup>160</sup>.

Islamic State respects the Islamic rules on slavery, at least in practice, as demonstrated above. However, further research leads us to believe that the rules enunciated by the Diwan Al-Buhuth and Iftaa is nothing more than a mindless regurgitation of the Shari'a rulings. I found two cases where Islamic State distances itself from the Islamic law on slavery. The first case concerns the freedom of women who bear their owner's son. Neither of the documents presented above and authored by the Buhuth and Iftaa' Committee mentions the right of freedom an *um walad* acquires or the slave's right to buy her freedom back. The Buhuth and Iftaa Committee only specifies in its "Questions and Answers on Taking Captives and Slaves"<sup>161</sup> that "if the female captive was impregnated by her owner, [...] he can't sell her if she becomes mother of a child..."

It appears that Islamic State would rather avoid having its fighters free the wombs destined to carry parts of its future. Moreover, the abundance of sexual slaves is one of the main attraction for foreign *mujahideen*.

The second point to notice is the discrepancies within the statements of Diwan of Buhuth and Iftaa', concerning the permissibility to enslave women of the Book aka Christians (*kitabyat*)<sup>162</sup> is that "it is not allowed to take captives of the women of the disbelievers not waging war from the people of the Dhimmi [i.e. Jews and Christians] and the like."<sup>163</sup>

However, in the "Questions and Answers on Taking Captives and Slaves", it is specified that:

"There is no dispute among the scholars that it is permissible to capture unbelieving women [who are characterized by] original unbelief [*kufr asli*], such as the *kitabyat* [women from among the People of the Book, i.e. Jews and Christians]<sup>164</sup>."

This disagreement from within the institution could be based on the differences in religious experiences within the Diwan al-Buhuth and Iftaa'. Upon reading both texts it seems that the writer(s) of the first pamphlet is more experienced and thorough in his argumentation. In that same regard, the first text reminds the fighters of the forbiddance of enslaving Muslim men and women.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Al-Tamimi, Archive of Islamic State Administrative Documents (cont), Specimen 13Y: Notice on buying sex slaves, Homs province.

<sup>161</sup> Diwan al-Eftaa' wa al-Buhuth, "Questions and Answers on Taking Captives and Slaves," ed. Islamic State (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2014).

<sup>162</sup> "Unseen Islamic State Pamphlet on Slavery."

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> "Questions and Answers on Taking Captives and Slaves."

However, Jabhat al-Nusra accuses Islamic State of enslaving their women, who are Sunni too. Moreover, it appears that Islamic State is killing Shi'a, whom it considers apostates. Those accusations and Islamic State retaliation were made through Twitter<sup>165</sup>.

### **Leadership and Caliphate:**

The criteria to which every candidate to the caliphate has to correspond were decided informally through the caliphate elections and nomination throughout history<sup>166</sup>. The five conditions documented by Ibn Khaldun<sup>167</sup>:

- to be extremely knowledgeable in Islamic fiqh and the Quran, and be able to make informed, just and independent decisions accordingly,
- to be known for one's integrity, sense of justice, bravery, honesty, and virtue,
- to be competent as a leader, he should lead *jihad*, apply war and law punishments, apply and protect Islam and manage the public interests, lead the political life and diplomatic relations,
- to be fit of mind and body, this includes handicaps, disfigurements and missing limbs, to be free of external physical and mental influences,
- to descend from the Quraysh clan and preferably from the Hashemite clan<sup>168</sup>.

Ibn Khaldun writes that the fifth condition is based on the Saqifah events, a succession battle that opposed the Prophet's Medinian Supporters (Ansar) and Quraysh, which happened after the death of Muhammed<sup>169</sup>. The Quraysh imposed themselves as the only choice of succession on the Ansar due to the Prophet's recommendation for the first to "care" for the second<sup>170</sup>. Ibn Khaldun argues that the Quraysh became the concentrators of a "group feeling", due to their unified position they could stop conflicts among the community; however, they lost their polarization factor when they became richer and experienced luxury<sup>171</sup>. Non-Arabs gained power and proved that the leadership of Islam was accessible to all and any believer and denied Qurayshite descent as a requirement to access the supreme position<sup>172</sup>. Ibn Khaldun claims that the descent is significant only if it fulfills

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<sup>165</sup> R; Yehoshua Anat Aragon; Green, Y, "Sex Slavery in the Islamic State - Practices, Social Media Discourse, and Justifications; Jabhat Al-Nusra: Isis Is Taking Our Women as Sex Slaves Too " in *Inquiry & Analysis Series* (Islamic State, 2015).

<sup>166</sup> Vernie Liebl, *The Caliphate and Islamic Statehood: Formation, Fragmentation and Modern Interpretation*, ed. Carol Kersten, vol. 3, *Critical Surveys in Islamic Studies* (Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2015), 258.

<sup>167</sup> Khaldūn, 1, 394-402.

<sup>168</sup> This condition is opposed by the Khawarij who argue that "any pious Muslim should be eligible to be caliph" Liebl (2015) 258.

<sup>169</sup> Khaldūn, 1, 396.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 397.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 400.

<sup>172</sup> They based their argument of Kharijite doctrine Ibn Khaldun (1956) 397.

the “group feeling”, this feeling is uniting and the leader can use it to make the community follow him without opposition<sup>173</sup>. The Qurayshites have the ability to unite all the communities and tribes, all over the Muslim world, because they are “all-comprehensive” to both Arabs and Muslims. Those strict features were made to guarantee that the caliph would be close to the impersonated perfection Muslim believers find in Muhammad. By claiming to be of Qurayshite descent, as seen below, al-Baghdadi is apparently planning to use this “group feeling” to his own advantage. Firstly, he secures his candidacy by “fulfilling” this condition only a few can achieve; and secondly, he hopes to unite Muslims worldwide by “being” the flesh and blood of the Prophet.

When Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Al-Badri (aka Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Qurayshi) claimed the position in May 2010 he had, at least according to Islamic State’s Majlis Al-Shura, satisfied all the criteria, making him the heir of the Prophet’s religious legacy. At first glance, al-Baghdadi seems to fulfill at least two of those conditions. The document “Mad al-Ayadi Li Baya’at al-Baghdadi” is written to justify the veracity and truthfulness of al-Baghdadi’s claim on the caliph’s position.

Knowledge: He studied at Saddam University for Islamic Studies and graduated with honors. He earned his masters degree in Quranic recitation, his doctorate in Quranic Sciences, and wrote a book on the Quranic recitation techniques<sup>174</sup>. Al-Baghdadi is apparently well read in the elements of the Quran; one can presume that he also possesses familiarity with the other branches of Islamic religious knowledge.

Probity: al-Baghdadi sense of justice is demonstrated by his position as a conflict mediator during the time he spent in Camp Bucca, a US prison. He was chosen as the leader of the Sharia Committee by Abu Ayoub Al-Masri, his predecessor at the head of Islamic State. However, it was demonstrated that the *tamthil* applied on Muath al-Kasasbeh was unjust according to Islamic law. Yet, it was still applied, and one can safely assume that such a publicized act would be ordered by the top decision maker. al-Baghdadi did not arrive to his position on his own. He was helped by Hajj Bakr, his “éminence grise”<sup>175</sup>; one could therefore wonder, how independently al-Baghdadi’s decisions are taken.

Competence: The existence and expansion of Islamic State is the material proof of al-Baghdadi’s ability to lead his subjects in *jihad*. He administers the daily affairs by appointing governors and

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<sup>173</sup> Khaldūn, 1, 400.

<sup>174</sup> 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamid 'Athari, *Islamic Beliefs: A Brief Introduction to the 'Aqīdah of Ahl as-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005), 2.

<sup>175</sup> McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Leader of the Islamic State."

judicial courts, as seen in the *Tamthil* section. Islamic State directs everything in its territory according to Islamic laws, as it interprets it. Diwan al-Hisba<sup>176</sup> patrols the streets to make sure the laws are followed; they even check the meat<sup>177</sup> and regulate bread prices<sup>178</sup>, and have issued a law forbidding the use of explosives and electricity in fishing, with the goal of protecting the environment and fish consumers<sup>179</sup>.

Physical/mental health: His only public appearance was posted on social media on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2014; he addressed his followers and proclaimed himself a caliph in one of Mosul's mosque. Since that date, Al-Baghdadi's rare signs of life were uncertain and vague. He was announced as dead or wounded three times since his nomination (November 2014<sup>180</sup>, April 2015<sup>181</sup> and June 2016<sup>182</sup>). Moreover, when it comes to his body's lack of handicap of any sort, it seems that he miraculously lost the need to wear glasses despite his poor eyesight<sup>183</sup>. In his public address in the Mosul mosque, he is not wearing glasses. He however was wearing them on his Camp Bucca profile picture<sup>184</sup>.

Qurayshite descent: He asserts his belonging to the Quraysh tribe through the tenth Imam, Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Hadi. al-Baghdadi declares that he descends from Ja'far al-Zaki, one of the Imam's son<sup>185</sup> <sup>186</sup>. I found two sources breaking this argument, both of which are based on Shi'i groups and individuals who questioned the veracity of Al-Baghdadi declared descent. The Alawi Descent Transcendence Association<sup>187</sup> demonstrates the impossibility that al-Baghdadi tribe, al-Bu-Badri, descends from the Prophet for three reasons. Firstly, they claimed to descend from

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<sup>176</sup> Chamber of Morality Police Al-Aqeedi, 2.

<sup>177</sup> Medyan Dairieh, *The Islamic State (Part 3)* (Vice News, 2014), Video.

<sup>178</sup> Diwan al-Qamah wa al-Makhabaz, "Specimen 10o: Regulations on Bread Prices (Aleppo Province)," ed. Islamic State (2014).

<sup>179</sup> "Specimen C: Fishing Regulations (Agricultural Department): Deir Az-Zor Province," ed. Islamic State (2015).

<sup>180</sup> McCoy and Taylor.

<sup>181</sup> Chulov and Shaheen for The Guardian (2015).

<sup>182</sup> Julia Glum, "Is Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Dead? Islamic State Leader Reportedly Killed in Us Anti-Isis Airstrikes," *International Business Times*, June 14, 2016 2016.

<sup>183</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 1227.

<sup>184</sup> Northern German Broadcast quoted in McCants, The Believer.

<sup>185</sup> 'Athari, 3.

<sup>186</sup> After listing the paternal lineage of al-Baghdadi all the way to the prophet, Al-Athari quotes Ibn Kathir. Ibn Kathir wrote an exegesis of the Quran commonly titled "Tafsir Ibn Kathir". Al-Athari quotes a passage that explains Al-Nisaa' (4.133) *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 124. This extract explains, among other things, that the family of the prophet is the purest family on Earth and all its members should be respected as such. However, when I looked up the extract cited by Al-Athari in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, I found that Al-Nisaa' (4.133) is in no way connected to the family of the prophet. The verse only states the ability of God to take people's lives and replace them with other individuals (Al-Nisaa' 4.133).

<sup>187</sup> "جمعية تنزية النسب العلوي, "تدقيق نسب عشيرة أبو بدري"

[http://tanzeeh.nabilalkarkhy.com/trips/iraq\\_trips/badry.htm](http://tanzeeh.nabilalkarkhy.com/trips/iraq_trips/badry.htm).

Yahya, one of the sons of the ninth Imam, Muhammad al-Jawad. The issue for al-Baghdadi is that Yahya did not have children. Secondly, Abbas, one of Al-Baghdadi's paternal ancestors, claimed to descend from Al-Hassan through the bloodline of a certain emir Hamidha. However, the Alawi Descent Transcendence Association explains that no proof of this descent was ever presented. Thirdly, the tribe claimed its descent from the Prophet through the bloodline of Ja'afar al-Zaki, the son of the tenth Imam and brother of the eleventh Imam<sup>188</sup>. Once again it is one of Al-Baghdadi's ancestors who is the source of this statement, one Ali al-Badri, who wanted to rearrange his ancestry in 1964. He sought to get his claim recognized by Sayyid<sup>189</sup> Mahdi Al-Wardi and Abd al-Mullah al-Tounji, two of his contemporaries, however absolutely no proof of his statement was ever presented<sup>190</sup>. Al-Hussainy adds that Al-Badri are not known to belong to the Mawajid. This name is given to the descendants of Sayyid Majd bin Abd-Al Rahman Al-Radwi. However, the Mawajid were well-known as Shi'a scholars in Al-Hila, Iraq. They migrated to Shiraz and Isfahan with the Ottoman invasion of Iraq. The Bu Badri immigrated, at some point in history, from the Levant to Sammara in Iraq<sup>191</sup>. It is therefore impossible for the Bu Badri to descend from Ali, despite all the claims Islamic State makes. Regardless of all the contestations against Al-Baghdadi's arguments, he is using his so-called descent to empower the Ibn Khaldunian "group feeling" that united Muslims from all over the world to form Islamic State.

Hajj Bakr, the "éminence grise" of Al-Baghdadi, the man who was an officer in Saddam's army, met al-Baghdadi during their imprisonment in Camp Bucca, a prison led by the American military<sup>192</sup>. Islamic State was still under an oath of allegiance to Osama Bin Laden, and the latter was supposed to select the next emir.<sup>193</sup> However, his instructions were ignored by Hajj Bakr, who conspired to ensure the election of al-Baghdadi. He sent letters to each of the eleven Shura members<sup>194</sup> telling them that the other members already chose al-Baghdadi<sup>195</sup>.

<sup>188</sup> "عبدالرحمن الحسيني، "أبو بكر البغدادي والتوقف على نسبه الهاشمي #داعش تحقيق علمي" <http://alhoussainy.net/2014/06/29/%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%85%D9%8A-%D8%AF/>

<sup>189</sup> The nomination Sayyid is given to the male descent of the Prophet through Fatma and Ali.

<sup>190</sup> الحسيني.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Leader of the Islamic State."

<sup>193</sup> Meanwhile an interim leader, selected by the Council, was to lead (McCants, *The Believer*).

<sup>194</sup> Abu Abdulrahman al-Bilawi was the head of the Shura Council, he was also one of the Camp Bucca detainees. His real name is Adnan Ismael Najm; he was killed in al-Khalidiya, Anbar. "Exclusive: Top Isis Leaders Revealed," *Al-Arabiya English*, February 13 2014..

<sup>195</sup> The results were nine against two in favor of Al-Badri. McCants, "The Believer: How an Introvert with a Passion for Religion and Soccer Became Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi Leader of the Islamic State.".

### **Conclusion:**

The first Islamic dynasties were left with the religious heritage of the Prophet and his successors. It was up to the newly named caliph and his political and religious courts to model the piece of clay they had as the image they needed to put their ideas in practice. However, the problem with those successive models is that it can be hardly determined which values, declarations, and beliefs were those authentically left to humanity by the Prophet, and which ones were made up after his death to serve the material interests of his successors. As crude as this may sound, one could compare today's Islam to a fourteen centuries old Frankenstein creature. The political and governing institutions were replaced and reformed so many times that Muslim political thought is an agglomeration of tribal rules, Iranian patriarchal monarchy, religious rivalries and religious myths. Moreover, one can add to all those ingredients, the modern idea of nationalism that started to influence Islamic states as a movement of resistance against the Western colonialism. Islamic political thought, is as its name indicates, an intricate mix between Islam and politics from the beginning.

### **Conclusion:**

This chapter's goal was to test the strength of Islamic State's claim to the caliphate legacy by comparing facets of Islamic law and its application in premodern Muslim societies with Islamic State. Several conclusions resulted from this comparison. Firstly, it appears that Islamic State is tremendously selective toward the rules of Islam it follows. Islamic State is an ideological religious entity that ignores and omits many of the opinions and teachings of God, the Prophet and the scholars while claiming their actions in the name of the three. This selective process was mainly demonstrated through the analysis of *tamthil* and slavery and can most likely be explained by 1) the vague religious knowledge of both the fighters and the so-called 'ulama guiding and fueling the organization and, 2) the need for Islamic State to recruit the largest number of fighters through an ideology based on pure violence and abundant sexual intercourse.

Secondly, Islamic State tries to recreate the early Islamic societal dynamics which were based on tribal values and customs. However, this reviving process is jeopardized by Islamic State's underestimation of nationalism's growing influence in the region through the last century. At first glance, Islamic State might appear as a unified and organized Islamic society, an explicitly named resurrection of the caliphate concept which died with the Ottoman empire. However, the reality is different. Islamic State experiences a culture clash between its local (Iraqi and Syrian) and Western fighters and an extremely unequal religious experience between its members as seen in the slavery section. It appears that the followers of Islamic State, brought in their hijra luggage more than their

radicalized and lost minds, they brought their Western views on nationalism and cultural differences.

Thirdly, Islamic State is an entity that tries to distance itself from both the Western world and the Muslim community. By concentrating a part of the terrorist attacks on Western capitals, symbolic days and monuments, Islamic State strategy is to increase the sentiments of hatred toward the Muslim community in the West and in general. The goal is to kill two birds with one stone; 1) to become the champion of the oppressed Muslims and 2) to create more enemies to be added to the United States alliance, which in turn will accomplish the apocalyptic prophecy. Moreover, the apocalyptic narrative helps Islamic State in its recruiting mission. Islamic ideology and all the violence it contains can only attract a certain part of the needed army. However, when near-apocalypse is added to the equation, the radicalized and unstable minds will readily rush to guarantee their seats in a paradise where all their needs will be satisfied, a place they reached through the new meaning their life and death have been given by their religion.

Islamic State is indeed an organized entity to a certain point but it cannot be compared to any modern Arab or Western state. The dynamics of Islamic State are a fragile balance of tribalism, religious extremism, mafia/gang attitudes and politics. If Islamic State was given the opportunity to develop and grow, or, was created in another time, it could have become more than a religious terrorist organization which is imposing its laws on territories conquered and submitted by force and fear. However even if it would have reached a step closer to sovereignty, its claim to Islamic authenticity is still invalidated by the many contradictions, manipulations, and ignorant claims it is imposing on Islamic laws, culture, and history.

The different conclusions exposed above can be summarized in three statements: 1) Islamic State is detached from the precepts of Islam, 2) it only uses Islam as an inspiration to control a disconnected community living in a broken territory, 3) Islamic State is neither Islamic nor a state, 4) Islamic State is an ideology inspired from Islam and it uses Islam as a tool toward territorial and ideological dominance.

Islamic State, follows the same path of other ideological Islamic organizations. It claims to be the exclusive representative of Islamic beliefs and history, and views itself as the only group able to maintain the purity of Islam. Islamic State is not the first group claiming to purify Islam and most certainly not the last. Saudi Arabia is the perfect contemporary example, and the outcome of a similar formative process, that is the so-called purification of Islam. In the upcoming chapter, I will compare Saudi Arabia's main institutions to those of Islamic State.

## Chapter 2-Saudi Arabia and Islamic State: Two Sides of the Same Coin

In the last chapter, I explained how Islamic State is neither Islamic nor a state. This double negation of Islamic State claims results from both the group's manipulative omission of core Islamic precepts and culture and its inability to truly unite its members under one common idea of belonging. I arrived at this a conclusion by assessing different facets of Islamic State functioning with the governance, laws and rules applied in the early Islamic society. In this second chapter I will present the main beliefs of both Salafism and Wahhabism<sup>196</sup> and demonstrate how they influence Islamic State and Saudi Arabia's daily life. Before moving forward in this ideological comparison, one must know that neither Islamic State nor Saudi Arabia represent the Muslim community and Islamic State is opposed by most the Muslim creeds<sup>197</sup>.

At first glance, comparing Islamic State and Saudi Arabia through their ideologies seems easy and direct<sup>198</sup>. Both entities were formed on military conquests which were fueled by their radical interpretation of Islam; today they both claim to govern per the true<sup>199</sup> precepts of Islam. This unique reading of Islam is widely known under two terms, often mistakenly used to define each other, Salafism and Wahhabism. Briefly put, the followers of these two ideologies believe that true Islam is the Islam practiced during the Prophet and his successors' times (610-8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries), an Islam that is, at least theoretically, not influenced by any of the practices picked up by Islam's followers with the religion's worldwide spread.

However, both Saudi Arabia and Islamic State would not be what they are today if it weren't for these two ideologies, their believers and each entities unique background. Due to the fundamental positions Salafism and Wahhabism hold in both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia, the first section of this second chapter will explain the differences and similarities between those two visions of Islam, whereas the second section will explain how both entities use the teaching of these two ideologies in their everyday life.

