

# THE ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES OF ISLAMIC REVIVALIST THOUGHT, 1750–1850

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This paper examines and compares four major intellectual trends of Islamic thought in the period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. It characterizes the works of the Arabian Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703–1787), the Indian Shāh Walī Allāh (1703–1762), the west African ʿUthmān Ibn Fūdī (1754–1817), and the north African Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Sanūsī (1787–1859). It then argues that, contrary to the accepted paradigm, the intellectual models produced by these scholars are quite distinct and cannot be grouped under one rubric.

STUDIES OF MODERN ISLAMIC THOUGHT often assert that the roots of the modern Islamic revival originate in the eighteenth century. An intellectual link is postulated between Wahhābī puritanical ideas and later Islamic thought; Wahhābism, it is argued, continues to inspire a growing number of Muslims in their encounter with the problems of the modern world.[1] "Wahhābī" is applied to such diverse groups as the followers of the Indian Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvīa[2] and the Subbanu al-Muslimin (association of young Muslims) of west Africa,[3] despite the recognition that in both of these cases the title Wahhābī is a misnomer.[4] The argument for the continuity of the "fundamentalist tradition"[5] is also founded on the assumption that, despite the diversity in their "organizational styles," the revivalist movements stretching from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century have produced a single, more or less homogeneous, body of thought which belongs to an identifiable "fundamentalist mode of Islam."[6] This mode which traverses Islamic history is defined in terms of such themes as the need to abide by the Qurʾān and the Sunna, return to origins, revival of *ijtihād* and *ḥadīth* studies, rejection of innovation and imitation (*taqlīd*) in matters of law, and rejection of the excesses of sufism.[7] More generally

[1] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977), 42; for a similar notion of the gradual spread of Wahhābism in the Muslim world see H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1947), 27–28.

[2] Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahabi Movement in India* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1966).

[3] Lansine Kaba, *The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1974).

[4] Bari argues convincingly that the name "Indian Wahhābis" given to the nineteenth-century militant reform movement led by Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvī (d. 1831) was an afterthought, "perhaps given by co-religionist opponents to discredit them"; M. A. Bari, "The Politics of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi," *Islamic Culture* 31.1 (1957): 158. He also argues that the name was adopted by British administrators for the same purposes; M. A. Bari, "A Nineteenth-Century Muslim Reform Movement in India," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), 84. Ahmad adds, however, that "the title became unavoidable on account of its wide prevalence"; Ahmad, *Wahabi*, v. The name was given to the mid-twentieth-century movement in west Africa by the French head of the Bureau of Muslim Affairs in Bamako in the 1950s; Kaba, 8.

[5] Rudolph Peters, "Idjtihād and Taqlīd in 18th and 19th Century Islam," *Die Welt des Islams* 20.3–4 (1980): 145.

[6] John O. Voll, "The Sudanese Mahdī: Frontier Fundamentalist," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 160.

[7] There is abundant reference in writings on 18th- and 19th-century Islamic thought and movements in which these themes are said to define the common intellectual trend of fundamentalist or revivalist Islam; see, for example, Smith, 42, 52; Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968), 242–50; John Esposito, "Tradition and Modernization in Islam," in *Movements and Issues in World Religions*, ed. Charles Weihsun Fu and Gerhard E. Spiegler (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 92; Mervyn Hiskett, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (London: Longman, 1984), 157; John O. Voll, "Muḥammad Ḥayyā al-Sindī and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb: An

these themes are said to assert transcendence, unity, and authenticity as opposed to immanence, diversity, and openness.[8] It is thus commonplace to speak of Wahhābī influences on the thought of the Indian Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dihlawī,[9] the west African ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī,[10] and the north African Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī.[11]

To lend further credibility to the theory of a united Islamic revivalism, scholars argue that the renowned revivalists from different parts of the Islamic world converged with a "small group of teachers of *ḥadīth* in the holy cities" of Mecca and Medina, thus creating overlapping "intellectual family trees."[12] This theory is attractive in many ways, primarily because it allows the student of modern Islam to analyze and understand a complex set of variables in the context of one coherent whole. The connections made to achieve this coherence are at best fragile. Any familiarity with the perception of Wahhābism in the Islamic world would confirm the rather conspicuous status it has among most Muslims, which undermines any parallels between Wahhābīs and other movements enjoying general or local recognition outside Arabia. Second, the general characterizations of modern Islamic revival are not always applicable to specific instances of this revival. Even a cursory reading of the work of Shāh Walī Allāh, for example, reveals that, contrary to the accepted paradigm, his reformed "Neo-Sufism" is not stripped of its "metaphysical character";[13] this, despite the fact that both Walī Allāh and the ardent anti-sufi Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb studied under the same Medinese *ḥadīth* scholar Muḥammad Ḥayā al-Sindī[14] (d. 1750). The "intellectual family-trees" of students and teachers cannot serve as evidence for common origins; education acquired from the same teacher could be, and indeed was, put to completely different uses by different students, and the commonality of the source does not prove that the outcome is identical or even similar. The only information that can be safely derived from such evidence relates to the pool of prominent teachers of the time with whom a serious student might study. If accepted, the allegations made in an anti-Wahhābī polemic, in which Muḥammad Ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī and Muḥammad Ḥayā al-Sindī warned their students against the excesses of Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, would further corroborate this conclusion.[15]

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Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madīna," *BSOAS* 38.1 (1974); John O. Voll, "Hadith Scholars and Tariqahs: An Ulama Group in the 18th Century Haramayn and their Impact in the Islamic World," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 15.3–4 (1980); Louis Brenner, "Muslim Thought in Eighteenth-Century West Africa: The Case of Shaykh Uthman b. Fudi," in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1987), 61; Muin ud-Din Ahmad Khan, "Farāᵓidī Movement," *Islamic Studies* 9 (1970): 123; and B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), 107–8.

[8] Voll, "Sudanese Mahdī"; Gibb, 32; and Peters, 132.

[9] Smith, 52; Voll, "Intellectual Group," 39; Rahman, *Islam*, 242–50; Aziz Ahmad, "Political and Religious Ideas of Shāh Walī-Ullāh of Delhi," *The Muslim World* 52.1 (1962): 22; and Esposito, 92.

[10] Gibb, 27, 30; and Hiskett, *Development*, 289–91.

[11] Gibb, 27; Hiskett, *Development*, 256, 259; and Martin, 99, 103. In fact, this intellectual genealogy is often stretched back in time to include, in addition to the Sanūsī and Wahhābī movements, the Murābiṭūn and the Muwaḥḥidūn of north Africa; see Gibb, 26; and Nehemia Levtzion, "Introduction," in *Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Humphrey J. Fisher (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1987), 12.

[12] Voll, "Intellectual Group," 39; most of the research on the theory of a common network of scholars was done by Voll; see, for example, Voll, "Intellectual Group"; Voll, "Sudanese Mahdī"; and Voll, "Hadith Scholars." This theory has also gained wide currency among scholars of modern Islam; for a reference to the common background of Shāh Walī Allāh and Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb see Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 153; on the link between west African education and the Arabian network of scholars see Nehemia Levtzion, "The Eighteenth Century Background to the Islamic Revolutions in West Africa," in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1987), 32–33; also on ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī see Brenner, 61; on the teachers of al-Sanūsī see Peters, 145.

[13] Compare, for example, with Rahman, *Islam*, 253–54; and Voll, "Hadith Scholars."

[14] Compare with Voll, "Intellectual Group."

[15] ᶜAbd al-Qādir Ibn al-Sayyid Muḥammad Salīm al-Kīlānī al-Iskandarānī, *Al-Nafḥa al-Zakīya fī al-Radd ᶜalā al-Firqa al-Wahhābīya* (Damascus: Maṭbaᶜat al-Fayḥāᵓ, 1340 A.H.), 4; Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb composed the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* during his stay in Baṣra before he travelled to Mecca, where he supposedly studied under Muḥammad Ḥayā al-Sindī; he was also expelled from Baṣra on account of his extremism; see Amīn Saᶜīd, *Sīrat al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb* (Beirut: Sharikat al-Tawzīᶜ al-ᶜArabīya, 1384 A.H.); and A. M. Naṣīr, *Al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb wa Manhajuhu fī Mabāḥith al-ᶜAqīda* (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1983), 32. This seems to indicate that his ideas were articulated before establishing connections with the Ḥaramayn network.

What is most inadequate about the theory of a common origin is that the little analysis there is of the substance of the ideologies of Islamic revival have not been comparatively examined. Whether Islamic revival is unified or diverse can only be decided on the basis of what is Islamic in this revival, and that is ideology. It is thus imperative to reconstruct the different intellectual projects of the period in question. Any resolution is contingent upon a comparison of the main features of this body of thought. This study will examine and compare the works of four major thinkers and activists whose ideas, I will argue, comprise four distinct intellectual trends of Islamic thought in the period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. These thinkers are the most famous scholars of the period in question: Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, of Arabia (1703–1787), Shāh Walī Allāh, of India (1703–1762), ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, of west Africa (1754–1817), and the north African scholar Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī (1787–1859). Studies which draw parallels between their respective backgrounds and ideas[16] have consistently lacked a general account or analysis of their thought.

Shāh Walī Allāh lived and worked in Delhi.[17] During his lifetime he witnessed the final breakup of the Mughal empire, and the rise in its place of a number of smaller and weaker states. The invasion of Nādir Shāh in 1739 and the subsequent sack of Delhi further weakened the Muslims and left them vulnerable to the aggression of the numerous non-Muslim communities of India. It is not surprising that Walī Allāh's thought was in some measure a response to his perception of the crisis of the time.[18] Rather than define this crisis simply in terms of our perception of the political situation of Walī Allāh's time, it would be more instructive to examine his understanding of it, which is the basis of his intellectual project.

For the many ills of society, Walī Allāh singles out several sources which he specifies directly in his writings or implies through the issues he discusses. Disunity is a central theme that occupied him throughout his life.[19] He wrote extensively on differences of opinion within jurisprudence,[20] sufism,[21] traditionalist *ḥadīth* scholarship,[22] and differences among all of these.[23] Although he was concerned with political division and disintegration, the solution he prescribed was to be found outside the immediate realm of politics. He believed that political authority is important for practical purposes, but what ultimately counts is society. While the outward caliphate (*khilāfat al-ẓāhir*) is in charge of implementing superficial order, the inward one (*khilāfat al-bāṭin*) is responsible for social order in all its details.[24] The guardians of the inward order are the scholars (*ᶜulamāᵓ*), and it is their duty to ensure that daily life is conducted in harmony with God's created nature (*fiṭra*).[25] Political corruption is but an outcome of the scholars' neglect in performing their duties properly.[26] Extreme intellectualism or "profundity" (*taᶜammuq*),[27] severity,[28] false consensus,[29] opportunism,[30] and claiming monopoly over truth[31] are some aspects of this neglect.

