

# The salafi movement in global context theology religion essay



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Salafism (al-Salafiyyah) is a contemporary Islamic global movement, which is concerned with a search for the pure teachings of Islam as prescribed in the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's tradition (sunnah) by rejecting any external influences and human involvement in the interpretation of religious texts. The proponents of Salafism define themselves to be the inheritors of the pre-modern Ahl al-Hadiths (people of the Prophet tradition). In their view, this school of thought was the only group that remained faithful to the pure teachings of Islam as prescribed in the Quran and the Sunnah so that it was considered the saved sect. They base their claim on a hadith (the Prophet Muhammad sayings) that the Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said that there would always be a group of his people who remained committed to the truth, whom the Salafis identify as the Ahl al-Hadith (Duderija, 2011). By claiming to be the inheritors of the Ahl al-Hadith and followers of its footsteps, the proponents of contemporary Salafi movement attempt to assert that they have privilege and take pride to be the guardians of the pure Islam in modern period.

The proponents of contemporary Salafism identify themselves, and are proud to be, as "salafi" (plural: salafiyyin), the followers of al-salaf al-shalih (the righteous ancestors). For them, the term "salaf" refers to the first three Muslim generations in the early Islam, who were considered as the best Islamic generations as they were directly guided by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. This self-ascription is based on their belief that their understanding and practicing Islam is in complete accordance with the footsteps and methodology of the salaf (manhaj al-salaf). 'Abdullah ibn Baz, one of the main Salafi authorities, said that Salafi ideology is "derived

from the Qur'an, Sunnah and Consensus (ijma`) which govern the method of acquiring din [religion] and understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah according to the principles agreed upon by the righteous predecessors (salaf)" (Cited in Duderija, 2011: 54). Due to this strong emphasis on the Salaf as the only model of understanding and practicing Islam, Salafism can be said as a movement of "return to the forefather" (Marshallsay, 2004).

## **Major Authorities of the Contemporary Salafi Movement**

Within contemporary Salafi movement, the most influential proponents are the Middle Eastern Muslim scholars with Saudi nationality or Saudi-educated, university educated, many gained PhDs in Islamic sciences from Saudi universities. These include Nashir al-Din al-Albani (d. 1999), 'Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz (d. 1999), Muhammad ibn Shalih al-Uthaymin (d. 2001), Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i (d. 2001), Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali (b. 1931), Yahya al-Hajuri, and Shalih al-Fawzan. The dominance of Saudi Arabian or Saudi-educated religious scholars (ulama) asserts the centrality of Saudi Arabia as the birth of modern Salafism. As the main representative of the Salafi movement, these ulama become major references that Salafi leaders and ordinary followers in the Muslim world turn to for guidance and advice in their lives.

Outside the Middle East, leading personalities of Salafism in Western countries such as Jamal Zarabozo and Bilal Philips (Duderija, 2011) mostly become the mouthpiece of these Middle East authorities, translating their Salafi messages for the Western Salafi followers. The same is true for the leaders of the Salafi movement in Indonesia. Most of them went to Saudi and Yemen universities or Islamic religious learning institutions (ma'had) to study

Islamic knowledge. These include Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz, Yusuf Baisa, Jafar  
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Umar Thalib, Ayip Syafrudin, Luqman Baabduh and Muhammad Umar Sewed (Hasan, 2007; 2009). Compared to their locally trained Salafi proponents, these Middle East graduates commonly enjoy more authority and recognition from their followers due to their highly-esteemed learning in Mecca or Medinah, two holy cities of Islam. Yet, all of these Salafi exponents make the Saudi and Yemeni Salafi authorities as major, and to some extent, the only references in learning and preaching Salafi ideas among Indonesian Muslims.