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<sup>196</sup> Wahhabism (Wahhabiyya) was the name the detractors of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab gave to his doctrine in an effort "to deter others from accepting it [...] and to suggest that he was preaching a new religion or a fifth madhab as it was occasionally called" Abd Allah al-Salih 'Uthaymin, *Muhammad Ibn 'abd Al-Wahhab: The Man and His Works* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 110. The followers of Ibn Abd-Al-Wahhab call themselves Muslims, since they believe that their doctrine is true Islam; some of them prefer the term "Muwahhidun" as Tawhid (God's unicity) is the core idea of their belief. However, al-'Uthaymin (d. 2001) notes that the followers of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are gradually accepting to be named "Wahhabis" because their beliefs are understood today, so the term "Wahhabi" ceased to carry a pejorative connotation and is commonly used in the literature *ibid.*, 111.

<sup>197</sup> Elias D. Mallon, "Who Speaks for Islam? Muslim Authorities Call for an End to Militant Violence," *America: The Jesuit Review* 212, no. 9 (2015).

<sup>198</sup> Kamel Daoud, "L'arabie Soudite, Un Daesh Qui a Reussi," *The New York Times*, November 20 2015.

<sup>199</sup> The truthfulness of Islamic precepts is a timeless claim made by all Muslim leaders, from all the Islamic branches, during their respective reigns.



### **Salafism and Wahhabism:**

We will begin this chapter by differentiating between two terms that are often confused; Salafism and Wahhabism. They both refer to the same ideology, that is an application of the Islam of “the pious ancestors”<sup>200</sup>, known as *al-salaf al-salih*<sup>201</sup>. This Islam of the first hour is “the earliest and therefore [most] authentic version of Islam”<sup>202</sup>.

I denote above the similar origin Salafism and Wahhabism share. However, Wahhabism is but one of the most recent versions of Salafism<sup>203</sup>. Lauzière explains that both the Salaf and Wahhabis reject the idea that the way of “the pious ancestors”<sup>204</sup> is subjected to a diversity of interpretations;

From their [Purist Salafi] perspective, there cannot be differentiated types of Salafism, just as there cannot be premodern and modern versions of it. Rather, there can be only one authentic Salafism, handed down from generation to generation since the time of the pious ancestors. So although it is common for self-proclaimed Salafis to have disagreements and accuse one another of deviating from Salafism, they usually compete for the same label<sup>205</sup>.

There is a diversity of groups who declare themselves to be the only true theological successors of the Prophet and his pious followers and it is not my position to assess the legitimacy of their claims; but I noticed through my research that all those groups have their disagreements on what defines Islam. So, despite being the unsurpassed community in the Muslim *ummah*, at least in the eyes of its members, the Salafi movement (i.e. Salafism and Wahhabism) contains contradictions (e.g.: selective takfir, interested bida’ legalization, bida’ creation, etc). Some of those paradoxes came to

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<sup>200</sup> Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 33.

<sup>201</sup> In Arabic السلف الصالح, also known as the way of “Ahl al-Sunna wa’l Jama’a” (أهل السنة و الجماعة) Noorhaidi Hasan, *Laskar Jihad: Islam, Militancy, and the Quest for Identity in Post-New Order Indonesia*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, 2006), 135.

<sup>202</sup> Haykel, 33.

<sup>203</sup> Due to the disagreements encouraged by both religion and politics, Salafism and Wahhabism gave birth to several sub-groups. Neo-Salafism was the result of a combination of *jihad* and *da’wa* in an effort to propagate Islam “to build an ideal, alternative society free from Western cultural influence and control”, an ideal society in which only the so-called true Muslims are admitted (Moussalli, 21), meaning not the Shi’a (Haykel, 35). Neo-Wahhabism was created to rebel against the softening of the Saudi royal family toward the infidels and the teaming of the Wahhabi clerics by the Saud. This new movement goal is the destruction of all the infidels a.k.a the Americans, the Muslims who stand with them (Haykel, 10) and the Shi’a (Haykel, 35).

<sup>204</sup> Haykel, 33.

<sup>205</sup> Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism: Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 9.

be at the beginning of the movement and others were created with its evolution and development through time and space. The time of the original *Salaf*, the ancestors, lasted for the three generations that shadowed the Prophet and ended in the same period as Ahmed ibn Hanbal's death<sup>206</sup> (d.780-855)<sup>207</sup>. However, the modern *Salaf* came to base a large part of their beliefs<sup>208</sup> on the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, a man born in 1263. Ibn Taymiyya was not one of the original pious ancestors, he became a pious ancestor among others, at least to the *Salaf*, who recognized the value of the late scholar's works. He is known by the *Salaf* as the Sheikh of Islam and his books are set as primary legal sources in the Salafi and Wahhabi communities.

Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Saqqaf (d. 1961) and Muhammad Sa'id Ramadan al Buti (d. 2013) shade a light on the way Ibn Taymiyya became the *Salaf*'s deputy by default. Both authors deny the existence of Salafism as a doctrine (*madhab*), but their logic on this matter differs from that of the *Salaf*. Al-Saddaq explains that "the pious ancestors [disagreement] on so many theological issues-ranging from the createdness of the Qur'an to the vision of God on the Day of Judgement [makes the] madhab al-salaf [...] a historical myth"<sup>209</sup>.

Al-Buti expressed a similar sentiment toward the non-existence of a *madhab al-salaf* based on the forefathers' doctrine, which "was not a doctrine per se, [...] but rather a set of rules and a methodological framework"<sup>210</sup>. The disagreements and differences of opinions displayed by the Prophet's companions are confirmed by the abundance of *ahadith* and the numerous contradictions they contain. Consequently, not a single line of conduct could be confirmed in the Sunna when it came to *tamthil*, a practice discussed in the previous chapter. This lack of agreement explains that Ibn Taymiyya (b.1263) became an essential source of validation of this practice, even though he was born centuries after the end of the *salaf al-salih* era in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries. In other words, Ibn Taymiyyah, helped Salafi rules to be anchored in Islam as known and written rules, even though he was not one of the original *Salaf*.

### **Salafism:**

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<sup>206</sup> Haykel, 39.

<sup>207</sup> Holtzman Livnat, "Aḥmad B. Ḥanbal," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Brill).

<sup>208</sup> The *Salaf* reject of the ideas of "*taqlid* (blind imitation)" and *maddhahib* (Islamic law schools) which are non-divine laws, therefore null; and their similar rejection of *ijma'* (consensus), *qiyas* (analogy) and *ijtihad* ("independent legal reasoning") Hasan, 134.. The *Salaf* believed that real Islam can only be found in the Quran and the Sunna, but throughout history they followed the teaching of several scholars who explained, debated and reinterpreted *Salafi* doctrine.

<sup>209</sup> Lauzière, 31.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

All of the self-proclaimed *Salaf* are reluctant toward innovations (*bida'*). However, Salafism<sup>211</sup>, the path of “the pious ancestors”<sup>212</sup>, was influenced and interpreted by numerous scholars, such as Ahmed Ibn Hanbal, Ahmad ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. The “pious ancestors”<sup>213</sup> are known as the Prophet’s “generation, then those who came after them and those who follow them”<sup>214</sup>. As the followers of the “pious ancestors”, the *Salaf* see themselves as the representatives of the purest form of Islam. They envision themselves as the chosen people, “the only victorious group that will be saved in the Hereafter”<sup>215</sup>, *al-firqa al-najiya*<sup>216</sup>. The *Salaf* believe that their singular status is due to their exclusive dependence on the Quran and Sunna for any theological support. The *da'wa al-Salafiyya* (Salafi calling) focuses on the teaching and propagation of pure and uncorrupted Islam<sup>217</sup>. To abide by this mission is to accept Salafism as a way of life, a *Salafi* person finds all the answers to life in Islam. He/she dedicates a lifetime toward the protection of Islam from *bid'a* (innovations)<sup>218</sup>, *khurafat* (superstitions), *shirk* (polytheism)<sup>219</sup>, *rida* (apostasy), and *kufr* (unbelief)<sup>220</sup>. To be a *Salafi* is to renounce reasoning in matters of religion; in other words, one should never challenge the rules and forbiddances of Islam, even if they are not understood. The *Salaf* emulate the Prophet’s life, clothing and attitude toward others. Since the Prophet’s society was woven around him and Islam, the *Salafi* community lives as a tight and interdependent communal body ruled by the *wala'* (loyalty to the Prophet) and *bara'* (rejection of heresy and unbelief)<sup>221</sup>. A community living by the *wala'* and *bara'* principle is a community that, at least in theory, lives in isolation

<sup>211</sup> Due to the similarities between the two ideologies, I will present the common points they share and refer to Wahhabism by name when its views change from those of original Salafism.

<sup>212</sup> Haykel, 33.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Bukhārī, *Sahih Al-Bukhari: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, vol. 8, Sahih Al-Bukhari (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1976), 8.437.

<sup>215</sup> Haykel, 34.

<sup>216</sup> Hasan, 131.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>218</sup> ‘Abd al-Aziz ‘Abd Allah Bin Baz issued several fatwas on what is considered as *bid'a*; leisure activities (“music, theatre, [...] cafes, discotheques, and dance clubs), cosmetics [perfume, maquillage but only at home for the husband (Fatwas of Ibn Baz, Part No. 21; Page No. 223)], and media (cinema, television, and photographs are excluded and ‘considered aspects of infidel culture’ ” (Hasan, 140). Perfume is forbidden for women outside the household, as it can be seen in the previously cited fatwa; but it is highly advised for men, since it was one of the Prophet’s habit to have his beard glisten with the perfume Aisha put on it (Bukhari 7.806).

<sup>219</sup> , 130.

<sup>220</sup> Ahmad Moussalli, "Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who Is the Enemy?" (American University of Beirut, 2009), 4.

<sup>221</sup> Hasan, 132.

from the rest of the world to avoid the unbelievers' (Muslims and non-Muslims) corruptions and innovations.

#### Hizbiyya:

The members of the *Salafi* community differ in the ways they apprehend the *wala'* and *bara'* principle. Some of them prefer to isolate themselves from the rest of the society, while others like the Muslim Brotherhood, attempt to introduce their views Salafi views of Islam to society through politics. The *Salaf* call such a move toward political life, *hizbiyya*<sup>222</sup>, meaning the use of Islam for political means. Some of the *Salaf* see *hizbiyya* not only as the unholy fusion of politics and Islam but as a completely new *da'wa* known as the *da'wa al-hizbiyya* (the calling toward Islam politicization). Abd al-Mu'thi's who is a *Salafi* scholar explains that the *da'wa al-hizbiyya* endangers the purity of Islam because 1) it is a deviation "from the way of faithful Muslims (*sabil al-mu'minin*)", 2) "its leader comes perilously close to the sins of *bid'a*", 3) "its members are committed to the doctrine of *al-wala'* and *al-bara'* on the basis of their loyalty to a particular leader rather than to the Qur'an and the Sunna", 4) "it teaches fanaticism"<sup>223</sup>. To put it in another way, the cohesion of the *Salafi* movement is threatened by the creation of different political loyalties that will set the community afar from their primary loyalty to the Prophet and draw them closer to innovations and temptations.

As mentioned above, some branches of *Salafiyya* try to organize their community and ultimately create an Islamic and Sharia abiding state, by entering the political realm. They believe that the *Salafi* doctrine will be able to rule the whole Islamic community with the spread of the *Salafi* beliefs. Even though all the *Salaf* agree on the necessity of an Islamic state, they are not on an agreement concerning the methods of creating one or the time in which such a state will be created. Ja'far Umar Thalib, a *Salafi* scholar, explains that some of the *Salaf* have faith in the creation of an Islamic state at some point in the future, but such a creation will only result from the realization of a divine promise<sup>224</sup>. He adds that human beings' only responsibility is to keep Islam pure from *bid'a* and religious corruption, while practicing the Prophet's Sunna. Likewise, Abd al-Mu'thi explains that the Muslims should not worry themselves with the creation of a caliphate when their most important mission is to maintain the propagation of tawhid, Islam's central principle<sup>225</sup>. If Muslims' responsibility is only the preservation of Islam and tawhid until God gives them an Islamic state; then one could be a Muslim anywhere, in a state that abides or not by Islamic

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<sup>222</sup> *Hizbiyya* (حزبية) literally translated is "partyism", in other words, divisions following religious/political factions.

<sup>223</sup> Hasan, 141.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

rules. Therefore one could conclude that by forbidding hizbiyya, the Salafi movement might have introduced secularism to Islam.

#### Tawhid:

Tawhid is the most important precept of Islam, it is the declaration of God's unicity. *Tawhid* has three indivisible meanings; "*tawhid al-ubudiyya* (unity of worship), *tawhid al-rububbiyya* (unity of lordship), *tawhid al-asma wa 'l-sifat* (unity of Allah's names and attributes)"<sup>226</sup>. When a Muslim declares "There is no God, but God" ("*la ilaha illa Allah*"), he or she asserts that 1) there is only God that should be worshipped and none other than Him, 2) God is the only Creator and Sovereign of all that is, and 3) all the names and attributes of God refer only to him and to none of his creations<sup>227</sup>.

Tawhid al-ubudiyya (unity of worship) implies that God's "true servants must single [Him] out [...] in all acts of worship and He alone should be worshipped with complete and utter loyalty"<sup>228</sup>. Specifically, acts of worship like prayers, fasting, good deeds should only be done with God in mind and no other than Him. Tawhid al-rububbiyya (unity of lordship) means that "a faithful Muslim must accept that God is the Creator of all things and sovereignty over believers belongs only to Him"<sup>229</sup>. Tawhid al-rububbiyya is the reason behind the rejection of hizbiyya by some of the Salaf; the politicization of Islam implies that Muslims will submit their life to another human being and possibly forget that only God is their lord and sovereign. The names and attributes in question are the ninety-nine names of God (Allah) that He used in the Quran to describe Himself. Tawhid al-asma wa 'l sifāt (unity of God's names and attributes) is therefore, to believe that those names and attributes can only be used to describe God and none of his creatures. In other words, to be a Muslim, in this case a *Salafi*, is to accept utter and infinite submission to God and only God in every aspect of one's life. The Salafi community is submitted to God and accepts his unicity but it is divided when it comes to the ways such a unicity should be defined. Mawdudi and Qutb, Salafi scholars, believe in a fourth dimension of *tawhid* and that is *tawhid al-hakimiyya*<sup>230</sup>.

#### Hakimiyya:

Mawdudi defines *Tawhid al-hakimiyya* as the "true sovereignty [that] can be ascribed only to God who is Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe"<sup>231</sup>. Qutb agrees with Mawdudi's idea

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>231</sup> Charles J. Adams, Mawdudi and the Islamic State, in Esposito, Voices of Resurgent Islam, p 105, in Hasan, 143.

about God’s total sovereignty. Both scholars believe that *tawhid al-hakimiyya* is one of the main components of God’s tawhid (unicity)<sup>232</sup>, however, this idea is deemed to be an innovation of the principle of tawhid by the rest of the Salafi community. The Salaf consider that tawhid al-uluhiyya encompasses Muslims’ acceptance of the Sharia as the only law, but they reject the idea that a Muslim who does not follow the Sharia is necessarily a *kafir*, as it is implied by Mawdudi and Qutb. This takfiri concept is based on the two scholars’ interpretation of al-Mai’dah (5:47)<sup>233</sup>. The controversially innovative idea proposed by the two scholars is that God is the one true Sovereign in every known domain, and whoever does not obey to his law (namely the Quran and the Sunna) is a *kafir*, an unbeliever<sup>234</sup>. Most of the Salafi scholastic community rejects this general takfir movement<sup>235</sup> and deem it extremely dangerous for the unity of the Muslim community<sup>236</sup>.

The difference of opinion between the Salafi majority and the two scholars is one of the internal contradictions of Salafism, but it does not mean that the *Salaf* are against the application of the Sharia as the one and only rule for the human beings. For the *Salaf* this application is inevitably included in the acceptance of the *tawhid ubudiyya*, but they exclude excommunication of a ruler due to his faulty application of the Sharia for reasons of political stability<sup>237</sup>. Instead, the *Salaf* created two categories of rulers guilty of different degrees of unbelief; “*kafir ‘itiqadi* (infidel at the level of belief) and *kafir ‘amali* (infidel at the level of practice)”. While the first is unredeemable since he stopped believing in God, His messenger and the total superiority of Islam rules, the second is a Muslim who has committed sins<sup>238</sup>. Hasan adds that the *Salaf* might have created the second category to safeguard rulers from incessant revolutions based on their certain unbelief in Islam<sup>239</sup>. Those revolutions could lead the people to democracy, a concept the Salaf seem un-Islamic because they believe that only the most religiously educated members of the society can choose a leader following the rules of Islam.

#### Democracy:

A ruler cannot be toppled easily because he is chosen by “*ahl al-hall wa’l-‘aqq*”<sup>240</sup> who are defined by Thalib as “a group of religious scholars and political leaders who act under the

<sup>232</sup> Ahmand Moussalli, Radical Islamic Fundamentalism, p 151 in Hasan 143.

<sup>233</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 145.

<sup>234</sup> Hasan, 143.

<sup>235</sup> Takfir is one of the main characteristics of the Wahhabi movement as shown below.

<sup>236</sup> Hasan, 144.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 146.

guidance of God and His messenger”<sup>241</sup>. The Salaf envision Islamic leadership as an oligarchy led by “*Ahl l-hall wa ’l- ‘aqd*”<sup>242</sup> who have studied the Quran and the Sunna, a knowledge that enables them to choose the next “*ulu al-amr*”<sup>243</sup>, the ruler whose authority is a temporary “power delegated by God”<sup>244</sup>. The Muslims must obey this ruler, no matter how despotic and unjust he can be, to avoid the inner-annihilation of the Muslim community. However, if he turns out to be a *kafir*<sup>245</sup>, a *taghut* meaning a ruler whose disobedience to the Sharia has been proved<sup>246</sup>, it is the believers’ responsibility to remove him because “a Muslim is not bound to obey a government led by a *kafir*”<sup>247</sup>. Because a Muslim’s primary submission is meant for God, he/she must not obey a leader who stands on the path of divine obedience. Whoever does not resist in every conceivable way against those who stand in the way of Islam, “by force [...], by word of mouth, [or] at least in their hearts through refutation and disengagement [has] no faith”<sup>248</sup> per Abu Bakr Ba’asyir, an Indonesian Qutbi Salafi leader<sup>249</sup>.

<sup>241</sup> Ja’afar Umar Thalib, *Menyoal Demokrasi*, *Salafy* 30 (1999): 4-6, quoted in Hasan, 146.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Also, known as *wali al-amr*.

<sup>244</sup> Hasan, 146.

<sup>245</sup> The Salaf object the use of general takfir to avoid breaking the community, but they use it to keep the stability of the leadership in order to keep this same community from going astray from religion. If the political ruler, who is chosen by the religious elite, is proven to be an unbeliever then both the religion and its representatives lose their credibility.

<sup>246</sup> Hasan, 147.

<sup>247</sup> Hasan, 146.

<sup>248</sup> Abu Bakr Ba’syir, “Pedoman Mengamalkan Islam Menurut Al-Qur’an dan As-Sunnah”, in *Dakwahdan Jihad Abu Bakr Ba’asyir*, ed. Irfan Suryahardy Awwas (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2003), p. 87 quoted in Hasan, 147.

<sup>249</sup> Founder of Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, an Indonesian military Salafi opposition group aiming for the creation of an Islamic State in Indonesia Hasan, 18-20. Abu Bakr Ba’aysir (pronounced Bashir) is an Indonesian cleric who spent twenty-five months in prison for “being part of an ‘evil conspiracy’ to commit the 2002 Bali suicide bombings”; he was freed in 2006. Lee Hudson Teslik, “Profile: Abu Bakar Bashir (A.K.A. Ba’asyir),” Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/indonesia/profile-abu-bakar-bashir-k-baasyir/p10219>.

Along the accusations concerning the Bali bombings, he was blamed for life threats made against former president Megawati Sukarnoputri although the prosecutors could not “make any of the charges stick”, “Profile: Abu Bakar Ba’asyir,” BBC, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-10912588>.

While in prison in 2005, he quoted Ibn Taymiyyah and declared that “a martyrdom action cannot be postponed in this case because *jihad* is more important than making the hajj. [...] There is no better deed than *jihad*. None. The highest deed in Islam is *jihad*. If we commit to *jihad*, we can neglect other deeds”. He also supports attacks on America and its policies as long as it is on American and not Muslim soil, in order to avoid fitna and the death of Muslims. Scott Atran, “The Emir: An Interview with Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, Alleged Leader of the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah Organization,” *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 9 (2005).