Walī Allāh's world emerges as one in which the political and the social are separated. This separation, however, is not meant to serve the interests of the political but to provide alternatives to it. The scholars

[16] See footnotes 8–12 above.

[17] For general information on Shāh Walī Allāh and his time see the introductory sections of G. N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shāh Walīyullāh of Delhi* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1967); and J. M. S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Walī Allah Dihlawi* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986); also see the chapter on the eighteenth century in Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982).

[18] On the notion of crisis see Fazlur Rahman, "The Thinker of Crisis: Shah Waliy-Ullah," *Pakistan Quarterly* 6.2 (1956): 44–48; Jalbani, 112–13; and Ahmad, "Political Ideas," 22.

[19] He states that his role is to interpret the *Sharīᶜa* in a way that will allow differences within it to vanish; see Shāh Walī Allāh, *Al-Tafhīmāt al-Ilāhīya*, 2 vols., ed. Ghulām Muṣṭafā al-Qāsimī (Ḥaydar Ābād: Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi Academy, no date), 1:111–12; 2:54.

[20] See Shāh Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd al-Jīd fī Aḥkām al-Ijtihād wal-Taqlīd* (Cairo: Al-Maṭbaᶜa al-Salafīya, 1385 A.H.); and Shāh Walī Allāh, *Al-Inṣāf fī Bayān Sabab al-Ikhtilāf* (Lahore: Maṭbaᶜat al-Maktaba al-ᶜIlmīya, 1971).

[21] The works where sufi differences are mostly discussed are Shāh Walī Allāh, *The Sacred Knowledge of the Higher Functions of the Mind: Translation of Alṭāf al-Quds*, translated by G. N. Jalbani, revised by David Pendlebury (London: The Octagon Press, 1982); and Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt.*

[22] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*; *Inṣāf*; and Shāh Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat Allāh al-Bāligha*, 2 parts (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1936).

[23] See especially Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:54.

[24] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:8.

[25] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:8; and *Ḥujjat*, 2:215.

[26] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120, and 2:150.

[27] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120, and 2:21–22, 215.

[28] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120.

[29] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:121.

[30] Walī Allāh, *Inṣāf*, 57–58; and *Ḥujjat*, 1:152–53.

[31] From Walī Allāh's *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn*, quoted in Baljon, 162.

who inherit the role of prophets must not be deterred by the corrupting effects of politics,[32] and if they fail in their endeavor, it is the thought that informs their actions, and guides them and the community through them, which deserves reform.[33] In opposition to the philosophers, Walī Allāh argues that the political imām is not necessarily a real individual, but a symbol of the indispensable unity of the community.[34] Moreover, the central role of the *ʿulamāʾ* may not be restricted to a special elite, but should be open to the participation of the community at large.[35] Such participation ensures a program for intellectual as well as social revival, and it is this duality between the intellectual and the social that characterizes Walī Allāh's thought.

Walī Allāh envisions revival through intellectual synthesis, and the inclusion of the community in this process has broad social ramifications. Knowledge, according to Walī Allāh, is of two kinds. The first pertains to a core of specific and well-defined rules which guarantee humanity's natural and logical interests.[36] Observance of these rules, which are subsumed under God's revealed injunctions and prohibitions, is mandatory whether one recognizes the wisdom in them or not.[37] It follows that this first kind of knowledge is transmitted rather than acquired through speculation, and that its authority derives from the letter of the law.[38] The second kind of knowledge is general, unspecified, and flexible. It is based on human interest, and seeks the amelioration of society and the lives of individuals.[39] God's instructions regarding this second kind of knowledge are general, and intention rather than strict observance determines the validity of related judgments and actions.[40] Central to Walī Allāh's scheme is the effort to limit the applicability and prevent the undue extension of knowledge derived from divine law.[41] For Walī Allāh, a proper legal analogy (*qīyās*), for instance, is the derivation of a legal ruling on the basis of a common legal cause (*ʿilla mushtaraka*) rather than on the basis of a common interest (*maṣlaḥa mushtaraka*).[42] This would restrict the imposition of opinions derived from the application of general knowledge under the limited and binding *sharʿ* of God.

For Walī Allāh Islam is the religion of nature (*fiṭra*).[43] He introduces a theory of human development in stages which he calls *irtifāqāt*[44] (sing. *irtifāq*). An *irtifāq* is characterized as the art of searching for ease (*taysīr*) and beneficial acts, and ease obtains specifically because God commands acts for which people have a natural inclination, and which are required by both nature and reason. The first and most basic *irtifāq* includes those aspects of knowledge and conduct which are specific to the human species and essential to its survival, such as language, cultivation, and family relations. The second includes experiential and acquired faculties and customs that are utilized in the house and marketplace. The third relates to the administration of life in the city, and the fourth and ultimate regulates the relations between all the cities within a universal order. Aside from the specific core of commands which God unequivocally communicated to men, Walī Allāh maintains that most laws are guiding principles, and their precise determination is left to the reasoning of people and to what they think is best for their well-being, and to what is in harmony with and in the interest of their natural dispositions.[45]

Nature, in the language of Walī Allāh, refers not only to human nature but to the physical world as well. The laws of an expanded nature govern all phenomena that men may observe or experience in life, including miracles. Miracles, he maintains, are simply the result of uncommmon or less frequent natural causes.[46] God interferes in nature through nature itself, by suppressing (*qabḍ*) certain aspects of nature and expanding (*basṭ*) others.[47] In his account of Muḥammad's night

[32] Walī Allāh, *Inṣāf*, 57–58.

[33] To Walī Allāh, renewal is mainly in response to the problem of differences, and is achieved through the intellectual reform of thought; see Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:8; and *Tafhīmāt*, 1:37, 111–12, and 2:54.

[34] Shāh Walī Allāh, *Al-Budūr al-Bāzigha*, ed. Ṣaghīr Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmī (Ḥaydar Ābād: Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi Academy, no date), 91.

[35] From Walī Allāh's *Fuyūḍ al-Ḥaramayn*, quoted in Baljon, 162.

[36] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:111, 129.

[37] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:130.

[38] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 12–13; *Inṣāf*, 62; and *Ḥujjat*, 1:161.

[39] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:111, 129.

[40] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:130.

[41] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120, and 2:22.

[42] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:130.

[43] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:111; and *Tafhīmāt*, 1:266.

[44] On the following theory of *irtifāqāt* see Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:39–47; and *Budūr*, 61–64, 119–20.

[45] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:111–12.

[46] Shāh Walī Allāh, *A Mystical Interpretation of Prophetic Tales by an Indian Muslim: Translation of Taʾwīl al-Aḥādīth*, translated by J. M. S. Baljon (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 4.

[47] Shāh Walī Allāh, *Sufism and the Islamic Tradition: The Lamahat and Sataʿat of Shah Waliullah*, trans. G. N. Jalbani, ed. D. B. Fry (London: The Octagon Press, 1980), 56–57.

journey to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven, Walī Allāh contends that the laws of the spirit became operative while the laws of physical bodies were suspended.[48] The actual occurrence of this incident is not denied, nor is it metaphorically interpreted; rather, a different and unfamiliar set of laws produced a "natural" miracle.

It does not follow, however, that God's agency in the life of men is mediated through and thus limited by nature. While he asserts the principle of causation, Walī Allāh attributes it to the intention or will of an agent he calls *al-shakhṣ al-akbar* (the greater being or "metaphysical man").[49] This greater being is God's first creation; God then creates the things that are ingrained in its universal nature, and its existence is sustained through continuous emanation from the First.[50] According to this theory, natural causation is the intention of an agent which is itself, together with its soul, created and sustained by God. Causation is thus recovered without compromising the power of God. The reconciliation between natural laws and causation, on the one hand, and transmitted knowledge, on the other, is sanctioned by scripture, and specifically by the Qurʾānic principle of *taysīr*.[51] It is important to note that the ultimate authority which enables this mediation is the transmitted tradition.[52] According to Walī Allāh, the classification of scholars into those who pursue independent legal opinion (*ahl al-raʾy*) and literalists (*ahl al-ẓāhir*) is based on an invalid delineation. The real difference between these two groups is not over the exclusive use of either tradition or reason; rather, it lies in their supreme source of authority, and Walī Allāh exhibits no willingness to compromise the authority of tradition in the interest of any reconciliation.[53]

Walī Allāh's attempt to reconcile sufism with tradition is as ambitious as—though perhaps less effective than—the work of his predecessor, the eleventh-century scholar al-Ghazālī. Walī Allāh's defense of sufism does not prevent him from criticizing sufi excesses.[54] His creative interpretations, however, are far more important than his criticism. To start with, he argues that the silence of the law on such subjects as sufism does not mean they cannot be pursued.[55] Islam, he maintains, prohibits metaphysical speculation on issues beyond the natural order;[56] he adds, however, that the sufis reflect on these subjects to the extent that they partake in existence outside of their capacity as humans.[57] The sufi purification of the hidden faculties is subordinate to the observance of the law, and is not achievable without such observance.[58] Sufis who maintain that the essence of God and the world is one are unbelievers, and their harm to the common people is great.[59] Such allegations often result from a misunderstanding of the complex technical terminology used by sufi writers.[60] Other errors result from the sufis' neglect of the apparent and real meanings of the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* in favor of the meanings they bring to them.[61] At both the terminological and the conceptual levels, however, there are some truths which are reconcilable with the basic tenets of belief. One important concept which Walī Allāh attempts to recover is the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) which was systematically advocated by the famous sufi philosopher Ibn ʿArabī. On the notion that all being is subsumed by the one real existence of God, Walī Allāh writes:

> [T]he form of the Real which appeared in the mirror of the fine part of the *Shakhṣ Akbar* has also two aspects. One shows the perfection of *Shakhṣ Akbar*, counted as a universe, while the other shows the Real and its existence.[62] . . . When a gnostic reaches this Divine Appearance and looks intently at it, he sees in it only an incorporeality. The mirror does not come to his sight at all, nay, even its presence does not occur to his mind.[63]

Here the unity of existence occurs at a level removed several stages from the Creator, but still reflects God's all-encompassing nature.

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[48] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:206–7.

