1 Global Salafi Ideology

Salafism has a bad reputation. I cannot count the number of times that I was told by Salafis in Jordan that "the West" has a wrong and very generalised view of Salafism. Although the irony of that statement, being rather generalising itself, was often lost on them, it does make some sense. The trend as a whole is often associated with violence and terrorism, particularly in popular discourse, even though most Salafis never engage in either of these.[1] Such stereotypes are not limited to Western countries, however. Pall, for instance, recalls how a Lebanese person, who was probably used to associating Salafism with violence and militancy as well, once referred to some Salafi youngsters as "very good guys" but was shocked to hear them described as "Salafis", as if these two do not go together.[2]

However, a less drastic "accusation" against Salafis in general – that they are very strict and have views about, for example, non-Muslims that are at odds with what most people adhere to – hits closer to home. The general ideology espoused by Salafis is one that is quite different from what even most Sunni Muslims believe in, although this is not always apparent. This chapter delves into the ideology of global Salafism in three parts: firstly, I deal with the definition, origins and spread of Salafism; secondly, I describe and analyse the most important concepts in modern-day Salafi ideology that will be used throughout this book; and thirdly, the divisions within Salafism with regard to applying this ideology in practice are described. This chapter, as such, not only forms a general yet comprehensive treatment of global Salafi ideology in and of itself, but also acts as the basis on which the next chapter, which looks specifically at Jordanian ideological contributions, builds.

[1] Christian Caryl, "The Salafi Moment," in *The New Salafi Politics* (Washington, DC: Project on Middle East Political Science, 2012), 8–10.
[2] Pall, *Salafism*, 18.

The Definition, Origins and Spread of Salafism

In their article on the Ghost Dance movement in the United States, the Rastafari movement of Jamaica and the Maya movement of Guatemala, Price, Nonini and Fox Tree refer to these trends as "grounded utopian movements". By this term, they mean "thoroughly modern movements" that may "have emerged, persisted, disappeared, and re-emerged across decades, even centuries" and that make "use of cultural resources such as religious beliefs, the creation of new cultural formations and meanings, and the manifestation of culturally-embedded movement practices." Such movements are "utopian" because "they point to a[n] 'ideal place' (utopia) [. . .] and[,] by implication, to a better time and more satisfying social relationships and identifications". Rather than concentrating on "instrumental action with respect to states and capitalism", they focus on "group integrity and identity". These movements are also "grounded" in the sense that their "identities, values, and imaginative dimensions of utopia are culturally focussed on real places, embodied by living people, informed by past lifeways, and constructed and maintained through quotidian interactions and valued practices that connect the members of a community".[3] Salafism, as has been pointed out elsewhere,[4] can also be seen as such a grounded utopian movement, focussing on the "ideal place" or "utopia" of the first generations of Islam, while simultaneously being grounded in the very real places Salafis live in and the actual people they meet.

The Definition of Salafism

It is precisely the focus on the utopia of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ* that leads me to refer to Salafis – i.e., those who claim to follow the *salaf* as closely and in as many spheres of life as possible – as such. According to several *ḥadīth*s ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad, "the best of my (i.e., Muhammad's) community" (*khayr ummatī*) or "the best people" (*khayr al-nās*) are "my generation (*qarnī*) and then the ones who follow them (*thumma lladhīna yalūnahum*) and then the ones who follow them (*thumma lladhīna yalūnahum*)".[5] This suggests that the first three

[3] Charles Price, Donald Nonini and Erich Fox Tree, "Grounded Utopian Movements: Subjects of Neglect," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2008): 128–9.
[4] Martijn de Koning, "'Moge Hij onze ogen openen': De radicale utopie van het 'salafisme'," *Tijdschrift voor Religie, Recht en Beleid* 2, no. 2 (2011): 49–51; De Koning, Wagemakers and Becker, *Salafisme*, esp. 20–1.
[5] These traditions exist in slightly different forms. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, book 57 ("Kitāb Faḍāʾil Aṣḥāb al-Nabī"), chapter 1 ("Faḍāʾil Aṣḥāb al-Nabī"), nos. 2–3; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, book 44 ("Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥāba"), chapter 52 ("Faḍl al-Ṣaḥāba, thumma lladhīna Yalūnahum, thumma lladhīna Yalūnahum"), nos. 2533–6.

generations of Islam are the best that ever lived, and it is also these three that are usually equated with *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

