

A Quietist Jihadi

Since '9/11', the Jordanian Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (b. West Bank, 1959) has emerged as one of the most important radical Muslim thinkers alive today. While al-Maqdisi may not be a household name in the West, his influence amongst like-minded Muslims stretches across the world, from Jordan – where he lives today – to Southeast Asia. His writings and teachings on Salafi Islam have inspired terrorists from Europe to the Middle East, including Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, the former leader of al-Qa'ida in Iraq, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama Bin Laden's successor as the head of al-Qa'ida Central.

This groundbreaking book, which is the first comprehensive assessment of al-Maqdisi, his life, ideology and influence, is based on his extensive writings and those of other jihadis, as well as on interviews that the author conducted with (former) jihadis, including al-Maqdisi himself. It is a serious and intense work of scholarship that uses this considerable archive to explain and interpret al-Maqdisi's particular brand of Salafism. More broadly, the book offers an alternative insider perspective on the rise of radical Islam, with a particular focus on Salafi opposition movements in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

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*The Ideology and Influence of
Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi*

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Glossary</i>	xiii
<i>Note on Transliteration</i>	xxiii
Introduction	I
<i>The Salafi Ideological Basis</i>	2
<i>The Development of Radical Islam</i>	10
<i>Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Sources</i>	20
<i>Overview</i>	24
PART I. AL-MAQDISI’S LIFE AND HIS PLACE IN THE JIHADI IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM, 1959–2009	
1 <i>Wavering between Quietism and Jihadism</i>	29
<i>Al-Maqdisi’s Childhood Years</i>	30
<i>Becoming a Quietist Jihadi-Salafi</i>	33
<i>Al-Maqdisi’s Troubled Relationship with al-Zarqawi</i>	41
2 <i>Al-Maqdisi’s Quietist Jihadi-Salafi ‘Aqīda</i>	51
<i>Classical Jihad</i>	52
<i>Turning Jihad against Muslim Rulers</i>	59
<i>Global Jihad</i>	72
3 <i>Al-Maqdisi’s Quietist Jihadi-Salafi Manhaj</i>	75
<i>Da‘wa or Jihad?</i>	75
<i>Jihad Strategy</i>	78
<i>Targets of Jihad</i>	85

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
	PART II. AL-MAQDISI'S INFLUENCE ON THE SAUDI ISLAMIC OPPOSITION, 1989–2005	
4	Saudi Arabia's Post–Gulf War Opposition	97
	<i>Wahhabism and the Saudi System</i>	97
	<i>Al-Maqdisi's Framing of Saudi Arabia</i>	104
	<i>Al-Maqdisi's Influence on Saudi Arabia's Post–Gulf War Opposition</i>	109
	<i>Explaining al-Maqdisi's Influence</i>	113
5	Al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula	120
	<i>The Rise of al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP)</i>	121
	<i>Adopting al-Maqdisi's Frame</i>	127
	<i>A Wahhabi to the Wahhabis: Explaining al-Maqdisi's Influence</i>	137
	PART III. AL-MAQDISI'S INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AL-WALĀ' WA-L-BARĀ', 1984–2009	
6	The Revival of <i>al-Isti'āna bi-l-Kuffār</i>	147
	<i>From Jāhiliyya to Wahhābiyya: The Development of al-Walā' wa-l-Barā'</i>	148
	<i>Reframing al-Isti'āna bi-l-Kuffār</i>	153
	<i>Explaining al-Maqdisi's Frame Resonance</i>	160
7	'Salafising' Jihad	165
	<i>Jihad as Barā' against 'Infidel' Walā'</i>	166
	<i>Adopting a 'Salafised' Jihad</i>	174
	<i>The Acceptance of al-Maqdisi's 'Salafised' Jihad</i>	183
	PART IV. AL-MAQDISI'S INFLUENCE ON THE JORDANIAN JIHADI-SALAFI COMMUNITY, 1992–2009	
8	Guidance to the Seekers	191
	<i>The Jordanian Political Context</i>	191
	<i>Al-Maqdisi's Arrival in Jordan</i>	198
	<i>A Visionary in the Land of the Blind</i>	208
9	The Leader of the Jordanian Jihadi-Salafi Community?	213
	<i>The Prison Experience and Beyond</i>	214
	<i>Framing Jordanian Opponents</i>	222
	<i>A New Generation of Quietist Jihadi-Salafis?</i>	231
	Conclusion	237
	<i>Bibliography</i>	251
	<i>Index</i>	277

Preface

Like many good ideas, the one to write the PhD thesis on which this book is based started over dinner. In 2005, the co-supervisor of my thesis, Roel Meijer, and I were at a restaurant discussing my intention to write a dissertation about radical Islam in the Middle East, but I was not entirely sure what to do yet. Roel, who was quite aware of my fascination with the dynamics of Islamist ideology, suggested I do something with Jihadi-Salafism. Although I do not recall his mentioning the name ‘Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi’, of whom I had never heard at the time, I distinctly remember his saying: ‘Perhaps you should check out this website.’ The URL he suggested was, of course, www.tawhed.ws, al-Maqdisi’s website and the biggest online library of Jihadi-Salafi literature. When I got home and found it, I was immediately struck by the huge number of sources available, and I just knew I had to do something with this site. This book is the product of the idea that was born that night.