[49] Walī Allāh, *Lamaḥāt*, 41. The translation 'metaphysical man' was used by Fazlur Rahman; see Rahman, "Thinker," 46.

[50] Walī Allāh, *Lamaḥāt*, 16.

[51] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:111–12.

[52] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:2–3.

[53] Walī Allāh's principle of *taṭbīq*, or the mutual application of the two categories of transmitted and rationally construed knowledge, should not be confused with an attempt to subjugate tradition to independent reasoning; he frequently indicates that while attempts to explain rationally the wisdom in what the law obligates are recommended, they are subordinate to, and are only attainable through strict abidance by, the letter of the law. See Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:8; and *Tafhīmāt*, 2:242–43; and compare with Rahman, "Thinker," 44.

[54] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf*, 82; and *Tafhīmāt*, 1:282–85.

[55] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:18.

[56] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:266–67.

[57] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:266–67.

[58] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf*, 80.

[59] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:275.

[60] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf*, 39; and *Tafhīmāt*, 2:263.

[61] Walī Allāh, *Alṭāf*, 47, 52.

[62] Walī Allāh, *Saṭaʿāt*, 81.

[63] Walī Allāh, *Saṭaʿāt*, 82.

Walī Allāh uses a similar approach to reconcile the concepts of unity of being and unity of witness (*waḥdat al-shuhūd*);[64] the latter is promoted by Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī, in whose view the notion of unity of being constitutes a denial of God's oneness and transcendence.[65] Walī Allāh maintains that the emergence and polarization of different sufi sects occur when people judge by appearances, and fail to realize that the "Providence of the True One is the same."[66] Walī Allāh clarifies what he considers a misuse of terminology which partly accounts for the schism between the unity of being and the unity of witness. These concepts actually refer to different aspects of the same truth;[67] that is, one meaning of the former is "being absorbed in the knowledge of the encompassing Truth . . . such that the laws of separation and distinction, on which the knowledge of good and evil is based . . . cease to apply"; a meaning of the latter is "to combine the laws of classification and distinction, thus realizing that in one respect multiple things are united in one, and in another respect they are numerous and differentiated." According to Walī Allāh, the insight of Sirhindī's *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is more profound and hence superior to Ibn ᶜArabī's notion of unity of being.[68] His defense of Ibn ᶜArabī, however, is more persistent and uncritical than his assessment of some of Sirhindī's formulations, with which he takes issue. While Sirhindī is entitled to his interpretations, Walī Allāh argues, his opinions do not necessarily coincide with the normative position of the first generation of Muslims, and are not superior to other mystical interpretations of Islam.[69]

While acknowledging that the last formal link between humanity and God was Muḥammad, Walī Allāh grants that a potential experience of the Divine can be reclaimed through the spiritually rich sufi tradition.[70] This allows for a continuous presence of the sacred in the lives of individuals, but it cannot form the basis of community action. A similarly accommodating attitude toward individual Muslims characterizes all of Walī Allāh's writings. In his definition of belief (*īmān*) he makes a distinction between a this-worldly and an other-worldly *īmān*.[71] Worldly belief is the profession of faith on the basis of which worldly action is decided, whereas a person's status in the hereafter is decided on the basis of other-worldly faith. In the hereafter, cardinal hypocrisy may entail eternal residence in Hell, yet this-worldly *takfīr* (accusing someone of disbelief) cannot be predicated on a person's intention.[72] *Takfīr* is only possible on the basis of an unambiguous scriptural statement. Actions as extreme as prostration[73] to trees, stones, idols, and stars, although strictly forbidden, are not final evidence of disbelief because there is no explicit text that defines them as such.[74] The accusation of disbelief is valid only when the person performing such forbidden acts declares them to be acts of worship, or professes his or her belief in, and obedience to creators other than God.[75] Visiting tombs, and the accompanying expressions of sadness, cannot be forbidden according to Walī Allāh, as they are by-products of the tenderness of the human heart, which is essential for the proper functioning of society.[76] He also maintains that it is not wrong to believe in and seek the blessing (*baraka*) and intercession (*shafāᶜa*) of pious people, as long as this does not involve glorifying them.[77] Strictly speaking, making vows and offering sacrifices at the tombs of saints are not part of proper belief; however, once made, one should not neglect fulfilling vows made in the name of God.[78] Walī Allāh even uses his own reading of certain historical classifications to support his conciliatory distinction between sin and disbelief. He distinguishes between the first and the second *jāhilīyas*: while in the first one people denied that God is the creator, in the second one they simply turned away from Him, and failed to obey Him as they should.[79]

Walī Allāh develops other unconventional readings of history. The superiority of the first community, he argues, is a functional concept, but not necessarily an

[64] *Waḥdat al-wujūd* is often translated as ontological or existential monism, while *waḥdat al-shuhūd* translates as phenomenological monism; see, for example, Ahmad, "Political Ideas," 23.

[65] Metcalf, 39.

[66] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 1:114, 166, 252.

[67] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 2:262.

[68] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 2:263.

[69] Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 2:282–83.

[70] Though this kind of sufism is in harmony with the formal aspects of religion, it is in no way devoid of philosophical and spiritual values, as many modern studies claim. See footnote 13 above.

[71] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:162–63.

[72] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:163.

[73] Walī Allāh indicates that prostration could be seen as either an act of worship or simply greeting; Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:60.

[74] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:38; and *Tafhīmāt*, 2:49.

[75] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:61–62.

[76] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:32–38.

[77] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:61.

[78] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:202.

[79] Walī Allāh, *Budūr*, 252.

exclusive one. For later generations to accept the transmitted tradition, they had to develop an idealized view of its transmitters. Later generations, however, are not doomed to be inferior to earlier ones, and they are capable of producing people who are, in some respects, better than their earlier counterparts.[80] This reading is clearly inspired by a strong commitment to the living community of Muslims. A more persistent presence of the community is evident in Walī Allāh's extensive discussion of *ijtihād* and *taqlid*. *Ijtihād* is defined as exhausting one's effort in arriving at legal rulings in matters over which there is no explicit statement in the Qurʾān or the *ḥadīth*,[81] and it is a communal obligation until the end of time.[82] The requirements for the different ranks of *ijtihād* are attainable without much difficulty.[83] Partial knowledge of a few disciplines suffices for fulfilling these requirements, and even then this knowledge need not be committed to memory. A *mujtahid* should know the verses of the Qurʾān and the traditions of the prophet which pertain to the applied law, the instances of abrogation, the difference between ambiguous and unequivocal verses, the legal categories of obligation and prohibition and what falls in between, the principles of *ḥadīth* authentication, the conditions of legal analogy, and Arabic grammar. A *mujtahid* is also required to know the instances of consensus so as not to contradict them in his ruling. Knowledge of theological disputation (*kalām*) or jurisprudence are not requirements for *ijtihād*.[84] In short, to attain the rank of a *mujtahid* one must know how to extract rulings from traditions and provide their evidence and proof, whether they agree with old rulings made by earlier authorities or not.[85]

To be sure, there are different ranks of *ijtihād*:[86] an absolute and independent *mujtahid* (*muṭlaq mustaqill*) is one who has full knowledge of the principles on which he bases his rulings; he should know all the precedent rulings, their proofs in the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*, and the methods of deriving them; he should also be able to handle new questions for which no precedents exist. An absolute and affiliated *mujtahid* (*muṭlaq muntasib*), on the other hand, is one who accepts the principles adopted by his teacher, relies on the teacher's arguments in his proofs and derivations of old rulings, and is capable of deducing new rulings on the basis of his teacher's principles; he should also have some knowledge of the method of deriving a ruling from evidence. A *mujtahid* within the school (*fī al-madhhab*) is one who follows his teacher or imām wherever there is an existing ruling based on a text (*naṣṣ*); he also knows the general principles upon which his imām's school is based, and is capable of independently applying these principles to a limited number of new cases. A whole range of types of *ijtihād* makes this collective obligation accessible to any knowledgeable member of the community.

*Ijtihād*, however, is not simply a requirement for issuing *fatwa*s and judging in courts,[87] but it has broader implications for the community. The *sharīᶜa*, according to Walī Allāh, can only be known through transmission (*naql*);[88] this is why it is important to study and verify the authenticity of *ḥadīth*, and to recognize that, after the Qurʾān, it is the most noble and authoritative of all disciplines.[89] Legal codes which are extracted from the *ḥadīth* cannot have the same authority as the *ḥadīth* itself.[90] Walī Allāh distinguishes between the authority of authentic transmitted texts and the authority of interpretations of these texts, and allows his own community the same right to interpret them as did past communities.[91] Viewed from this perspective *ijtihād*, coupled with an emphasis on the authority of *ḥadīth*, limits the domain of *sharᶜ* to a central, definitive core of texts, readily accessible to all Muslims, and it undermines the elitist claims of professional experts of the law. Walī Allāh even denounces extreme intellectualism (*taᶜammuq*), which he maintains is not obligated by the law,[92] and which he considers one of the causes of difference and disunity.[93]

Walī Allāh's theory of *ijtihād* seeks to mediate differences among jurists. The status of divergent rulings issued by these jurists is the next issue on his agenda of reconciliation. The *ijtihād* of Walī Allāh is not simply a prescription to include more opinions and hence dissent, but a way of coming to terms with

[80] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:215.

[81] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 3.

[82] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 3; and *Inṣāf*, 46.

[83] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 4.

[84] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 3–4, 32–35.

[85] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 3; *Inṣāf*, 36, 50; and *Ḥujjat*, 1:156.

[86] On the kinds of *mujtahid*s see Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 5, 17–19; and *Inṣāf*, 46–50.

[87] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 4, 35; and *Ḥujjat*, 1:153.

[88] Walī Allāh, *ᶜIqd*, 13.

[89] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:2; and *ᶜIqd*, 13.

[90] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:161; *Tafhīmāt*, 2:242–43; *ᶜIqd*, 13; and *Inṣāf*, 62.

[91] He frequently asserts this right by stating that "they are men and we are men too"; see, for example, Walī Allāh, *Tafhīmāt*, 2:282–83.

[92] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 2:21–22.