As straightforward as this may seem, the *ḥadīth*s mentioned above are actually rather unclear. Even if we assume that these traditions are reliable sources of what really happened,[6] it is not entirely obvious what "my generation" means. As has been pointed out by several scholars, it is unclear whether this refers to an actual generation (and exactly how many years that would entail) or to a century of Muslims. The latter explanation would, for example, allow certain scholars revered by Salafis, such as Ahmad b. Hanbal (780–855), to be included among the *salaf*.[7] Despite this lack of clarity, Salafis manage to distil a fairly homogeneous body of doctrines from this utopian period that they try to emulate, although not one that they can all agree on, as we will see later.

In naming and labelling a group of people, it is not uncommon to look at what the object of study calls itself. However, in the case of Salafis, that is slightly problematic. Some Salafis refer to themselves simply as "Muslims", "the people of the Prophetic practice and the community" (*ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamāʿa*)[8] or "followers of *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*". The first is analytically impractical since "Muslims" suggests far too wide a group. The second label is somewhat subjective and more or less a synonym for "Sunni Muslims", which is more narrow than "Muslims" but still too broad to be useful. The third label, finally, may mean the same as "Salafis", making it slightly redundant, or may loosely refer to a more

[6] For more on the academic debate on the authenticity of the sources of Muḥammad's life, see Andreas Görke, "Prospects and Limits in the Study of the Historical Muḥammad," in *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam: Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki*, ed. Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort, Kees Versteegh and Joas Wagemakers (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 137–51. One could argue that academic questions about the sources' authenticity do not really matter in this respect since the important thing here is whether Muslims believe them to be authentic. This is correct, yet Muslims themselves, not least the *ḥadīth*-scholar al-Albānī, are sceptical of the authenticity of some traditions of Muḥammad's life as well, though not these particular ones. For more on al-Albānī's methods in this respect, see Amin, "Nasiruddin."

[7] Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (London: Hurst & Co., 2009), 38–9; Christina Hellmich, "Creating the Ideology of Al Qaeda: From Hypocrites to Salafi-Jihadists," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31 (2008): 117; Justyna Nedza, "'Salafismus': Überlegungen zur Schärfung einer Analysekategorie," in *Salafismus: Auf der Suche nach dem wahren Islam*, ed. Behnam T. Said and Hazim Fouad (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 96–100.

[8] For more on the origins of the term *ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamāʿa* from a Salafī perspective, see Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Miṣrī, *Maʿālim Manhaj Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-Ǧamāʿa* (Amman: Jamʿiyyat al-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna – Lajnat al-Kalima al-Ṭayyiba, 2011), 69–74. Interestingly, this author is typical of many Salafīs in the sense that he claims the term *ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamāʿa* for Salafīs by describing its beliefs and characteristics as those of Salafism, as if "ordinary" Sunni Muslims do not really fit into this category. See *ibid.*, 49–130.

general way of following the *salaf* that is not limited to the Salafis discussed in this book but can also be found among other Sunni Muslims. In principle, the terms "Salafi" and "Salafism" used in this study are therefore labels that *I* use to denote the people dealt with in this book, based on their common characteristic of claiming to emulate the utopia of the *salaf* very closely and as much as possible, rather than a term derived from what Salafis call themselves. In practice, however, major Salafi scholars also refer to themselves as such, and labelling oneself a "Salafi" is a common practice among Jordanians whom I too describe as Salafis, meaning that their own label and mine converge.[9]

The Origins of Salafism

The trend we call "Salafism" today – the defining feature of which is the strict emulation of the utopia of the "pious predecessors" in every sphere of life – is often described by its adherents as nothing more than simply Islam in its pure and unadulterated form. The Salafi movement analysed in this book is, however, of far more recent origin and has its roots in the twentieth century. Still, a general desire to emulate the *salaf* in some way – though less detailed, less broadly applied and less focussed upon than by modern-day Salafis – is much older and goes back into history almost as far as Islam itself, to the eighth century. Until that period (but after Muhammad's death in 632), Muslims had mostly relied on the Qurʾan, the different *sunan* (practices; pl. of Sunna) of an authoritative group of early believers, the latter's considered opinion (*raʾy*) and scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*) when they wanted to have answers to their questions on religion. On the basis of these sources, the early schools of Islamic law (*madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*) developed. In opposition, however, to this "lived tradition", as espoused by the *ahl al-raʾy* (the people of considered opinion), a different trend developed. Followers of the latter – known as the *ahl al-ḥadīth* (the people of the Prophetic tradition or traditionists) – claimed that the increasing number of *ḥadīth* texts that were found and ascribed to Muhammad as his authentic sayings were of greater value than the "lived tradition" of the *ahl al-raʾy* and should therefore be focussed on instead.[10]