My fascination with ideology and its development and flexibility is rooted in an inexplicable interest in beliefs and dogmas I have had for a long time. For years I have been intrigued by the intricate details of theological and ideological debates, whose participants often claim to be the only true followers of a certain tradition, all the while quoting the same books and scholars but coming up with entirely different practical solutions. This interest was, of course, directed towards Islamic and Islamist thought during my studies at university. In that sense, this book is something I had long wanted to write, probably even before I realised it myself.

Dinners and long-held fascinations aside, however, it should also be mentioned that this book would probably not have been written had it not

been for the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. Not only were thousands in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania murdered in these attacks, but they also had a deep impact on the lives of millions of others affected by the attacks' foreign and domestic policy implications and – importantly – on academia. The aftermath of '9/11', as my generation will always remember it, spawned a great number of think tanks, centres and institutes dedicated to the study of terrorism and – in this case – its radical Islamist underpinnings. In a way, this book is also a result of this trend, although I feel slightly uneasy putting it like that. While I am certainly very interested in radical Islam and terrorism, I have never considered myself a 'terrorism analyst'. This is not to suggest that there is anything wrong with terrorism analysts; many of them do an excellent job of keeping us safe and writing first-class publications. It is just that I have always been more interested in the words and ideas than in the guns and bombs, and would have been happy to apply my time to non-radical beliefs and ideologies. I therefore also hope that this book will not be viewed as dealing only with terrorism and radicalisation – although these subjects are certainly mentioned in the pages to come – but really as an effort to dissect the contents, (ideological) context and impact of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi's ideas.

Combining my fascination for ideas with my realisation that this book would not have seen the light of day without '9/11' turned out to be much easier than I had initially thought. As someone who was profoundly shocked and filled with abhorrence by the attacks in 2001, I assumed it would be difficult ever to talk to al-Maqdisi, who so openly applauded this wanton killing and generally held beliefs that were diametrically opposed to my own. It turned out, however, that this was not the case. Not only was al-Maqdisi a very friendly and hospitable person – his radical beliefs notwithstanding – but meeting the man whose ideas have occupied such a major part of my life over the past few years was quite exciting, and ensured that we had a connection that overcame any ideological animosity I had for him. It would be wonderful if this book could in some way contribute to a greater understanding of radical Islam as my reading of al-Maqdisi's work helped me understand him better. While a better grasp of Jihadi-Salafism can be used for various purposes – both good and evil, depending on one's perspective – a bit more understanding is never wasted, especially in today's world. That would definitely be a nice result of an idea that simply started over dinner.

Acknowledgements

One of the many great pleasures of writing a book is that you can do it on your own, free to set your own agenda and work according to your own timetable. Still, throughout the course of doing research and writing these chapters, I have had a lot of help from many people who must be mentioned here. First, I would like to thank the Institute of Historical, Literary and Cultural Studies (HLCS) at Radboud University, Nijmegen, for awarding me a grant that allowed me to do this research. I am grateful for this opportunity and, considering how much I enjoyed doing my research, I still have a hard time believing that HLCS not only enabled me to do it but even paid me for it into the bargain.

I would also like to thank the two supervisors of my PhD thesis that underlies this book, Harald Motzki and Roel Meijer. They gave me the freedom to do research without having to report on my findings every two weeks, and were always willing to comment on my work – including the articles I continued to bother them with – and their advice was very useful and has improved my writing considerably. The two different kinds of research that Harald and Roel represent – philological research on the beginnings of Islam and historical research on contemporary Islamism and the modern Middle East, respectively – have both greatly contributed to this book in their own ways. If, after reading this book, anyone should remark that traces of Motzki and Meijer can clearly be seen in its text, I would consider it a great compliment.

I should also mention the Department of Islam and Arabic at Radboud University, Nijmegen. Shortly after I started working there, we were told that the department would be dissolved, but because of the tireless efforts

of several people, particularly Lieke de Jong and Kees Versteegh, we survived. Even throughout this difficult period it was always a joy to work at this department, and I would like to thank all of my colleagues there for creating such a pleasant working environment. The same can be said of my colleagues of the research project on Salafism in which I participated, Carmen Becker, Martijn de Koning, Roel Meijer, Zoltan Pall and Din Wahid, whose research was not only very interesting but also provided me with new perspectives on my own work. I should especially mention Martin van Bruinessen, who often took time out of his busy schedule to listen to our stories and whose extensive experience and judicious advice were useful to all of us.