[93] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120.

differences of opinion, and creatively bypassing them in the interest of the community. He believes there are historical reasons for differences among scholars and their approaches to the study of law. Early traditionists, he argues, did not derive rulings from the *ḥadīth*, fearing they may misunderstand its meanings. Instead, they simply transmitted the traditions as they heard them.[94] Early jurists were afraid of attributing wrong traditions to the prophet, and thought that less risk is involved in issuing rulings and opinions.[95] The followers of both groups actually attributed to them exclusive claims they did not make, and the zealotry of these followers is one of the reasons for later differences.[96] The situation was aggravated when some scholars compromised their integrity, and were lured by the prospects of wealth and power.[97] Legal disputation was a favorite subject in the courts, and scholars seeking wealth focused their research on it in order to gain the patronage of the rulers, thus diverting their attention from the more scholarly pursuits of the first generations of Muslims.[98] There are also structural factors that account for legal divergences (*ikhtilāfāt*); conflicting transmitted *ḥadīth*s and their varying linguistic interpretations are some such factors. The differences in the methods of applying a general rule in a specific situation, or deriving a general ruling from a specific one, and the interpretation of a general rule in a specific context in opposition to the requirements of common sense and simple reason, are added causes for *ikhtilāf*.[99]

Walī Allāh charts the causes of legal divergences, then suggests ways of dealing with them. Difference, he asserts, is a natural and unavoidable outcome of *ijtihād*. It is sanctioned in the prophetic tradition which assigns two rewards to a *mujtahid* who hits the mark, and one reward for one who does not.[100] According to Walī Allāh, this does not mean that one of the two opinions in question is wrong, only that one is more correct than the other. The claim that only one of the two opinions corresponds to the ruling intended by God would pitch the other one in opposition to God's ruling, which is a sin and cannot be deserving of God's reward.[101] Therefore, in differences resulting from most kinds of *ijtihād*, the truth is on both sides of the difference,[102] and the choice between different legal opinions, and by extension different legal schools, is a choice between equally valid options. Based on this argument, Walī Allāh then asserts that it is prohibited to believe in and promote one school of law to the exclusion of others.[103] These schools have no exclusive claim to truth, and there are only four of them because it so happened that their followers were more active than those of the now extinct schools.[104] A measure of *ijtihād* should be exercised by any discerning Muslim in opting for one among different opinions. This choice must be based on the strength of the evidence behind each opinion, the soundness of its reasoning, and how easily it can be followed.[105] Since the choice is made between equally valid opinions, and on the basis of the principle of *taysīr*, Walī Allāh sees no reason why people should not adopt the easier and least demanding of the options.[106]

Contrary to Ibn Ḥazm who prohibits it, Walī Allāh does not deny people the right to resort to *taqlīd* (imitation in matters of law) when they are incapable of exercising their own judgment.[107] He does prohibit the belief that an imām is infallible, or that it is obligatory to imitate him.[108] This kind of *taqlīd* is the major reason for disunity and is strictly forbidden.[109] He further argues that *taqlīd* is obligatory for one who is ignorant of the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*, in which case imitation is equivalent to following the tradition.[110] Such a person, however, cannot have a school; the tradition he follows can only be the ruling of the judge or *muftī*.[111]

Walī Allāh's conciliatory approach is not restricted to theoretical discussion, but extends to his own legal practice. A committed Ḥanafī, he studied and taught the *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of imām Mālik and reassessed Ḥanafī legal opinions in its light, arguing that it is the most reliable book after the Qurʾān.[112] He applied the principles of jurisprudence developed by Shāfiʿī to his theory of *ijtihād*, convinced that no *ijtihād* in any of the four schools could have been possible without these

[94] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:148–49; and *Inṣāf*, 23.
[95] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:151–52; and *Inṣāf*, 33.
[96] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:159; and *Inṣāf*, 64.
[97] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:120, 152–53; and *Inṣāf*, 57.
[98] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:153; and *Inṣāf*, 58.
[99] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:141–43; *ʿIqd*, 8–9; and *Inṣāf*, 6–11.
[100] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 6; and *Inṣāf*, 6.
[101] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 6–7.
[102] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 11.
[103] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:154; and *ʿIqd*, 14–15.
[104] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 13.
[105] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 20.
[106] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 36.
[107] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 14.
[108] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:154–55; and *ʿIqd*, 15–16, 28.
[109] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:121.
[110] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 27.
[111] Walī Allāh, *ʿIqd*, 30.
[112] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:133; *ʿIqd*, 20; Walī Allāh also wrote a separate work in Persian entitled *Sharḥ-i-Muwaṭṭaʾ*.

principles.[113] He also recognized the primacy of the authority of *ḥadīth*,[114] which is the central contribution of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, and adopted the theory of *ijtihād* which was largely advocated by several generations of Ḥanbalī scholars.

Shāh Walī Allāh's formidable attempt to reconcile the conflicts between the different facets of the Islamic intellectual legacy, and to forge a new synthesis of gnostic, inductive, and transmitted forms of knowledge, was conducted with an eye on the community, its power and well-being. Perhaps the greatest achievement of this intellectual synthesis was in its ability to argue, without being reductive or simplistic, for the community's right to wrench the use of the intellect from the exclusive monopoly of the professional zealots of Islam.

Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb was born in the village of ᶜUyayna in Najd in the year 1703. There is little reliable information on his activities the first four decades of his life. His longest journey was to Baṣra, from which he was eventually expelled. In the early 1740s, after the death of his father, he started preaching his doctrine of *tawḥīd*. Five years later he gained the political support of the head of the Suᶜūd family residing in Darᶜīya, and together they gradually spread their control over different parts of Arabia. Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb reportedly retired after the conquest of Riyadh, and devoted the last two decades of his life to worship and meditation.[115]

Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb's writings are almost entirely devoted to a discussion of the concept of *tawḥīd* (professing the oneness of God). Before trying to characterize his thought, however, it might be useful to examine some of his ideas, while comparing them to those of Walī Allāh. It is perhaps safe to state up front that Walī Allāh would have disagreed with Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb on every single issue he addressed. To start with, Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb had no interest in intellectual accommodation or reconciliation. He strove to classify people on the basis of their creed into believers and unbelievers, and his subsequent actions were all predicated on this classification.[116] Political and social concerns were marginal to his agenda. He made a distinction between politics and creed, and although he recognized that in promoting his cause he was indebted to the support of the local rulers,[117] he neither couched his teachings in political language, nor did he consider the seizure of power an aim of his movement. The only time he mentions tolerance is in reference to the excesses of rulers who, he says, should be advised gently, and in the event they fail to heed this advice, their injustice should be tolerated patiently. Rulers should be obeyed despite their injustice and the harm they do.[118] Zealotry, on the other hand, upon which Wahhābism has many obvious claims, is defined only in terms of the intolerant attitude toward the political authority.[119] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb even distinguishes between what may be termed as injustice because of social and economic inequities, and credal injustice (*ẓulm al-amwāl* and *ẓulm al-shirk*, literally, the injustice of wealth and that of association).[120] Needless to say, Wahhābī thought is focused on the second kind, whereas the first is tolerable as long as it is accompanied by *tawḥīd*.

Immediate concern for the social is largely absent from the writings of Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb. Not only are tyranny[121] and social injustice minor problems in his view, but numbers are also irrelevant and of no merit.[122] The community may very well be represented

[113] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:146–47; and *Inṣāf*, 19–22, 55–57.

[114] Walī Allāh, *Ḥujjat*, 1:2, 161; and *Inṣāf*, 62.

[115] On the life of Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb see Saᶜīd, and Naṣīr [n. 15]; there is also some useful information in the otherwise dated article by Phoenix, "A Brief Outline of the Wahabi Movement," *Journal of the Central Asian Society* 17 (1930): 401–16.

[116] Almost every single work by Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb discusses this issue.

[117] Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil al-Daᶜwa," in *Sīrat al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb*, ed. Amīm Saᶜīd (Beirut: Sharikat al-Tawzīᶜ al-ᶜArabīya, 1384 A.H.), 43.

[118] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 139–40; and "Masāʾil al-Jāhilīya," in Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūᶜat al-Fatāwā wal-Rasāʾil wal-Ajwiba* (Cairo: Dār al-Waḥī, 1400 A.H.), 105, 128.

[119] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 139.

[120] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 116.

[121] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb refers to *tāghūt* which, in the modern usage of the word, translates as tyrant or tyranny, and may imply a concern for social justice; Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, however, steers away from this possible political meaning, and uses the word in a specific credal sense in conjunction with worshipping God through intermediaries or worshipping idols. See, for example, Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Risāla fī Maᶜnā al-Ṭāghūt," in *Majmūᶜat al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Rashīd Riḍā (Cairo: Al-Maṭbaᶜa al-Salafīya), 122–24; also see "Rasāʾil," 142; and *Majmūᶜat al-Fatāwā*, 119–21.

[122] Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 57, 168; Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," in *Sīrat al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb*, Amīn Saᶜīd (Beirut: Sharikat al-Tawzīᶜ al-ᶜArabīya, 1384 A.H.), 227; and Muḥammad Ibn

by one man,[123] and the Qurʾānic injunction to abide by the community (*jamāʿa*) may refer to an earlier generation of Muslims, rather than a contemporary one.[124] As such, unity is of no importance, and neither are the venues that guarantee the empowerment and participation of the community in deciding its future. Withholding knowledge from the masses is permissible.[125] Similarly, *ijtihād* is not an issue which he seriously addresses. In a couple of instances he denies that he himself was a *mujtahid*, and asserts that in every case where he diverged from a scholar, he relied on the authority of an earlier one.[126] He also rejects the notion that a *mujtahid* is needed to bypass the authoritative works of the later jurists, in order to go back directly to the tradition of the first generation of Muslims.[127] The Qurʾān, he argues, has ambiguous and unambiguous verses; the latter are straightforward and require neither the explanation of earlier jurists, nor the interpretations of contemporary *mujtahid*s.[128] He thus reduces the operativeness of the Qurʾān to its unambiguous verses, and dismisses the need for the intermediary traditions, without replacing them with the empowering tool of *ijtihād*. The closest Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb gets to rejecting *taqlīd* is when he blames it, together with the excessive veneration of scholars and saints, for much of the unbelief of his contemporaries.[129] His opposition to *taqlīd* is used only to undermine traditional authority, and is not contrasted with its logical opposite, *ijtihād*. Elsewhere Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb does not hide his scorn for scholarship that disagrees with his positions, and adds that the enemies of God may have a lot of knowledge and many books.[130]

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb shared none of the concerns of Walī Allāh. His enemies were Muslims who held wrong beliefs about God, not tyrants who oppress Muslims. He separates the credal and the political, but unlike Walī Allāh, this separation ultimately benefits the political, and fails to produce alternatives to it. His ideology was generally intolerant of many practices and beliefs of individual Muslims. In his extensive discussion of what constitutes unbelief (*kufr*) and the belief in more than one God (*shirk*), he lists numerous convictions and acts. *Shirk* includes supplicating pious living or dead people,[131] seeking their intercession,[132] making vows to them,[133] offering sacrifices and praying at their tombs,[134] and attributing to the dead among them the power to harm or give benefit.[135] *Shirk* also includes the belief in, practice, teaching, and learning of magic, astrology, and divination;[136] the use of amulets and talismans;[137] giving shelter to innovators, and befriending unbelievers;[138] treating rabbis and monks as lords by offering them unquestioning obedience;[139] and worshipping God through intermediaries.[140] A person who knows both the Ashʿarī school and the school of the first generation and gives preference to the former over the latter is also considered an unbeliever by Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.[141] In addition, someone who says, for example, "Take note my brother, may you never know evil," will also qualify for *kufr*, since without knowledge of evil one cannot know *tawḥīd*.[142]

It is through his emphasis on *shirk* and *kufr* that Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb introduces his theory of *tawḥīd*. *Tawḥīd*, he argues, is the exclusive dedication of

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ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Al-Kalimāt al-Nāfiʿa fī al-Mukaffirāt al-Wāqiʿa* (Cairo: Al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafīya, 1393 A.H.), 2–3.