Abu Bakr Ba’aysir was arrested in 2010 days after threats were made to former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s life. The police arrested Ba’aysir on charges of “planning and funding a terrorist training camp in Aceh”. Jason Tedjasukmana, “Indonesia Arrests Cleric Linked to Bali Bombings,” *Time*, August 10 2010.

Democracy is not the way of the *Salaf*, they think that it will not help the Muslim society to imitate the Western ways. To put it in Thalib's words "all attempts to get away from the problems afflicting our nation will fail except a return to the way prescribed by God and His messenger. Muslims should be convinced of this solution and they should be aware of God's warning that they are being colonized by erroneous opinions introduced by the West"<sup>250</sup>.

Thalib deems democracy as a Western and alien concept that represents a danger for Islam and its followers. To be a Muslim is to submit to God, therefore Thalib demonstrates, one must believe in God and not in a foreign man-made concept. Thalib is concerned that Muslims' temptation for democracy will create "chaos and destruction"<sup>251</sup>, moreover he believes that democracy is the reason behind all the problems the Muslims face today. Those problems, he believes, can only be solved by a return to the rules of God, therefore he adds that it is the responsibility of the most educated of the Muslims to lead the community through those rules by taking crucial decisions such as the nomination of a *wali al-amr*. However, this logic holds a contradiction since it is up to the Muslims as a community to decide to remove their leader based on his level of religious virtue. Nevertheless, one could infer a different idea from Thalib's logic; the Salafi scholar judges that democracy is incompatible with Islam because the "Muslims are prohibited from submitting to the will of the majority of the people, since the majority of them are in error"<sup>252</sup>. But would the Muslims be able to vote, if the *Salaf* could create the perfect Muslim community where all the believers would be devout and educated Muslims? The answer would be negative if we base ourselves on the Saudi Arabian system, but this would suppose that Saudi Arabia created the perfect Salafi society.

#### Jihad:

Due to the attention *jihad* is given in the popular culture and minds I will briefly clarify the meaning of *jihad* before I explain the Salafi interpretation of this concept. *Jihad* is a word and concept that has been widely overused, misused and misunderstood by nearly every Eastern and Western concerned party in the last decade. *Jihad* is often defined as the Islamic equivalent of the Christian holy war, but then again, this type of warfare originates from the understanding of

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In 2011, he was jailed "for 15 years for supporting a militant training camp", "Profile: Abu Bakar Ba'asyir". While in prison, he pledged his allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. This decision that made his sons (Abdul "Im" Rohim and Rosyid Ridho), who are loyal to al-Qaeda, and by extension Jabhat al-Nusra, form their own faction known as Jamaah Ansharusy Syariah in support of al-Qaeda's fight in Syria Rendi A. Witular, "Sons, Top Aides Abandon Ba'asyir over Isil, Form New Jihadist Group," *The Jakarta Post*, August 13 2014.

<sup>250</sup> Ja'afar Umar Thalib, *Menyoal Demokrasi, Salafy* 30 (1999): 4-6, quoted in Hasan, 146.

<sup>251</sup> Hasan, 146.

<sup>252</sup> Hasan, 146.



religious wars only in Europe<sup>253</sup>. It is essential to know that even though a parallel could be made between the religiously motivated use of force in both holy war and *jihad*, *jihad* encompasses more concepts under its umbrella than holy war. This difference originates in the semantic and religious definitions of the word *jihad*. Despite being commonly known as a military kamikaze action, the main definition given to *jihad* is defined by the Prophet as the constant struggle for a believer to keep God's message, to His numerous prophets, alive by using his hand, tongue and heart<sup>254 255</sup>. Therefore, a person engaged in *jihad* is "exerting one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors, unsparing, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation"<sup>256</sup>, that is most likely "a visible enemy, the devil and aspects of one's own self"<sup>257</sup>. The different obstacles faced by Islam through its believers come in various aspects and colors (spiritual, political, military, social), which call for various kinds of *jihad*. The Prophet prescribed three ways for a believer to fight for his/her religion; the *jihad* of the heart ("struggl[ing] against one's own sinful inclinations"), the *jihad* of the tongue ("speak[ing] on behalf of the good and forbidding evil"), the *jihad* of the sword ("defending Islam and propagating the faith")<sup>258</sup>.

The word *jihad* is often followed by the expression "*fi sabil Allah*" (in the path of God) which indicates that one is struggling to "further or promote God's kingdom on earth [...] by simply striving to behave ethically and by speaking without causing harm to others or by actively defending Islam and propagating the faith"<sup>259</sup>. This sentence puts the emphasis on the distinct aspects a person's struggle could have; Islam's propagation and protection is possible through peace and war.

However, it seems that both the Prophet and the scholars put a considerable emphasis on the peaceful spread of Islam. Firstly, this saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad in which he states that "the best fighting (*jihad*) in the path of Allah is (to speak) a word of justice to an oppressive ruler"<sup>260</sup>. When a simple person is courageous enough to honestly tell a leader when he/she is

<sup>253</sup> Reuven Firestone, *Jihād: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>254</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri and Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami'-Us-Sahih*, vol. 1 (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1971), 1.81.

<sup>255</sup> Firestone, 17.

<sup>256</sup> Edward Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, (London: William and Norgate, 1865) quoted in Firestone, 16.

<sup>257</sup> Firestone, 16-17.

<sup>258</sup> Firestone, 17.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Abu Da'ud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani and Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud: English Translation and Explanatory Notes*, vol. 3 (Lahore: Sh. M. Ashraf, 1984), 3.4330.

wrong, that person is executing a great act of *jihad* because the defense of Islamic values was done despite a risk for their life. Secondly, the Muslim scholars distinguished between *al-jihad al-akbar* (the greater jihad) and *al-jihad al-asghar* (the lesser jihad); the latter includes the individual's inner and spiritual struggle while the first represents only the military warfare in the name of God<sup>261</sup>. Therefore, it is more arduous and demanding for a Muslim to keep his belief in God durable and pure and his spirit far from the Devil's temptations than to take arms to defend and propagate Islam by killing those he sees as the religion's adversaries.

The rules of Jihad listed above are applied by all the creeds of Islam (Khawarij, Shi'i, Sufi, Sunni) since those rules are based on the Quran and the *ahadith*. However, the territorial expansions and internal/external attacks experienced by the religion since the death of Muhammad resulted in diverse interpretations and adaptations of the rules of *jihad*.

The Khawarij were Muslims who after supporting Ali's fight over leadership of the *ummah* against Mu'awiya ibn Sufyan, left the Prophet's son-in-law side when he accepted to settle the issue with a human-led Quran based arbitration<sup>262</sup>. This original group of the Khawarij opposed Ali's decision because by accepting the arbitration, they claimed, he rejected the word of God, thus was not a believer anymore<sup>263</sup>. From then on, they had a maxim they followed unquestionably, "No ruling but for God's"<sup>264</sup>. The Khawarij's *jihad* was a continuous battle for the perfect application of Islam, whoever stood in the way of God's way was to be killed. Whoever did not agree with their vision of Islam was brutally executed, they made no differences between men, women (even pregnant ones) and children<sup>265</sup>; they only spared the Jewish and Christian individuals because Islam was not against the people of the book<sup>266</sup>. They remembered the martyrs in their ranks and took them as examples for their own rebellions and martyrdom<sup>267</sup>. The Khawarij were fierce warriors "whose murderous zeal" to protect "all that early Muslim society valued most" also meant the destruction of the Muslim legacy<sup>268</sup>. However, not all of them prioritized the physical *jihad*, Abu Bilal Mirdas ibn Udayya was quietist Khariji Muslim until the murder of a Khariji women occurred. After this event, he embraced the violent Khariji ways. This could indicate that the rebellious

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<sup>261</sup> Hasan adds that the *jihad* of the tongue, when striving for good and against evil, is simply called *al amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al nahi 'an al-munkar* (Hasan 149),

<sup>262</sup> Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*, Divinations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

<sup>263</sup> Williams John Alden, Corfield Justin, and J. DeLong-Bas Natana, "Khawārij," (Oxford University Press).

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Sizgorich, 197, 215-16.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 214.

movement was easily swayed toward a forceful problem resolution. The movement's violence and brutality was often compared with the actions of al-Qaeda and Islamic State, a comparison that was vehemently refuted by the two entities<sup>269 270</sup>. Nevertheless, the irony is that the Wahhabis were described by Muhammad Amin ibn Abidin as the "Khawarij' (seceders) of his time"<sup>271</sup> and Al-Qaeda was defined as a Khariji group by Prince Naif of Saudi Arabia<sup>272</sup>.

The Shi'a modelled their jihad rules upon the action of Ali during the first four battles that opposed the Muslims. Ali created a chivalry code as an attempt to civilize the action of the Muslim military toward both the Muslims, the people of the Book and, the unbelievers. He insisted that no elders, women or children should be harmed, if a reasonable offer of peace came from the adverse camp it should be considered, treaties must be respected<sup>273</sup>. Those rules are used as a basis for jus in bello<sup>274</sup> by both the Shi'a and the Sunna. However, after al-Hassan and his family were attacked and killed, despite being in a situation of military inferiority, the Shi'a became quietists. Quietists only attack when they must defend themselves<sup>275</sup>, the problem is that the definition of preventive self-defense could quickly become that of preventive attack<sup>276</sup>. Jihad according to the Twelvers should be paused until it can be restored by his authority<sup>277</sup>. When they engage in jihad, it is a jihad justified by an injustice they cannot suffer anymore (e.g.: Iranian Revolution)<sup>278</sup>. However, their definition of self-defense is comparable to a preventive attack.

Sunnis and Shi'i agree on the necessity to engage in jihad for the defense and expansion of the territory and the religion. They also agree on the immunity of women, children, elders and disabled<sup>279</sup>. However, they disagree on the authority allowed to begin jihad, the Sunnis favor the Califs and their successors, while the Sunnis envision the descent of Ali as the possessors of such an authority<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> "Naif Calls Al-Qaeda Khawarij," *McClatchy - Tribune Business News*, March 17 2010.

<sup>270</sup> Pamela Engel, "This Is the Name Isis Hates Being Called More Than 'Daesh'," *Business Insider*, September 17 2016.

<sup>271</sup> Ahmad Atif Ahmad, *Islam, Modernity, Violence, and Everyday Life* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>272</sup> "Naif Calls Al-Qaeda Khawarij."

<sup>273</sup> Mohammad Jafer Mahallati, *Ethics of War and Peace in Iran and Shi'i Islam* (Toronto; 4: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 140.

<sup>274</sup> "Moral aspect of conduct in jihad" *ibid.*, 137.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> Micheal G. Knapp, "The Concept and Practice on Jihad in Islam," *Parameters* 33, no. 1 (2003): 85.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>278</sup> Mahallati, 132.

<sup>279</sup> Knapp.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

The Sufis, like the rest of the Muslims, believe in the “greater” (“mujahada”)<sup>281</sup> and “lesser” (“jihad”)<sup>282</sup> jihads, they see them as complementary<sup>283</sup>. Al-Ghazali encourages the believers to conduct military jihad, but insists on the fact that mental jihad is a prerequisite<sup>284</sup>.

We explained the religious meaning of jihad firstly to clarify the scope of such an essential concept for both the Muslim and the Western worlds, and secondly to emphasize Salafism’s attitude toward this religious notion as seen below. The *Salaf* insist on keeping Islam immaculate from any corruption and innovation. Yet several examples<sup>285</sup> through history show the *Salaf* making use of jihad for political reasons, despite their (theoretical) complete rejection of the *hizbiyya* due to its inherently innovative nature and its contradiction with the Salafi doctrine<sup>286</sup>. The alternative use of jihadi *hizbiyya* and its rejection for religious reasons is but one of the strategies used by the *Salaf* and numerous other Islamic groups. This strategy might be explained by human nature and interests; even the most devout and pious activist religious group needs a material and concrete realization of its earthly goals. Moreover, religious activism cannot succeed without the intervention of men and women to unite the masses behind a religious idea; religious belief on its own cannot carry a revolution.

#### Literal Interpretation:

The *Salaf* are different from common Muslims in the way that they understand the religious scriptures literally. They do not interpret the Quran and the Sunna by using reason. Ibn Taymiyya writes in *al-Fatawa al-Kubra* that this *Salafi* verbatim understanding is to interpret literally the Qur’anic verses and *ahadith* that relate to the Divine attributes [...], and without indicating modality and without attributing to Him anthropomorphic qualities [...]. So that one is not to state that the meaning of ‘hand’ is power or that of ‘hearing’ is knowledge<sup>287</sup>. By way of explanation, the followers of the Salaf interpret *Sad (38:75)*<sup>288</sup>, for example, as a confirmation of God’s hands existence; but neither as an anatomically real hands and nor as simple metaphor indicating His power.

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<sup>281</sup> Harry S. Neale, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings* (New York, NY; 4: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 55.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Neale, 61.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>285</sup> Assaf Moghadam, "Motives for Martyrdom: Al-Qaida, Salafi Jihad, and the Spread of Suicide Attacks," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (2008): 47.

<sup>286</sup> Hasan, 148.

<sup>287</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatawa al-Kubra*, Cairo: Dar al-Kuttub al-Haditha, 1966, 5, p. 152 quoted in Haykel 38.

<sup>288</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 603.

To summarize, Salafism is an ideological movement based on 1) the belief in the unicity of God, 2) the literal application and understanding of the sharia and the Quran. The *Salaf* as indicated by their name define themselves as the followers of the “pious ancestors”<sup>289</sup> creed. So, what differentiates them from the followers of Abd al-Wahab teachings? The subtle differences between the two creeds can be explained crudely in the following way: Wahhabism is Salafism cooked in the Saudi sauce. In other words, Wahhabism is a strict reinterpretation and reformation of Salafism that was used by both Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad ibn Saud in the founding of the first Saudi state (1744-1818). In the following section, I will explore the birth of the Wahhabi doctrine. Our goals are to comprehend how it compares to Salafism and how it was used and is still used in the reinforcement of Saudi Arabia.

### **Wahhabism:**

Wahhabism emerged in the isolated and sporadically educated region of Najd, at the center of the Arabian Peninsula, in the present Saudi Arabia. This doctrine is named after its founder, Muhammed ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). He was one of the sons of his town’s (al-Uyayna’s) local religious leader and judge Shaykh Sulayman ibn Ali. His religious education was traditional; he learned the Quran by heart at ten years old and studied *al-madhab al-Hanbali*<sup>290</sup>. His education increased with his travels to the two Holy Cities and all around the Arabian Peninsula<sup>291 292</sup>. Some scholars believe that his encounters with Shi’a in Basra were the starting point of his doctrine, teaching and applications. He was faced with beliefs that completely contradicted his views of what proper Islam ought to be. His severe opinions about the Basran Shi’i religious life got him expelled from the city<sup>293</sup>. After further travels around the peninsula, he came back to his hometown, al-Uyayna, where he started to apply his doctrine<sup>294</sup>. The Wahhabi line of thinking is not extremely far from that of the *Salaf*, however, it is far more complex to grasp. The tremendous importance given by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to the unicity of God in every aspect of religion, politics, and daily life explains this difference.

### **Tawhid:**

The scholar explains that *tawhid al-rububiyya* (the unity of “divine lordship”) does not only mean that God is the one Creator, the “Controller of the Universe”, the “Giver of life and

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<sup>289</sup> Haykel, 33.

<sup>290</sup> 'Uthaymin, 29-30.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>292</sup> There is no agreement in the scholarly sources about the length and exactitude of Ibn Abd al-Wahab’s travels, I will therefore only mention the points that are mostly agreed on.

<sup>293</sup> 'Uthaymin, 36.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 41.

death<sup>295</sup>, but He is also the One who predestined all human actions, without, however removing their free will<sup>296 297</sup>. The *tawhid al-asma wa al-sifat* (the unity of God's names and attributes) corresponds to the general *Salafi* idea. Finally, the *tawhid al-ibada/tawhid al-ilahiya* (the unity of God's worship) should be understood as different and parallel to the *tawhid al-rububiyya* (the unity of God as the One Creator and Sovereign of the believers<sup>298</sup>). The first one is to be understood as the unity of God as the one God and the second as the unity of God as the one Lord<sup>299</sup>. When one declares his submission to God he should therefore think of God as the one and only God, because idol-worshippers can think of their idols as lords<sup>300</sup>.

#### Intercession:

As an extension of the belief in the unity of God, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab forbade the practice of intercession to God through the Prophet, his family and saints. The believers would ask a certain saint to intercede on their part to God. This religious ritual is mainly practiced by the Shi'a and the Sufi branches of Islam, and is also a feature of popular Muslim religiosity that does not have a formal name.

The rituals followed by the Shi'a and the Sufis are based on their attachment to the Prophet and his family. Therefore, they fall under Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's accusation of people who: 1) celebrate the "Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*mawlid*)", 2) "seek [...] to make the dead a means to God (*tawassul*), 3) or a means for assistance (*istighatha*) or, 4) an object of intercession with God (*tashaffu*)"<sup>301</sup>. The logic behind his argument is that only God can answer prayers and help the Muslims<sup>302</sup>. To ask for help from any other than God is to imply that 1) he is not all powerful to help his creations, 2) he cannot hear all he prayers and need the assistance of saints, 3) to put God on the same level as mere human as sanctified as they can be, is a sin of idolization<sup>303</sup>.

#### Grave visitation:

Tombs and graves of the Prophet, his family and the saints should not become places of worship as are the mosques built in honor of God. The Wahhabis are not against grave visitation with the goals of remembering the finite nature of life, of praying for and remembering the dead<sup>304</sup>, but they

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<sup>295</sup> 'Athari, 69.

<sup>296</sup> They are, therefore, still punished for their sins Hasan 115.

<sup>297</sup> Hasan 115.

<sup>298</sup> In the religious sense of the term (Hasan 133)

<sup>299</sup> Hasan 119-120.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>301</sup> Haykel 41.

<sup>302</sup> 'Uthaymin, 121.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 122-3.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 125.

are against praying to the dead, the sacrifices and offerings that they believe are made to the dead by visitors. Even the grave of the Prophet is no exception; when one goes for pilgrimage he/she should visit the grave out of reverence but it should not be the only reason for a travelling to Mecca<sup>305</sup>.

#### Takfir and Qital:

Whoever contradicts the Wahhabi beliefs is by default excommunicated; one becomes a kafir meaning an unbeliever. Excommunicating/killing (*takfir* and *qital*) Muslims is a common practice in the Wahhabi circles. Al-Uthaymin adds that Ibn Taymiyya considers Islam to be grounded in only two main beliefs: tawheed (God's unicity and singular worship) and the exact following of the Prophet's precepts when worshipping God<sup>306</sup>. Therefore, most Muslims are accounted as unbelievers by the followers of that movement<sup>307</sup>, because they do not follow its beliefs and demands. However, the death sentence is not immediate; if someone is completely ignorant of Islam's true doctrines, Wahhabism in this case, he/she should be taught the right ways. If that person refuses submission to God or is proven to be an unbeliever, she/he can be killed even if the proof of the unbelief is not understood by the executed person<sup>308</sup>.

#### Bid'a:

This massive excommunication mission conducted by the Wahhabis is mainly due to the innovative practices (*bida'*, sing. *bida'*), adopted by those "so-called" Muslims. An innovative practice, *bid'a*, "as a juridical term [...] is used to describe any doctrine or action that is not based on the Qur'an, the tradition or the authority of the Companions"<sup>309</sup>. A good innovation is therefore an innovation that does not condemn those sources<sup>310</sup>. The schools of Islam differ on the way those innovations should be classified. The Shafi'i school, one of the four Sunni legal schools, differentiates between good *bida'* and different degrees of bad *bida'*<sup>311</sup>. Al-Uthaymin explains that the good innovations are Muslims' responsibilities to apply (*fard kifaya*); an example could be the study and teaching of sharia that allows one to defend Islam<sup>312</sup>. The bad innovations are classified as either *haram* (prohibited), *mandub* (recommended), *makruh* (disapproved), or *mubah* (permitted). Some novelties are permitted in certain cases like the opening of schools (*mandub*) and a luxurious life

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 131-2.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

(permitted); the negative *bida'* include divorce (makruh)<sup>313</sup> and adultery (Bani Israel 17.32)<sup>314</sup>. None of the *bida'* are *fard 'ayn* (an obligation to all Muslims); however, there is a debate about the *bida'* that fall under the *mubah* category. When it comes to religious “doctrine or practice” *mubah* transforms into either makruh or haram<sup>315</sup>. While the *fard* or the Muslims’ responsibilities are not an obligation for every Muslim, the *bid'a* are forbidden to all the Muslims without exception. In the Hanbali school and by extension, the Wahhabi doctrine, this forbiddance applies to every kind of innovation. With respect to worship, all the rituals that are not included in the Sharia are considered as haram for the Hanabil<sup>316</sup>.