Several people, including Joseph Alagha, Egbert Harmsen, Thomas Hegghammer, Stéphane Lacroix, Marie Juul Petersen, Madawi al-Rasheed, Guido Steinberg and Quintan Wiktorowicz, have given me some excellent advice on field work in the countries that I visited and often shared contacts that allowed me to get started, for which I thank them all. I am also grateful to Hasan Abu Haniyya, Mohamed-Ali Adraoui, David Commins, Bernard Haykel, Will McCants, Saud al-Sarhan and Paul Schrijver, who have contributed indirectly to this book by commenting on articles I wrote or by providing me with certain documents that I was unable to find myself.

In England, I was always welcomed by my friends Dave and Christine Miller and their sons Daniel and Andrew. Although my support for Arsenal sometimes clashed with their preference for Tottenham Hotspur, we had some very good times together, and I thank them for their hospitality and great sense of humour. In Jordan, I benefited greatly from the personnel at the Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFPO) in Amman, particularly Leila El Jechi, who always had time for my questions. Similarly, my stay in Saudi Arabia would have been much less effective without the help of the staff at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS) in Riyadh, especially Yahya b. Junayd and Awadh al-Badi, whose advice and contacts helped me find the literature and people I was looking for. I am thankful for all of their help, and hope I will be able to benefit from their expertise again in the future.

During my field work, I talked to lots of people. Many of them are mentioned in this study, but some would only be interviewed on the condition of anonymity, which, of course, I respect. I thank all the people I interviewed for their time and expertise, particularly Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who was kind enough to welcome me into his home and give me the best meal I had in all of my stay in Jordan. Without all of them,

Acknowledgements

xi

this book would obviously not have been the same. Several people have also been of tremendous help for me in locating other people. I would especially like to thank Marwan Shahada, who proved indispensable and sacrificed a lot of his time to help me; Fu'ad Husayn, whose car will never be the same again after driving me through the hilly Jordanian countryside; and Hasan Abu Haniyya, from whose insights and experiences I benefited a great deal. Moreover, he and his wife, Huda, never failed to welcome me into their home for a chat. I am grateful for all of their help and hospitality.

Several researchers and visitors to the countries I went to for my field work, including Romain Caillet, Pascal Debruyne, Christopher Parker, Mohammed Sbitli, Ora Szekeley and Erin Walsh, made my time in Jordan and Saudi Arabia much more interesting and a lot more fun. We had some good discussions about our work and all kinds of other things I have fond memories of, and I would like to thank them all. Once back home, I found several experts willing to read early drafts of this work. These include Egbert Harmsen, Thomas Hegghammer, Stéphane Lacroix, Madawi al-Rasheed and Jillian Schwedler, whose comments improved the relevant chapters, even if I did not adopt all of their suggestions. I thank them for all their work and efforts. Suffice it to say, all mistakes in this book are mine alone.

There are also several people to whom thanks are due for their special help, such as my colleagues Jan Hoogland and Everhard Ditters, as well as my friend Steven Boogaard, for their efforts to solve my computer-related problems, and Asad Jaber, for teaching me the basics of Palestinian Arabic. At Cambridge University Press, Marigold Acland, Joy Mizan and manuscript editor Ronald Cohen guided me through the process of turning my dissertation into a book that is not just interesting but will also actually be read, and for this I thank them.

Perhaps somewhat strangely, I would also like to thank the people behind AccuRadio.com and AccuJazz.com – whoever they are – for ensuring that writing this book was not only an interesting but also a swinging affair. One of the few things I did not like about my research was typing out interviews, not in the least because it kept me from listening to AccuRadio.com's wonderful music. I am not much of a rebel, and perhaps my only act of rebellion during my research was playing AccuRadio.com's fantastic selection of bluegrass music at full blast from my laptop at the King Faisal Center in Riyadh on a Friday afternoon, which may well have been the very first time that the sounds of the American South were heard in that building.

Finally, I cannot finish these acknowledgements without mentioning my wife, who not only had to manage on her own and take care of our son when I was away for what ultimately amounted to several months of field work, but also spent many an evening alone while I was working in my study. I thank her for all the patience and the loving way in which she accepted my oft-broken promises to be downstairs ‘in five minutes’ time’. My wife and I were blessed with two wonderful children during the course of my research. As anyone who has gone through the same experience will tell you, raising small children on top of a full-time job that includes teaching and writing a book – particularly with all the sleepless nights, of which I have had my fair share – does not exactly contribute to a good working environment. Still, I would not have missed it for the world, as my wife and children have provided me with a deep sense of happiness throughout the past few years. And that happiness has been the best working environment any researcher could ask for.

Glossary

Note: Several of the terms mentioned here have multiple meanings. I have chosen to focus only on those meanings used in this study.

‘*adāwa* – hostility. A word used in Q. 60: 4 – a very important verse in al-Maqdisi’s writings – and often equated with disavowal (*barāʾ*, q.v.). See also *baghdāʾ*.

ahl al-ḥadīth – an early-Islamic trend and precursor to Salafism (q.v.) that relied heavily on *ḥadīths* (q.v.) in establishing its rulings. There are also modern-day movements bearing this name or similar ones.

ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamāʿa – the branch of Islam that claims to follow the example of the Prophet (Sunna) and belong to the group (*jamāʿa*) that, according to a *ḥadīth* (q.v.), will be saved from hellfire. The term is applied by Salafis (q.v.) to themselves, but is also used by Sunni Muslims in general. See also *al-firqa al-nājiya*, *al-ṭāʾifa al-manṣūra*.

amīr (pl. *umarāʾ*) – leader. The term can refer to a prince, the commander of an army unit or the leader of a group. See also *imāra*.

anṣār al-ṭawāghīt – lit. ‘the helpers of the idols’. The term is used by al-Maqdisi to refer to the group of politicians, diplomats and military men and women who support, defend or directly help a regime based on laws other than Islamic ones. The term ‘*anṣār*’ has a positive connotation for Muslims since it is also the word used to refer to the people from Medina who helped the Prophet Muhammad in his time of need. Al-Maqdisi implicitly seems to juxtapose this with the *anṣār al-ṭawāghīt*. See also *ṭaghūt*.

‘*aqīda* – creed. This is a highly important term for Salafis (q.v.) since they attach great value to following the right path.

aṣl (pl. **uṣūl**) – root, core or basis. Salafis (q.v.) use the term to refer to the part of religion (*aṣl al-dīn*) that is so important that it forms the basis of Islam. Some Salafis (including al-Maqdisi) believe that a violation of parts of the *aṣl al-dīn* (such as a denial of God's existence) immediately turns a Muslim into an unbeliever (*kāfir*, q.v.).

aṣnām (sing. **ṣanam**) – idols. Sometimes applied by Jihadi-Salafis, including al-Maqdisi, to rulers who do not govern on the basis of Islamic law (*sharī'a*, q.v.). See also *ṭaghūt*.

baghdā' – hatred. A word used in Q. 60: 4 – a very important verse in al-Maqdisi's writings – and often equated with *barā'* (q.v.). See also *'adāwa*.

barā' – see *al-walā' wa-l-barā'*.

bay'a – an oath of allegiance. The term is used in Bay'at al-Imam, the name wrongly applied to al-Maqdisi's group in Jordan before he went to prison in 1994.

bid'a (pl. **bida'**) – innovation. Salafis (q.v.) regard *bida'* as undesirable and wrong since they are considered illegitimate additions to Islam that compromise the religion's supposed purity.

bughāt (sing. **bāghin**) – rebels against the leadership of (parts of) the Muslim world. They are considered a category of people that may be fought by means of jihad, but should not be equated with non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)).

dā'in (pl. **du'āt**) – a caller to Islam. See also *da'wa*.

dār al-ḥarb/dār al-kufr – the abode of war/the abode of unbelief. The terms traditionally referred to the parts of the world that were not under Muslim control and had no peace agreement or truce with the abode of Islam (*dār al-Islām*, q.v.). Al-Maqdisi distinguishes the *dār al-kufr al-aṣliyya* (the original abode of unbelief) from the *dār al-kufr al-ḥāditha* (the new abode of unbelief). The former refers to the parts of the world that are traditionally not under Muslim control, such as Western Europe and the Americas, while the latter term denotes the parts of the Muslim world that are controlled by supposed apostates (*murtaddūn*, q.v.). Al-Maqdisi sees the entire world as *dār al-kufr*, divided only between the original and new ones. See also *dār al-Islām/dār al-imān*.

dār al-Islām/dār al-imān – the abode of Islam/the abode of faith. The terms refer to the parts of the world that are under Muslim control. According to al-Maqdisi, these areas do not exist today since no country is ruled entirely in accordance with Islamic law (*sharī'a*, q.v.). See also *dār al-ḥarb/dār al-kufr*.

da'wa – the call to Islam. This is part of the preferred method (*manhaj*, q.v.) of engaging with society for quietist Salafis (q.v.) but is also an important part of al-Maqdisi's.

dawla – state, caliphate.

farḍ 'alā l-'ayn – individual duty. Used in this study with regard to jihad, where it refers to the duty that is incumbent upon every Muslim. Scholars disagree on when jihad becomes an individual duty, but many claim that this happens in a situation when the *dār al-Islām* (q.v.) is attacked. See also *farḍ 'alā l-kifāya*.

farḍ 'alā l-kifāya – collective duty. Used in this study with regard to jihad, where it refers to the duty that is incumbent upon only a limited group of Muslims to be sufficient. Scholars disagree on when jihad becomes a collective duty, but many claim that this happens in a situation when Muslims attack the *dār al-ḥarb* (q.v.). See also *farḍ 'alā l-'ayn*.

fiqh – Islamic jurisprudence. This term plays a minor role in Salafism (q.v.) and the writings of al-Maqdisi. See also *fuqahā'*.