The Middle East Salafi authorities write treatises on Salafi ideas exclusively in Arabic. But, this is not a major barrier for Salafi followers from non-Arabic speaking countries to understand the messages of these Salafi ulama. The Salafi followers and sympathizers have attempted to translate the works of these Salafi ulama into local languages. For this purpose, in Western countries, they have established publishing houses, including Tarbiyyah Publications in Toronto, Invitation to Islam and Al-Khilafat Publications in London, and Salafi Publications and Maktabah Darussalam in Birmingham. Mobilizing the information and communication technologies, they have created websites such as [www. salafipublications. com](http://www.salafipublications.com), [www. tarbiyyahbookstore. com](http://www.tarbiyyahbookstore.com), [http://sunna. com](http://sunna.com), [www. salaf. com](http://www.salaf.com), and [www. fatwa-online. com](http://www.fatwa-online.com). Individual Salafi authorities websites have been also established by the Salafi supporters, such as [www. binbaz. com](http://www.binbaz.com) (on the works of ‘ Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz), [www. rabee. net](http://www.rabee.net) (on the works of Rabi ibn Hadi al-Madkhali), and [www. ibnothaimeen. com](http://www.ibnothaimeen.com) (on the works of Muhammad ibn al-Uthaymin) (Duderija, 2011).

## **The Puzzle of the Origin and Meaning of Salafism**

For decades, there has been conviction among Western and Western-educated scholars that history of Salafism is a history of Islamic modernism; that Salafi ideas are regarded as similar to those of Islamic modernist movement; and the Salafis are representatives of Muslim modernist. It is believed that Salafism dates back to the 19th Islamic modernism, which was associated with Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905), and Rashid Ridha (d. 1935), whose principles and ideas include rejection of taqlid (blind following), promotion of ijtihad (independent interpretation), and support of progress and rationality in its responses to the decline of the Muslim world. As Lauziere (2010) identifies, this conception can be seen in the “standard” academic works of Islamic thought such as Brill’s Encyclopedia of Islam, Malcolm Kerr’s Islamic Reform (1966), M. A. Zaki Badawi’s The Reformers of Egypt (1978), and Daniel Brown’s Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought (1996). Some recent studies by scholars of contemporary Islam, such as Ali Hassan Zaidi (2006) and Dumber and Tayob (2011), also connect Salafi orientations with Muslim reformists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

However, this conception is problematic in some respects. First, there is no convincing evidence to the claim of the connection among Salafism, al-Afghani, and ‘Abduh. According to Lauziere (2010), there are no primary sources including al-‘Urwat al-Wuthqa, a flagship journal of al-Afghani and ‘Abduh, that substantially prove the claim that al-Afghani and ‘Abduh coined the term Salafism and used it to identify themselves and their reform movement in the 19th century. It is true that Abduh mentioned the term al-

Salafiyyin (the Salafis) in Al-Manar (Al-Manar 5, 1902 cited in Lauziere 2010) to designate Sunni Muslims who were against Ash'ariyyah, a 10th century school of speculative Islamic theology,[1]in terms of theological issues based on their strict adherence to the creed of the forefathers (Lauziere, 2010). But, ' Abduh clearly did not claim to be a Salafi nor identified his followers as Salafis. He simply referred al-Salafiyyin in the context of theological debates as Sunni Muslims who differed from Ash'arites based on their strict adherence to ' aqidat al-salaf (the creed of the forefather) (Lauziere, 2010).

Moreover, Rasyid Ridha, one of Muhammad ' Abduh's main disciples, recognized the fundamental differences between Salafism and Islamic modernist school, which his mentor promoted. According to Ridha, following the Salafi creed did not necessarily make one committed to Islamic modernist school. During his time, Ridha identified Salafism as Wahhabism to which he called al-Wahhabiyyah al-Salafiyyah. Later, in 1928 he and some of his disciples declared their passage to becoming Salafis not only with respect to Islamic theology but also in fiqh or Islamic jurisprudence (Lauziere, 2010).