[9] This is perhaps a result of al-Albānī's statement that Salafis should always refer to themselves as such as shorthand for "Muslims following the Book and the Sunna according to the method of the pious predecessors". See www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uyWHf5FJ_M (accessed 25 March 2015). See also the statement on this issue by major Salafi shaykh Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUthaymīn, who arrives at the same conclusion as al-Albānī, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe_8UmoELZk (accessed 25 March 2015).

[10] N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999 [1964]), 39–52; Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982 [1964]), 29–34.

Although the *ahl al-ḥadīth* faced stiff opposition from the *ahl al-raʾy* in the eighth and early ninth centuries, it was clear that the growing body of texts about Muhammad was a religious source that could not be ignored. The *ahl al-ḥadīth* argued that their reliance on Prophetic *ḥadīth*s was more consistent and more authentic than the *ahl al-raʾy*'s "lived tradition" because the former was based on concrete texts that could directly be ascribed to the Prophet himself. Why, after all, rely on people's considered opinion when one can – through the use of *ḥadīth*s – supposedly have direct access to the views of the Prophet himself? Thus, it was not surprising that, while the *ahl al-ḥadīth*'s position did not become mainstream, the focus on the Prophetic traditions that they argued for was incorporated into Islamic law as one of the major sources of the *sharīʿa* by Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafiʿi (767–820). This middle ground, as it were, between the two approaches of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* and the *ahl al-raʾy* went on to form the legal basis of what became known as Sunni Islam from the ninth century onwards and was generally adopted by most Muslims.[11]

The general desire to base one's beliefs and practices directly on the Qurʾan and the prophetic Sunna – as early traditionists such as Ibn Hanbal advocated and as Salafis also want today – thus goes back to the formative period of Islamic legal schools. This is not to suggest that twenty-first-century Salafis are modern-day equivalents of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* – although at least some Salafis seem to view themselves that way[12] – but simply that they share a core tenet in their approach to Islamic tradition.[13] Importantly, this is also the key legal difference between Salafis and "ordinary" Sunni Muslims, who also view the first generations of Islam as the purest form of the religion.[14] The latter see the Prophet and his companions as exemplary and as people whose model should be followed by adhering to a school of Islamic law, which in itself takes into account things like the interests of the Muslim community and considered scholarly opinions. Salafis, by contrast, try to interpret and apply the sources of Islam through the prism of

[11] Coulson, *History*, 52–61; Hallaq, *Sharīʿa*, 55–9; Schacht, *Introduction*, 35–48.
[12] See, for example, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Dahlawī al-Madanī, *Tārīkh Ahl al-Ḥadīth: Taʿyīn al-Firqa al-Nājiya wa-annahā Ṭāʾifat Ahl al-Ḥadīth* (Medina: Maktabat al-Ghurabāʾ al-Athariyya, 1417 AH [1996/1997]), in which the author applies terms such as "the saved sect" (*al-firqa al-nājiya*), which is often used for Salafis, to the *ahl al-ḥadīth*. Interestingly, the *ḥadīth*s used in the book were verified and commented upon by ʿAlī al-Ḥalabī, probably the most prominent Jordanian quietist Salafi scholar today.
[13] See also Adis Duderija, "Neo-Traditional Salafi Qurʾan-Sunna Hermeneutics and Its Interpretational Implications," *Religion Compass* 5, no. 7 (2011): 314–25.
[14] Haykel, "Nature," 34.

the first Muslim generations only, mostly without recourse to schools of law or extra-textual sources.[15]