al-firqa al-nājiya – the saved sect, the group that, according to a *ḥadīth* (q.v.), will be saved from hellfire. Salafis (q.v.) believe that they are part of this group. See also *ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamā'a*, *al-tā'ifa al-manṣūra*.

fitna (pl. *fitan*) – chaos, strife. Quietist Salafis (q.v.) often describe Jihadi-Salafis as causing *fitna* through their jihad and excommunication (*takfīr*, q.v.) of Muslim rulers. Al-Maqdisi, however, claims that the greatest *fitna* is caused by abandoning the unity of God (*tawḥīd*, q.v.) through – amongst other reasons – ruling on the basis of laws other than those of Islamic law (*sharī'a*, q.v.).

fuqahā' – (sing. *faqīh*) – scholars of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*, q.v.).

ghulāt – exaggerators, extremists. The term is often applied to Muslims who go to great lengths to apply excommunication (*takfīr*, q.v.) to other Muslims. See also *ghulūw*.

ghulūw – exaggeration, extremism. The term is often used with regard to excommunication of other Muslims (*takfīr*, q.v.). See also *ghulāt*.

ḥadīth (pl. *aḥādīth*, but given as *ḥadīths* in this study) – a story consisting of a chain of transmitters (*isnād*) and some content (*matn*) containing information about or from the first generations of Muslims, particularly the Prophet Muhammad. *Ḥadīths* have played a major role in the formation of Islamic law (*sharī'a*, q.v.) and in the doctrines and publications of Salafis (q.v.).

- ḥākimiyya* – sovereignty. According to many Islamists, sovereignty of a country and its laws should be God's alone. The term was popularised by Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and adopted by Jihadi-Salafis.
- ḥalāl* – allowed, permitted. The opposite of *ḥarām* (q.v.). The term is applied to all kinds of issues that are considered admissible according to Islamic law (*sharīʿa*, q.v.). See also *istiḥlāl*.
- ḥarām* – forbidden. The opposite of *ḥalāl* (q.v.). The term is applied to all kinds of issues that are considered forbidden according to Islamic law (*sharīʿa*, q.v.).
- hijra* – emigration. Most often used in Islamic history to refer to the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D., but also applied to modern-day religiously motivated emigration, such as the perceived duty to move from the *dār al-ḥarb* (q.v.) to the *dār al-Islām* (q.v.).
- ḥizb* (pl. *aḥzāb*) – (political) party or group.
- ḥukm* (pl. *aḥkām*) – (Islamic legal) ruling.
- iʿānat al-kuffār* – the act of helping non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)), particularly against other Muslims in times of war. It is seen by most modern Salafi (q.v.) scholars as part of loyalty and disavowal (*al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*, q.v.). According to some scholars, including al-Maqdisi, *iʿānat al-kuffār* is strictly forbidden. See also *al-istiʿāna bi-l-kuffār*.
- ʿibāda* – worship. On the basis of Q. 9: 31, several scholars, including al-Maqdisi, include the following or application of man-made laws (*qawānīn waḍʿiyya*, q.v.), as opposed to Islamic ones, in their definition of worship too.
- ijtihād* – independent reasoning on the basis of the scriptural sources of Islam without necessarily remaining within the limits of one Islamic legal school of thought (*madhhab*, q.v.). The opposite of blind emulation (*taqlīd*, q.v.).
- ʿilm* – (Islamic) knowledge.
- īmān* – faith. The opposite of unbelief (*kufr*, q.v.).
- imāra* – the emirate or leadership of a group, army unit or political entity. See also *amīr*.
- irjāʾ* – postponement. The term is linked to the Murjiʿa (q.v.), an early-Islamic trend advocating the postponement of judgement over a person's sins and leaving it to God.
- irtidād* – apostasy. This makes one an apostate (*murtadd*, q.v.) and an unbeliever (*kāfir*, q.v.). See also *ridda*.
- al-istiʿāna bi-l-kuffār* – the act of asking non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)) for help, especially against other Muslims in times of

war. It is seen by most modern Salafi (q.v.) scholars as part of loyalty and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, q.v.). According to some scholars, including al-Maqdisi, *al-isti'āna bi-l-kuffār* is strictly forbidden. See also *i'ānat al-kuffār*.

istiḥlāl – making or considering something that is forbidden (*ḥarām*, q.v.) permissible (*ḥalāl*, q.v.). With regard to the question of unbelief (*kufr*, q.v.), having the belief that something wrong is actually right is one of the conditions that turns minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*) into major unbelief (*kufr akbar*), thereby expelling its culprit from Islam. See also *i'tiqād*, *jaḥd*.

i'tiqād – conviction. With regard to the question of unbelief (*kufr*, q.v.), the conviction that one is committing a sin without refraining from it is one of the conditions that turns minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*) into major unbelief (*kufr akbar*), thereby expelling its culprit from Islam. See also *istiḥlāl*, *jaḥd*.

jaḥd/juḥūd – negation. With regard to the question of unbelief (*kufr*, q.v.), the negation of the supposed truth of Islam and its rulings is one of the conditions that turn minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*) into major unbelief (*kufr akbar*), thereby expelling its culprit from Islam. See also *istiḥlāl*, *i'tiqād*.

jāhiliyya – the pre-Islamic age that Muslims identify as a period of ignorance. The term was also used by Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) to refer to the supposed state of ignorance Muslim countries live in nowadays, and has also been adopted by Jihadi-Salafis as such.