#### Ijtihad and Taqlid:

Islam teaches total obedience to God through a loyal application of the rules and laws He specified in the Quran and the Sunna. However, those two primary sources do not cover all the situations and issues the whole Muslim community can face. To address to protect the community from going astray from the rules of Islam, the ‘ulama are to research and interpret the theological/legal texts of Islam to formulate solutions that do not contradict the Quran and the Sunna. This process is known as *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) and the scholars applying it are identified by the community as *mujtahiddun* (sg: *mujtahid*). To be a *mujtahid* is a great responsibility and religious obligation, only the most educated of the ‘ulama can pretend to have the knowledge required<sup>317</sup>.

The Wahhabi position on *ijtihad* is extremely puzzling; *ijtihad* is both permitted and forbidden depending on the cases presented to the *mujtahid*. Abdallah, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s son, claimed that the Wahhabis “are not qualified to exercise *ijtihad*, nor does any of [them] claim[s] to be”<sup>318</sup>. However, it seems that the Wahhabis do apply *ijtihad*, even though it is an indirect application. They attempt to minimize their reliance on *ijtihad*, since the Quran and the Sunna are their legal/religious sources by default. Therefore, when they are faced with a religious question they begin by checking the Quran and the Sunna, if they find nothing they will research into the opinions (aka: *ijtihad*) of the pious ancestors and the scholars<sup>319</sup>. The Wahhabis divide the scholars whose *ijtihad* is accepted in two categories; the *mujtahid mutlaq* (*absolute*) and *mujtahid*

<sup>313</sup> Dalenda Lagueche, "Confined, Battered, and Repudiated Women in Tunis since the Eighteenth Century," in *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History*, ed. Amira El Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 265.

<sup>314</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 367.

<sup>315</sup> 'Uthaymin, 137.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> “A thorough knowledge of theology, revealed texts, and legal theory (usul al-fiqh), a sophisticated capacity for legal reasoning, and a thorough knowledge of Arabic”. A. Rabb Intisar, "Ijtihād," (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>318</sup> 'Uthaymin, 141.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.



*muqayad* (limited). The first category encompasses the leaders of the four schools of Islam whose religious knowledge was complete enough to perform *ijtihad* in all matters of religion, while the second category is made of “exceptionally” well-informed religious scholars on specific dimensions of Islam. Said differently, the Wahhabis accept only the *ijtihad* coming from the *mujtahid* that came before them. But, one could ask, what about the modern religious problems to which the *mujtahid* of the past were never faced? In those cases the Wahhabis interpret the possible *ijtihad* of the past scholars based on similar cases; therefore, the *ijtihad* of the present is based on that of the past. Both Sulayman Ibn Abd al-Wahhab<sup>320</sup> and Al-Albani (d.1999)<sup>321</sup>, criticized Ibn Abd al-Wahhab because of 1) his misunderstanding of the principles of *ijtihad* and 2) his following (*taqlid*) of the Hanbali school<sup>322</sup>. Al-Albani<sup>323</sup> adds that Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s did not have the experience to apply legal/religious *ijtihad* since his writings were focused on *tawhid* and the punishment of those who did not follow its principles<sup>324</sup>.

Al-Albani, a major Salafi scholar, criticizes Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab for following the rulings of the Hanbali school because:

the Salafis completely reject *taqlid* (“imitation”) of any *madhhab* [Islamic theological/legal school], preferring instead to interface directly with the sources of revelation (*al-‘amal bi-al-dalil*) every time they want to obtain an Islamic judgment or opinion<sup>325</sup>.

The Salaf prefer to apply *ijtihad* onto the Quran/Sunna to solve their religious/secular issues in the Quran and the Sunna. They pride themselves to follow none other than God and the Prophet. A similar claim was made by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab who maintained that the Prophet is the only one Muslims are required to follow in matters of religion. Wahhabis could rely on the four Sunni Imams, but they must check that the opinions of the four Imams are not in contradiction with the Quran/Sunna as the quartet required Muslims to<sup>326</sup>.

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s followers admit their imitation of the Hanbali school but they insist they would never apply one of its rulings if it goes against the word of God and the teachings of the Prophet. Moreover, they do not oppose following any of the other three Sunnis schools, but

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<sup>320</sup> Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s brother and opponent.

<sup>321</sup> A major Salafi scholar.

<sup>322</sup> Haykel, 42-3.

<sup>323</sup> Al-Albani approved of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab’s spread of tawhid and fight against the bida’ of Najd and Hijaz (Haykel 42).

<sup>324</sup> Haykel, 43.

<sup>325</sup> Haykel, 42.

<sup>326</sup> This condition implies that the Muslims have to apply *ijtihad* on the opinions of the absolute *mujtahidun*. Even though the four Sunni Imams asked the Muslims not to follow them if they ever contradicted Islam, it sounds unrealistic to discuss and re-interpret opinions that were most likely validated, invalidated and interpreted numerous times in the last fourteen centuries.

only if such change was not made of personal interest. Nevertheless, they maintain that “the Rafidites, the Zaydites and the Imamites” (aka the Shi’a) should change their ways to abide by the teachings of one of the four Sunni schools<sup>327</sup>. To administer the application of taqlid the Wahhabis broke up Taqlid in three categories known as

-haram (prohibited): Imitation of a *madhab*’s leader even if his opinions contradict the Quran/Sunna,

-madhmum (disliked): Blind imitation of a *madhab*’s leader despite possessing the necessary *ijtihad* knowledge and,

-mubah (permitted): Imitating a *madhab*’s leader because of the absence or lack of religious knowledge in any other *madhab*.

#### Imama:

The taqlid (following) of a madhhab leader is questioned in the Wahhabbi doctrine, however there is no extensive debate concerning the Muslim’s obedience toward their political, military, and religious leader. The unity of the Muslim community behind its leader is conditional for the dominance of Islam<sup>328</sup>. Muslims cannot be spread the rules of the Sharia without their Imam and no man can an Imam without a group of people following his lead. The perfect leader must be free male with extensive religious and administrative knowledge, a Qurayshi with such criteria is preferred. The Muslim community must remain loyal and united behind the leader even he is “oppressive or sinful” and if he calls for *jihad* the community should readily follow his command<sup>329</sup>. In the case the leader is unjust with the people, revolt should make place to patience in the minds of the Muslims; a united community behind a bad leader is better than a good leader without a community.

#### Amr bi al-ma’ruf wa al-nahi ‘an al munkar:

The unity of the Muslim community depends on its obedience toward its leader, but it is also based on the community’s application of the principle of *amr bi al-ma’ruf wa al-nahi ‘an al munkar* (order to do good and forbiddance of evil). This principle is defined by the Quran (Al-Imran 3.110)<sup>330</sup> as the reason why the Muslims are the “the best community”. Ibn Taymiyyah’s believes that the *amr* (order) to do good and *nahy* (forbiddance) to do evil are the basis of Islam and the application of these two rules is an obligation upon all the Muslims. When a Muslim applies this principle he/she has to know 1) what is good and bad according to Islam, 2) the physical/mental

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<sup>327</sup> Uthaymin, 143.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 79-80.

state of the person they are talking to, and 3) be kind with the person and tolerant concerning the consequences of their intervention. Nevertheless, the Muslims should never intimidate Muslims and non-Muslims from applying or joining Islam, the Prophet himself tolerated sinful actions from some of his opponents to avoid spilling blood in battles<sup>331</sup>. However, such an injunction raises question toward the application of tamthil and other violent actions by Islamic State; it must be noted that Islamic State justified its use of tamthil by quoting Ibn Taymiyyah on the possibility to convert people through *tamthil*<sup>332</sup> (Ibn Taymiyyah 223-224).

*Al-Salaf al-Salih*, the Islam followed by the pious ancestors, is an Islam that is considered by its followers to be as pure and virgin as the day of its revelation. However, this pure and untouched version Islam went through the path of time and was dissected, debated, and discussed by both educated and uneducated Muslims innumerable times. Each new scholar added his own interpretation and understanding of what this real Islam means. New words and terms were created to define new concepts. Consequently, a few questions can be asked: Does *al-Salaf al-Salih* still exist? Did those scholars who vehemently refused reform and innovation change the unalterable Islam<sup>333</sup> through their insistence of retaining the one true Islam in their books?<sup>334</sup>. Unfortunately, I cannot answer those questions in this thesis, but it does make one wonder about the validity of Islamic State, Saudi Arabia and all the other Muslim self-declared Sharia abiding states.

#### **Salafism and Wahhabism in Islamic State and Saudi Arabia:**

In the previous section, I examined the Salafi and Wahhabi ideologies in detail, however in this section I will demonstrate some of Islamic State and Saudi Arabia's daily application of those precepts. Since Salafism and Wahhabism are two interpretations of the way of the pious ancestors, I cannot scientifically categorize the attitudes of either entities as uniquely Salafi or Wahhabi in nature. Therefore, I will explain and describe conducts and behaviors that could be reasonably based on one or both ideologies. I will only concentrate on the 1) grave leveling and the destruction of so-called idols, 2) Islamic State's Hisba Brigades and the Saudi Arabian Muttawa<sup>335</sup>.

#### **Grave leveling and so-called idols' destruction:**

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<sup>331</sup> 'Uthaymin, 145.

<sup>332</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, 223-4.

<sup>333</sup> "This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL ISLAM" (The Table Spread 5.3). Al-Islam is translated as "The Surrender" to God, a surrender that came to characterize the religion revealed to Muhammad *The Glorious Koran - a Bilingual Edition with English Translation, Introduction and Notes*, 153.

<sup>334</sup> As did claim all the other doctrines of Islam since the death of the Prophet.

<sup>335</sup> The Arabic word "muttawa" means a person who got volunteered or volunteered on his own.

As seen in the Grave visitation sub-section, the Wahhabis are against people visiting graves, especially those of the Prophet, his family and the saints in fear of people praying to the dead and making them offerings. Since God is the only one who should be worshipped, the believers should not turn toward the graves when praying. Therefore, the Wahhabis destroyed the graves of the Prophet's family and notables of al-Medina (Figure 1 and 2) and the remnant of Muhammad's familial houses<sup>336</sup> to suppress what they perceived as idolization<sup>337</sup>. In the same vein, the Wahhabis destroyed palm trees which were planted by Salman al-Farisi by order of the Prophet. The Wahhabis objected to "the veneration which Iranian and other visitors (as well as local Shiites) used to show for those trees"<sup>338</sup>. Whether the palm tree in Figure 4 is linked to destroyed trees is hard to say, but the Nakhawila<sup>339</sup> Shi'i community has kept its palm tree related customs alive despite the Wahhabbi oppression. A Shi'i widespread belief is that when one makes a wish will tying a ribbon on a holy place, God will grant the person's wish when the ribbon gets unfastened.

Islamic State destroyed several Shi'i mosques in Mosul (Figure 5) for the same reasons that pushed the Wahhabis to destroy the Baqi' al-Gharqad; a fear that people are and will worship other than God. These destructions at the hands of the Wahhabis and Islamic State are only several examples of the numerous buildings and tombs which were levelled, ravaged and ruined.

Both entities based their destructions on several *ahadith* stating that graves should always be levelled, should not display an image<sup>340</sup>, should not be sit on<sup>341</sup>, should not be plastered with gypsum<sup>342</sup>, and should not be prayed toward<sup>343</sup>.

<sup>336</sup> Werner Ende, "Baqi Al-Gharqad," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Kate; Krämer Fleet, Gudrun; Matringe, Denis; Nawas, John; Rowson, Everett, Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill Online, 2010).

<sup>337</sup> In 2014, Saudi Arabia made public its potential project to remove the Prophet's body from his tomb to officially avoid the development of a veneration towards his burial place. His body would be moved to the Baqi' al-Gharqad were it would be interred anonymously. The speculations are that the Saudi government wishes to destroy all the parts of the Masjid al-Nabawi that are hindering the regime's plans to expand the religious complex to welcome more pilgrims Andrew Johnson, "Saudis May Risk Muslim Division with Proposal to Move Mohamed's Tomb," *The Independent* 2014. It seems that the Wahhabis give more value to the Prophet's message of Tawhid than they respect his whole legacy including his teachings and his family.

<sup>338</sup> Ende, 297.

<sup>339</sup> From the Arabic word "nakhal" which means palm tree.

<sup>340</sup> Abu Da'ud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani and Ahmad Hasan, *Sunan Abu Dawud: English Translation and Explanatory Notes*, vol. 2 (Lahore: Sh. M. Ashraf, 1984), 2.3212.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 2.3222.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 2.3219.

<sup>343</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri and Abdul Hameed Siddiqui, *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami'-Us-Sahih*, al-Tab'ah 2 ed., vol. 2 (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1972), 2.2121.



Figure 1: Baqi' al-Gharqad before it was destroyed by Ibn Saud ad the Wahhabis 1925 (Ende, [www.alhikmeh.org](http://www.alhikmeh.org))



Figure 2: Baqi' al-Gharqad in 2015 with the Masjid al-Nabawi in the background (Muslah Mattar)



Figure 3: Al-Baqi' al-Gharqad, al-Medina, February 2014 (Credit: author's mother)



Figure 4: Ribbons tied on a palm tree in the Nakhawila Shi'i community neighbourhood, February 2014 (Credit: author's mother)



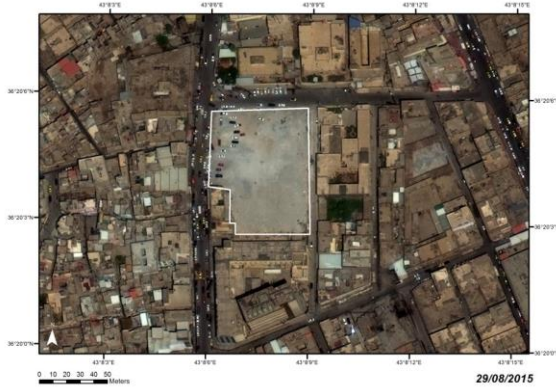


Figure 5: Al-Nabi Shith mosque in 2013, 2014 and 2015. West Mosul, Ottoman period. Built in 1231/1815-16. (European Space Imaging GmbH/ARCDATA PRAHA; Oriental Institute: The Czech Academy of Science)

### The Hisba Brigade:

Islamic State’s maintains religious morals and values on the territories it conquered with the help of the Diwan al-Hisba<sup>344</sup>’s car patrols. Medyan Dairieh, a Vice News reporter, filmed one of these patrols on one of its daily rounds around Raqqa in Syria. Abu Obida, one of the patrol leaders of the Hisba, declared in the context of this documentary titled “The Islamic State”, “my purpose is to establish the Caliphate And in order to make it happen in the way of the Prophet, we have to teach others what to do and what not to do [*amr bi al-ma’ruf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*]. [...] We are still fighting with our machine guns, but we have to face these vices as well”<sup>345</sup>.

This man’s words are no other than Ibn Taymiyyah’s ideas concerning the perfection of the Muslim’s community’s and the application of the *amr bi al-ma’ruf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*. This Hisba patrol leader, supposedly a Salafi, wants to implement the caliphate by fighting with weapons and by forcing the Sunni Raqqa population to follow the Sharia as Islamic State interprets it. Later in the video, he proudly declares that alcohol drinking and selling does not exist anymore since “they’re [the people] afraid of even having it in their house, as we [the Hisba patrols] get reports even on that”<sup>346</sup>.

He goes on to claims that the Hisba (aka Islamic State) “advises in a nice way, but those who don’t obey, [they] will be forced [to obey]”<sup>347</sup>. The rules the patrol is seen enforcing are the forbiddance of human representation, swearing, smoking publicly, the women’s dress code<sup>348</sup>, cheating on the products nature, price and weight (cooking gas and meat), and alcohol/ drugs selling and

<sup>344</sup> Hisba is defined as the “reckoning” and “accounting” of the people toward “state-appointed individuals [...] who enforce the law of Islam (the shari’a) in both the public and private spheres” (Gleave 306).

<sup>345</sup> Dairieh, *The Islamic State (Part 3)*.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Full body coverage, the clothes under the abaya should not be seen.

consumption. The punishment for such offense go from a warning, to prison, whipping and finally capital execution<sup>349</sup>.

This glimpse in Islamic State judicial system might lead one to assume that the system is, at least even if barely, based on Islamic law. This does not seem to be the case in Mosul, Iraq, per the people living in Islamic State's conquered territories. In this city, the members of the Hisba come from Mosul's far away villages and rural outskirts. These young men were not socially advantaged compared to Mosul inhabitants, they are looking for social recognition and a revenge on those more fortunate than them. The social difference burden pushed the Hisba men to act inhumanely toward the Mosulites compared to the Hisba members who apparently originated from Afghanistan<sup>350</sup>. This resentment explains the comment made by a person living in Mosul: "They do not look pious like the Arab fighters. Sometimes they harass women even. But they enjoy publicly humiliating people from Mosul. They resent us."<sup>351</sup> The Hisba men in Mosul are men from the outskirts of Mosul and men wearing Afghani-looking clothes<sup>352</sup>, while the Hisba men in Raqqa could be Syrian or Iraqi since their Syrian accent could result from a life near the Iraqi-Syrian borders<sup>353</sup>.

It is not clear whether the Hisba members in Raqqa share the social situation of their Mosulites counterpart. Abu Obida's accent is Syrian, but he does not identify himself as Syrian in the video. Moreover, the Syrian and Iraqi populations share some of their accents and one can safely suppose that Islamic State's fighters are constantly on the move.

#### The Muttawa:

The King is the only governmental body able to challenge the muttawa religious executive authority<sup>354</sup>. This is demonstrated by late king Abdallah ibn Abdulaziz decision to grant to women the right to vote in 2011<sup>355 356</sup>. This revolution was not a sensational transformation of the Saudi society since women remained under the patriarchal control through the male guardianship system,

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<sup>349</sup> Dairieh, *The Islamic State (Part 3)*.

<sup>350</sup> Rasha Al-Aqeedi, "Hisba in Mosul: Systematic Oppression in the Name of Virtue," (Program on Extremism at George Washington University, 2016), 6.

<sup>351</sup> Al-Aqeedi, 6.

<sup>352</sup> Al-Aqeedi, 6.

<sup>353</sup> Dairieh, *The Islamic State (Part 3)*.

<sup>354</sup> As of April 2016, the Muttawa don't have the power to arrest people, follow them, or ask them for their IDs. If they find people using drugs or alcohol they have to report them to the police. "Saudi Arabia Strips Religious Police of Arresting Power: New Cabinet Decision Orders Religious Officers to Report Violators to Police or Drug Squad Unit.," *Al-Jazeera*, April 14 2016. But this decrease in their power could be temporary and it does not decrease the fear they instigate in people after all the years they were allowed to use their power at its full extent.

<sup>355</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, "Saudi Monarch Grants Women Right to Vote," *New York Times* 2011.

<sup>356</sup> The elections were held in 2015 (BBC.com)



as will be seen in the third chapter. The power of muttawa seems to be stronger than the unlimited guardianship/decisional power Saudi men have upon their female relatives. In 2002, a fire was declared in a girl Meccan middle school; the four-stories building held an all-female body of 835 students and 55 teachers. To avoid the women leaving the building and men entering it, the building was locked and guarded. However, the elderly man who held the key “had wandered away”<sup>357</sup>. Since the only exit, there were no fire exits<sup>358</sup>, was locked “fifteen girls were trampled to death; more than fifty others were injured, some having jumped from the windows”<sup>359</sup>. The firefighters and common people who attempted to help the girls out of the furnace “were turned away by a representative of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue—the country’s religious police—because the girls were not wearing their abayas<sup>360 361</sup>”. A man whose work was a ten-minute drive from the school, when he arrived to the school the “civil defense squad”, the “seventeen fire engines” and the lone muttawa were all there, in front of the gate. The man saw his daughter and a group of girls running toward the gate; she pleaded and screamed for someone to ‘break the lock’, another girl was crying her eyes out because “her clothes were sticking to her skin”<sup>362</sup>. Despite the girls’ deadly desperation, cries and screams no one from “the police, the firemen, the parents or the bystanders” was brave enough to disregard the single muttawa’s order and save the girls. This single muttawa’s power and influence were strong enough to stop the father from challenging him. When the daughter and the girls arrived at the gate the muttawa ordered them to go get their abayas, from inside the burning school, since he cannot let women dressed indecently<sup>363</sup> be seen in public. The girl burned to death. The people’s fear of this solitary muttawa overcame every basic human instinct, it overpowered the father’s instincts to save his daughter and it incapacitated the public servants sense of duty. The muttawa’s actions were not investigated, he was not convicted for the deaths and injuries of the victims, since the death of the girls was “God’s will”<sup>364</sup>.