Although those advocating a "Salafi" approach to the sources – i.e., bypassing the *madhāhib* and taking the Qurʾan and the Sunna of the *salaf* as their only guide – have always been a minority, this trend did not die with Ibn Hanbal. It was picked up again by the Syrian Hanbali scholars Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350), who argued that blind emulation (*taqlīd*) of any school of law should be discarded. The alternative was direct and independent interpretation of the Qurʾan and the Sunna (*ijtihād*)[16] for scholars and – according to some – simply "following" (*ittibāʿ*) these sources for "ordinary" believers.[17] A similar desire was expressed by Yemeni scholars such as Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. al-Wazir (d. 1436) and Muhammad b. Ismaʿil al-Sanʿani (1688–1768), who both rejected *taqlīd* when there were authentic *ḥadīth*s contradicting received Islamic legal opinions.[18] These and others, in turn, were a great influence on the nineteenth-century Yemeni scholar Muhammad b. ʿAli al-Shawkani (d. 1834), who shared his predecessors' dismissal of *taqlīd* and advocated finding direct evidence in the original texts.[19]

The tendency to rely only on the Qurʾan and the Sunna, at the expense of extra-textual sources or the blind following of a *madhhab*, could also be found outside the Arab world. On the Indian subcontinent, the

[15] Jonathan A.C. Brown, "Is Islam Easy to Understand or Not? Salafis, the Democratization of Interpretation and the Need for the Ulema," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2015): 117–44. This difference is perfectly summed up in the title of a book written by a staunch Syrian Sunni critic of Salafism, Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī: "Salafism is a blessed temporal period, not an Islamic legal school." See Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *Al-Salafiyya Marḥala Zamaniyya Mubāraka Lā Madhhab Islāmī* (Beirut/Damascus: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir/Dār al-Fikr, 2010 [1988]).

[16] The exact history of *ijtihād* and when this tool ceased to be employed by scholars – if at all – is somewhat controversial. For more on this, see Mohammed Fadel, "The Social Logic of *Taqlīd* and the Rise of the *Mukhtaṣar*," *Islamic Law and Society* 3, no. 2 (1996): 193–233; Wael B. Hallaq, "On the Origins of the Controversy about the Existence of *Mujtahid*s and the Gate of *Ijtihād*," *Studia Islamica* 63 (1986): 129–41; *id.*, "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 1 (1984): 3–41; Haykel, *Revival*, 76–108; Sherman Jackson, "*Taqlīd*, Legal Scaffolding and the Scope of Legal Injunctions in Post-Formative Theory," *Islamic Law and Society* 3, no. 2 (1996): 165–92; Rudolph Peters, "Idjtihād and Taqlīd in 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islams* 20, nos. 3–4 (1980): 131–45; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 17–19.

[17] Haykel, "Nature," 43–4. The difference between *taqlīd* (blind emulation of a *madhhab*) and *ittibāʿ* (following a Qurʾānic verse or *ḥadīth* itself directly) is further explained in al-Madanī, *Tārīkh*, 116–17.

[18] Brown, *Canonization*, 314–18.

[19] *Ibid.*, 315; Haykel, *Revival*, 10. For more on al-Shawkānī's specific position on *taqlīd* and *ijtihād*, see Haykel, *Revival*, 89–108.

eighteenth-century scholar Shah Wali Allah (1703–1762) thought along similar lines. Although he was very concerned with communal cohesion and therefore quite tolerant of popular religious practices that modern-day Salafis would frown upon, Shah Wali Allah believed that excessive recourse to *madhāhib* had led Muslims away from Islam's original message and that this should therefore be discarded. At the same time, however, he did recognise the value of the schools of law *as such* for their role in bringing order to a Muslim community (*umma*) under fire in his home country.[20] The teachings of Shah Wali Allah and others inspired the *ahl-e ḥadīth* movement on the Indian subcontinent in the nineteenth century,[21] which – like the original *ahl al-ḥadīth* movement discussed earlier – advocated a supposedly purer and more authentic form of Islam through direct recourse to the Qurʾan and Sunna by scholars. The *ahl-e ḥadīth* movement has, in fact, been active in India and Pakistan till this very day.[22]

Also active until today and related to the *ahl-e ḥadīth* movement in India is the so-called Wahhabi movement, named after the eighteenth-century reformer Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). Hailing from the central Arabian region of Najd, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab tried to "cleanse" Islam as he saw it from the popular and syncretistic religious rituals and customs it had acquired throughout time, using the utopia of the *salaf* as his guide. In doing so, he explicitly built on the work of earlier scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya and tried to revert directly to the Qurʾan and the Sunna.[23] Although he initially encountered hostility against his views among his own people and even his own family,[24] he eventually allied himself with the tribal leader Muhammad b. Saʿud (d. 1765) and together they conquered large parts of the Arabian Peninsula. This way, Wahhabism became the dominant Islamic trend in Saudi