***kaḥira* (*kaḥā'ir*)** – a major sin. It can be equated with minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*, q.v.) and should not be confused with major unbelief (*kufr akbar*).

kāfir (pl. *kuffār/kāfirūn*) – unbeliever, a non-Muslim. An apostate of Islam (*murtadd*, q.v.) becomes a *kāfir* once he/she has abandoned Islam. See also *mushrik*.

***Khawārij* (sing. *Khārījī*)** – seceders. The term refers to an early-Islamic group that seceded from the majority of Muslims and advocated the excommunication (*takfir*, q.v.) of other Muslims for acts of minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*, q.v.). The label is often used by quietist Salafis (q.v.) to de-legitimise Jihadi-Salafis. In that sense, the term 'Khawārij' is the opposite of 'Murji'a' (q.v.). See also *irjā'*.

khurūj – revolt against the ruler. This is strongly rejected by quietist Salafis (q.v.) but often advocated by Jihadi-Salafis.

kufr – unbelief. The opposite of faith (*īmān*, q.v.). Salafis (q.v.) divide *kufr* into major unbelief (*kufr akbar*), which expels its culprit from

- Islam, and minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*), which does not, unless it is accompanied by *i'tiqād* (q.v.), *istiḥlāl* (q.v.) or *jaḥd* (q.v.).
- madhhab** (pl. *madhāhib*) – Islamic legal school. In Sunni Islam, there are four schools of law: the Hanbali, Hanafi, Shafi'i and Maliki legal schools. Each is usually treated as legitimate in the eyes of the others, but Salafis (q.v.) reject the blind emulation (*taqlīd*, q.v.) of any one school of law and instead advocate independent reasoning on the basis of the scriptural sources of Islam (*ijtihād*, q.v.).
- maḥabba** – affection. This term is often equated with *walā'* (q.v.). See also *muḥāhara*.
- majlis al-shūrā** – consultation council. See also *shūrā*.
- manhaj** – method. The term refers to the method of applying the creed (*'aqīda*, q.v.) that Salafis (q.v.) follow in their treatment of the sources, worship and dealings with society. It is a very important concept since the *manhaj* is mostly responsible for setting Salafis apart from other Sunni Muslims, who may have the same ideas but do not apply them similarly.
- ma'siya** – disobedience.
- maṣlaḥa** (pl. *maṣāliḥ*) – (general) interest. In this study, the term is used in contexts where certain things may be legitimate but not in the interest of Islam and Muslims.
- mujaḍdid** (pl. *mujaḍdidūn*) – renewer. According to tradition, every hundred years will see a new and important renewer in Islam.
- mujāhid** (pl. *mujāhidūn*) – jihad fighter.
- murāja'a** – revisionism. Al-Maqdisi has been accused of this by some of his critics.
- Murji'a** – an early-Islamic trend advocating the postponement (*irjā'*, q.v.) of judgement over a person's sins and leaving it to God. Quietist Salafis (q.v.) unwilling to apply excommunication (*takfīr*, q.v.) to rulers of Muslim countries are often accused of using *irjā'* by Jihadi-Salafis, including Al-Maqdisi. See also Khawārij.
- murtadd** (pl. *murtaddūn*) – apostate. Al-Maqdisi and other Jihadi-Salafis accuse the rulers of Muslim countries of being apostates for their adherence to other, non-Islamic laws. See also *irtidād*, *kāfir*, *kufr*, *mushrik*, *ridḍa*, *shirk*.
- al-mushābaha li-l-kuffār** – looking like unbelievers (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)). This is frowned upon by Salafis (q.v.) and is – rightly or wrongly – often conflated with loyalty and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, q.v.). See also *tashabbuh al-kuffār*.
- mushrik** (pl. *mushrikūn*) – polytheist. Al-Maqdisi and other Jihadi-Salafis accuse the rulers of Muslim countries of being polytheists

for their adherence to other, non-Islamic laws. See also *irtidād*, *kāfir*, *kufr*, *murtadd*, *ridda*, *shirk*.

mustaḥabb – commendable. This term is applied to aspects of Islam that are not compulsory (*wājib*, q.v.) and that, subsequently, are believed not to be punished by God when abandoned but the performance of which is said to be rewarded.

muwaḥḥid (pl. **muwaḥḥidūn**) – an upholder of the unity of God (*tawḥīd*, q.v.). Salafis (q.v.) sometimes call themselves this because of their allegedly strong preference for and adherence to *tawḥīd*.