[123] As Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb maintains was actually the case at the time of Ibn Ḥanbal; see Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 112.

[124] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 113.

[125] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 223.

[126] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 49, 58.

[127] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 55.

[128] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 58–62; and Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb Kashf al-Shubuhāt," in *Sīrat al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb*, Amīn Saʿīd (Beirut: Sharikat al-Tawzīʿ al-ʿArabīya, 1384 A.H.), 302–3.

[129] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 105–7; he also opposes the *taqlīd* of the scholar in opposition to a text; ibid., 137.

[130] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kashf," 302.

[131] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46–47, 64–65; "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 233; and "Kashf," 300.

[132] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46–47, 64–65, 155; *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 34, 37, 40–44; and *Kalimāt*, 45.

[133] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 64–65, 108; and *Kalimāt*, 6.

[134] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 64–65; "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 237–38, 239; and *Kalimāt*, 4.

[135] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46–47, 84; and "Kashf," 312.

[136] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 64–65, 83.

[137] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 105; and "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 232–33, 257–58.

[138] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 238; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 109.

[139] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 145. He then extends this concept to include similar attitudes toward much of what is often referred to as jurisprudence; Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 145.

[140] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 82, 108.

[141] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 136.

[142] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 93.

worship to God; it is worshipping God without *shirk*.[143] The mere profession of faith is not sufficient for Islam[144] because there is a difference between knowing the truth about God (*ʿilm*), actively affirming this truth (*taṣdīq*), and believing in it (*īmān*).[145] The first two kinds of recognition are possible for unbelievers, whereas *īmān* involves full reliance on and fear of God; it also involves loving, hating, and making friends or enemies in the way of God.[146] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's cautious attempt to develop a positive definition of *tawḥīd* in terms of *īmān* suffers no small setback when he argues that even someone with great love for God may be an unbeliever.[147]

There are, according to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, two kinds of *tawḥīd*. The first is the *tawḥīd rubūbī* (professing the lordly unity), the belief that God is the creator and administrator of the universe.[148] This belief is held by most people, and was even held by the Arabs before the advent of Islam.[149] The unbelievers in the pre-Islamic *jāhilīya* knew God, glorified Him, believed that He was the only creator and that He alone could grant sustenance and bring life and death. They were followers of Ibrāhīm, and performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, but they were still guilty of *shirk* because they associated partners with God in worship, and supplicated and sought the intercession of prophets, angels, and pious people.[150] They were not driven to oppose the message of Muḥammad until he initiated hostilities against them and cursed their religion and scholars.[151] The second kind of *tawḥīd* demanded of humanity, and required for true Islam, is the *tawḥīd ulūhī*[152] (professing the Godly unity); it entails bearing witness that there is one God and that Muḥammad is His messenger, ridding oneself of *shirk*, abandoning the worship of anything but God, devoting all worship exclusively to God, and disowning the believers and taking them for enemies.[153] Recognizing *shirk* is a prerequisite for this second kind of belief,[154] and so is *barāʾa*,[155] dissociating oneself from unbelievers and disbelief in words and deeds. The concept of *tawḥīd* is thus linked in the thought of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb to an act of repudiation, which functions as a rite of intellectual initiation into Wahhābism. The non-initiated remains guilty of *shirk*.

Armed with this concept of *tawḥīd*, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was able to change his discourse *on* practice to a discourse *in* practice. He argued that the first battle in Islam (after the death of Muḥammad) was fought by Abū Bakr against people who claimed to be Muslims.[156] They believed in God and in the prophethood of Muḥammad, but refused to pay taxes. This act of disobedience was reason enough for fighting them.[157] The *shirk* of the time of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, on the other hand, is graver than the *shirk* of the first *jāhilīya*: the people who are supplicated are neither pious people nor objects that are obedient to God, and the *shirk* of the later generations persists in times of plenitude and hardship alike.[158] In this framework, the Wahhābī war against the hidden unbelievers of Islam is not only justifiable, but is itself a condition for proper belief.

Far from the tolerant and rich synthesis of Shāh Walī Allāh, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb provided a grim and narrow theory of unbelief, which failed to link the credal to the political or the social, or to generate a meaningful discourse that could justify its perpetuation as a legitimate theoretical reading of Islam.

ʿUthmān Ibn Fūdī[159] was born in Gobir (in northern Nigeria) in the year 1754. His father was a learned

[143] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46; "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 231–32; "Kashf," 299; *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 104; and *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 122.

[144] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 73–74.

[145] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 96.

[146] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 265–67; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 32.

[147] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 266.

[148] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 79; "fī tafsīr kalimat al-tawḥīd," in *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 122–24; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 56–57.

[149] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46–47, 79; "Kashf," 307; and *Kalimāt*, 25.

[150] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 46–47; "Kashf," 299; *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 110–14; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 37–44.

[151] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 106–8.

[152] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 79, 96; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 56–57.

[153] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 222, 226, 231–32; *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 110–14; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 32.

[154] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 93; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 32.

[155] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," 222, 231–32; *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, 122–24; and *Majmūʿat al-Fatāwā*, 32, 106–8.

[156] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 159.

[157] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 76.

[158] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, "Rasāʾil," 47; and "Kashf," 307.

[159] There are several good studies on the life and writings of Ibn Fūdī, and on the Fulanī *jihād* movements; see, for example, Marilyn Robinson Waldman, "The Fulani Jihād: A Reassessment," *Journal of African History* 6.3 (1965): 333–55;

man, and Ibn Fūdī studied with him and with several renowned scholars of the region. He started his career as a wandering teacher in the 1770s, and through the mid-1790s he instructed people on the proper practice of Islam. By the end of this period he had acquired a wide reputation and his following increased considerably. Around the year 1795 the emphasis of his teachings and writings gradually shifted from personal instruction to a broader concern with social and political questions,[160] and a *jihād* which was declared in 1804 culminated in 1806 in the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate. He died in 1817 in the newly established capital Sokoto, but the caliphate he built continued to flourish under his successors and to inspire many other movements in west Africa.[161]

As a young man ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī studied the classical works of medieval Muslim writers whose views informed his notions of an ideal society.[162] His experience in life, however, brought him into contact with a reality which did not conform to his ideals. The communities of Muslims were plagued by two sets of problems which are interrelated in the thought of Ibn Fūdī, improper practice of Islam and social injustice. Islam was injected with non-Islamic practices by ordinary Muslims.[163] It was not uncommon for Muslims to glorify stones and trees, offer them sacrifices, and seek them for the fulfillment of their needs.[164] Some claimed to be Muslims while they consulted magicians and soothsayers, claimed knowledge of the hidden, made vows at the tombs of pious people, and mocked Islam and Muslims.[165] They neglected performance of religious obligations and participated in corrupting and forbidden ceremonies.[166] Corruption also crept into families: men married far more than the four wives allowed by the law, and the first and oldest of these wives was allowed full control of the others;[167] inheritance was usurped by the strongest heir among the descendants of the deceased,[168] Muslims cheated in their commercial transactions,[169] and moral laxity and decadence prevailed.[170] In short, Muslims emulated the customs of unbelievers in their private and public lives.[171]

ᶜUthmān called upon Muslims to order their lives on the basis of Islam, and to resist the influences of the prevailing non-Islamic religious and social practices.

J. O. Hunwick, "Religion and State in the Songhay Empire 1464–1591," in *Islam in Tropical Africa*, ed. I. M. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966); Murray Last, "Reform in West Africa: The Jihād Movements of the Nineteenth Century," in *The History of West Africa*, vol. 2, ed. J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (Essex: Longman, 1984); Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Islam* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1982); Hiskett, *Development*; and Martin.

[160] An excellent study of the development of the thought of Ibn Fūdī is Brenner's. For the purposes of this paper, the thought of Ibn Fūdī will be examined in its final shape, although it is interesting to note how his early ideological predications conditioned his later work. For material relating to the status and role of education before and during the *jihād*, see Louis Brenner and Murray Last, "The Role of Language in West African Islam," *Africa* 55.4 (1985): 432–46; A. D. Bivar and M. Hiskett, "The Arabic Literature of Nigeria to 1804: A Provisional Account," *BSOAS* 25 (1962): 104–49; and Mervyn Hiskett, "Material Relating to the State of Learning among the Fulani before their Jihād," *BSOAS* 19 (1957): 550–78.

[161] On other west African movements see Last, "Reform"; Martin; Clarke; and Hiskett, *Development*.

[162] On the standard Islamic education in west Africa prior to the *jihād* see Hiskett, "Material"; some of the authorities frequently quoted by ᶜUthmān are listed in footnote 200 below.

[163] ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "The Wathīqat Ahl al-Sūdān: A Manifesto of the Fulani Jihād," Arabic text and translation with introduction by A. D. H. Bivar, *The Journal of African History* 2.2 (1961): 240; ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "The Translation of the Nūr-Al-Albāb," Arabic text and translation with introduction by Yusuf Wali, *Kano Studies* 2.1 (1980): 18; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "Sirāj al-Ikhwān," in "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," translation of selections from Sirāj al-Ikhwān, Bayān al-Bidaᶜ al-Shayṭānīya, and Naṣāᵓiḥ al-Umma al-Muḥammadīya, by M. Hiskett, *BSOAS* 25.3 (1962): 579.