Second, the unconfirmed claim of ideological connection between contemporary Salafism and the early 20th century Islamic modernism can be seen in the issue of how each defines the term Salaf. While the two movements shared the idea of the importance of the pious ancestors, they differ in the issue of to what extent the Salaf is defined and how it should be modelled. The proponents of Islamic modernism conceived that the term Salaf includes virtually the Muslim scholars of all schools of thought in the medieval period whose success and achievements should be contextually

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propagated and imitated within modern Muslim contexts. The early 20th century Salafism understood the Salaf as Muslim scholars in religious science as well as in 'secular' science of the golden age of Islam in the medieval period that should be contextually followed.

In contrast, the proponents of contemporary Salafism restrict the Salaf to the first three generations in the early Islam, namely the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (al-shahabat), those after them (al-tabi'in) and the next generation after them (atba'u al-tabi'in). They also include religious scholars ('ulama') in the first and second centuries of Islam who were considered to adhere to the way of these first three Muslim generations, particularly Ahmad bin Hanbal and the followers of his textual school. These Salaf generations and Salafi 'ulama' were considered rightly guided forefathers and, hence, role models to whom Muslims are obliged to follow their ways in any circumstances. In addition, when the proponents of contemporary Salafism speak about the Salaf, they use it in its narrow religious sense. Practically, they exclude, show suspicion and hostility towards social, cultural and scientific heritage of the Muslim forefathers. In their view, the perfect method of modelling the Salaf in the contemporary Muslim societies is preserving and imitating their footsteps without contextualizing them in the present contexts.

Third, the issue of the unconfirmed ideological connection between Salafism and the late 19th century Islamic modernism can be discerned in differences between them with respect to methodology and objectives. In response to the decline of the Islamic world, the Islamic modernism of al-Aghani and 'Abduh was committed to islah (reform) in Muslim society through promotion

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of i'tidal (moderation and balance) by which Muslims were expected to conduct conciliation between Islam and Western civilization. It encouraged the appreciation and adoption of social, political and scientific achievements of Western civilization and at the same rooted firmly in Islamic principles and civilization. In other words, al-Afghani and 'Abduh's Islamic modernism was a moderate approach to Islam and Western civilization in that it was able to balance between revelation and reason, and between strict Islamic conservatism and blind following of the West (Lauziere, 2010).

Contemporary Salafism, in contrast, aims to revive the golden age of Islam by adhering strictly to the ways of the first three Muslim generations in the early Islam understood and practiced Islam to protect its purity from forbidden religious innovation. From this perspective, the making of the Salaf as a perfect model requires strict applying the Salaf method in social and cultural vacuum, without contextualizing their ideas and practices within present contexts of the Muslim world. Subsequently, this movement regards revealed texts as the only primary sources so that its proponents tend to be anti-rationalistic approach to revelation. The proponents of contemporary Salafism are also suspicious of anything not textually written in the scripture, taught or done by the Prophet Muhammad, his companions and religious scholars adhered to their ways. Conservatism, or even ultra conservatism, is highly represented in contemporary Salafi movement.

As a result, there is no adequate evidence to claim ideological connection between the late 19th and early 20th century's Islamic modernism and the contemporary Salafi movement. There is no support that Al-Afghani and 'Abduh proclaimed they were Salafis or exponents of the Salafi movement or

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their ideas were in accordance with contemporary Salafism. The modernist conception of “Salafism” substantially differs from the contemporary Salafism’s understanding of the same term. Within contemporary Salafi movement, salafism is conceived first and foremost as label by Sunni purist-literalist-traditionalists to designate their particular approach to Islam.

## **Conceptual History of Salafism**

Undoubtedly, the uncertainty of the origin and meaning of Salafism within modern scholarship has caused the substance of Salafism remain puzzling. Fortunately, a recent study by Henri Lauziere (2010) is helpful in solving this puzzle and gaining relative certainty in the issues of the origin and meaning of Salafism. He argues that the puzzle of the meaning and origins of Salafism is attributable to the “faulty scholarship” and the fact that there is little scholarly attention to the examination of the history of knowledge production of Salafism (Lauziere, 2010: 369).