muwālāt – a form of loyalty (*walāʾ*, q.v.), which, when directed towards non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)), is considered a form of minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*, q.v.). See also *tawallī*.

muḏāhara – assistance, often equated with loyalty (*walāʾ*, q.v.) and considered forbidden (*ḥarām*, q.v.) when given to unbelievers (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)). See also *maḥabba*.

naṣīḥa (pl. **naṣāʾih**) – advice. Quietist Salafis (q.v.) often find this the preferred way of expressing criticism of rulers. See also *walī l-amr*.

al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh – the abrogating and the abrogated. One of several methods of Qurʾānic exegesis to reconcile seemingly contradictory verses in which the later verses abrogate the earlier ones.

qawānīn waḍʿiyya (sing. **qānūn waḍʿī**) – positive law, but in this context translated as man-made laws. Salafis (q.v.) oppose man-made laws and favour Islamic law (*sharīʿa*, q.v.), although they do so in highly different ways.

qitāl – fighting. Al-Maqdisi distinguishes *qitāl al-tamkīn* (fighting to consolidate one's power in a certain territory) from *qitāl al-nikāya* (fighting to hurt the enemy and his interests). He considers both legitimate in principle but has a strong preference for the former.

qiyās – analogical reasoning. One of the methods used in exegesis to derive new rules from existing ones. Salafis (q.v.) do not reject this outright but have a strong preference for relying on the literal texts themselves.

Rāfiḍa/Rawāfiḍ – rejecters, deserters. A derogatory term for Shiites, used by many Salafis (q.v.).

raʾy – personal opinion. A means for scholars of Islamic jurisprudence (*fuqahāʾ*, q.v.) to create new rulings (*aḥkām* (sing. *ḥukm*, q.v.)) on the basis of existing texts using one's own or others' opinions. Salafis (q.v.) reject this but distinguish this from independent reasoning (*ijtihād*, q.v.), which they see as a legitimate way of deriving rulings from the text.

ridḍa – apostasy. This makes one an apostate (*murtadd*, q.v.) and an unbeliever (*kāfir*, q.v.). See also *irtidād*.

ṣaḥwa – revival. In this study, the term refers to the Saudi movement that was inspired by Wahhabism and Muslim Brotherhood ideas and grew in importance from the 1960s onwards. It played a major role in the opposition to the Saudi regime in the 1990s.

salaf – see *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ – the pious predecessors. Refers to the first three generations of Muslims who, according to a *ḥadīth* (q.v.), are the best in Islamic history. Salafis (q.v.) try to emulate these generations as much and in as many spheres of life as possible.

Salafis – see Salafism.

Salafism – the trend in Islam whose adherents try to emulate the first three generations of Muslims (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, q.v.) as much and in as many spheres of life as possible.

shahāda – the Islamic confession of faith. It reads: ‘There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.’ It is the most basic creed (*‘aqīda*, q.v.) in Islam and is the first of Islam’s five pillars or basic duties.

sharī‘a – Islamic law. The term refers to the path Muslims should follow, which is supposedly embodied by the numerous writings on Islamic legal issues. Because Salafis (q.v.) believe that religious innovations (*bida‘*, sing. *bid‘a*, q.v.) have crept into this system of laws throughout the centuries, they reject the *sharī‘a* as it is understood by many other Muslims, i.e., the systems of the different legal schools (*madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*, q.v.) developed by the *fuqahā‘* (q.v.) throughout the course of Islamic history. Their own alternative remains rather vague, however.

sharīf (pl. *shurafā‘/ashraf*) – a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. The Jordanian king claims to be a *sharīf*, a title that is respected by many Muslims but has little other significance.

shaykh – patriarch, leader. Title for a religious scholar or for someone respected for other reasons.

shirk – polytheism. Jihadi-Salafis accuse rulers of polytheism (*shirk*, q.v.) because of their reliance on man-made laws (*qawānīn waḍ‘iyya*, q.v.) at the expense of Islamic law (*sharī‘a*, q.v.). Because they equate laws with idols (*aṣnām*, q.v.; *ṭawāghūt*, sing. *ṭāghūt*, q.v.) and adhering to these laws with worship (*‘ibāda*, q.v.) on the basis of Q. 9: 31, Jihadi-Salafis accuse people who consciously follow ‘un-Islamic’ laws out of conviction (*i‘tiqād*, q.v.) of being polytheists (*mushrikūn*, q.v.).

shūrā – consultation. Islamists who want to incorporate democracy into their ideas sometimes use this term as a supposedly Islamic form of democracy. Al-Maqdisi rejects this.

tabarru' – see *barā'*.

tabdīl – exchange. In this study, the term refers to the complete exchange of Islamic law (*sharī'a*, q.v.) with another system of laws or a non-Islamic constitution. According to some Salafis (q.v.), including al-Maqdisi, this act of exchange is such a clear example of unbelief (*kufr*, q.v.) that no further proof of someone's true intentions is necessary.