[164] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 19; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "Unbelief in the Western Sudan: ᶜUthmān dan Fodio's 'Taᶜlīm al-Ikhwān,'" ed. and trans. with an introduction by B. G. Martin, *Middle Eastern Studies* 4 (1976): 63.

[165] Ibn Fūdī, "Sirāj," 579; "Nūr," 20, 27–28; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "Bayān al-Bidaᶜ al-Shayṭānīya," in "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," by M. Hiskett, *BSOAS* 25.3 (1962): 594.

[166] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 28–30; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, *Bayān Wujūb al-Hijrā ᶜalā al-ᶜibād*, ed. and trans. F. H. El-Masri (Khartoum: Khartoum Univ. Press and Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 29.

[167] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 25; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "Kitāb al-Farq: A Work on the Habe Kingdoms Attributed to ᶜUthmān Dan Fodio," ed. and trans. with introduction by M. Hiskett *BSOAS* 23.2 (1960): 561

[168] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 34; and ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "Naṣāᵓiḥ al-Umma al-Muḥammadīya," in "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the Western Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," by M. Hiskett, *BSOAS* 25.3 (1962): 587.

[169] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 33–34.

[170] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 30; "Al-Farq," 560–61; and "Naṣāᵓiḥ," 587.

[171] Ibn Fūdī, "Al-Farq," 560, 563; and "Naṣāᵓiḥ," 586.

At this first stage, Ibn Fūdī envisioned a solution for the problems of Muslims by modeling a society after the Islamic ideal. It is important to note that despite his emphasis on the proper practice of Islam and on rejecting non-Islamic practices that lead to *kufr*, Ibn Fūdī's primary concern was social. For him creed, in contrast to Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, is not an end in itself; the end is to create the kind of Muslim defined by this creed. His concern for the community and his tolerance in dealing with individual Muslims fuels the positive and constructive articulation of notions of belief and *kufr*. He insists disbelief can be discerned only through deeds, and not through what is in the heart.[172] On numerous occasions he warns of the great danger in accusing Muslims of disbelief on account of sins,[173] and implies that it is definitely *kufr* to accuse the whole community of unbelief.[174] The sanctity of a Muslim's blood and dignity is unequivocally protected by the law,[175] and judgment about disbelief can only be made on the basis of a transmitted tradition that is not the subject of speculation or analogy.[176] He further distinguishes between prohibited and reprehensible innovations. Muslims are discouraged but not prohibited from the latter. Reprehensible innovations include, among other things, planting trees and building mosques at grave sites, and seeking intercession by praying at a tomb or rubbing oneself against it.[177] He strongly condemns denying the blessings (*karāmāt*) of pious people, and argues that such denials are themselves prohibited innovations.[178] He maintains that it is permissible to seek these blessings by visiting the tombs of saints,[179] and that this permission is confirmed by the actions of the companions of the prophet.[180]

The religious scholars were also part of Ibn Fūdī's reform of the social disorder. It is through the spread of education that Muslims may recognize and apply the proper Islamic codes of social behavior. Well-educated and committed scholars recognized by Muslims are essential to this project. Ibn Fūdī sharply criticizes those *ᶜulamāᵓ* who seek prestige and power in their teaching, and are interested only in increasing the number of their students while failing to teach their wives and children the basic tenets of Islam.[181] He is also critical of those scholars who neither study nor teach Arabic, and instead dedicate their efforts to justifying the abuses of pagan rulers.[182] Ibn Fūdī evaluates scholarship in terms of its social functions, and opposes the establishment of a class of elitist clerics who lack dedication to communal obligations.[183]

Ibn Fūdī's initial move to institute an alternative order based on Islam was at least partly successful; it clearly alarmed the authorities and provoked them to take measures against the growing autonomous communities of Fulānī Muslims.[184] Rather than succumb under pressure, Ibn Fūdī led his community in a confrontation from which he emerged victorious. The ideological position of Ibn Fūdī was also transformed in conjunction with changes in his political strategies.[185] He considered the gravest problem facing Muslims in this new stage to be the hegemony of un-Islamic rule. To lead an Islamic life, it became apparent to him that Muslims had to seize power. His ideas were increasingly influenced by the belief that social ills were exacerbated by the rule of unbelievers,[186] who forced Muslims to abide by un-Islamic customs and laws.[187] The targets of Ibn Fūdī's attacks included, as before,

[172] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 21.

[173] Ibn Fūdī, "Naṣāᵓiḥ," 588; "Sirāj," 585; and "Taᶜlīm," 54–55, 60. He adds that this was the practice of the Khārijites and Muᶜtazilites, and that it was forbidden by consensus, "Naṣāᵓiḥ," 588; he also criticizes his teacher Jibrīl Ibn ᶜUmar for his excessive zeal, "Naṣāᵓiḥ," 589.

[174] Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 60.

[175] Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 61.

[176] Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 60. Compare this strong anti-Wahhābī position to Gibb, 30, who speaks of strong Wahhābī influences on Ibn Fūdī.

[177] Ibn Fūdī, "Bayān al-Bidaᶜ," 594. Note that Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb counts these as either prohibited sins or *shirk*.

[178] Ibn Fūdī, "Bayān al-Bidaᶜ," 594.

[179] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 28.

[180] Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 69.

[181] Ibn Fūdī, "Nūr," 23–24.

[182] Ibn Fūdī, "Sirāj," 581.

[183] ᶜUthmān's life itself was an example of his social commitment; he started his career as a traveling teacher; he also composed numerous works in Fulbe in a clear attempt to make Islamic education accessible to larger sectors of the community; Brenner and Last, 436.

[184] See, for example, Last, "Reform," 5; and Waldman, 349.

[185] On the development of Ibn Fūdī's thought, see Brenner; a similar analysis of this development can be found in Waldman, 349–50.

[186] ᶜUthmān Ibn Fūdī, "An Early Fulani Conception of Islam," 2 parts, trans. of *Tanbīh al-Ikhwān* with introduction by H. R. Palmer, *Journal of the African Society* 13 (1913–14) and 14 (1914–15), part 1:414.

[187] Customs characterizing un-Islamic rule include: hereditary succession by force and without consultation; unlawfully violating the persons, sanctities, and properties of people; extorting unlawful taxes such as a cattle tax, prayer tax, townspeople tax, merchant and traveller tax, and meat and cotton sales tax; taking women without marriage, and seizing their wealth; perpetuation of corruption by the ruler's concubines;

unjust laws and customs that sharply contradict Islamic norms. What is new in this formulation is that the rulers are held responsible for the perpetuation of this corruption. The status of a town, Ibn Fūdī added, is the status of its rulers,[188] and it is obligatory for Muslims to leave towns ruled by unbelievers for a land where Islam prevails.[189] A Muslim should also refrain from commercial exchange with these towns,[190] should not support them in any way against other Muslims,[191] and if possible, he should participate in the obligatory *jihād* against them.[192] A capable Muslim who fails to emigrate from a land of unbelief chooses to belong to that land and must bear the consequences of his choice.[193]

The apparent contradiction between Ibn Fūdī's earlier tolerance and his later sweeping *takfīr* is an issue which he confronted and creatively resolved. *Takfīr* on the basis of the ruler is a political *takfīr*,[194] which is not equated with individual unbelief. Ibn Fūdī wrote extensively on the difference between the laws that apply to a genuine unbeliever in enemy territories, and a Muslim residing therein.[195] These laws addressed such questions as whether it is permissible to continue fighting a retreating Muslim as opposed to a retreating unbeliever, and the status of the person, his family and wives, and his wealth once captured by Muslims. It is significant that, legally, the treatment of Muslims guilty of political *kufr* or loyalty to the unbelievers is similar to the treatment of Muslim criminals, and not apostates.[196] In fact, political *takfīr* was needed to justify a *jihād* which ᶜUthmān believed was unavoidable, and which ultimately served the interests of the individual as well as society.

The incorporation of tolerant and inclusive formulations from the first stage of his career through the ideological scheme of a radically different stage clearly indicates the seriousness with which Ibn Fūdī treated ideology, and how his early thoughts, together with the transformed conditions of the later phase of his struggle, were important in shaping his later ideas about society and politics.[197]

The sources of Ibn Fūdī's intellectual inspiration all belong to the classical heritage of medieval Islam,[198] which he quotes extensively and uncritically. He did not lack erudition, but unlike Walī Allāh, he was not interested in intellectual reform or revival; his emphasis was on reviving or reforming actual Islamic society. He did not study the classics to resolve their contradictions, but to derive from them a model for individual and social life. He sought not to reform the content of Islamic education, but to employ it in the reformation of the individual and society. It is not surprising that he did not address questions of *taqlīd*, *ijtihād*,[199] or the reconciliation of *ḥadīth* scholarship and jurisprudence. He himself was a sufi, yet sufism was not part of his intellectual discourse. His few references to sufism were part of larger discussions on proper Islamic practice for individuals, and had nothing to do with its intellectual merits. He did write enough on sufism, however, to

bribery in courts and to officials in order to withhold the application of the law or to suspend the conclusion of contracts, and to circumvent the laws of God; enlisting Muslims by force to fight in the armies of non-Muslims; and prohibiting Muslims from observing the requirements of their religion as in prohibiting men from wearing turbans and women from wearing veils; Ibn Fūdī, "Al-Farq," 560–63.

[188] Ibn Fūdī, "Wathīqat," 240; "Tanbīh," 2:53–54; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 12–17.

[189] Ibn Fūdī, "Wathīqat," 239–40; "Tanbīh," 2:54; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 12–17.

[190] Ibn Fūdī, "Tanbīh," 1:414; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 12–17.

[191] Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 53, 70, 73; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 21–24.

[192] Ibn Fūdī, "Wathīqat," 239; "Sirāj," 584–85; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 46–49.

[193] Ibn Fūdī, "Wathīqat," 240; "Tanbīh," 1:414; "Taᶜlīm," 65; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 18–20.

[194] In contrast to the credal *takfīr* of Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb.

[195] Ibn Fūdī, "Wathīqat," 242; "Nūr," 22; "Taᶜlīm," 61, 72; and *Bayān Wujūb*, 107–12.

[196] For example, while the person, children, wives, and wealth of an unbeliever can be taken, the same measures can only be applied to the wealth of a Muslim captured in enemy territory; Ibn Fūdī, *Bayān Wujūb*, 107–8.

