

# The appeal and transnationalization of salafism theology religion



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## Contents

- Drumhead

Despite its existent followings can non be accurately estimated, the Salafi motion is one of the fastest-growing modern-day Islamic motions, distributing virtually to the Muslim and non-Muslim parts. Its modern-day presence can be seen in assorted parts of the universe including the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Australia, Europe, and the North America. What makes Salafi movement appealing and multinational? The replies to this inquiry can be found in the features of the Salafi political orientation itself and socio-political conditions of modern-day Muslims. The nature of the Salafi reductionist position of Islamic heritage and their simplistic method of reading is felt appealing to Muslim multitudes. As Abou El Fadl argues, Salafism for ordinary Muslims “ connotes genuineness and legitimacy [ and ] as a term, it is exploitable by any motion that wants to claim that it is grounded in Islamic genuineness ” ( cited in Duderija, 2007 ) . This is echoed by recent surveies on the development of Salafism in the Western contexts ( e. g. Hamid, 2009 ; Adraoui, 2009 ) , which I believe can be used to explicate the Salafi spread in other states and part, including Indonesia.

### The Attraction of Authentic, Simple and Absolute Islam

The entreaty of Salafism to Muslim multitudes lies in the claim that its instructions and rules are derived from the pure Islam and its call to return to the Quran and Sunnah in conformity with apprehension and pattern of salaf ( Hamid, 2009: 389 ) . Salafism is peculiarly attractive to immature Muslims such as those in France as it embodies true Islam and represents the pristine

signifier and undiluted pure Islam ( Adraoui, 2009: 366, 368 ) . For these immature Moslems, Salafism is the exclusive keeper of the true Islam, which promised to animate the idealized yesteryear of Islam in the modern period.

Furthermore, the attractive force of Salafism for modern-day Muslims lies in its promise of supplying spiritual certainty by trusting entirely on spiritual texts ( Haykel, 2009: 36 ) . The simplistic and literalist method of reading farther makes Salafi movement appealing to Muslim multitudes.

Furthermore, the Muslim multitudes are attracted to the ideal beginnings of Islam that Salafism refers to. The Salafis virtually rely on spiritual texts, the Quran and the Sunnah, in constructing their instructions and statements, rejecting other beginnings derived from human rational exercisings. Salafi movement is, so, seen as a representation of true Islam or even it itself is Islam because it is based on pure beginnings of God ' s disclosure. The literalist attack to these texts makes Salafism more appealing to Muslim multitudes because this represents simpleness, without acquiring into complicated arguments and treatments on spiritual texts in apprehension and practising Islamic instructions.

The fact that Salafism comes from Saudi Arabia besides contributes to the credence of Salafism among Muslim multitudes. The fact that it is the state of the birth of Islam, Saudi Arabia to the Muslim masses represents the beginning of Islam. Hence, Salafism, which is straight imported from Saudi Arabia, represents the original Islam and Saudi Arabia is the ideal province of Islam ( Adraoui 2009: 369 ) .

In add-on, the failure of the governments of mainstream Islam to pass on and turn to the demand and development of younger coevals has opened a manner of the exportation of Salafism beyond its state of birth, Saudi Arabia. The crisis of spiritual leading within modern-day Muslims helped speed up the popularity of Salafism among the Muslim young person. In British, for illustration, Muslim young person were tired of cultural Islam brought and lived by their parents as it was seen as unable to reply their modern-day socio-political jobs. Since the governments of cultural Islam were unable to pass on decently with them, these new coevals of Muslims found a decultured Islam in Salafism and considered it a promising solution to their social-economic jobs as the consequence of life in the secularise and modern society ( Hamid, 2009: 390 ) .

The rise of modern-day Salafism, as Hashem ( 2006 ) argues, constitutes a reaction to the considerable value depreciation experienced by schools of idea ( madhhab ) and ulama. It was believed that Islamic schools of idea and the ulema have been excessively legalistic or fiqh-oriented and they were seen incapable of supplying equal replies to modern jobs. In response to these jobs confronting the Muslim Ummah, the Salafis offered a reformatory solution in the signifier of call for return to the original instructions of Islam with strong literalist orientation to spiritual texts. They believe that spiritual texts provide distinct replies to the socio-political jobs and the challenges of modernness confronting the Muslim societies. With this strong belief, the modern-day Salafis effort “ to fit every way of world to a remarkable text, or to a aggregation of remarkable texts ” ( Hashem, 2006: 27 ) .