### **The First Use of the Term “Salafism”**

Historically speaking, Salafism as a religious orientation is not purely a modern phenomenon. Rather, it rooted in the Islamic scholarship in pre-modern history of Islam. The early use of the term Salafism (Salafiyyah) as an approach to religious texts is found in a number of religious scholars’ works in the medieval period. For example, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1238) writes in his al-Fatawa al-Kubra:

As for the Salafiyya it is as [Hamd ibn Muhammad] al-Khattabi and Abu Bakr al-Khatib [al-Bagdadi] and other have stated: The way of the Salaf is to

interpret literally the Qur’an verses and hadiths that relate to the Divine  
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attributes (ijra' ayat al-sifat wa ahadits al-sifat ' ala zahiriha), and without indicating modality and without attributing to Him anthropomorphic qualities. So that one is not to state that the meaning of " hand" is power or that of " hearing" is knowledge (Cited in Haykel, 2009: 38).

However, as Haykel (2009) and Dumbe & Tayob (2011) suggest, the historical precedent of the Salafi orientations even dates back earlier to the 9th century theological and juridical debates between the Ahl al-Ra'y (people of opinion), which was associated with the Mu'tazilah,[2]and Ahl al-Hadith (people of the Prophet Muhammad's tradition), which was related to Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), the inspirer of the Hanbali school of law (Hanbaliyyah). [3]Particularly, the early use of the term Salaf and its derivatives in this period can be traced back to the Ahl al Hadits. It is reported that Ibn Hanbal said:

It has been transmitted from more than one of our ancestors (salafina) that they said ' the Qur'an is the speech of God and is uncreated', and this is what I endorse. I do not engage in speculative theology and I hold that there is nothing to be said other than what is in God's Book (Qur'an), the traditions of His messenger or those of his companions and their followers- may God have mercy on them. It is not praiseworthy to engage in theological discussion in matters not contained therein (Cited in Haykel, 2009: 38).

These statements not only refer to the early use of the terms Salaf and Salafism within Islamic scholarship, but also points out the way of thinking that the early ' Salafis' advocated in regard to theological issues such as the nature of the Qur'an as God's messages revealed to the Prophet

Muhammad. With respect to the approach to the interpretation of religious texts, the Ahl al-Ra`y represented Muslims scholars who sought explanations from personal opinions and borrowings from other cultures and intellectual traditions, while the Ahl al-Hadits sufficed themselves with literal meanings of the texts and tradition of the Prophet and his companions believed as pure and original sources of Islam.

Another corresponding term, madhhab al-salaf (the school of forefathers), is found in the literature of Muslim scholars of medieval period. As Lauziere (2010: 372) suggests, written sources also indicate that medieval Muslims scholars used this term primarily in the theological debates within early schools of theology in Islam. The notion of madhhab al-salaf was used to designate those who hold a theological purity in a time when early Muslims were not faced yet with speculative theology (ilm al-kalam) resulted from the encounter of Islam and other world civilizations. The proponents of madhhab al-salaf showed hostility towards Islamic speculative theology ('ilm al-kalam) which was influenced by Greek inspiration and rationalism such 'ilm al-mantiq (syllogistic logic) and falsafah (philosophy). Contrary to Islamic theologians (mutakalimin) such as Mu'tazilis and Asharites, the people of the madhhab al-salaf distanced themselves from intellectualizing the divine issues, such as al asma` wal sifat (the divine names and attributes).

However, the word Salafi or Salafism was not commonly used by medieval purist Muslims to refer to themselves and their approach to Islam. Instead, the common epithets used to refer to the purists at the period were not derived from the word salaf, but rather from the terms associated with the Prophet Muhammad's tradition, such as Ahl al-Sunnah (people of the

prophetic tradition), Ahl al-Hadist (people of prophetic sayings and sayings) or al-Atsari (the follower of the prophetic report) (Lauziere, 2010: 373).