[20] Brown, *Canonization*, 318–21.
[21] For more on the origins of this movement, see Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1982]), esp. 268–96.
[22] Abou Zahab, "Salafism," 126–42.
[23] Interestingly, a student of mine once told me he had read one of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's books, the famous *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, and noticed that there was "really nothing new in the book, just Qurʾān and Sunna". Although a lack of originality is not something authors generally like being accused of, I told my student that Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb would most probably have been proud to hear that.
[24] Hamadi Redissi, "The Refutation of Wahhabism in Arabic Sources," in *Kingdom without Borders: Saudi Arabia's Political, Religious and Media Frontiers*, ed. Madawi Al-Rasheed (London: Hurst & Co., 2008), 157–81; Samer Traboulsi, "An Early Refutation of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's Reformist Views," *Die Welt des Islams* 42, no. 3 (2002): 373–415.

Arabia and it has remained this way ever since.[25] The ideological kinship between Wahhabism and the *ahl-e ḥadīth* movement was clear from, among other things,[26] the fact that several Arabian scholars went to study in India, including the prominent shaykh Saʿd b. ʿAtiq (1862/3–1930), who studied there for nine years at the behest of his father, Hamd b. ʿAtiq (d. 1883).[27]

The interest in generally wanting to revert to the Qurʾan and the Sunna is the key element that all groups and scholars mentioned in this section had in common, which they share with modern-day Salafis. This does not mean, however, that all of them were Salafis themselves, nor that they were all exactly alike. Wahhabi scholars, for example, were more likely to follow the Hanbali school of Islamic law, rather than discard this practice in favour of *ijtihād*, and focussed mostly on cleansing the creed (*ʿaqīda*) of Islam. Some other reformers dealt with above were much more negative about *taqlīd* and concentrated on the study of Islamic law (*fiqh*), rather than on creedal issues.[28] It is also worth noting that the equation that is often made between Wahhabism on the one hand and Salafism on the other is not entirely accurate. Given its strong ideological similarities with Salafism, Wahhabism – a term rejected by adherents to this trend – can certainly be seen as Salafi, but the opposite is not always true. Apart from the difference in approach towards *ijtihād* and *taqlīd*, Salafism represents the international trend whose adherents claim to emulate the *salaf* as strictly and in as many spheres of life as possible, while Wahhabism is its Najdi version, being (at least initially) more local than Salafism and also perhaps somewhat less tolerant.[29]

[25] Studies describing the rise of early Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia in greater detail include Commins, *Wahhabi*, 10–30; Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15–23; George S. Rentz, *The Birth of the Islamic Reform Movement in Saudi Arabia: Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703/4–1792) and the Beginnings of Unitarian Empire in Arabia* (London: Arabian Publishing Ltd., 2004); Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 2000 [1998]), 64–139.

[26] A very accessible – though somewhat spectacularly titled – work on the relations between Wahhābī scholars and the like-minded shaykhs in India is Charles Allen, *God's Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006).

[27] Dziri, "Gebet," 145–8; Lacroix, "Between," 62; Steinberg, *Religion*, 249.

[28] Dziri, "Gebet," 141–4; Haykel, "Nature," 42–3; Lacroix, "L'apport," 46–7; *id.*, "Between," 61–2, 65–6. This is not to say that Saudi scholars never make use of *ijtihād*, however, as several scholars have pointed out. See Gauvain, *Salafi*, 140, 162; Qasim Zaman, *Ulama*, 152.

[29] Allen, *God's*, 50; Hala Fattah, "'Wahhabi' Influences, Salafi Responses: Shaikh Mahmud Shukri and the Iraqi Salafi Movement, 1745–1930," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, no. 2 (2003): 145–6; Haykel, *Revival*, 14, 127–30.