**New Identity and Pride**

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Furthermore, the nature of the Salafi lucidity and simpleness has power to alter individuality. The Salafi promises are peculiarly attractive because they provide members with new individuality with which they pride themselves and set boundary from the other. Salafism promotes new Muslim individuality, the “ holy individuality ” of the chosen group promised to the followings of Salafism. This is related to the promise of ageless redemption and label ascribed to the followings of the Salaf as the saves sect ( al-firqah al-najiyah ) and the winning group ( al-thaifah al-mansurah ) ( Adraoui, 2009: 369 ) .

For its followings, Salafism represents a spiritual domination with regard to claim as the keeper of the true Islam. By fall ining Salafism, the followings and recruits felt to get “ supra individuality ” , a divinely-endorsed individuality, of the keepers of the reliable Islam. This sense of new individuality, to some extent, has created sacredly justifiable grounds for the Salafi followings to be chesty, exclusivist and intolerant ( Hamid 2009: 393 ) . Socially, Salafism provides new immature recruits societal security as it offers cohesive societal individuality ( Hamid, 2009: 392 ) . Financially, as exemplified by the Salafis in France ( Adraoui, 2009 ) , Salafism opens chances for its followings to derive material wealth through concern webs among the Salafi members.

The thought of reliable Islam has led to a perceptual experience that Salafi followings have superior cognition of Islam over others ( Hamid, 2009: 92 ) . Salafi movement has capacity to mobilise followings and sympathisers by out-moralizes the Other. Its basic power lies in its averment that: “ We are better than you ” ( Meijer, 2009: 13 ) . By fall ining Salafism, the new recruits <https://assignbuster.com/the-appeal-and-transnationalization-of-salafism-theology-religion/>

felt to be reborn with new individuality, altering from minority and marginalized to the chosen 1s, the super Muslims, who are superior over the remainder of society ( Adraoui, 2009: 372-3 ) . As Olivier Roy says that “ neofundamentalists are obsessed with boundaries ” ( cited in Meijer, 2009: 14-15 ) , the Salafi followings so use this acquired new individuality to put boundaries between the pure “ us ” and impure “ other ” ( Haykel, 2009: 37 ) .

In short, the certainty, lucidity, and simpleness of the Salafi political orientation combined with the force per unit area of social-economic jobs confronting the modern-day Moslems have helped made Salafism appealing and obliging to Muslim laypersons, peculiarly urban young person. The attractive force of Salafism lies in its ability to assure a spiritual genuineness which is needed for those who are in hunt for significance and individuality building ( Hamid, 2009: 390 ) . Its entreaty to Muslim multitudes is based on its claims of moral high quality, rational high quality and strong individuality, through which the followings set boundary between the pure “ us ” and the impure “ other ” ( Haykel, 2009: 37 ) .

#### Transnationalization of Salafi movement

It can be said that the transnationalization of Salafism, its spread to the Muslim and non-Muslim parts beyond its state of birth, has to make with the absence of strong counter-forces against Salafism within mainstream Muslim society. The crisis of spiritual authorization within modern-day Muslims has contributed to the development of Salafism in many Muslim states. The governments of the established Muslim establishments and Muslim civil

society have lost their leadings in the face of turning demand of modern-day society, peculiarly the young person Muslims. They have failed to turn to the growing of Salafism in an appropriate manner. In the words of Adraoui ( 2009: 375 ) , the spread of Salafism owes to the “ loss of authorization of counter-forces in the spiritual market ” within the Muslim Ummah.

More significantly, in fact the exportation of Salafism has been made possible by the long tradition of students-scholars relationship. Individually, after their return to their states alumnuss of the Middle East universities or informal acquisition establishments, peculiarly in Saudi Arabia, maintain their web with the spiritual bookmans whom they studied with. In making so, these alumnuss were committed to distribute Salafism by talking, interpreting, and printing the plants of their instructors when they return to their state of beginning. The Middle East acquisition establishments besides play an of import function in this procedure of Salafi exportation. Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, for illustration, has actively involved in the airing of Salafism in the universe including Western states ( Lacroix, 2009: 70-79 ) . In Indonesia, the function of Saudi universities and Saudi authorities in general can be seen in the constitution of Lembaga Pengetahuan Islam and Arab ( LIPIA ; The Institute of Islamic Science and Arabic ) , a spiritual higher acquisition establishment which is linked to Imam Muhammad ibn Sa’ud Islamic University of Riyadh and actively involved in distributing Salafi thoughts among Indonesian Muslims through its alumnuss and charity plants ( Noorhaidi, 2005, 2007 ) .