### The Origin of the Confusion of Salafism: Louis Massignon and the Salafyah Review

A recent study by Lauziere (2010) revealed the origin of the confusion between Salafism and Islamic modernism in scholarly literature. He argues that puzzle of Salafism lies in the fact Massignon and scholars who quoted him were not aware of the complex development of the Salafi epithets within Muslim scholars in the Middle East. They simply relied on al-Majallah al-Salafiyyah, a monthly reformist journal published by Salafiyya Bookstore in Egypt -whose key role in Salafi discourses will be examined in the following section- that reached overseas including Paris. Being established in 1917, the journal was edited by ' Abd al-Fattah Qatlan and rendered by him into English as Salafyah Review. The journal was purported to serve as a marketing vehicle for reaching a wider readership of the Salafiyyah Bookstore. More importantly, the journal was created in the period in which the reform spirit overwhelmed the Salafiyyah Bookstore before the coming of the Saudi-Wahhabi influence on the type of literature it published. So, in line with the reform spirit, the journal aimed to spread the achievements of the pious ancestors (al-salaf) in a wide range of scientific, cultural and intellectual fields. In line with this spirit, the content of the journal encompassed various themes such as literature, linguistics, and astronomy in addition to religious topics (Lauziere, 2010: 379).

It was through this journal that the term Salafism caught the attention of Western scholars (Lauziere, 2010). Louis Massignon, a well-known French orientalist and the major contributor to the leading journal *Revue du monde musulman*, subscribed to Arabic journals including *al-Majallah al-Salafiyyah*. When the first issue of the journal reached his journal office, Massignon provided explanation of the *Majallah al-Salafiyyah* to the readers of his journal. He said that “ the *Salafiyyah* was an intellectual movement that emerged in early 19th century India at the time of Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (d. 1931) [and] Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890), the founder of the Ahl-i Hadith movement, had later rehashed its ideas” (Cited in Lauziere, 2010: 380). Then, he added that “ from there, [the *Salafiyyah*] was spread by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Syaikh ‘ Abduh and established itself in Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and even in the Maghrib and Java” (*Revue du monde musulman* 34, 1916-18 in Lauziere, 2010: 380). But, later Massignon abolished the connection of the *Salafiyyah* with the 19th century Indian movement and focused more on its link with al-Afghani and ‘ Abduh. Then, he associated *Salafiyyah* with a relatively transnational Islamic modernism in the 19th century, whose proponents were committed to reform in Islam and Muslim societies (Lauziere, 2010).

However, Massignon’s claim of Salafism is problematic as it raised questions with respect to conceptual and historical foundations of Salafism he based on. It is not clear how he came to this claim though it is known that he studied Islam in Baghdad and made contacts with some reform-oriented Muslim scholars like Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi. Due to this, it can be said that Massignon misinterpreted the term *Salafiyyah* and inadequately made

Salafism and Islamic modernism of al-Afghani and 'Abduh synonymous (Lauziere, 2010).

Nevertheless, as Lauziere (2010: 381) shows, some leading scholars welcomed Massignon's definition of Salafism and even took its validity for granted despite its factual limitations. The famous *The New World of Islam*, published in 1921, repeated this misinterpretation when made reference to Salafiyyah. In 1922, the leading journal *The Moslem World* published by Hartford Seminary did the same when it translated an article of Massignon from the *Revue du monde musulman*. This is further misinterpreted by Henri Laoust, a scholar who spread Massignon's ideas in French, when in his seminal article in 1932 defined Salafism based on Massignon's conception. Even influential scholar Sir Hamilton Gibb took Massignon's claim of Salafism for granted in his famous *Modern Trends in Islam*. Hence, it is through this intellectual transmission that the term Salafism with the sense of Islamic modernist movement was created within Western scholarly literature on Islam.

### The Evolution of Salafism

If there is no connection with al-Afghani and 'Abduh's Islamic modernism of the late 19th century, who first used the Salafi label as understood today? And how was it defined? As Lauziere (2010) argues, to remedy this puzzle requires considering the origin and development of the term Salafism from the perspective of conceptual history.