This fear, dread and utter terror the muttawa inspire the Saudi population is in no way a natural fear; it was intentionally implanted and ingrained in the Saudi minds by Ibn Saud himself. Ibn Saud united the territories that became Saudi Arabia through a military use of religion (the Ikhwan). Ibn Saud and his successors reinforced this unity and the submission of the population by

<sup>357</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to the Islamic State*, First ed. (New York; 4: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016), 94-5.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>360</sup> Black cloak covering the body from the shoulder to the feet.

<sup>361</sup> Wright, 95.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>363</sup> The muttawa in question definition of indecency.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 95.

making religion and religious morals the ultimate laws. The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice was created in the forties during Ibn Saud's reign. The muttawa, the religious police, acts under the Commission's jurisdiction, each of the four-thousand men making this force<sup>365</sup> is always accompanied by two policemen responsible for executing the muttawa orders<sup>366</sup>. The muttawa make sure that the rules of Islam are followed everywhere in the kingdom in private and public areas (houses, schools, offices); the Commission has its own car patrols to surveil the population indoors and outdoors<sup>367</sup>. They walk around shopping malls making sure among other things that 1) the shoppers go pray and that the shops/restaurants close at the prayer times, 2) they scold women if they judge their clothes are not decent enough and 3) they check if the pictured and material mannequins are headless or not<sup>368</sup>. Wright specifies that the muttawa are not consistent in their censorship mission since some shops headed mannequins' pictures are blacked out while others are not<sup>369</sup>. This force is mostly made of former prisoners whose only employability is based on their memorization of the Quran; these men unique employment opportunity is one of low experience but high self-esteem, a situation similar to that of the Mosulite Hisba members. They are paid by the government for every arrest they make; three hundred dollars for a Saudi national and one-hundred and fifty for a foreigner<sup>370</sup>.

There are instances in which the population rebels against those incursions in their private lives, but these rebellions are quickly nipped in the bud. In 2007, it was reported that two "inappropriately-dressed" Saudi female "pepper-sprayed" and "insulted" members of the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice who were advising them on their clothes during Ramadan. The women were "escorted to the police station where they apologized for the attack, were cautioned and then released"<sup>371</sup>. The press voiced the people's rebellion after the girls' middle school fire; the media question the amount of power and influence the muttawa enjoyed and the population's acceptance toward the treatment inflicted to the female members of society. However, this awakening wave was not given the time to spread. The government asked the press to instantly stop writing on the fire and so they did. Once again, the government preferred its survival over the public's right of freedom and expression.

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<sup>365</sup> Jazeera Al, "هيئة الأمر بالمعروف بالسعودية تنشئ إدارة قانونية" [the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in Saudi Arabia Creates a Legal Administration],

<http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2007/6/11/هيئة-الأمر-بالمعروف-بالسعودية-تنشئ-إدارة-قانونية>.

<sup>366</sup> Wright, 95-115.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., 115-116.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, "Saudi Religious Police Attacked by Girls," September 24 2007.

Islamic State and Saudi Arabia's religious police missions are to control the populations within their territories by instigating fear in their minds. Not so much a fear of God as a fear of the punishments the authorities could inflict on them if they have the misfortune to disobey. Religion, at least something that appears as religion, is used as the cement of both Saudi Arabia and Islamic State. If there were no patrols driving around the streets of these two entities, it is likely that they would both crumble under the weight of their oppressive techniques of governance.

This chapter's objectives are to explain the ways of the Salafi and Wahhabi doctrines and demonstrate how Islamic State and Saudi Arabia applies some of the doctrines' practices in their day to day life and governance. Understanding this doctrine is an essential step of this thesis, since these doctrines are the contexts in which Saudi Arabia and Islamic State came to be and developed into the entities known today. It appears that both entities depend greatly on the tawhid principle to explain why graves and religious memorials should be forbidden. Moreover, it seems that if it wasn't for religion, specifically the oppressive way in which religion is used, Saudi Arabia and Islamic State wouldn't be able to control the populations under their authority. Saudi Arabia's is so in need of the control the religious branch provides it with, that it did not hesitate to cede the people's freedom of expression and decision on more than one occasion to these religious authorities. However, as has been demonstrated through this thesis, religion is never powerful enough to unite a group of people alone. They need a concept anchored in their common histories, a concept that does not completely discriminate communities based on their religion, and that concept is nationalism.

### Chapter 3-Nationalism and Religion: The Battle of Titans

In the former chapter, I examined the components of the Salafi and the Wahhabi doctrines and the ways they are used in the daily lives of Saudi Arabia and Islamic State. In this chapter I will expand this comparative approach by parsing the social, political, legal and financial, unifying dynamics of Saudi Arabia and comparing them to those of Islamic State. However, it is essential to clarify that even though Saudi Arabia and Islamic State share a similar ideology, the first is sovereign internationally recognized country, while the second is a collapsing terrorist and fanatic entity.

Today, religion is the legitimizing basis of the leadership and governance in both territories. However, despite those noticeable similarities, one cannot say that Saudi Arabia and Islamic State are identical. They differ deeply in their views on nationalism and progress, even though such opinions are silenced in Saudi Arabia. The following chapter, like the first, will be organized into several sections; each of these sections will compare facets of both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia. The goal of this process is to understand how similar and different Islamic State and Saudi Arabia are in the ways they became organized entities based on pan-Islamism, a unique religious ideology. Pan-Islamism is a religious political ideology; its believers attempt to create an Islamic state where sharia would be the only law by using an unbalanced combination of “Western political doctrines like constitutional rule and democracy”<sup>372</sup> and fragments of both Salafism and Wahhabism<sup>373</sup>. Understanding these two concepts, their origins and the dynamics in which they evolve will help us comprehend Saudi Arabian statehood and Islamic State’s path toward statehood.

This pan-Islamic religious ideology is the main ingredient in both Saudi Arabia and Islamic State’s military, political and educational systems. However, one will notice that despite the well-known image of religious conservatism and extremism Saudi Arabia displays, nationalism, feminism and a modern idea of citizenship are slowly making their way toward realization. This revolutionary movement is slowly building up in the society sometimes with the help of certain members of the al-Saud (the Saudi royal family), and, often despite the longstanding religious-political alliance between the al-Saud and the al-Sheikh family (Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab’s family). As to pan-Islamism, it is “the ideology aiming at a comprehensive union of all Muslims into one entity, thus restoring the situation prevalent in early Islam”<sup>374</sup>. Pan-Islamism is the foundation of both Saudi Arabia and Iran, but the difference between these two states is that Iran became pan-Islamic through a popular revolution that overthrew the westernized and secular

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<sup>372</sup> Moussalli, 23.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>374</sup> J. M. Landau, "Pan-Islamism," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P.; Th. Bianquis Bearman, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. , Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill, 2012).

Pahlavi governing dynasty, while Saudi Arabia was united and submitted to the Wahhabi reading of Islam through Ibn Saud's Ikhwan military force. The version of pan-Islamism Islamic State used is an ideological hybrid. This hybrid is the creation of Muslim believers who were deceived by the perceived indolence and underachievement on part of Salafi and Wahhabi leaders. This disappointment, to say the least, is not the monopoly of Al-Qaeda and Islamic State fighters; it is a feeling expressed by dissident Saudi scholars (e.g.: Saad Faqih), by Islamic State, and by many common people. Those diverse groups believe that the Salafi and Wahhabi leaders lost the momentum of the fight for the spread of true Islam, joined forces with the Western world (militarily, economically, and politically), and indulged in the satisfaction of their earthly desires (political success, lavishness and material possessions).

### **Unifying Symbols:**

I deliberately titled this section "Unifying Symbols" as opposed to "National Symbols." This is because both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia, the first more clearly than the second, refute the idea of nationalism for religious reasons. However, it is crucial to know that both entities' definition of nationalism differs from one another, and both differ from the modern idea of nationalism.

In the "Islamic State Treatise on the Syrian Education System" written by Islamic State as a step toward the deep reformation and metamorphoses of the Syrian education system, nationalism is defined as "a da'wa of atheistic and ignorant nature to wage war on Islam, to discard of rulings and teachings, nationalism aims to replace the prophets and [...] to be the principal belief for every Arab [...] in the other palm with God Almighty<sup>375</sup>. (my translation)

Al-Buhuth and al-Eftaa Committee describes nationalism as a call, a "da'wa of atheistic and ignorant nature"<sup>376</sup>. The positioning of nationalism by God's side is viewed as idolatry. To be a nationalist is to love and defend an idea other than God, which goes against the principle of *tawhid*, meaning the unicity of God<sup>377</sup>. For Islamic State, God is the only one who deserves complete submission from humans. Islamic State sees nationalism as a deviation from the *Salafi* doctrine of *al-wala'a* and *bara'* (loyalty to the Prophet and rejection of disbelief). God, His Messenger and the religious leaders are the only one Muslims should trust with their life and be loyal to. Nationalism gives any individual great power that they did not gain through their loyalty and study of Islam but their fight for the nation, a concept that represents an inherent opposition to God and Islam.

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<sup>375</sup> al-Eftaa' wa al-Buhuth, "Islamic State Treatise on the Syrian Education System Full Text, Translation and Analysis."

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Islamic State symbolizes the unicity of God by raising their right-hand index finger Nathaniel Zelinsky, "Isis Sends a Message: What Gestures Say About Today's Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* (2014).

Similarly, to Islamic State, the idea of nationalism is viewed negatively in Saudi Arabia, though, this is mostly the case in religious circles. The year 1950 (1369 AH) marked the fiftieth and first official commemoration of the capture of Riyadh on January 13, 1902 (1319 AH) by Ibn Saud; this capture was an essential step in the creation of Saudi Arabia. However, jubilee celebrations were cancelled one week before their beginning<sup>378 379</sup>. The cancellation was motivated by King Saud's advisers, for whom only the celebrations of "id al-fitr" (marking the end of Ramadan) and "id al-adha" (commemoration of the pilgrimage period and the sacrifice of Abraham) were allowed by religion (al-Rasheed 204-205). Celebrations, other than these two religious rituals, are interpreted by the Salafi and Wahhabi doctrines as innovations of Islam, since the Messenger only celebrated the two *a'yad* (sing: 'id) mentioned above. The religious branch did not meet the same cancellation success in 1999 (1419 AH), as that year witnessed the centennial celebrations of Riyadh's capture. The celebrations revolved around the life and legacy of Ibn Saud and they "were homage to the achievements of a single man rather than to the achievements of the 'people' or the 'nation', who are defined in general and vague Islamic terms. [During this celebration] the people were projected as recipients of ni'ma<sup>380</sup>, and were expected to renew their allegiance to its sources [aka the Saud family]"<sup>381</sup>.

This ceremony commemorating the creation of the Saudi state is the perfect example of the Saudi paradox. The population is commonly known as the Saudis, despite their different regional origins, is made to rejoice their centennial forced union under the authority of one man, Ibn Saud, who appended his tribe's name to all the inhabitants of the lands he conquered. These people are not defined as a nation who shares the same ancestral and regional bonds, but as a group of people who were united by their common, probably imposed, beliefs in the same Islamic values, rituals, and the national services provided by the oil wealth. The people known as Saudis carry in their appellation the conquest of their cultures and local histories. They are not a nation united by their common remembrance of a common decision toward unity or a political event that meant their freedom from an invader or an oppressive ruler. The Saudis are the forcibly united population we know today because a tribal ruler decided to put an end to the tribal dynamics and appropriate himself

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<sup>378</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 205.

<sup>379</sup> The celebration of this capture was less problematic than the possibility to celebrate the conquest of al-Ahsa (1913) and Hejaz (1924/25). The celebrations of those two military conquests would revive the locals' contestations since the inhabitants of those regions considered the Saudi authority "as an imposition of an alien Najdi leadership". (Jörg Matthias Determann, *Historiography in Saudi Arabia: Globalization and the State in the Middle East*, vol. 42, Library of Middle East History (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 111.

<sup>380</sup> In Arabic ni'ma means the goods one is blessed with (e.g.: a new born, a house, a good salary, etc).

<sup>381</sup> Al-Rasheed, 201.

with the whole territories; and this centennial commemoration was the authority rejoicing for its continuity at the top of those conquered territories. Ironically enough this celebration is one of the closest instances the Saudi population experiences to nationalism in Saudi Arabia. To celebrate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to celebrate the Arabic kingdom of Ibn Saud, because after all he is the personified image of Saudi Arabia as its founder and first leader.

Unifying symbols, like the celebration discussed above, are made to create a history for people who have little in common. In this case, the divisions between the Saudi people on one hand, and the differences experienced by the inhabitants of Islamic State territory on the other hand. The only common denominators the populations of each entity have with their peers is their religion/language. However, even though the inhabitants of both Saudi Arabia and Islamic State are mostly Muslims, their populations are inherently divided between two creeds of Islam, namely Sunnism and Shi'ism. This difference is still today, the source of several problems in the kingdom. To unify people who had so little in common, Ibn Saud, a political genius in his own right, created his own mixture of what could be called Saudi nationalism. To satisfy the religious branch of power and create a single basis for his newly made people, Ibn Saud amalgamated Wahhabism, the western concept of nationalism and Saudism<sup>382</sup>. For the purposes of this thesis, Saudism is defined as the combination of personality cult and a tribal idea of nationalism. Saudi nationalism unites people using Ibn Saud's life, history and legacy as a basis. By uniting those Arabic territories, which he made them his property in a certain way, after all, they carry his name. To be born from a male Saudi citizen is to be a part of the Saudi nation or political project, even though one's family name is not Saud. These two concepts make the Saudi Arabian nationalism<sup>383</sup> a unique concept even within the Middle Eastern neighborhood. This section will 1) demonstrate the use of Saudism, Wahhabi Islamism, and western inspired nationalism in several Saudi Arabian unifying symbols like the flag, the currency, the anthem and the non-religious celebrations; 2) determine the use of the western concept of nationalism into the Islamic-inspired unifying symbols used by Islamic

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<sup>382</sup> The term Saudism I use in this thesis is my own understanding the attitude of the Saudi Arabian authority toward its citizens (use of money to calm the insurgency, lack of political and religious freedom, citizenship rankings depending on the Sunni or Shi'i beliefs) and the expatriate population (use of the kafala system, known as the sponsorship system, which involves the employer confiscating the expatriate employee passport). After a quick scan of the web, it seems that social media is the only medium in which the term "Saudism" was featured. Twitter and Instagram identify Saudism as a blend of Wahhabism, the Saudi bombings in Yemen and a richness showcased in Mecca.

<sup>383</sup> Moreover, Smith notes that usually nationalist movements begin with people rallying around their shared cultural and literary characteristics and "not with a protest rally, declaration or armed resistance" Smith.. It seems that the Saudi Arabian nation was the result of an opposite process, since the territories were first militarily united and their population began to share a common culture and literature of their own later on.

State. The goal is to reveal the similarities between Islamic State and Saudi Arabian unifying symbols and their great use of the western idea of nationalism despite considering both the Western world and nationalism as blasphemous.

Flags:

In 2006, the founding of Islamic State in Iraq<sup>384</sup> was announced in a video published by the Media Council of the Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq. In this video titled “Good News to Muslims Everywhere”<sup>385</sup>, a man with the face censored announces “the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq [sic], in Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Salahaldeen, Naynawa and parts of Babel and Waset province in order to protect our religion and our people, so that there is no disbelief, and so the blood and sacrifices of your Mujahideen sons are not lost in vain”<sup>386</sup>.

The state was founded but it did not have its current flag yet. Islamic State in Iraq spokesman had behind him a large “generic black flag with the Muslim profession inscribed [in white] on it”<sup>387</sup>.



Figure 6: Islamic State in Iraq’s flag<sup>388</sup>

The flag that is used today by Islamic State was made public in January 2007 by Al-Qaeda’s media office, Fajr li-l-Ilam. A text was published to explain the appearance of the presently known Islamic State flag.



Figure 7: Islamic State’s flag<sup>389</sup>

<sup>384</sup> Commonly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq.

<sup>385</sup> Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq, *Good News to Muslims Everywhere* (The Media Council, 2006), YouTube video.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 3257.

<sup>388</sup> Foundation Quilliam, "Misappropriating the Black Flag," Quilliam Foundation, <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/blog/misappropriating-the-black-flag/>.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.



This text is titled “A Religious Essay Explaining the Significance of the Banner in Islam”<sup>390</sup>. Islamic State quotes numerous times Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani throughout the essay to specify Islamic State’s flag name, size, colors and inscriptions based on several sayings describing the Prophet’s flag. The Prophet’s flag, based on the *ahadith* quoted by Islamic State, had numerous names, among others “The Eagle”. A name Islamic State explains by the fact that the kind of eagle in question was called “The Bone Breaker”<sup>391</sup>. Islamic State, by stating the Prophet’s banner name is announcing and justifying the war and violence it is using to defend the vision it has of Islam. The blackness and size of the flag results from the idea, related in the *ahadith*, that the Prophet’s flag was a black square. However, in the following *ahadith*, they quote it is declared that the flag is black, but the standard is white with the shahada (profession of faith) inscribed on it<sup>392</sup>. The second part of the shahada shown on Islamic State’s flag, which is the three superposed words, is supposedly a reproduction of the Prophet’s ring-seal.

The shahada on Islamic flag is divided in two. In the upper part of the flag one can read “There is no god but God” and the in the lower section the second part of the shahada, which in this case is read from the bottom (Muhammed Messenger of God). Put differently, the word “Allah” is on the top, “Messenger” in the middle and “Mohammed” at the bottom. The words in the white circle are the supposed representation of the Prophetic silver ring mounted with an Abyssinian stone marked with the statement Muhammad Messenger of God<sup>393</sup>. However, in a *hadith* in Sahih Bukhari, one can read that “the engraving was in three line: ‘Muhammad’ in one line, ‘Apostle’ in another line, and ‘Allah’ in a third line”<sup>394</sup>. There is no mention about the word “Allah” being set above the other two. We suppose the present popular representation of the seal (Figure 8) and Islamic State’s flag is based on a letter “believed by several scholars”<sup>395</sup> to have been signed, with the seal in question, by the Prophet<sup>396</sup>.

<sup>390</sup> Islamic State in Iraq, "A Religious Essay Explaining the Significance of the Banner in Islam " (2007).

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> و محمد رسول الله لا إله إلا الله.

This text can be translated in Arabic as “There is no god but God and Muhammed is His Messenger”

<sup>393</sup> David Samuel Margoliouth, *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*, 3rd ed. (New York; London: Putman, 1905), 364.

<sup>394</sup> Muḥammad ibn Isma'il Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 4d rev ed., vol. 7, Sahih Al-Bukhari (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1976), 7.767.

<sup>395</sup> Margoliouth, 365.

<sup>396</sup> Even though this letter and seal are probably real, it does not change the findings of fake sealed letters said to be written by the Prophet D. M. Dunlop, "Another 'Prophetic' Letter," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 72, no. 1 (1940): 59.



Figure 8: Fantasized reproduction of the Prophet's ring that Uthman lost

This seal that was dropped in a well by the third caliph and never found despite a three days' search<sup>397</sup>. The lost ring-seal is not to be confused with the seal unidentical replacement made on Uthman's orders, this agate version is preserved in Istanbul's Topkapi Museum since the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>398</sup>.

One of the significant idea one can retain from this "Religious Essay" is that after quoting al-Asqalani's statement on the lack of information verifying the order of the words on the Prophetic seal, Islamic State confirms that the flag is based on the looks of the Prophet seal. Aside from the words order and the validity of the represented seal<sup>399</sup>, Islamic State use of that seal on the flag can be questioned. The Prophet is reported to have said: "I have a silver ring with 'Muhammed, the Apostle of Allah' engraved on it, so none of you should have the same engraving on his ring."<sup>400</sup>. In this hadith, one can read the Prophet's explicit interdiction for anyone other than himself to use this seal; in other words, this interdiction would probably include the three caliphs who wore the seal and Islamic State's use of it on the flag. Islamic State concludes its essay by showing an image of its flag (Figure 7). Islamic State attempts to creates its flag as similar as possible to the Prophet's supposed flag in a tentative way to present itself as the rightful heir to the Prophet and the past caliphates legacy. Their use of the so-called seal is the main example of this strategy; to put it in McCants words "we are meant to believe the Islamic State [sic] had inherited the Prophet's seal, just as the early caliphs had"<sup>401</sup>.