In add-on, the fiscal support provided by some Middle East states has made the exportation of Salafism more accelerated. Saudi Arabia has made the <https://assignbuster.com/the-appeal-and-transnationalization-of-salafism-theology-religion/>

airing of Salafism in the Muslim universe as one of its chief foreign policies in order to keep its cardinal place in the Muslim universe every bit good as to forestall the consequence of Persian revolution on the political domination of Saudi household. To accomplish this, Saudi Arabia together with Kuwait has provided the Salafi followings in the universe with considerable fiscal supports through their charity and da'wah organisations such as Al-Haramayn Foundation and Jamiyyah Ihya al Turath ( Noorhaidi, 2005, 2007, 2009 ; Haykel, 2009 ; and Bonnefoy, 2009 ) .

Finally, undoubtedly communicating and information engineerings have opened up chances, every bit good as challenges, for the advocates of Salafism to propagate their thoughts. Within the last decennary, the cyberspace has played a important function in easing the spread of Salafism to the universe. While maintaining the old media as agencies of airing, the modern-day Salafis employ the cyberspace for farther propagate the Salafi ideas and maintain linkage among the Salafi protagonists. Though this, as Paz ( 2009: 26 ) argues, they have established unfastened universities of Salafism and created practical communities of Salafi ikhwan ( brothers ) . The farther treatment on the cyberspace and the Salafism, which is the research topic of this survey, will be presented in the undermentioned chapters.

## **The Salafi Movement in a Local Context: Dutch east indies**

### The Coming of Salafism to the Archipelago

The coming of Salafism to Indonesia is closely connected with Saudi Arabia attempts to beef up its political and spiritual influences over the Muslim



universe. Harmonizing to Hasan ( 2007 ) , this began when Saudi authorities supported Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia ( DDII ; Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation ) , an Islamic missional organisation established the 1970s by former leaders of Masyumi party.[ 1 ]The DDII anti-Shiite run, which was in line with Saudi household policy of containing of the impact of Persian revolution to procure its political involvements, drove the Saudi authorities to supply generous fiscal support through Saudi-supported Islamic charity organisations such as Hai'at al-Ighathat al-Islamiyyat al-'Alamiyyah ( International Islamic Relief Organization ) , al-Majlis al-'Alami Li al-Masajid ( World Council of Mosques ) , Lajnat al-Birr al-Islami ( Committee of Islamic Charity ) and al-Nadwat al-'Alamiyyat li-al-Shabab ( World Assembly of Muslim Youth ) . With this considerable fiscal support, DDII was well-equipped to recognize its undertakings such as building of mosques, orphanhoods, infirmaries, madrasah ( Islamic schools ) , distribution of free transcripts of Quran and Islamic books, and preparation of sermonizers who were so sent to remote transmigration countries ( Hakiem and Linrung, 1997 in Hassn, 2007: 88 ) .

The DDII activities had important impact on the intensification of Islamic extension among Indonesian Muslims. In peculiar, the DDII created rapid Islamic activism on university campuses ( Hasan, 2007 ) . These stipulations provided Saudi Arabia with opportunities to beef up its politico-religious influences among Indonesian Muslims. In making so, the Saudi authorities established Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab ( Institute of Islamic Science and Arabic ) in Jakarta in 1980. As it is straight linked with Imam Muhammad ibn Sa'ud Islamic University of Riyadh, the LIPIA manager,

whose nationality is usually a Saudi, is appointed by the university. The lecturers are recruited from Saudi Arabia and other Middle East states every bit good as from Indonesia. Intelligibly, LIPIA is engaged in presenting Wahhabism, the official school of Islamic idea of Saudi Arabia, to its pupils through the choice of topics every bit good to wider communities through distribution of free books in line with politico-religious involvements of the Saudi authorities, such as the plants of Muhammad ibn ' Abd al-Wahhab the laminitis of Wahhabism, to 100s of Islamic educational establishments and spiritual organisation ( Hasan, 2007: 89-90 ) .