Another point of confusion about Salafism can be found in the trend of, as Haykel puts it, "enlightened Salafism" (*al-Salafiyya al-tanwīriyya*).[30] This term is often associated with modernist reformers such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838/9–1897) and Muhammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905),[31] but – as Lauzière has shown – this is likely more because of a mix-up in labels than because of the actual beliefs of these two men. Moreover, it is unlikely that either of these two men claimed to be Salafis or saw themselves as part of a Salafi trend.[32] This does not mean that "enlightened" or "modernist" Salafis did not exist, however. Several nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinkers and scholars in Iraq[33] and particularly Syria,[34] such as Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi (1856–1924) and Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (1866–1914), could also be labelled "Salafi" in the sense that they, too, fully geared their beliefs towards returning to the *salaf*. They did so, however, with partly different objectives. While the Salafis dealt with in this book reach back to the utopia of the *salaf* in order to "purify" Islam and try do so on the basis of the Qurʾan and Sunna alone, "enlightened" Salafis were mostly concerned with modernising the religion and, among other methods, applied rationalism to achieve this. They wanted to remove "backward" elements such as *taqlīd* from Islam in order to rebuild the religion from the bottom up, as it were, and to make it compatible with the challenges of the modern age.[35] It is this latter aspect, about which the Salafis dealt with in this book –

[30] Haykel, "Nature," 45.
[31] For more on the ideas and beliefs of these two men, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983 [1962]), 103–60.
[32] Henri Lauzière, "The Construction of *Salafiyya*: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (2010): 373–6. See also, however, Frank Griffel, "What Do We Mean by 'Salafi'? Connecting Muḥammad ʿAbduh with Egypt's Nūr Party in Islam's Contemporary Intellectual History," *Die Welt des Islams* 55, no. 2 (2015): 186–220, esp. 200–13.
[33] Fattah, "Wahhabi"; Itzchak Weismann, "Genealogies of Fundamentalism: Salafi Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Baghdad," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (2009): 267–80.
[34] David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Munʿim Sirry, "Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī and the Salafi Approach to Sufism," *Die Welt des Islams* 51, no. 1 (2011): 75–108; Itzchak Weismann, "Between Ṣūfī Reformism and Modernist Rationalism: A Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene Angle," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, no. 2 (2001): 206–37; *id.*, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 263–304.
[35] Haykel, "Nature," 45–7; Wagemakers, *Quietist*, 6–7.

frankly – do not really care, that constitutes the most important difference between "enlightened" and "purifying" Salafis.[36]

The Spread of Salafism

The general attempt to emulate the utopia of the *salaf* is thus an old and widespread phenomenon in the history of Islam. This, again, does not mean that the scholars and groups mentioned above were all Salafis *avant la lettre*, but they were indeed precursors to the current Salafi movement in the sense that they all tried to go directly to the earliest textual sources (the Qurʾan and the Sunna). Moreover, this general claim of wanting to return to the beginning of Islam, although it is not as specific and pervasive as modern-day Salafis express it, may nevertheless help explain the spread of Salafism today. A focus on the Qurʾan and the Sunna provides Muslims with a great source of authenticity, giving the impression that they are merely doing what the sources are saying. Given that Salafis are the ultimate advocates of such a method, this approach – although contested by other Muslims, as we will see below – allows Salafis to adopt an attitude of supposed religious purity and authority, which may well be an attractive feature to many Muslim youngsters searching for answers in life.[37] Furthermore, some of the scholars and movements mentioned earlier, although often not Salafis themselves, may well have contributed to a renewed appreciation of the study of particularly *ḥadīth*s. This may, indirectly, also have aided the rise of the Salafi trend dealt with in this book, which – as mentioned – has its roots in the twentieth century. The trend that stimulated and facilitated the spread of Salafism in that period more than any other was Wahhabism.

Before explaining the Saudi-Wahhabi role in the spread of Salafism in the twentieth century, it should be clear that this factor must not be exaggerated.[38] Apart from the influence of other Salafi movements already in existence, independent of Wahhabism, it is important to remember that the *salaf*, the Qurʾan and the Sunna are of great importance to *all* Sunni Muslims. As such, the general tendency to be influenced by early Islam is not beholden to Salafis alone, but finds a much wider audience. Although Salafis and "ordinary" Sunnis have different

[36] The more modernist Salafis in particularly Syria have nevertheless been of great importance to Salafism in Jordan and continue to inspire the more politically minded Salafis in the kingdom. That issue requires a separate publication, however.

[37] See, for example, Martijn de Koning, *Zoeken naar een "zuivere" islam: Geloofsbeleving en identiteitsvorming van jonge Marokkaans-Nederlandse moslims* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008).

[38] See also Bonnefoy, *Salafism*, 5–13, who points this out as well in the context of his work on Yemen.