The so-called seal represented on the flag is made to look "ragged", probably to provide it with authenticity, even though it was drawn on a computer<sup>402</sup>. Moreover, the presence of the supposed seal on the flag is an indication of a certain reverence to an item which belonged and was used by

<sup>397</sup> David Samuel Margoliouth, "The Relics of the Prophet Mohammed," *The Muslim World (Hartford)* 27, no. 1 (1937): 21.

<sup>398</sup> It is a rectangular agate stone engraved with the words "God" on the first line and "Muhammad Messenger" on the second line (Tavernier 211).

<sup>399</sup> No one can ultimately confirm the looks of this seal since it was lost centuries ago.

<sup>400</sup> Bukhari, 7, 7.766.

<sup>401</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 341.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 354.

the Prophet<sup>403</sup>; a reverence that is negatively looked on by the Wahhabi, Salaf and Islamic State when it is performed by the Shi'a. If reverence toward the Prophet and his possessions is not the case, then Islamic State should have been content by a black flag, like the one described in the ahadith they quote.

At this point, I cannot certify why Islamic State leaders decided to merge, the black flag, the white standard, and the supposed appearance of the Prophet's ring-seal. My supposition is that Islamic State designed their flag to apply a sense of authenticity to their overall new flag. The appearance and characteristics of Islamic State flag are more or less known by the Muslim community, this flag was made in order to be accepted by the community and unite it behind familiar features. Moreover, because Islamic State affirms to be the only true image of Islam, it could not have a flag similar to other entities claiming to represent the purest Islam; namely Jabhat al-Nusra (figure 9) and Saudi Arabia (figure 10).



Figure 9: Jabhat al-Nusra's flag<sup>404</sup>

Those are similarities Islamic State leaders want to avoid. This need to differentiate Islamic State from all other Islamic entities is made clear in Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's first public address<sup>405</sup>. When talking about the importance of the *mujahiddun*'s work who "have rushed to declare the Caliphate and the inauguration of Imam" and moving to his acceptance of the "great burden" that is the caliphate supreme position, al-Baghdadi declared that Islamic State is the long awaited and "neglected" incarnation of "the duty of Muslims, which has been lost for centuries, and absent from the reality on the ground, thus it has been neglected by many Muslims"<sup>406</sup>.

This statement implies that the past caliphates and states based on Islam, that had risen and fallen during several of the past centuries had nothing to do with Islam; in other words, al-Qaeda, Saudi

<sup>403</sup> The reverence toward belongings of the Prophet or parts of his body are far from being recent. Mu'awiya, the second Umayyad caliph, wanted to be buried in one of the shirt the Prophet gave him, moreover he demanded to have the Prophet nail parings sprinkled "over [his] eyes and into [his] mouth on the chance that God may have mercy on [him] through their *baraka* [blessing]" (al-Tabari in Meri, 108).

<sup>404</sup> Quilliam.

<sup>405</sup> Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, *Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's Preach at Mosul's Al-Nouri Mosque* (2014).

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

Arabia and several of the past caliphates<sup>407</sup> are excluded from the definition Islamic State's leaders have of the caliphate. I analyzed in the previous chapter the validity of several Islamic State's claims on the caliphate and the universal leadership of the Muslim world (e.g.: descent of Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri, strict following of the Sharia, etc).

Despite the inherent need for Islamic State to be the one and only, its members foreshadowed the complete impossibility of this singularity. In the beginning of the "Religious Essay Explaining the Significance of the Banner in Islam", Islamic State in Iraq quotes the words of Ahmad Cevdet Pasha. The "19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman historian and official"<sup>408</sup> explained the importance of a flag in the process of unifying a population with the following words. "The secret in creating a flag is that it gathers people under a single banner to unify them, meaning that this flag is a sign of the coming together of their words and a proof of the unity of their hearts. They are like a single body and what knits them together is stronger than the bond of blood relatives"<sup>409</sup>.

Pasha was a Turkish man who wanted to use Islam as the unifying denominator of the multiple ethnic groups under Turkish rule; in other words, he wanted religion and its rules to play the role of national devotion and patriotism despite the intrinsic differences in the Ottoman Empire. Other than the Ottoman Empire, Islamic State in its quest for Islamic identity tries to take example on the first caliphates. However, even those who were the contemporaries of the Prophet divided the Muslim community depending on the time of the conversion and the origin of the believer<sup>410</sup>. This is to say that Muslims were never totally bound together by their religion, multiple factors (birth country, branch of Islam, etc.) were taken in consideration when one's allegiance was in question. As noted by McCants<sup>411</sup> those divisions are even present in the names Islamic State held in the beginning; before modification were made, Islamic State was firstly known as Islamic State in Iraq, and then Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. Both names encompass nation-states, with their own boundaries, as the territories of an Islamic State. Therefore, to be more in accordance with the prayer Islamic State in Iraq ended the "Religious Essay Explaining the Significance of the Banner

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<sup>407</sup>I do not mention the Shi'i caliphates and the Republic of Iran since they are not considered as Muslims by Islamic State.

<sup>408</sup>McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 345.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>410</sup> Even though I could not define the Egyptian, Basrans and Kufans (El-Hibri 183) revolutionaries, who participated in the overthrow of Uthman, as nationalists in the modern sense of the term, I must consider the fact they were grouped and named depending of their regions of origin. Moreover, when the Egyptians talked about themselves as a group when questioned Uthman on the order he, supposedly, gave to have them murdered Tayeb El-Hibri, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History: The Rashidun Caliphs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 187.

<sup>411</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 358.

in Islam” and its “expansionist ambitions”, the entity abandoned all the previous appellations<sup>412</sup> in June 2014 and named itself Islamic State<sup>413</sup>. The prayer in question, quoted below, is the perfect example of the national, religious and identity paradox Islamic State and its *mujahiddun*’s experience.

“We ask God, praised be He, to make this flag the sole flag for all Muslims. We are certain that it will be the flag of the people of Iraq when they go to aid the Mahdi at the holy house of God”<sup>414</sup>.

In this prayer, Islamic State (Islamic State in Iraq at the time) asks God to make the flag it created (Figure 1) the only flag for all the Muslims and the following sentence they claim that this banner will represent “the people of Iraq”. This contradiction confirms that the leaders and members of Islamic State’s genesis form could not abandon their Iraqi nationalism even if it was for religion<sup>415</sup>. It seems Religion, Islam, in this case is not a unifying force strong enough to erase national sentiments from people hearts; one cannot be either Muslim or Iraqi. This competition between nationalism and religion is even visible in the difference of salaries/ranks between the Iraqi/Syrian and Western Islamic State fighters as seen in the Frontiers section.

#### Saudi Arabian flag:

The Saudi Arabian flag like Islamic State’s flag does not lack an ounce of Islamic symbolism and imagery. The Saudi Arabian flag could be noted as a perfect example of an Islamic state flag. The same goes for the Iranian Republic flag, but this would be the question of another thesis, partly because Saudi Arabia and Iran do not follow the same Islamic creed. It is essential to note that even though Saudi Arabia could be considered an Islamic state at this point of the thesis, Saudi Arabia represents only the Wahhabi interpretation of Islamic governance. The Saudi Arabian flag shown in figure 10 is the present banner which was approved on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1973 by Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud<sup>416</sup>. The banner is a green rectangle, green being one of the colors of Islam, along with black, yellow, and red<sup>417</sup>. On the green background is calligraphed in white the shahada indicating the application of Islamic law in the country. Below

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<sup>412</sup> Islamic State in Iraq, Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham.

<sup>413</sup> Faisal Irshaid, "Isis, Isil, Is or Daesh? One Group, Many Names," *BBC* 2015.

<sup>414</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 369-70.

<sup>415</sup> A German man named Denis Cupert changed his name to Abu Talha al-Almani when he joined Islamic State Clark Mindock, "Fbi Agent Married Isis Fighter before Realising Her Mistake and Fleeing Syria," *The Independent* May 1 2017.

<sup>416</sup> Jalal Abd al-Sami, *حكاية علم - السعودية (a Flag's Story-Saudi Arabia)* (al-Jazeera Documentary, 2010), YouTube video.

<sup>417</sup> Quilliam.

the shahada is a white sabre symbolizing the raw Wahhabi military power<sup>418</sup> and indirectly the strategic political power which Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud used to found Saudi Arabia.



Figure 10: The Saudi Arabian flag

However, the current version of the Saudi flag is far from being the first banner used by the third Saudi state. There was a total of six flags introduced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Every time new territorial conquests were made by the Saudi forefather, the flag was changed, as if the change was synonymous with the creation of a new country. These flags have in common the shahada and the green and white colors, through the sword was not common to all versions<sup>419</sup>. Due to the presence of the shahada on the flag, it would be a blasphemy to lower it, even for the death of the country's leader<sup>420</sup>. In sum, the Saudi Arabian flag is a conglomeration of Islamic symbolism and a reminder of the Saud political and military power over the country. This flag is supposedly one of the uniting symbols for the Saudi Arabian population, a flag in which they find both of their heritages. Their religion and their tribal unity and loyalty to al-Saud.

However, the reality does not run as smoothly as described above. Saudi Arabia is a new nation whose unity is mainly based on the Wahhabi authoritarianism and the government's strategic use of oil money. It is a nation in the making, struggling to find its own identity and unifying traditions. The last-minute cancellation attempt in 1999 (1419 AH) of the Centennial of Riyadh's<sup>421</sup> capture (1319 AH) by Ibn Saud is the perfect example of the identity struggle lived in Saudi Arabia<sup>422</sup>. This is a country in which Islam is supposed to be the only law, and the mode of life, encompassing everything from birth to death. The only celebrations in which Saudi Muslims can experience unity are *'id al-fitr* and *'id al-adha* according to the King's advisers<sup>423</sup>. But one cannot unite such a large group of people solely based on their religion, especially when not all inhabitants

<sup>418</sup> Whitney Smith, "Flag of Saudi Arabia," in *Britannica Academic*.

<sup>419</sup> Abd al-Sami.

<sup>420</sup> "Saudi King Is Laid at Rest," *BBC*, August 2 2005.

<sup>421</sup> Al-Rasheed, 198.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

follow the same creed and interpretation of Islam. Those people, like any other nation, need to feel different from the rest of the *ummah*, despite the claim of the unconditional unity of the Muslim community. This is where the national feeling is inserted in daily life with the use of the flag (and hymn as demonstrated below). This brings us to the paradoxical use made of the flag during national celebrations when we acknowledge the total interdiction to even lower the flag due its sacred nature<sup>424</sup>. The over-representation of the Saudi flag during national and sport celebrations (Figure 11 and 12) is a symptom of this identity struggle lived by the Saudi nationals. It indicates the citizens and government need become a nation as it is understood in the Western world. This is an urge that is gradually getting satisfied by the government. In the Unifying Symbols section I explained the religious ban the authorities put on the celebration on the fiftieth commemoration of Riyadh's capture by Ibn Saud and their inability to stand in the way of the royal decision by forbidding the capture's hundredth commemoration. Therefore, it is only partly surprising to acknowledge that the Saudi National Day (September 23)<sup>425</sup> was celebrated even though it fell on the Day of Arafat<sup>426</sup>, a major religious date in the Islamic calendar<sup>427</sup>. When talking about the double celebration witnessed by the kingdom Mashour Al-Otabi, a Saudi citizen, declared:

We are very proud to be Saudi and happy that Allah gave us this responsibility of serving the guests of Allah during Haj. However, our National Day is also very important so we are celebrating this day with pride and happiness as it falls on the Day of Arafat. We prayed for the stability, progress and long life for Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman

However, this cohabitation between the religious and national sides of Saudi Arabia changes nothing to the fact that the celebrations of the 23th of September are similarly to the hundredth commemoration of Riyadh's capture an "homage to the achievements [aka the union of contemporary Saudi Arabia] of a single man [Ibn Saud] rather than to the achievements of the 'people' or the 'nation'"<sup>428</sup>. The flag was displayed and the festivities were conducted everywhere

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<sup>424</sup> An array of images of the national celebration shows the citizens draped in the flag and dancing to celebrate the unity of the country. A practice that seems to be tolerated by both the government and the religious authority, despite the presence of the shahada on the flag.

<sup>425</sup> Celebration of Ibn Saud's union, in 1932, of the territories making the present Saudi Arabia.

<sup>426</sup> Second day of the Hajj pilgrimage, the day after is *'id al adha*.

<sup>427</sup> Fouzia Khan, "Saudis Celebrate National Day," *Arab News*, September 24 2015.

<sup>428</sup> Al-Rasheed, 201.

in Jeddah, and I suppose the rest of the country, Mecca and al-Medina were conducting the Hajj events<sup>429</sup>.



Figure 11: Women encouraging Saudi Arabia during a football match between Saudi Arabia and Yemen<sup>430</sup> (Gulf Cup 2010) (AFP)<sup>431</sup>



Figure 12: Men encouraging Saudi Arabia in the match between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain held in Riyadh during the Asian World Cup<sup>432</sup> (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

### Hymns:

A flag is a concrete, material representation of the unity of a certain group of people within a certain bounded territory. However, a hymn, an anthem or a *nasheed* (pl: anasheed) is an almost spiritual bond between a group of people. A flag can be burned, but a hymn is virtually an abstract idea; in the same way, as national identity and religious believe. All those reasons explain the need, a group of people who claims sovereignty and independence, has for a uniting and invariable chant. We find this necessity in practically every country and community in the world. Therefore, it is not

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<sup>429</sup> Khan, 2015.

<sup>430</sup> The Gulf Cup 2010 was held in Yemen which explains the presence of women in the stadium. It should also be noted that the face painting on the woman's face represent both the Saudi Arabian and Yemeni flags.

<sup>431</sup> Riyadh Connect, "Football Fever in Saudi Arabia," <http://riyadhconnect.com/football-fever-in-saudi-arabia/>.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.



surprising to know that Islamic State and Saudi Arabia have respectively their own *anasheed* and national anthem. In this section, I will analyze the nationalist and religious dynamics of the texts chanted by each group. Islamic State released a variety of *anasheed* in the last three years. I will only focus on the one *nasheed* that is “recognized by the fighters and supporters as kind of their anthem”, namely “My Ummah, Dawn has Appeared”<sup>433</sup> In the case of Saudi Arabia, I will analyze the current national anthem.

The Arabic word *nasheed* (pl. *anasheed*) can be translated as poem and chant; not all *anasheed* are related to *jihadi* propaganda, but in this analysis *nasheed* and *anasheed* will exclusively reference the *jihadi* chants and poems. In his article titled “Hymns (*Nasheeds*): A Contribution to the Study of the *Jihadist* Culture”<sup>434</sup>, Said gives the reader a comprehensive classification of the various kinds of *anasheed*. *Anasheed* are chanted by *jihadi* fighters and their followers for an array of reasons; encourage fighters in battle, celebrate martyrs and martyrdom, mourning leaders, relative, friends, animals and objects and finally appraisal of a significant leader (Said 869-874). Despite the diversity of the subjects, to be approved and sung, all those *anasheed* must respond to strict rules to pretend to the Islamic *anasheed* title. Said quotes Nasir ad-Din al-Albani (d. 1999), a Salafi scholar, on the rules behind the Islamic *anasheed*. Islamic *anasheed* are known as such and acceptable, only if:

“a) ... the melody is not similar to the teachings of western or eastern music, which make people dance.

b) ... the text is purely Islamic.

c) ... there are no musical instruments used, except for the duff (which is allowed only for women at weddings).

d) ... the listening to *nasheeds* does not distract from the study of the Quran.”<sup>435</sup>

#### My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared<sup>436</sup>:

"My Ummah, Dawn has appeared (loomed/begun to appear), so await the expected (manifest) victory,

The Islamic State has arisen by the blood of the righteous,

The Islamic State has arisen by the jihad of the pious,

They have offered their souls in righteousness with constancy and conviction,

So that the religion may be established in it: the law of the Lord of the Worlds.

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<sup>433</sup> Phillip Smyth quoted in “How Isis got their anthem ” (*The Guardian*).

<sup>434</sup> Behnam Said, "Hymns (Nasheeds): A Contribution to the Study of the Jihadist Culture," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, no. 12 (2012).

<sup>435</sup> al-Albani, *Tahrim Alat at-Tarab*, p. 181 f. quoted in *ibid.*, 869.

<sup>436</sup> "My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared," ed. Islamic State (2013).

My Ummah, accept the good news, and don't despair: victory is near.  
The Islamic State has arisen and the dreaded might has begun.  
It has arisen tracing out glory, and the period of setting has ended,  
By faithful men who do not fear warfare.  
They have created eternal glory that will not perish or disappear.  
My Ummah, God is our Lord, so grant your blood,  
For victory will not return except by the blood of the martyrs,  
Who have spent their time hoping for their Lord in the Abode of the Prophets.  
They have offered their souls to God, and for the religion there is self-sacrifice.  
The people of giving and granting are the people of excellence and pride.  
My Ummah, accept the good news: the Sun of Steadfastness has risen.  
Verily we have marched in masses for the hills: the time-honoured glory,  
That we may return the light, faith and glorious might,  
By men who have forsaken the dunya and attained immortality.  
And have revived the Ummah of glory and the assured victory."

This *nasheed* is four minutes and eight seconds long<sup>437</sup>, it was released by Islamic State's Ajnad Media foundation in December 2013<sup>438</sup>. The text, announcing the "good news" of the upcoming resurrection of the Islamic *umma* is paralleled with Islamic State in Iraq foundation video titled "Good News to Muslims Everywhere"<sup>439</sup>. The *munshid*, the man who is reciting<sup>440</sup> the *nasheed*, is not accompanied by musical instruments. His voice is echoed and one can hear a sword being drawn in background, the sounds of marching soldiers and the sound of bullets being fired. This sound background mixing the old and the new weapons and keeping the march of the soldiers as a common point symbolizes the continuity between the ancestors' battles and the fights of today. When hearing those sounds I imagine that the members of Islamic State and their sympathizers imagine the "pious" and "righteous" martyrs and soldiers who had fallen for the rise of Islamic State. Moreover, the title of the *nasheed* "My Ummah Dawn, Has Appeared" sounds like the announcement made by a person who witnessed the battles fought for the resurrection of the Islamic ummah, and came to announce the "good news" to the rest of the community. It is not surprising that Islamic State considers this *nasheed* as an anthem; 1) it contains "heroic" and martyrdom feats that every Islamic State member yearns to accomplish, 2) it transforms the martyrs into unnamed

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<sup>437</sup> Madi Debrè, *Nasheed Ummati Qad Laha Fajrun* (2015), YouTube video.

<sup>438</sup> Alex Marshall, "How Isis Got Its Anthem," *The Guardian*, November 9 2014.

<sup>439</sup> Iraq.

<sup>440</sup> Singing would be more defining of his action, however *anasheed* are not considered songs.

myths and legends that any prospective jihadi will easily identify with, and 3) it lights a beacon of hope for Islamic State members and supporters by announcing their upcoming victory.

The Saudi Arabian National Anthem<sup>441</sup>:

“Hasten  
To glory and supremacy,  
Glorify the Creator of the heavens!  
And raise the green flag  
Carrying the written light reflecting guidance,  
Repeat: Allahu Akbar!  
O my country!  
My country,  
Live as the pride of Muslims!  
Long live the King  
For the flag  
And the homeland!”