The influence of Saudi Wahhabism was intensified through scholarships provided to the talented LIPIA pupils and those from wider Islamic educational establishments and organisations to prosecute farther surveies at Saudi universities. These scholarships have appealed to many Indonesian Muslims for holding chance to analyze in the state of the birth of Islam constitutes a privilege and a beginning of great pride. For many centuries, Cairo in Egypt, Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia have been the major finishes for Indonesians who want to analyze traditional cognition of Islam making the ulama-student webs between the Malay-Indonesia archipelago and the Middle East ( Azra, 2004 ) . Thought the exact figure can non be assessed, since the gap of LIPIA, the figure of Indonesians pupils at Saudi universities has increased significantly from twelvemonth to twelvemonth. Consequently, all this helped escalate the influence of Salafi political orientation and hike the Saudi ' s cardinal place among Indonesian Muslims ( Hasan, 2007 ) .

More significantly, the spread of Salafism in Indonesia owes to the return of these pupils, like the first cohorts of LIPIA alumnuss, to their state after finishing their surveies at Saudi universities in the 1980s. Having studied the Salafi-Wahhabi thoughts, these alumnuss were committed to the Islamic resurgence by naming for return to the pure Islam as understood and practiced by al-Salaf al-Salih ( the pious ascendants ) . This implies that, for them, the diminution of the Muslim Ummah was attributable to the fact that Indonesian Muslims and Muslim societies in general had non understood and enforced Islam in right ways as prescribed and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim coevalss. After they returned, these Saudi alumnuss were obsessed with the purification of Indonesian Islam from what they considered as un-Islamic that had contaminated the pureness of Islam. Not merely did they use the Salafi thoughts in their lives, they besides attempted consistently to mobilise people to fall in their Salafi dawah activities ( Hasan, 2007 ) .

### The Spread

The early 1990s witnessed the fruitful attempts of the Saudi graduates to distribute Salafism in Indonesia. These Salafi sermonizers succeeded to pull followings who were chiefly pupils of universities in Central Java and Yogyakarta. Their activities were seen ab initio at mosques located at universities in Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang. Then, after another cohort of Saudi alumnuss returned home such as Jafar Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, Yusuf Baisa, Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Abdul Hakim Abdat, and Muhammad Zaitun Rusmin, Salafism rapidly spread to other metropoliss in Java including Cirebon, Bandung and Jakarta every bit good in outer Java

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metropoliss such in Makassar, South Sulawesi, and Balikpapan, East Kalimantan ( Hasan, 2007: 91 ) .

In add-on to leaders and followings ' committedness to the Salafi extension, the constitution of Salafi foundations played a cardinal function in escalating the spread of Salafi political orientation among Indonesian Muslims, peculiarly urban young person and university pupils. These include al-Majlis al-Turath al-Islami, al-Sunnah, al-Sofwah, al-Huda, Nida al-Sunnah, Lajnat al-Khayriyyah aal-Musharakah, and Wahdah Islamiyyah. To back up their undertakings, these foundations received considerable fiscal supports chiefly from Saudi and Kuwait charity organisations including al-Muassassat al-Haramayn al-Khayriyyah ( Haramayn Charity Foundation ) and al-Jam'iyat Ihya al-Turath al-Islami ( Society for Resuscitating Islamic Heritage ) ( Hasan, 2007: 91 ) .

### The Split

The connexion between the Middle East Salafi kineticss and local Salafi development in Indonesia is reflected in many ways including the cyberspace tenseness within the Salafi motion. In the Gulf War in 1990, Saudi Arabia decided to ask for the US military personnels to protect its district from Saddam Hussein ' s invasion and provided its land as military base where the US led alliance forces launched countermove to emancipate Kuwait from Hussein ' s invasion. This policy doubtless incited protests and unfavorable judgments from other Muslim states. In peculiar, unfavorable judgment of the Saudi policy was launched by new coevals of Saudi Salafis who were urban, university educated, and knowing of Islam and current

political personal business. This, doubtless, resulted in division among Salafi advocates: a group of senior Salafi governments who supported the Saudi policy and another is a group of Salafi governments who were critical of the Saudi authorities ( Hasan, 2007 ) .