[197] ᶜUthmān's justification for the *jihād* against the Bornu rulers is a clear illustration of this point; after he initially accused them of unbelief, a Bornu scholar initiated a correspondence with Sokoto and challenged ᶜUthmān's accusations; ᶜUthman then withdrew his general characterization of Bornu as a land of unbelief, and restricted it to individuals known to commit *kufr*; he also added that the war against Bornu was in self-defense; after this correspondence the war between the two states stopped, although the political conflicts between them were not yet resolved; see Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 53.

[198] He quotes such names as al-Maghīlī, al-Tinbuktī, al-Ṣuyūṭī, al-Maḥallī, al-Kuntī, al-Qasṭalānī, al-Sanūsī, al-Shabrakhtī, al-Barmūnī, al-Ajhūrī, al-Zarqānī, and Ibn Khaldūn; see, for example, Ibn Fūdī, "Tanbīh," 2:57; "Taᶜlīm," 65–66; and *Bayān Wujūb*, passim. For a study on the Arabic classics taught in west Africa, see Hiskett, "Material"; and Bivar and Hiskett.

[199] He does indicate that *ijtihād* is one of the conditions of the legitimate imām; however, he adds, this requirement can be overlooked if a qualified person is not found; see Ibn Fūdī, *Bayān Wujūb*, 30–31; compare with Martin, 32–34, who suggests a much greater emphasis on *ijtihād* in the work of ᶜUthmān.

indicate that his position was radically opposed to that of Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb.[200]

The *jihād* led by Ibn Fūdī culminated in the formation of a central state on the ruins of an old social and political order. At both levels a radical transformation was realized through the interplay of a clear program of social and political change, and an effective strategy for the introduction and application of this program. The old, fragmented order was meant to be replaced by a model of a centralized Islamic state extracted from the writings of medieval Islamic political theorists.[201] Indeed, the Sokoto state established after the successful conclusion of the *jihād* had all the characteristics of the ideal model; it was a state in which political power was delegated, but whose unity was guaranteed by the diffusion of a heterogeneous body of legal and administrative professionals.[202] The key to this uniformity was education,[203] a strategic weapon used by Ibn Fūdī, which he deployed on several levels. Through his efforts to spread literacy among his followers, Ibn Fūdī sought to forge a common social identity which included and superseded the preceding fragmented identities of the region. He convinced people of the superiority of his program for literacy, through which he then promoted a program of social and political change, and provided training for a team of legal and administrative professionals, who allowed the new state to function in accordance with its inspiring ideal.[204]

The writings of Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī[205] represent yet another distinct project of revival. Sanūsī was born in 1787 in Mustaghānim in Algeria. He received his first education in his home town and later in Fez before he went on pilgrimage to Mecca; there he met and became a loyal disciple of Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs al-Fāsī, founder of the Idrīsīya (or Aḥmadīya) order. After Fāsī's death in 1836 Sanūsī founded his first *zāwiya* on Mount Abū Qubays just outside Mecca, but he had to leave it due to opposition and pressure from local groups. In 1840 he headed back to Africa, and in the year 1842 established his first headquarters on al-Jabal al-Akhḍar, halfway between Tripoli and the Egyptian border. From this *zāwiya* Sanūsī dispatched missionaries to the southern and western parts of Libya, where the presence of Ottoman or French authorities, the strong orders of north African cities,[206] and the influence of the Azharite scholars were minimal. Between the years 1846 and 1853 he went on a second long pilgrimage to Mecca, and soon after his return he moved his headquarters further south to Jaghbūb, where he spent the final years of his life. Upon his death in 1859, tens of *zāwiya*s were already established throughout Libya and elsewhere in Egypt, Algeria, and the Sahara. The spread of the Sanūsīya continued under the leadership of the founder's two sons, and was halted only by the expanding French power. Later the followers of the order were active in the resistance against the Italian occupation, and the head of the order became the first king of Libya after independence.

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[200] Although he does not engage in any theoretical discussion of sufism, he does quote Ibn ᶜArabī approvingly (Ibn Fūdī, "Taᶜlīm," 65–66), in contrast to Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, who considers him an unbeliever.

[201] See notes in Hiskett, "Islamic Tradition of Reform," 592–93.

[202] On the organization of the Sokoto state see, for example, Murray Last, *The Sokoto Caliphate* (London: Longmans, 1967), 149, 178, 185, 226, 330–32; and Hiskett's conclusions in his edition of Ibn Fūdī, "Al-Farq," 579. On the role of the state in introducing social change, see Last, "Reform," 25–29. The Islamic ethos of the city, characterized by puritanism, literacy and egalitarianism, was instrumental in effecting a change in the rural hinterland, and in producing a central state in which the urban and the rural were unified; compare with Ernest Gellner, "A Pendulum Swing Theory of Islam," *The Philosophical Forum* 2.2 (1970–71): 234–44; and Ernest Gellner, "The Moslem Reformation," *The New Republic*, Nov. 22, 1982, pp. 25–30; Gellner's "pendulum swing theory of Islam" seems to locate the rural and the urban on two opposite poles, and allows for no possible synthesis between them.

[203] On the roles of scholars in the pre- and post-*jihād* periods, see Last, *Sokoto*, 57–60, 227–29, 232; and Last, "Reform," 29; also see Humphrey J. Fisher, "Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa," *Africa* 43 (1973): 36–37.

[204] This radical transformation in terms of the reorganization of political order and social structure illustrates the revolutionary effects that literacy had in west Africa; it is thus hard to figure out what Goody is referring to when he speaks of the "restricted" consequences of literacy in western Sudan (as well as elsewhere in black Africa and the Islamic world in general!) due to the "association of the Book with magic and religion." See Jack Goody, "Restricted Literacy in Northern Ghana," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968), 237, 241.

[205] On the life of Sanūsī see Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Sanūsīyah: A Study of a Revivalist Movement in Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958); E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954); and Martin, 99–124. These works deal more with the history of the Sanūsī order than with the thought of the Grand Sanūsī. For some discussion of Sanūsī's opinions on *ijtihād* see Peters.

[206] Almost all the non-Sanūsīya lodges mentioned by Evans-Pritchard were urban; see Evans-Pritchard, 84–97.

Sanūsī was neither an exclusive social reformer nor a simple reviver of the intellectual tradition—he mixed a measure of both in his thought. As opposed to Shāh Walī Allāh, whose intellectual reform had positive but indirect implications for the social order, Sanūsī's immediate mission was to model, initiate, and structure an ideal society. Unlike Ibn Fūdī, he avoided conflicts with political authorities by moving into areas of political vacuum, and unlike Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, the central characteristic of the religion that he preached was mercy (*raḥma*).[207]

Early in his life, Sanūsī became aware of the hazards of both politics and religious zealotry. In response to the first, he chose withdrawal over confrontation. In response to the second, however, he adopted, developed, and applied a reading of Islam which is at once authoritative and tolerant. Zealotry, the cause of social strife, was a major ill from which he personally suffered during his formative experience in Mecca. The zealotry of the traditionalists, he argues, is in their claim of monopoly over truth;[208] that of the sufis is in their scorn for the law;[209] and that of the masses is in their blind imitation of fallible men.[210] The final manifestation of zealotry concerns the accusation of unbelief. In what sounds like a direct response to Wahhābism, he quotes none other than Ibn Taymīya, who warns that the error involved in sparing the life of an unbeliever is far less than the error of spilling the blood of an innocent Muslim.[211] A ruling of *takfīr*, Sanūsī adds, is only applicable to someone who professes *kufr*, unambiguously chooses it as a religion, and apostatizes from the religion of Islam altogether.[212]

His remarks on sufism are driven by similar concerns. Although he dedicates some of his work to a discussion of the intellectual content of sufism,[213] he is more interested in formal descriptions of sufi orders, and in defending some sufi-related notions and practices. He describes the rituals of initiation and the prayer formulas of some forty sufi orders, implying that they are equally valid.[214] Unlike Walī Allāh, he does not try to justify or reconcile the differences between the various contradictory sufi concepts. The sufis, he argues, are the friends of God who have certain knowledge through direct inspiration communicated to their hearts. This inspiration is congruent with the content of the law revealed to the prophet, but lest the literalists object, he terms it inspiration, not revelation.[215] The sufis' knowledge is also limited by the Qurʾān and the Sunna,[216] and theirs is a new understanding, not a new legal code.[217] He argues that it is prohibited for someone who does not know the sufi conventions to read their books.[218] In addition to his defense of the legality of sufi practice, Sanūsī defends the social status accorded to sufi masters, and contrary to Wahhābism, he confirms the validity of the notion of intercession by asserting that Muḥammad was the first intercessor.[219] In his writings, Sanūsī is not concerned with intellectual sufism, and instead concentrates on the formal task of legitimizing sufi practice against Wahhābī-like zealots,[220] and on the organizational aspects which formed the backbone of the Sanūsīya enterprise.[221] Sufi knowledge is construed not in terms of

[207] In a work on prophetic tradition Sanūsī starts with the tradition of mercy, and he justifies his commencing with this *ḥadīth* on the ground that this is the essence of God's creation; Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī, *Al-Musalsalāt al-ᶜAshra fī al-Aḥādīth al-Nabawīya*, in *Al-Majmūᶜa al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbdu Ibn Ghalbūn (Manchester, 1990), 8–10. Also in arguing that legal analogy is not valid when there is a textual statement in which the issue in question is mentioned, he maintains that such a text either contradicts the result of the analogy, or makes no ruling on the specific issue under consideration. In the latter case the silence must be interpreted as a license, and a ruling on the basis of analogy would be a denial of God's license; see Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ al-Wasnān fī al-ᶜAmal bi al-Ḥadīth wal-Qurʾān*, in *Al-Majmūᶜa al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbdu Ibn Ghalbūn (Manchester, 1990), 89–90. This interpretation is comparable to Walī Allāh's notion of *taysīr*.

[208] Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī, *Al-Masāʾil al-ᶜAshr al-Musammā Bughyat al-Maqāṣid fī Khulāṣat al-Marāṣid*, in *Al-Majmūᶜa al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbdu Ibn Ghalbūn (Manchester, 1990), 8.

[209] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 9.

[210] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 9–10; and *Iqāẓ*, 84, 124.

[211] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 36.

[212] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 37.

[213] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 274ff.; and *Iqāẓ*, 129–35.

[214] Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī, *Al-Salsabīl al-Muᶜīn fī al-Ṭarāʾiq al-Arbaᶜīn*, in *Al-Majmūᶜa al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbdu Ibn Ghalbūn (Manchester, 1990).

[215] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 129.

[216] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 130–31.

[217] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 134–35.

[218] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 274.

[219] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 273; *Iqāẓ*, 20, 129; and *Salsabīl*, 18.