In 1984, Ibrahim Khafaji, the author of the Saudi hymn lyrics, took six months to write a text that satisfied the constricting limitations imposed by the royal family. The conditions were as such, the anthem should 1) correspond to the religious and political policies, 2) not cite any king in particular, 3) favor no ideological thought or position, and 4) should not praise any king<sup>442</sup>. The hymn is intriguingly vague when compared to “My Ummah, Dawn Has Appeared”; however, its vagueness is not a synonym of unclarity. The Saudi Arabian hymn is reaffirming the country’s links to Islam as a religion and a community, and the continuity and indivisibility of Saudi Arabia through its “King”, “flag” and “homeland”. The anthem characterizes the country as an unstoppable force supported by God, moreover, the hymn glorifies Saudi Arabia as the “pride of Muslims”. This hymn was written to unite all the Saudis as one voice, however this is not always the case. In May 11, 2017, the Prince of Riyadh, Faisal ibn Bandar ibn Abd al-Aziz was present at the Sharqa’a University to award their degree to the university graduates<sup>443</sup>. He was furious when some of the students did not rise in respect of the anthem, he was filmed shouting at them that “Don’t you respect the nation, whoever does not respect the nation shall leave the room”<sup>444</sup>. Knowingly or

<sup>441</sup> Abdul Rahman; Khafaji Al-Khateeb, Ibrahim, "The Saudi Arabian National Anthem," <http://www.nationalanthems.me/saudi-arabia-an-nasheed-al-wataniy/>.

<sup>442</sup> خليجية, كاتب النشيد الوطني السعودي إبراهيم خفاجي لبرنامج وينك : هذه قصة #سار عي (2014), YouTube video.

<sup>443</sup> شاهد .. أمير الرياض غاضبا من أشخاص جلسو أثناء عزف السلام الملكي: "الذي لا يحترم الوطن يغادر القاعة", "أخبار 24" May 11 2017.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

unknowingly, the Prince placed himself in a paradoxical situation vis-à-vis the position of the royal family toward the religious authorities. A fatwa published by The General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Iftaa states that

It is not permissible for a Muslim to stand in honor of a national anthem or flag; this is a repudiated Bid'ah (innovation in religion) as it did not happen during the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) or that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). It also runs counter to the perfection of due, pure Tawhid (monotheism) and to the sincerity of dedicating all glorifications to Allah Alone. It is a means that can lead to Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and involves imitation of the Kufar (disbelievers) and their bad customs, as well as their excessive glorification of their leaders and their exaggerated ceremonies. The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited acting like and imitating the disbelievers.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions<sup>445</sup>.

### **Currencies:**

Along with hymns and flags currencies are a sensational perpetual reminder of a territory's uniting values whether they are nationalistic or religious. The goal of this section is to analyze the messages behind the images displayed on both Islamic State's and Saudi Arabia's currencies. Currencies are not only an easy means of exchange, but they are also the citizens' daily reminder of a country's values, whether they are religious or nationalist. By accepting to use this mean of exchange, the individual implicitly accepts the financial rules and by extent the nationally supreme power of the country emitting the currency. Moreover, when a territory issues its own currency it is one more stone added to its declaration of sovereignty from any foreign power.

### **Islamic State currency:**

Islamic State announced its currency issue in a 55-min documentary like and special effects enhanced video titled "The Legacy of the Prophetic Methodology". The video was published by the al-Hayat Media Center on the 29th of August 2015. The gold Dinar is described as the "second blow to America's capitalist financial system of enslavement [which will] cast into ruins [the Americans] fraudulent dollar note"<sup>446</sup>. The themes addressed in this video are the destruction of 1)

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<sup>445</sup> The General Presidency of Scholarly Research and Iftaa, "Q: Is It Permissible to Stand in Honor of a National Anthem or Flag?,"

<http://www.alifta.com/Search/ResultDetails.aspx?languagename=en&lang=en&view=result&fatwaNum=&FatwaNumID=&ID=115&searchScope=7&SearchScopeLevels1=&SearchScopeLevels2=&highLight=1&SearchType=exact&SearchMoesar=false&bookID=&LeftVal=0&RightVal=0&simple=&SearchCriteria=allwords&PagePath=&siteSection=1&searchkeyword=102108097103#firstKeyWordFound>.

<sup>446</sup> Al-Hayat Media Center (2015).

capitalism, 2) the US financial supremacy (banknotes, US Federal Note) and 3) bank interests. In his American accent the narrator tells the viewer the financial history of the Middle-Eastern region. He explains the pre-currency struggles, the usage of Roman, Persian currencies by the first Muslims, the first issuance of Islamic money. But most importantly he explicates the decision to destroy the United States financial system, which is explained as based on oil and valueless pieces of paper, with the introduction of a currency only based on the so-called unchanged value of gold. Islamic State coins, like the flag, carry a lot of meaning and symbolism as it can be seen in figure 13. All the coins have on one side 1) their value represented in words, 2) the issue date, and 3) the entity's promise "Khilafa on the Messenger's Method". The elements of difference between the seven coins are extracted from "The Legacy of the Prophetic Methodology" video and arranged in the table below. The coins featuring a monument mention its name.

	Value & Weight	Image
Gold	One dinar (21k): 4.25 g	Seven wheat heads: "blessing of spending in the path of Allah"
	Five dinars (21k): 21.26 g	World map: "glad tidings of the Prophet (saw) [on the ummah's territorial extent]"
Silver	One dirham: 2 g	Spear & shield: "Source of [...] Prophet's provision from [religious] Jihad"
	Five dirhams: 10 g	Damascus's White Minaret: "Descent of al-Masih (rip) & the land of bloody battles" <sup>447</sup>
	10 dirhams: 20 g	Al-Aqsa mosque: "Destination of the Prophet's night journey <sup>448</sup> & the first of the two qibla's"
Copper	10 fulus: 10 g	Crescent & stars: "Timing of Ramadan, Hajj, and other acts of worship"
	20 fulus: 20 g	"Blessed date palm": "Whose similitude is that of the Muslim" <sup>449</sup>

Table 2: Description of Islamic State currency

<sup>447</sup> Sahih Muslim (4.7015).

<sup>448</sup> Isra' and Mi'raj journey.

<sup>449</sup> Sahih Bukhari (7.359).



Figure 13: Representation of Islamic State’s currency, right to left: Gold, Silver and Copper<sup>450</sup>

One can notice that those representations appeal to the communitarianist sentiments that fuel religion and the apocalyptic narrative of Islamic State. The crescent, spear and shield, seven wheat heads and the palm trees remind the Islamic State’s members that they are the so-called true Muslim, the direct continuation of the Prophet’s era. Despite the video narrator’s explication linking al-Aqsa mosque only to the Isra’a and Mi’raj journey, one can suppose that the representations of such an important Muslim monument on Islamic State currency is an allusion to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The second mosque depiction refers to the now-destroyed Umayyad mosque in Damascus, especially its Eastern minaret beside which Jesus is prophesized to return at the end of days<sup>451</sup>. The world map infers that the whole planet is the rightful territory of Islamic State, since the entity believes in the absence of borders (e.g.: Sykes-Picot’s destruction) and the total universality of Islamic religious law.

However, Islamic State attempt to bring back “the new metallic coins of the khilafa [as a] medium of exchange [based on] the prophetic methodology [of precious metals monetary exchange]”<sup>452</sup> is doomed to fail. This currency is blackened by the reality of the entity’s financial situation. This reality is crudely explained by one of Islamic State members “even within the believers, this [currency] will be a stunt. If they want people to buy eggs with new coins, then they will. But the real business will be done with real money.”<sup>453</sup>

Islamic State is as much “enslaved” as the rest of the world when it comes to its demand of dollars for the payment of kidnapping ransoms, antiquities and oil sales<sup>454</sup>. Moreover, one could deduce

<sup>450</sup> Islamic State, "Currencies of the Islamic Caliphate State," <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24776572.html>.

<sup>451</sup> Sahih Muslim (4.7015).

<sup>452</sup> Al-Hayat Media Center (2015).

<sup>453</sup> Martin; Shaheen Chulov, Kareem, "Isis Leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi 'Seriously Wounded in Air Strike'," *The Guardian*, April 21 2015.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

that Islamic State enforces on the people living under its yoke the use the newly created currency. The video shows mostly men and boys<sup>455</sup> admiring, with sparkles in their eyes, the golden dinar. They are blessing the Islamic State and the return to the financial rules of the Prophet; some are pointing their right fingers in the air to signify their appurtenance to Islamic State and their belief in tawhid. A melting pot of fighters, Western and Eastern looking men are marveled by the beauty of the golden dinar; the idea conveyed by this scene is that Islamic State revived the Islamic glory, fraternity and unity. But this flawless world is not as perfect as Islamic State attempts to depict it in its propaganda; the fighters are not all treated equally depending on their country of origin as we have seen in the frontiers section.

Saudi Arabian currencies:



Figure 14: Pilgrim receipts issued in 1952 (upper left) 1953 (lower left and upper right) and 1955 (Lower Right). All receipts were withdrawn in 1965<sup>456</sup>

To expose the diversity and change showcased in Saudi Arabia money, I will compare the first modern Saudi financial means with the most recent of the Kingdom bills. Then I will compare those observations with Islamic State’s currency’s notable features. Except for the last one, all the receipts were issued under the reign of Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud<sup>457</sup>. All the receipts are printed under the authority of the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency and carry official authority signature. A

<sup>455</sup> The only females are little girls accompanied by their fathers; some are toddlers, one looks eight to ten of age and is veiled.

<sup>456</sup> Saudi Arabia, "First Issue," (1961).

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

perceptible fact about the pilgrim receipts is the absence of explicit religious symbols, except for the palm tree and the crossed sabers<sup>458</sup>. On the second and third receipts dhows<sup>459</sup> entering the Jeddah boats were added. The crossed sabers and the palm tree are the fourth receipts, but the dhows were replaced by an image of the Khuzam Palace gate; a significant power symbol since it was built by Abd al-Aziz<sup>460</sup>.

Those tendencies got confirmed in the following issues which showcased a Pleiad of official buildings, religious local monuments, oil wells, the newly found modernity and development. The same characteristics were found in the third issue and, innovative fact for the extremely conservative kingdom, the portraits of Abd al-Aziz bin Saud and Faisal bin Abd al-Aziz were engraved on the currencies in circulation. This currency's issue was in circulation under Khalid bin Abd al-Aziz; the following one was printed under Fahad bin Abd al-Aziz. It featured his father's and his own portrait. Interestingly, it was the first time 1) non-Saudi Islamic monument were represented (al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock), 2) an image of an Umayyad dinar featuring the statement "There is no god but Allah, with no associate." Those two images accentuate the unity of the Muslim world in times of struggle and the essentiality of the Saudi religious creed<sup>461</sup>. Those two characteristics are to be understood in the post-Iranian revolution context since those bills were issued in 1984. The following issue was a special one printed in honor of the kingdom's centennial celebrations; the two bills featured Abd al-Aziz bin Saud, religious and politically symbolic monuments. The Saudi bills in circulation today were issued in 2007-2008, they seem to circulate alongside the bills issued for the centennial celebration and those issued under Fahad bin Abd al-Aziz in 1984<sup>462</sup>. The same previous religious and Saudi themes were reprised and similarly to the preceding issues, alongside the portrait of the issuing leader, Abd Allah bin Abd al-Aziz; his father's portrait is on the highest piece of currency<sup>463</sup>.

The Saudi religious and national struggles touched upon in the flag section are reflected on the country's bills<sup>464</sup>. The elements creating a national feeling and a religious unity are merged; they create a single and indivisible conglomerate. In other words, to be Saudi is to be a Muslim, preferably a Sunni Muslim. The term Saudi instead of citizen of Saudi Arabia was deliberately used to enhance the nationalistic spirit based on the person of Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud and his conquest.

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<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Fishermen boats.

<sup>460</sup> Arabia.

<sup>461</sup> "Second Issue," (1968).

<sup>462</sup> "Third Issue," (1976).

<sup>463</sup> "Fourth Issue," (1984).

<sup>464</sup> It seems that even the internal royal conflicts are reflected by the currency issues almost always corresponding to the intronization of a new ruler.



His portrait appears on all the currencies, since the whole existence of the state is based on his political and military actions.

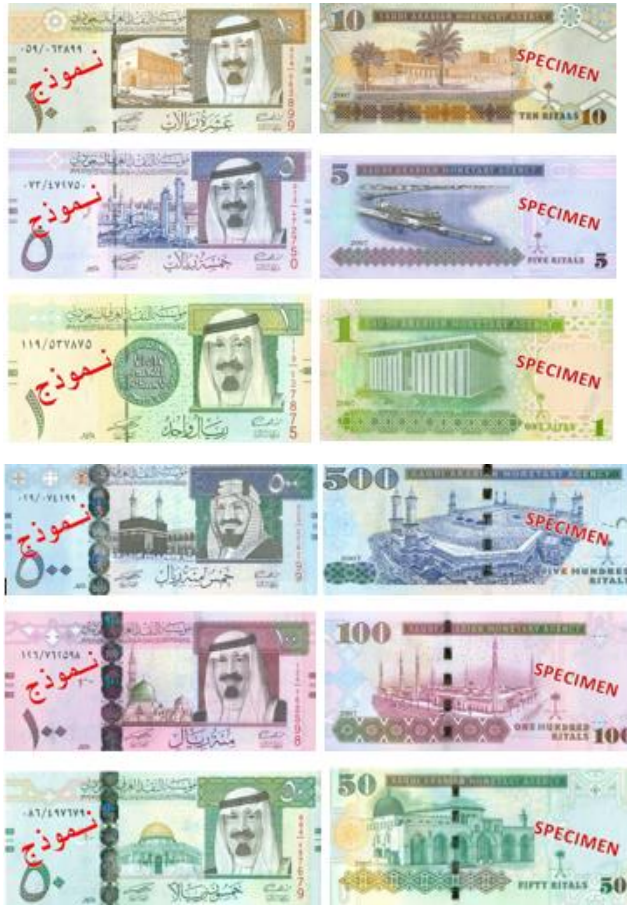


Figure 15: Fifth and present issue of Saudi currency<sup>465</sup>

Both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia seem to experience similar, but fundamentally different identity struggles as more or less recent state-like and state formations. Islamic State attempts to become a state by fully copying and following the Prophetic era, while denying being influenced by Western ideas concerning statehood and national unity. On the other side, Saudi Arabia wants a territory uniquely united by Islam despite knowing the desperate need it has for a strong national unity and citizenship.

#### **Women Roles and Duties:**

When I began to read about the women living under Islamic State's rule and the Saudi Arabian women, I had a few pre-set ideas in my mind. I expected to read that all the female Islamic State members (international and local) were there either because they were brainwashed or because they had no other choice. In the Saudi women's case, I imagined that except for the

<sup>465</sup>

“professional” activist women, in other words, the highly-educated women, the Saudi women would be submissive to the rules, and would have accepted them as their own reality. The situation in both Islamic State and Saudi Arabia is far from being dichotomous.

#### Islamic State and the Women:

Islamic State members are divided between the locals (Iraqi and Syrians) and the internationals who emigrated from all over the world to live and build Islamic State. The immigrants exhibit a variety of religious and social backgrounds; time of the conversion, understanding of Islam, social class, education level. Migration to an Islamic led territory is a religious duty in the mind of these immigrants; they leave the land of oppression to fully live their religion among their peers. The immigrants are emulating the first immigration of Islam. The Prophet left the Meccans oppression for the more welcoming Medinan society. In early Islamic history, men (sing: *muhajir*; plur: *muhajirun*), women and children emigrated to flee war and persecution and live in peace<sup>466</sup>. However, the term Hijra has lost its pacifist meaning with the introduction of Islamic State. The entity “can only understand Hijra as physical migration for *jihad*, [the passive history surrounding Hijra got] refashioned in the service of violent conquest and savage repression”<sup>467</sup>. The *muhajirat* (singular: *muhajirah*) are women who emigrated to Islamic State controlled territories. Like their male counterparts, they perceive this emigration (*hijra*) as a religious duty to which all Muslims are obligated. The female immigration ranks contain women with several backgrounds.

The women who decided to join Islamic State ranks have “push and pull factors”<sup>468</sup>. It has to be noted that the ideas exposed below are not exclusively developed by Islamic State’s female immigrants, their male counterpart 1) are made to believe the same dichotomous concepts, and 2) they share similar backgrounds. The women making the second or third generation of Muslim immigrants living in the West are teenagers and young adults who feel caught in the middle of the two cultures they were raised in. Since they are minorities in the countries their parents and grandparents immigrated to, they were most likely victims of verbal, possibly, physical abuse based on their “ethnic identity”<sup>469</sup>. They see the world as their enemy and the enemy of the Muslim community, a Manichean vision of the world that began with the 9/11 attacks. In the minds of these women and girls, the Muslim community became the center of Western attacks and no one, not

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<sup>466</sup> Rebecca Gould, "The Islamic State's Perversion of Hijra," *Project Syndicate and Qantara* 2017, no. 20 February (2015): 1.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>468</sup> Erin Marie Saltman and Melanie Smith, "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part': Gender and the Isis Phenomenon," (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015), 8.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

even the Muslim countries were defending their people. To the contrary, they were allying themselves with the Western world against their Muslim brothers<sup>470</sup>. The only ones, at least in the immigrants' minds, who were courageous and brave enough to defend Islam and create an Islamic state were the Taliban, al-Qaeda and Islamic State today<sup>471</sup>. The new immigrants envision Islamic State as the only entity who is standing in the way of al-Assad and al-Maliki to defend the rights of the Sunni population who is discriminated and killed daily in both Syria and Iraq<sup>472</sup>. Islamic State propaganda does not name the Western world by other names than "kuffar" and "enemies"; they dehumanize the other side to justify the violence they perpetrate against it<sup>473</sup>.

The women thinking about immigrations are looking 1) for their own identity as daughters of Muslims who immigrated to the Western world, and 2) they are looking for a refuge from the so-called worldwide oppression of Muslim. They find both an identity and a refuge in their community, may be not their nuclear family and neighborhood, but their worldwide religious community. This religious community is idealized as the caliphate of Islamic State, a land where the so-called rule of God is the only law. Muslims are not oppressed in this land, they can live their religion in the open without feeling discriminated against. This utopian view of Islamic State's rule reveals the seemingly unrealistic way the women experienced their lives in the Western world. They also want to live in Islamic State conquered territories because they are certain that their migration which is a fard ayn, a "mandatory religious duty"; if a Muslim can leave the unbelievers land for an Islamic land then she or he must do so<sup>474</sup>. These young women and girls want to belong to their religious community because it gives them the sense that they are part of a larger group. They believe the relationships they had in the West were fake and it is only with their sisters in Islam that they find a true sense of family and kinship<sup>475</sup>. Moreover, it is easier for growing teenagers to belong to a group which has already made its codes and identities, than to develop one's own personality based on life experience. They look for sisterhood, but they also want to live their teenage fantasies of love and adventure. These young women imagine their travel toward Islamic State utopian caliphate as an adventure that will test their belief in Islam. An adventure that will allow them to find their true love in the so-called land of Islam<sup>476</sup>. They romanticize their weddings, their roles as wives/mothers, and their roles as martyr widows. It is intriguing that one

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<sup>470</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid., 16.

of these female immigrants (Malaysian with Indian and Pakistani origins), who left the so-called oppression of the West to live in a so-called Sharia-abiding land, got married in a white niqab. White became the color of wedding gowns when Queen Victoria's appeared at her wedding dressed in a white dress<sup>477</sup>. The groom's attire is no less fascinating, his clothes correspond to the Western fashion while he displays his Salafi belief by having a beard and a shaved moustache<sup>478</sup>. This wedding picture is a demonstration of the paradoxes displayed by Islamic State, an entity that draws its values from Islam and the Western world. Islamic State lives in its own schizophrenic reality.



Figure 16: Shams' (the bride) with her jihadi groom (Picture extracted from the bride's blog titled "Till Martyrdom Do us part" (Saltman and Smith 40).

Yet not all the female immigrants are teenagers in search of an identity and idealized love life. There are also highly educated women, who were truly ecstatic to be a part of the organization's statehood endeavor. Surprisingly, Shams', the bride in Figure 16 is one of them; she a medical doctor. She was provided with a house and medical material by the local emir to make a clinic. Initially she refused to be the doctor of Tabqah, the town she lived in, due to the language barrier. She speaks as any doctor when she says that "being a doctor is more than diagnosing their illness. You must tell them how they got this sickness and the do and donts"<sup>479</sup>. She only treats women and children in this makeshift clinic, and she is helped by three translators. She is an exception among the immigrants both male and female, since the people who immigrate to Islamic

<sup>477</sup> Sarah Begley, "The White Wedding Dress That Changed History Forever," *The Time* 2015.

<sup>478</sup> "Do the opposite of what the pagans do. Keep the beards and cut the moustaches" (Sahih Bukhari 7.780). Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had a beard and a moustache when he made his foundational speech in 2014 in Mosul. This is probably due to the Arabic idea that a man's value, manliness, and honour is represented by his moustache. In the many videos I mentioned, some men are seen with moustaches and beards, while others had no moustache and beard; this discrepancy is more than likely due the various backgrounds of the different fighters seen in the videos.