According to Lauziere (2010), the growing popularity of Salafi epithets as well as overlap between Salafism and Islamic modernism can be attributed to a <https://assignbuster.com/the-salafi-movement-in-global-context-theology-religion-essay/>

key role played by the Salafiyyah Bookstore (al-Maktabat al-Salafiyyah). It was established in 1909 in Cairo by Muhib al-Din al-Khatib (1886-1969), a Syrian activist, well-known figure in the Egyptian publishing business, and pupil of “Salafis-cum-modernists” ‘ulama`, Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi (d. 1914) and Tahir al-Jazairi (d. 1920). Al-Khatib’s involvement in cultural and political affairs opened the opportunity to establish the bookstore aimed at spreading his interests in Islamic scholarship and reformist ideas under the label Salafiyyah (Salafism). The name Salafiyyah for the bookstore was inspired by al-Khatib’s mentor, Tahir al-Jazairi, who had inclinations to the madhhab al-salaf (school of the forefathers) with respect to Islamic theology.

But, it seemed that al-Khatib misinterpreted the term Salafiyyah or understood it in a broader sense than al-Jazairi meant (Lauziere, 2010). This is reflected in the way he and his partner, Abdul Fattah Qatlan (d. 1931), operated the Salafiyyah Bookstore, particularly in terms of the type of literature they published. Being motivated by desires to encourage educated Arab readers to rediscover the glory of their religious, social and cultural heritage for the advancement of their society, al-Khatib and Qatlan were not confined themselves in printing and selling books on the Salafi theology. Rather, they published works on progressive nature of Islam’s golden age as well as a wide range of issues not connected to religious reform. They used the Salafi epithets to refer virtually to any Islamic intellectual heritage in medieval period, not in a narrow sense of a particular school of theology. In addition to treatises on religion, the Salafiyyah Bookstore published works on Arabic literature, Arabic grammar, and work of medieval Muslim philosophers such al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037). In short, the literature that the

Salafiyyah Bookstore published and sold in the 1910s was in accordance with the spirit and concerns of Islamic modernism (Lauziere, 2010: 378).

The selection and publication of this type of literature suggest that al-Khatib and Qatlan attempted to revive the works of the great Muslim scholars and underline the Muslims's contribution to modernity in the West of modern age. Under the label Salafism, they sought to emphasize the compatibility between revelation and modernity as shown by the works of great and pious forefathers (Salaf) in the past by which Muslims in the modern age should model for the revival and advancement of the Islamic world. In turn, all this resulted in turning Salafiyyah into a common and popular term among producers and consumers of Arabic literature in the Middle East and other Muslim regions (Lauziere, 2010: 382). More importantly, an impression built up that the Salafiyyah Bookstore intertwined the term Salafism with Islamic modernism projected to the revival of Arabs and Muslims in the modern period. The label Salafism it used was then considered as to represent the success and greatness of the Islamic past. The bookstore expanded the scope of the term Salafism beyond its initial theological meanings and gradually created the association between Salafism and the project of Islamic modernism (Lauziere, 2010: 377).

The later development of the Salafiyyah Bookstore, however, determined the association of Islamic modernism and Salafism and brought about decisive changes in the nature and development of Salafism after the establishment of the Saudi Kingdom in the early 1920s. The bookstore experienced a shift with respect to choices of works for publication. This began with the change in the choice of works for publication. In the early 1920s, al-Khatib and <https://assignbuster.com/the-salafi-movement-in-global-context-theology-religion-essay/>



Qatlan began to print works that appeared contradictory to the progressive and rationalist ideas of the Islamic reform movement though they kept promoting Islamic modernism. For example, the Salafiyyah Bookstore published works of those who strongly opposed the secular and controversial works of 'Ali ' Abd al-Raziq and Taha Husayn. It also published anti-rationalist treatises by Hanbali and his school followers ordered by Saudis. This shift in the choice of publications was more clearly discernable in the establishment of the Saudi branch of the Salafiyyah Bookstore in Mecca in the late 1920 initiated by Qatlan in partnership with a Hijazi Muhammad Salih Nasif (d. 1971). In 1928, to suit the local needs, this Saudi branch began to publish works on Ahmad ibn Hanbal and his supporters as well pro-Wahhabi books such a theological treatise by Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350), which was printed with the request and fund from Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1932), the first monarch of Saudi Arabia (Lauziere, 2010: 383).