[220] Statements on Sanūsī's affinity to, or at least normalized feelings toward, Wahhābism completely ignore the clear opposition between them on issues of *takfīr* and sufism; compare with Martin, 99, 103.

[221] On the highly regimented social order in the Sanūsīya network of lodges see Evans-Pritchard, 79ff.; and Ziadeh, 106–23.

discussions of the substance of the sufi experience, but as systematically rationalized conduct.[222]

In arguing against it, Sanūsī meant to rescue all the victims of zealotry resulting from *taqlīd*. He was careful not to create new victims of either the founders of the imitated schools, or the authoritative texts of Islam. The ultimate authority is vested in the texts of the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*, and it is the obligation of every Muslim to try to extract the scriptural commands.[223] *Ḥadīth* hence becomes the best of all disciplines and the real basis of jurisprudence;[224] in the event that a tradition opposes the ruling of a school, one should always side with the tradition,[225] and neither *ijtihād* nor legal analogy are valid when there is a text.[226] In fact, Sanūsī argues, every generation should revisit the rulings of earlier legal schools, and evaluate these rulings against the bodies of *ḥadīth* literature known to them.[227]

The founders of the four schools are also redeemed in Sanūsī's analysis. It is prohibited to claim that one of the recognized imāms would intentionally contradict a sound tradition, or that he would make lawful what God prohibited and prohibit what God made lawful.[228] According to Sanūsī, it is impossible for anyone to know the whole of the *ḥadīth* corpus;[229] when contradicting a *ḥadīth* the imām must have the excuse of not knowing it, rejecting it on the basis of its weakness, or the like.[230] Whatever the reason, however, an error which results from an imām's *ijtihād* is not a sin, and is deserving of God's reward.[231] Sanūsī goes even as far as to state that imāms are not infallible and it is not unthinkable that they may sin,[232] but even then we should wish them well on account of all the good work they have done.[233]

There is no argument over the rank of the great masters of the law; there is an argument, however, with anyone who follows an opinion against an established *ḥadīth*. So while the imām does not sin by committing error, the imitator does,[234] and the latter cannot be excused by reasoning that the imām may possess knowledge the imitator lacks.[235] *Taqlīd* is, finally, a prohibited act, both for a scholar and an ordinary person.[236] A person should refer to scholars to find from them what the ruling of the prophet is, and should be prepared to abide by their instructions if they provide convincing evidence.[237] The difference between imitating (*taqlīd*) and following (*ittibāᶜ*), argues Sanūsī, is that the second is based on proof, whereas the first is blind.[238] In following, the follower has a choice, while an imitator by definition has none.[239] Someone who fails to comprehend a scholar's evidence may follow the scholar's opinion on the basis of his reputation for reliability.[240] This too is a case of following and not imitating, because some sort of discretion is exercised by the follower. In any event, the follower is prohibited from belonging to a legal school, lobbying for it, or arguing against the opinions of other schools,[241] because the knowledge required for these acts cannot be attributed to a person who is ignorant of arguments beyond the immediate opinion in question.[242]

Sanūsī was well aware of the standard arguments for the permissibility of *taqlīd* for common people. Even Walī Allāh, the ardent defender of *ijtihād*, argues for such permissibility. In response, Sanūsī maintains that one cannot make obligatory what God did not,[243] and that there was no explicit command to follow the imām of one legal school rather than another.[244] This, Sanūsī adds, is tantamount to treating a member of the community as a prophet.[245] In response to the criticism that common people are not capable of recognizing the exact meanings of *ḥadīth*, Sanūsī argues that the potential for error created by relying on a derived ruling far exceeds

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[222] Note that the Weberian characterization of mystic knowledge as uncommunicable does not apply to this kind of knowledge.

[223] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 116.

[224] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 112–29; and *Iqāẓ*, 19, 57, 117.

[225] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 12; and *Iqāẓ*, 55–56.

[226] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 76–78, 89–90.

[227] Muḥammad ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī, *Shifāʾ al-Ṣadr bi Arī al-Masāʾil al-ᶜAshr*, in *Al-Majmūᶜa al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbdu Ibn Ghalbūn (Manchester, 1990), 21.

[228] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 12, 20.

[229] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 15.

[230] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 9–11; and *Iqāẓ*, 12–13, 19.

[231] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 36; and *Iqāẓ*, 20.

[232] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 13; and *Iqāẓ*, 22.

[233] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 13; and *Iqāẓ*, 22.

[234] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 19.

[235] Sanūsī, *Shifāʾ*, 21.

[236] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 53–61; and *Iqāẓ*, 54, 84, 98.

[237] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 96.

[238] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 65–77, 93–112; and *Iqāẓ*, 96–97, 119.

[239] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 61–65.

[240] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 101, 124.

[241] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 98, 124.

[242] See Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 99, 101, where Sanūsī argues that a common person (*ᶜāmmī*) who claims to belong to a school is similar to one who has no knowledge of grammar and still claims to be a grammarian.

[243] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 98.

[244] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 37–49; and *Iqāẓ*, 85–97, 98, 116.

[245] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 55, 116.

the error in relying on the evidence upon which the ruling is built.[246] Sanūsī pushes his idea further and asserts that every Muslim is obliged to exercise a measure of *ijtihād*, or at least try to do so.[247]

Sanūsī's definition and classifications of *ijtihād* are almost identical to those of Walī Allāh, and so are the conditions for a *mujtahid*.[248] Sanūsī also emphasizes that the lack of qualified *mujtahid*s is due not to the difficulty of *ijtihād*, but to the failure to pursue the studies that lead to it.[249] He adds that it is perfectly acceptable for a *mujtahid* to duplicate the rulings and principles of an earlier imām and still qualify as an absolute *mujtahid*, if he has knowledge of their proofs and methods of extraction.[250] Despite the similarities between the discussions by Walī Allāh and Sanūsī on *ijtihād*, these positions understood within the general frameworks of their ideologies are considerably different. The key to this difference is that while Walī Allāh addresses the question of *taqlīd* in order to articulate a coherent theory of *ijtihād*, Sanūsī arrives indirectly at *ijtihād* through his treatment of *taqlīd*: for Walī Allāh, the central issue is to revive *ijtihād* in order to revive the Islamic intellectual tradition, while Sanūsī's main concern is to eliminate *taqlīd*, which is responsible for many divisions among Muslims. Sanūsī contends that the difficulties in accepting the obligation of *ijtihād* arise from the failure to realize that *ijtihād* is divisible.[251] Elsewhere, in illustrating his views on *taqlīd*, he suggests that a scholar whose knowledge is less than a *mujtahid* but more than a common person would be reduced to the lower rank if he is not allowed *ijtihād*.[252] Sanūsī thus seems to have two notions of *ijtihād*: that of a common person who exercises it to chose among different rulings, and that of a *mujtahid* who issues rulings to other people;[253] that is, an *ijtihād* for oneself, and an *ijtihād* for others. This is further confirmed by Sanūsī's stipulation that a scholar with sound knowledge needs the recognition of the community before he can exercise *ijtihād* and issue rulings to it.[254] The significance of Sanūsī's limited individual *ijtihād* can now be understood in the context of his general ideology: it empowers individual Muslims enough to liberate them from the fragmenting effects of *taqlīd*, and allows them to have a say by investing communal authority in the persons they choose. This *ijtihād*, however, prohibits these same individuals from judging beyond their persons or on behalf of any collectivity. It provides them the right to choose but not to impose.

The actual career of Muḥammad Ibn ᶜAlī al-Sanūsī reflects his ideological convictions. He avoided political confrontations in which ideals are imposed rather than adopted. His alternative community ideally would integrate individuals with a strong sense of responsibility coupled with tolerance; the regimented life which he offered was apparently gladly accepted by his followers. Yet the religious and cultural strongholds which he constructed were not the strong garrisons needed to withstand the military challenges of the expanding West.

## CONCLUSIONS

The four intellectual models examined in this paper cover a wide ideological spectrum. Walī Allāh undertook to revive the intellectual legacy of Islam through mediation and synthesis. Ibn Fūdī deployed the weapon of Islamic literacy in his battle for social and political reform. Sanūsī's emphasis on individual choice and responsibility, in addition to his tolerance, amount to a program for the establishment of a democratic utopia. Finally, the credal reform of Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb can qualify neither as a social nor intellectual project, not to mention utopian or democratic.

Characterizing and comparing different strains of Islamic thought instead of quoting isolated ideas out of their general ideological context yields markedly different objects and objectives of revival in each of the examined cases. Contrary to accepted paradigms, neither the emphasis on *ijtihād* nor the new conceptions of sufism were common features of the thought of the period in question. No unifying themes can be identified that warrant grouping these ideologies, and by

[246] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 19, 117.

[247] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 116.

[248] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 83–93; and *Iqāẓ*, 61–75.

[249] Sanūsī, *Masāʾil*, 88–93; and *Iqāẓ*, 72. Note also Sanūsī's indication that stipulating the memorization of all traditions as a prerequisite for *ijtihād* makes it impossible, and thus cannot be a condition; Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 15.

[250] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 74.

[251] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 44–46, 54.

[252] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 54.

[253] This is the kind of *ijtihād* required in a judge or a *muftī*; see Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 115; and *Masāʾil*, 49–52.

[254] Sanūsī, *Iqāẓ*, 105; also in his definition of this kind of *ijtihād*, he indicates that he is referring to the technical and conventional usage of the term. Compare this distinction between the *ijtihād*s of Walī Allāh and Sanūsī with Peters, who not only equates their notions of *ijtihād* with Wahhābī notions, but even ignores the technical differences between them on such questions as the validity of *taqlīd* for the *ᶜāmmī*.

extension the movements they initiated, under one rubric. The popular contention that there are enough studies of what is termed "elite discourse," and that more attention needs to be focused on the social aspects of movements[255] is unfounded. That theories of intellectual cohesion are widely accepted—despite the lack of any substantial evidence of such unity—underscores the need for studies on Islamic ideologies. Perhaps the only common feature in the writings of the four thinkers considered in this paper is the absence of the West. It is clear that Islamic imagination had yet not been encumbered by the overwhelming encounter with the West, whose challenge was yet to be perceived.

[255] For expressions of this view, see Edmund Burke III, "Understanding Arab Protest Movements," *The Maghreb Review* 2.1 (1986): 19–25; and Edmund Burke, "Islam and Social Movements: Methodological Reflections," in *Islam, Politics and Social Movements*, ed. Edmund Burke III, and Ira M. Lapidus (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988), 17–35.