This tenseness, in bend, had impacted on the development of the Salafi motion in Indonesia. Reflecting the internal struggle within Middle East Salafism, the advocates of Salafism in Indonesia were divided into two currents: one sought to keep traditional stance of unpolitical Salafism and the other attempted to convey Salafism antiphonal to current socio-political personal business. The first was represented, at least at the clip of the beginning of this tenseness, by Jafar Umar Thalib and the other was by Abu Nida, both were the taking figures in the early development of Salafism in Indonesia. This division started with and centred on the sururiyya issue launched ab initio by Thalib against Abu Nida. Thalib and his followings accused Abu Nida and his associates including Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Yusuf Baisa, Yusuf Harun, and Ahmad Zawawi, of being the followings of Muhammad ibn Surur, one of the chief critics of Saudi Arabia authorities, and being influenced by Ikhwan al-Muslimin. This accusal was besides connected with al-Jam'iyat al-Ihya` al-Turath, the Kuwaiti-based giver of Abu Nida and associates ' s Salafi foundations, that had close linkage with Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq, another review of Saudi and senior Salafi governments including Ibn Baz ( Hasan, 2007: 92 ; 2009: 174-5 ) . For Thalib, by following Ibn Surur and similar others Abu Nida and others had violated the Salafi method ( manhaj al-salaf ) of apoliticism, non-open unfavorable judgment of the regnant authorities and had brought political relations into the bow,

instead than da'wah ( spiritual mission ) of the Salaf. Furthermore, the tenseness within the Salafi motion in Indonesia had more to make with the battle over sacred authorization and who are the existent and echt Salafis. As will be explained in the chapter seven, this division is reflected and extended into internet where the Salafis use the cyberspace for intra-movement framing competitions.

## **Drumhead**

This chapter has provided background information on Salafi movement within planetary and local contexts. Salafi movement is Islam ' s multinational modern-day spiritual motion, which is concerned with the resurgence of the Muslim societies in the face of the challenges of modernness through the purification of Islam and Muslims from un-Islamic elements and the call for the return to the pure signifier of Islam in the prophetic clip. Bing inspired by the ninth century Ahl al-Hadith, the advocates of Salafism bend to the Salaf ( the early Muslim coevalss ) as a perfect theoretical account of understanding and practising Islam for modern Muslim societies by purely adhering to spiritual texts, while rejecting intellectual-based and bad reading and any un-Islamic beginnings believed as to pervert the pureness of Islam.

Due to its strong desire and insisting to return to what believed the original signifier of Islam as understood and practiced by the early Muslim coevalss, Salafism is built on a romanticized and Utopian position of the past disregarding the dialectic procedure of Islamic history. In this sense, Salafism is infested with a sort of supremacist thought that the aureate age of the

Salaf period is, and should be, consistent and retrievable in modern-day Islam.

The Salafi world-view is binary in nature in understanding the spiritual texts and world. The advocates of Salafism position that world is either in conformity with or in resistance to the original texts. Putting boundaries between “ us ” and “ the other ” , they consider the other either belongs to Ahl al-Sunnah ( people of the prophetic tradition ) or belong to Ahl al-Bid’ah ( people of out inventions ) . The Salafis position that the modern/Western civilisation is mostly, if non wholly, antithesis to the Islamic civilisation, and reject the thought of how civilization works, which involves dialogues, cross-pollination every bit good as tensions among civilisations.

Despite its anti-intellectualism and rigorous literalism, Salafism is non inherently anti-modernism because it is really a Muslims ‘ response to modernness. It is a peculiar manner of Muslims ‘ battle with the challenges of modernness. What makes it different from other Muslim groups is that it seeks to set the worlds and challenges of modernness under what its advocates believe as the original beginnings of Islam without rethinking and contextualizing them within the contexts of modern-day Muslim universe.

There is no uncertainty that Salafism looks appealing to Muslim multitudes owing to the spiritual certainty and simpleness that its advocates promote. The Salafi promises have been attractive to modern-day urban Muslim societies because they provide new recruits with new individuality of born-again Muslims and transform them from marginalised to the saved and winning group. The comparative success of the Salafi transnationalization

has been possible through the scholar-student webs and the fiscal and political support of the Saudi authorities. More significantly, the spread of Salafism across national boundary lines has been accelerated by the usage of the modern information and communicating engineering, peculiarly the cyberspace.

Salafi movement is non a spiritual motion with a formal and extremely structured organisational hierarchy. Rather, the Salafi followings are united by the shared planetary Salafi credo and rules that govern their spiritual orientation and patterns. The nature of the Salafi political orientation and the internal kineticss within planetary Salafi motion are reflected and extended in the local contexts where Salafism is disseminated.