ṭāghūt (pl. *ṭawāghūt*) – idols. Al-Maqdisi and other Jihadi-Salafis see the rulers of Muslim countries and their man-made laws (*qawānīn waq'īyya*) as idols for the obedience they enjoy from people, which should only be directed at God. See also *aṣnām*.

taḥkīm – legislation. See also *tashrī'*.

al-ṭā'ifa al-manṣūra – the victorious group. This term refers to the Muslims who are, on the basis of a *ḥadīth* (q.v.), believed to be the only victorious group on Judgement Day. Salafis (q.v.) believe they are part of this group. See also *ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamā'a*, *al-firqa al-nājiya*.

tajdīd – renewal. See also *mujaddid*.

takfīr – excommunication of other Muslims, declaring other Muslims to be unbelievers (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)), Al-Maqdisi advocates this when dealing with legislative issues and thus favours *takfīr* of the rulers of Muslim countries, but is careful in his application of the concept beyond the legislative sphere.

ṭālib 'ilm – a student of (religious) knowledge, a knowledge seeker. A term that many Salafis (q.v.) apply to themselves, thereby indicating that they see themselves as seekers of the correct knowledge of Islam. See also *'ilm*.

taqlīd – blind emulation of a particular school of law (*madhhab*, q.v.). See also *ijtihād*.

tashabbuh al-kuffār – looking like unbelievers (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)). This is frowned upon by Salafis (q.v.) and is – rightly or wrongly – often conflated with loyalty and disavowal (*al-walā' wa-l-barā'*, q.v.). See also *al-mushābaha li-l-kuffār*.

tashrī' – legislation. See also *taḥkīm*.

tattarrus – term that refers to a human shield (*turs*) used by the Muslims' enemies that does not prohibit the jihad fighters (*mujāhidūn*, q.v.)

from attacking them, even if the innocents used as a human shield are killed.

tawallī – a form of loyalty (*walāʾ*, q.v.), which, when directed towards non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)), is considered a form of major unbelief (*kufr akbar*, q.v.). See also *muwālāt*.

tawḥīd – the unity of God. This is a strong focal point in Salafism (q.v.) and in Islam as a whole. Salafis (q.v.) divide *tawḥīd* into three different types: *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyya* (the unity of lordship), *tawḥīd al-asmāʾ wa-l-ṣifāt* (the unity of names and attributes) and *tawḥīd al-ulūbiyya* (the unity of divinity). The first refers to basic ideas of monotheism such as that there is only one God and Creator. The second refers to God's unique nature and incomparability. The third form refers to the idea that only God may be worshipped.

taʾwīl – interpretation.

ʿulamāʾ (sing. **ʿālim**) – scholars, particularly religious scholars.

umma – the worldwide community of Muslims.

wājib – compulsory. Acts that are *wājib al-dīn* are compulsory. Neglecting them is not a form of major unbelief (*kufr akbar*, q.v.) but only a form of minor unbelief (*kufr aṣghar*).

walāʾ – see *al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ*.

al-walāʾ wa-l-barāʾ – loyalty and disavowal. *Walāʾ* refers to the friendship, loyalty and dedication Muslims should show to their co-religionists, whereas *barāʾ* denotes the distance, disavowal, hatred and enmity Muslims should show towards non-Muslims (*kuffār* (sing. *kāfir*, q.v.)). While many scholars interpret this concept solely in a social and apolitical way, others treat it also as a concept relevant to situations of military conflict, during which Muslims should always side with their fellow-believers against non-Muslims. See also *ʿadāwa*, *baghdāʾ*, *maḥabba*, *al-mushābaha li-l-kuffār*, *muwālāt*, *muḏāhara*, *tashabbuh al-kuffār*, *tawallī*.

walī l-amr (pl. **wulāt al-amr**) – the ruler. Quietist Salafis (q.v.) believe this ruler should be obeyed and, in case of criticism, should be given advice (*naṣiḥa*, q.v.). Political Salafis, however, believe protests and/or political participation are allowed, and Jihadi-Salafis believe the *walī al-amr* may be fought if he is an apostate (*murtadd*, q.v.).

yāsiq/yāsa – the Mongol system of laws. This system was criticised by Taqī l-Dīn Ahmad b. Taymiyya (1263–1328) for its mixture of Islamic and non-Islamic elements. Modern-day Jihadi-Salafis, including al-Maqdisi, sometimes compare the laws of Muslim countries today with the *yāsiq*.

Note on Transliteration

Throughout this study, I have transliterated Arabic words using the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). I have, however, also transliterated some more common terms that IJMES does not transliterate (e.g., Qur'an/Qur'ān). Moreover, I have transliterated names and titles of books in the footnotes but not in the text itself. Some words, such as *ḥadīth*, have not been given their accurate plural forms (*aḥādīth*) but a slightly simplified English plural (*ḥadīths*).