<sup>479</sup> Saltman and Smith, 37.

State are usually young and/or inexperienced. The *muhajirat*'s age ranges from toddlers to women in their seventies, as can be seen from a woman's tweet<sup>480</sup>.

Moreover, those apparently submissive women are feminists in their own ways. Once again, I had thought too dismissively of the diversity of women and their choices. I found out that, yes, several women who benefitted from higher education are prone to rebellion and have a need of independence from the paternalistic system they live in. Some of these women embrace their domestic roles as mothers and wives, while others refuse to limit themselves to cooking and giving birth. Women like Umm Ubaydah who send messages on social media to indicate her will to fight for Islamic State implementation. She declared on April 2014, "Maybe the time for us to participate is soon"<sup>481</sup>, and on October 2014, "I wonder if I can pull a Mulan and enter the battle field"<sup>482</sup>

#### Saudi Arabian Women:

The image of the Saudi Arabian women should not be limited to that of fully dark cloaked silhouettes who walk behind a man in a mall. The way the women and their situation are perceived by the international community are changing. Those changes are going too fast for the Wahhabis and too slow for the local and international human rights activists. Aartes and Roelants<sup>483</sup> note that "the state of women's rights serves as a good barometer [the] Saudi society."

Al-Rasheed writes in her book "A Most Masculine State"<sup>484</sup> how in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Wahhabis hit three birds with one stone. They disapproved of 1) women's influence (healers and witches) on the society, 2) the ways men used honor killing, banishment and tribal codes to control the women and 3) women's presence in the public eye (markets and mosques). By strictly applying the Sharia rules the Wahhabis forbade women from practicing sorcery and allowed only men to be healers, they implemented the use of hudud (Islamic punishments) and ulama questioning in case of matrimonial issues, and they restricted the women to their houses. This system based on the Najdi Ikhwan settlements became the young Saudi state's norm in 1932 when the ulama and the religious police united their forces. The Wahhabi policy of men's control "over women became [a] state and national policy"<sup>485</sup> (57).

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<sup>480</sup> Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, and Ross Frenett, "Becoming Mulan? Female Western Migrants to Isis," (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015), 6.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>483</sup> Paul Aartes and Carolien Roelants, *Saudi Arabia: A Kingdom in Peril* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), 49.

<sup>484</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics and Religion in Saudi Arabia*, vol. 43, Cambridge Middle East Studies (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 51-53.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., 57.

Today Saudi Arabia is a country of paradoxes, an Islamic-led, technology-addicted society. Girls and women can study and work if they are protected from the eyes of non-mahram men. Women are free to use the social media on which they can share among other things a picture of the last piece of lingerie they bought from a shop in which the salesperson is a man<sup>486</sup>. This is only one of the many example describing the schizophrenic life led by the Saudi population; the Western and Islamic/Arabic cultures became untangled in a certain way that is hard to qualify as completely conservative or liberal. But this presence of Western cultural products (TV shows, movies, clothes, foods, education) should not be mistaken with an acceptance of Western values concerning human (women) rights, politics, religion, Arabic customs and values. A Saudi nurse would like to see cinemas in the kingdom, but only if specific day are separately allocated for men and women<sup>487</sup>; in other word, at least a portion of the population, is not against having so called Western ways of life introduced in the Saudi society but only if they are adapted to the customs and values of said society. I suppose this adaptation tendency is because religion is a way of life in Saudi Arabia, a situation that is probably due to the constant religious reminder of the muttawa and the ulama. The Saudi women who accepted their submissive destiny try to find their way to be more than just daughters, wives and mothers without fully breaking with the education and up-bringing.

There are women who are vehemently against the male guardian system. This system controls the daily movements of women by putting them under the tutelage of a man. All women, from the youngest to the oldest, from the non-educated to the highly educated, from the weakest to the most powerful are under the auspices of a man. None of them can travel, have a passport, a bank account, get married, be freed from prison, study/work locally or abroad without the prior approval of their tutor who can be their father, husband, son, uncle, or grandfather<sup>488</sup> (Boxed In, Human Rights Watch). Said differently, a woman cannot live a normal life in Saudi Arabia if she is not supported by a man; women are as powerful as their young children.

Saudi and Islamic State's women should not be observed through the oppressor/victim lenses. The positions women hold in both societies are diverse, complicated, and paradoxical because of the intricate influence of political, religious, economic, social and traditional considerations. Islamic State women accept women's roles as the fighters' wives and mothers only. Nonetheless, Islamic State's women did not relinquish the possibility of, one day, taking the weapons to defend themselves in the absence of masculine protection. On the other hand, not all Saudi women yearn for a complete abandonment of the religious traditionalism and patriarchy that

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<sup>486</sup> Aarts and Roelants, 56.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>488</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Boxed In: Women and Saudi Arabia's Male Guardianship System," (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

lead their lives. Most of the Saudi female population does call for change, but only in the form of a subtle reform that would maintain respect for the traditions they were raised in. Saudi Arabian and Islamic State women's cases are extremely diverse due to several political, religious, economic, and traditional characteristics. Moreover, the women's background (nationality of origin, education, social class) seems to play a role, at least to a certain point, in the ways women evolve in both entities. The limiting position of both entities toward the women is comparable in the way they are both based on Arab traditions and Islam. However, it seems that the Saudi leaders are understanding of the potential of women in the society's different branches (despite the religious insurrection), while Islamic State is still in the religious utopia phase.

### **Symbolism in Titles:**

In this section, I will proceed to the analysis of the titles the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Islamic State have given themselves. The importance of such a nominal dissection resides in the fact that a leader's title indicates a lot about his governance style and the path he puts his people on. I will begin by analyzing the caliphal name al-Badri gave himself, then I will proceed to discuss King Fahad ibn Abd al-Aziz's title. Both Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) and Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz (Servant of the Two Inviolable Places of Worship<sup>489</sup>) carried their titles to symbolize their status as successors of the Prophet and protectors of his legacy.

### **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi:**

When Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri was elected by the Shura Council as the leader of Islamic State in May 2010, he took the name Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. This name, in the context of the "group feeling" described by Ibn Khaldun<sup>490</sup>, is a concentration of unifying symbolism. Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri chose this name and this location to unite the Muslims under his leadership. Abu Bakr is the name of the first caliph of Islam, the Prophet's father-in-law, and one of the Prophet closest and most knowledgeable companions. By choosing this name al-Badri is not only comparing himself to the man Abu Bakr al-Siddiq; he is also appropriating the symbolism of being the direct successor of the Prophet himself. The fact that he chose al-Siddiq among all the successors of Mohammad is not an anodyne matter. It seems that he wanted to put the accent on his religious and intellectual closeness to the Prophet among the possible candidates to the caliphate. The need to concretize a never-ending link with the Prophet explains the way he insists on his descent from Mohammad's family.

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<sup>489</sup> In his translation of the Quran, Pickthall (36) translated the Arabic word *haram* as "the Inviolable Place of Worship", a translation that renders more justice to the Arabic meaning of the word than the usual "mosque" and "shrine" translations.

<sup>490</sup> Khaldūn, 1, 398.

The symbolism carried by the name al-Baghdadi is as significant as Abu Bakr's name. al-Baghdadi means the one from Baghdad, even though the man in question comes from Samarra<sup>491</sup>. Baghdad is more than the capital of Iraq; it was the capital of the Abbasid caliphate, it is "the very home of the caliphate, the Baghdad of al-Rashid"<sup>492</sup>. Moreover, the Abbasid empire 1) was created through the bloodline of Abbas, one of Mohammad's uncles<sup>493</sup>, 2) the Abbasid empire is used as an inspiration for Islamic State as seen in the Muslim Jesus and the Mahdi section. By choosing this name al-Baghdadi attempts to link himself to the Prophet and the powerful dynasties that followed him. However, this is not the only way al-Badri tries to link his self-declared caliphate to the Abbasid caliphate, as seen in the Leadership and Caliphate section.

#### Guardian of the Two Inviolable Places of Worship:

The title of Guardian of the Two Inviolable Places of Worship is an essential nomination in the Muslim leadership; the title "was proudly borne" by the various Ottoman *salateen* (sing: *sultan*)<sup>494</sup>. However, the most interesting element concerning this title is the lack of information displayed by the literature concerning the reasons behind King Fahd's decision to carry this symbolic title in 1986, four years after the beginning of his reign. I suppose that the King's decision to strengthen his position as the political and religious leader of his country was motivated by a series of events which began with the 1979 crisis and continued through the eighties' Saudi age of austerity.

1979 was a hectic year for Saudi Arabia's regional and local political scene. In February, Iran had fallen under the yoke of Ayatollah Khomeini and in November 20, 1979 "a band of millenarians seized control of Mecca's Grand Mosque, seeking to overthrow the Saudi dynasty"<sup>495</sup>. Juhayman al-'Utaybi instigated his coup in the Grand Mosque, center of the Islamic beliefs, on the first day of the Islamic 15th century to symbolize the beginning of a new era for Islam<sup>496</sup> (163). This attempted coup was led by a man who believed he could help the restoration of Islam to its previous glory by instating Muhammad Abd Allah al-Qahtani, a man he viewed as the Mahdi<sup>497</sup>, as the leader of the Muslims. Moreover, he trusted that only an authentic Islamic leadership could

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<sup>491</sup> McCants, *The Isis Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*. 2779.

<sup>492</sup> Abu Umar al-Baghdadi, first ruler of Islamic State quoted in McCants, 2279.

<sup>493</sup> Both the Abbasid and Umayyad dynasty descent from Quraysh tribe, which makes the Abbasid's leadership takeover from the Umayyad a clan matter.

<sup>494</sup> William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840-1908* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 52.

<sup>495</sup> David Dean Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, Library of Modern Middle East Studies, 50 (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 163.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>497</sup> Even though the belief in the Mahdi is rare occurrence in Sunni history compared to Shi'i beliefs, there are Sunnis who believe that such a saviour will put an end to the tyrannical reign of unbelievers and implement the rule of God upon all (Commins 166).



eliminate the corruption and betrayal that had overcome Islam<sup>498</sup>. He considered al-Saud and the Western powers as allies in the exploitation of the country's resources and the cultural corruption of the Saudi population. He accused the ulama' of betraying Islam by using religion to allow and justify al-Saud's corruptive and manipulative actions.

Those allegations were a real threat to al-Saud's claim to power since the rebel group refused to obey and debated the rightfulness of King Khalid's leadership; those actions were contradicting the Wahhabi principle of utter obedience to one's ruler. Al-'Utaybi was executed for his penal and religious crimes<sup>499</sup> in 1980, but the waves created by his rebellion against the authority translated into the government tightening of religious morals and values. Even though such tendencies preceded the Grand Mosque seizure, they only increased after it<sup>500</sup>. The government amplified the religious extremists' power to protect itself from them<sup>501</sup>, in other words they were given the power they wanted before they took on arms to get it by force. The government preserved its longevity by indirectly oppressing the people. The muttawa's<sup>502</sup> power increased, they were to impose the Wahhabi moral codes in shops, offices, restaurants, private homes, malls, and amusement parks<sup>503</sup>. The government increased the funding, staffing and admission levels of religious universities. In 1981, Ibn Baz released a fatwa forbidding women to be driven by foreign chauffeurs<sup>504</sup>. All those measures were needed to expand the government control over the population, a control that was always maintained through religious severity.

The government had a total control over the population through religion and politics, but it could not stop the grounding of revolt and insurgency in the Shi'i oil rich region of al-Hasa'. This region was being discriminated<sup>505</sup> from the sixties, but the people build up the courage to act only on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November, 1979. Those Saudi citizens were discriminated against because of their so-called un-Islamic beliefs. In other words, the Shi'i Saudi were considered as second class citizens by the Sunni/Saudi authorities<sup>506</sup>. A week after the beginning of al-'Utaybi's attempted

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<sup>498</sup> Ibid., 164-166.

<sup>499</sup> Killing and terrorizing innocent Muslims, violating the sanctity of the Haram and the month of Muharram, interrupting the prayers in the Haram, challenging the "legitimate authorities" and misidentifying the Mahdi Commins 168.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>501</sup> Wright, 95.

<sup>502</sup> The religious police.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Commins, 169.

<sup>505</sup> They were not allowed to teach their version of history or their interpretation of Islam, their religious rituals they had to be practiced in the privacy/security of their houses, their religious memorial was destroyed, only a minority of them could the oil high-end jobs Commins, 169.

<sup>506</sup> Commins, 169-171.

coup, the Shi'a of Hasa' commemorated Ashura<sup>507</sup>, despite the taboo created by the Saudi authorities. They protested religious and economic discriminations, they supported the Iranian Revolution. Despite the military repression, they came back stronger in February 1980 in celebration of the one year reign of Khomeini. The Saudi government answered to this rebellion by 1) cooperating with the Shi'i opposition movement by developing the local economy and infrastructure and 2) temporarily arresting the movement's leaders. The activists were liberated, in 1981, a year after their arrest during the period the government celebration of the improvements it brought to al-Qatif, a Hasawi town<sup>508</sup>.

King Khalid died in 1982, he was replaced by his brother King Fahd. The new king inherited a country shaken by revolt, a country that was slowly but surely entering an age of austerity due to the oil price decrease. In 1982, the Saudi GDP was 415.2 billion Saudi Riyals, four years later it dropped to 271 billion Riyals<sup>509</sup>. The government had to limit its spending to the necessary service, namely the populations' public services and benefits<sup>510</sup>. In other words, the authorities attempted to avoid a popular revolt by keeping the population satisfied. The "cash flow" was decreasing, the government could not keep this rhythm endlessly, the gas and electricity prices were raised 70 percent in 1985<sup>511</sup>. Moreover, the population was growing exponentially. A growth that affected the state's services, including the schooling and university systems, the public infrastructures and social benefits.

King Fahd's decision to be known as the Guardian of the Two Inviolable Places of Worship is not surprising when one knows all the challenges al-Saud's authority faced from the attempted coup and Shi'i revolt against King Khalid to the austerity age that marked King Fahd early reign. The King had to remind his population and the regional powers of al-Saud's political and religious status; al-Saud were not to be removed and they were only under God's highest authority. Those authoritative and religious claims are present in the title Servant of the Two Inviolable Places of Worship. It is essential to acknowledge the symbolism this title and the one who take it carry. The Masjid al-Haram (Mecca's Grand Mosque) and the Masjid al-Nabawi (Medina's Grand Mosque) were both build under the Prophet's authority. The first is home to the Ka'aba (the House of God), while the second was constructed after the Prophet's hijra to Medina from the Meccan unbelievers' oppression. The sacredness of these two location explains why they are known as

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<sup>507</sup> Remembrance of al-Hussain's martyrdom.

<sup>508</sup> Commins, 170.

<sup>509</sup> IMF 1999, 798-9 quoted in Al-Rasheed, 149.

<sup>510</sup> Free healthcare and education, social benefits Al-Rasheed, 150.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

*haram* meaning that they are inviolable; crime and violence against any of God's creature is forbidden. Al-Saud strengthened their religious connection to their population and the worldwide Muslim community by protecting the Two Inviolable Places of Worship and by facilitating the believers pilgrimage<sup>512</sup>. Moreover, by carrying this title King Fahd presented himself as a successor of the Prophet, a protector of his legacy; the title gave the King a whole new status that no other Muslim could pretend to. At the death of King Fahd in 2005, the title was taken by King Abdallah (d. 2015) who passed to the present ruler King Salman. The continual holding of this title by the al-Saud is a constant reminder for the old and rising powers of the region about the status of the Saudi Arabian leadership.

### **Conclusion:**

This chapter's main purpose was to demonstrate that Saudi Arabia and Islamic State are entities which function by balancing religion and nationalism. An Islamic statehood is the goal both entities are after, but in both them one can find signs of a strengthening nationalistic tendency. The nationalism of Islamic State is deliberate, but it is not defined as nationalism by Islamic State. The entity declares that nationalists

are aiming for nationalism to be a replacement for the prophecies, and [the nationalists] stipulate that all that is precious and cheap must be spent for [nationalism]. [Moreover] faith in [nationalism] must be stronger than all the bonds [e.g. family, religion]. And they have placed [nationalism] in the other palm, with faith in God Almighty and stipulated that it must be the creed for every Arab<sup>513</sup>.

In other words, Islamic State considers nationalism as an opposition to tawhid; one cannot be a Muslim and a nationalist since those ideas contradict each other. This paradoxical situation, Islamic State showing all the characteristics of nationalism while denying it, is due to Islamic State rejection of what they define as unbelievers' creations, nationalism in this case.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is a country in which two inclinations are constantly battling, namely religious conservatism and nationalism. The royal family is conscious of the population's need to feel united by something other than Islam; the Saudis display this longing for a concretization of their union in the ways they display their flag during sporting event. The celebration of a national day (September 23) partly answers this need, but the royal family is nonetheless conscious that religion is the main factor allowing them a certain control over the Saudi population, as seen in the second chapter, in the Muttawa sub-section. I suppose that had Ibn Saud

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<sup>512</sup> By the past those were the duties of the Ottoman *salateen* toward the believers, Ochsenwald, 59. The Saudi King places his leadership in continuity of those who led the Ottoman empire.

<sup>513</sup> al-Eftaa' wa al-Buhuth, "Islamic State Treatise on the Syrian Education System Full Text, Translation and Analysis."

been alive today, he would use the population's nationalistic tendencies at his own advantage instead of limiting them, as is the case today. Ibn Saud used the power of religion, the Wahhabi movement and, the Ikhwan military/religious fervor to conquer, unite and develop Saudi Arabia. His particularly developed political genius is clearly demonstrated by his famous expression "Religion is a free falcon, whoever catches it will use it to hunt"<sup>514</sup>. Saudi Arabia is today at a crossroad of its history. The present king, Salman ibn 'Abd al-Aziz, is the last of Ibn Saud's sons. When his time will come, the royal family will have to decide whether it will tame the falcon, allow it to roam freely or kill it and replace it with nationalism, possibly an Islam-inspired nationalism.

Religion is not powerful enough to ultimately unite an entire population around it. Moreover, an Islamic state per the precepts of the *Salaf al-Salih* is impossible since the world has changed drastically in the last fourteen centuries. Muslim countries are developing toward an Islamic-Western merged version of the nation-state; however, this development is far from being completed today. Muslim countries are in the pan-Islamic phase of this evolution, they are interpreting the nation-state through the Muslim lens.

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<sup>514</sup> "الدِّين طير حر من صاده قنص به" Rashid Al-Khayoun, "Morsi... Let the Nile Thrive and the Lilies Flower," *Al-Itihad*, July 4 2012.

## Conclusion

Islamic State is united by neither Islam nor its pseudo-nationalistic Islamic unifying symbols. Islamic State cannot overcome the power of nationalistic feelings coming from both the local and expatriate fighters because religion is not a cement strong enough to unite such a diverse group. Islamic State's doom will come from its internal disunity on nationalistic and religious grounds. It was created by religious purists who will most certainly be overcome by even more purist religious minds.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is the probable future of Islamic State if the latter was free to develop. Saudi Arabia is developing a national consciousness despite the religious brakes. This consciousness is the only way for the citizens to truly attain their leading potentials.

Saudi Arabia and Islamic State are different because of the times they came to be in. Saudi Arabia came to be in a time when nationalism was still not a known tendency in the area, even though each of the region that makes contemporary Saudi Arabia had and still have its own regional cultural and ethnic particularities. Islamic State, on the other hand, is a territory united by force (like Saudi Arabia), but where the inhabitants have had formed the notion of national feelings in their countries of origin making the territory's unity harder to implement because of the strong cultural differences between the people making Islamic State's members.

Saudi Arabia is a territory that was united by force, whose people are slowly become one due to a rising sense of nationalism. Islamic State is a territory that was united by force, whose people are slowly disuniting because of the rising power of old and anchored nationalistic feelings.

A state where all life is ruled by Islam is most likely an impossibility since Islam is not strong enough to overcome cultural and national life. Islam could not erase the tribal system; it had to include it in its rules and laws, and in the same way Islam had and will continue adapting to nationalistic feelings since they are second nature in humans.

Today Islamic State is on the brink of material destruction, but its ideas are still very much alive in the minds of its local and international active and dormant cells. Pure force played a role in Islamic State's birth, but pure force cannot end Islamic State. Ideas are not fought with guns, ideas are made to evolve through education and economic development.

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