This shift within the Salafiyya Bookstore's choice of publications, according to Lauziere (2010), should be seen in the context of political change in the Muslim world in the mid 1920s. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of Islamic caliphate in the early 1920s brought about political and cultural turbulence within the Muslim world. At the same time, however, the rise of the Saudi Kingdom in Hejaz offered Muslim ummah (global Muslim community) a great hope of social and political renaissance in the Muslim world. Therefore, many Muslims intellectuals and religious scholars, including Rasyid Ridha, supported the young Saudi state and turned toward religious conservatism, particularly Wahhabism,[4]founded by Muhammad ibn ' Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), and endorsed as an official school of Islam and

promoted by the state. Al-Khatib showed the same response to these circumstances. He opted to support the young Saudi state and showed respect to the Wahhabism and its proponents. These religio-political stances influenced the activities of his Salafiyyah Bookstore. This was reflected in the change of choices of editing and publishing when it began to publish the Wahhabi treatises and pro-Saudi works.

Although Lauziere missed to capture the complexity of social and political transformation in the Muslim world in the first quarter of twentieth century, his argument was sufficient to overcome to the puzzle of Salafism by making sense of the evolution of Salafism. By publishing pro-Wahhabi works to cater the religious and political needs of the Saudi elite and proponents of Wahhabism, the Salafiyyah Bookstore brought its commercial label Salafism closer to Wahhabism. Though the Cairo Salafiyyah Bookstore still published modernist themes, the popularization and commodification of the Salafi epithets by the Saudi branch of the Salafiyyah Bookstore had brought the Wahhabi religious orientation to the fore. The unfounded intellectual association between Salafism (Salafiyyah) and al-Afghani and 'Abduh's Islamic reform as well as the absence of the monopoly over Salafism as a marketing brand that al-Khatib and Qatlan might have opened opportunity to the proponents of the Wahhabi-oriented purist movement kept using Salafiyyah as the label of their publications ignoring any modernist agenda as initiated by the original Salafi Bookstore in Cairo (Lauziere, 2010). It can be added that given that they shared the strong reference to the pious forefather (al-salaf al-shalih) with respect to theological issues with the Salafiyyah Bookstore, at least in its early years of operation, the proponents

of Wahhabism had no difficulties in taking the advantage of using Salafism as their label of spreading the purist ideas of Ibn al-Wahhab.

Through these religious-political processes, consequently, the Salafi epithets experienced re-definition and counter-definitions. More importantly, this gradually created the impression that the term Salafism and Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia were synonymous. The opening of the Saudi-connected Salafiyyah bookstores outside Saudi Arabia, such as in Syria and Pakistan, enforced this impression (Lauziere, 2010). Undoubtedly, this evolution of Salafism explains the state of the contemporary development of the Salafi movement with Saudi Arabia as its major supporter. Due to the fact that it is a contemporary phenomenon that assigns the epistemological value to traditions, Adis Duderija (2007: 2011) labels the proponents of this contemporary Salafism as “ Neo-Traditional Salafis”.

In its later development, in the 1960s Wahhabi-inspired Salafism encountered with religious-political ideas brought by the Islamic activists who fled from their ruling governments’ repression and persecution found Saudi Arabia safe haven. This has to do with the Saudi Arabia’s policy under King Faisal (d. 1975) to support Islamic solidarity in its attempts to oppose Egypt’s pan-Arabism promoted by President Jamal Abdel Nasser (d. 1970), which was regarded as a threat to the existence of the kingdom (Lacroix, 2010).

Among these refugees were the members of al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun (the Muslim Brotherhood), a religious-political movement that first emerged in Egypt in 1928 and then spread to the Muslim world. The political aspects of

the ideology of al-Ikhwan al Muslimun encountered with the puritanical ideas of Wahhabism (Wahhabiyyah) brought about an intellectual hybrid identified as al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya (th