

Yasir Qadhi and Muḥammad Ḥijāb: Ikhwāniyyah in Theory and Practice



**Part 1: The ‘Aṣl’ (Foundation) of a Muslim
and Issues Pertaining to Tabdī’ of those
Who Oppose the Way of the Salaf**

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الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله

In a video commentary¹ on a prior discussion that took place in Speaker’s Corner, Muḥammad Hijāb presented his understanding of the issue of the base rule concerning a Muslim and issues pertaining to tabdī (declaring someone to be an innovator). This article² provides a clarification of some of his misunderstandings and errors in the topic and in particular his belief that the foundation with respect to any Muslim is “**salāmat al-ī’tiqād**” (safety, soundness of belief).

From the numerous things Hijāb said in this video:

¹ The video was published on Youtube on 25 July 2018 at this location: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtHay4eIs54> with the title: “*On Bidah, Salafi Manhaj and Discussion with Sheikh Rabee Madkhali Admirers*”. However, it has since been made private by Hijāb. It seems he is hiding his previous footprints. This video was published by Hijāb following a discussion with Shamsī in Hyde Park in which his ignorance in this subject area were highlighted. That video is still available online at this location: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G59ESbfMH6I>. So he did this video in response, as a form of recovery. However, his confusion remains as is clear from this video, in his attempts to juggle with statements of Salafī scholars.

² This article was originally written in September 2018, but was not published at the time.

So if I see someone from Pakistan or this school or that school, I am not going to declare them as innovators because I believe, and this is the belief I have that someone is ‘adl, which is the status of ‘udūl which means they are good individuals, trustworthy, salāmat al-ī‘tiqād, which means that they do not have any problems with ī‘tiqād. Even if they fell into bid‘ah, that is overlooked because of their ignorance.”

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

First we have to establish a number of realities which must be agreed upon:

1. The Standard of Truth and Tabdī

The existence of tabdī as a legislative ruling in Islām upon people necessitates **a standard of truth** from which a person must have deviated, in belief, speech or action (creed or methodology), before the ruling can be applied upon him. Hence, it must be first established that the person in question is actually upon that truth which if deviated from, makes a person to become an innovator. That truth is **the way of the Salaf** in creed and methodology. It is obligatory upon every Muslim on the face of this Earth to adhere to the way of the Salaf, this being the legislatively commanded basis for genuine unity of hearts and bodies. This command is clear in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah and this article is not

a place for a discussion of this affair. There is no escape from this matter. Either you deny tabdī as an Islāmic ruling and hence make takdhīb of Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) or you affirm it. If you affirm it, then you must agree upon that standard, which if deviated from, necessitates tabdī, along with the tafṣīl (detail) that is made with respect to removal of barriers and establishment of the proof. Hence, if tabdī is affirmed, then that standard is the Qurʾān and Sunnah upon the understanding and implementation of the Righteous Salaf. This is a proof for the obligation of every Muslim to be upon this way.

2. Distortion and Alteration of the Religion

From the wisdoms of the legislative ruling of tabdī—which has principles which must be adhered—is to prevent **tahrīf** (distortion) and **tabdīl** (alteration) of the dīn of Islām, something which the Jews and Christians fell into. Allāh has guaranteed protection of this religion and this includes **the preservation of the integrity of the text of the Qurʾān**,³ as well as its explanation by the

³ Recently, Muḥammad Ḥijāb invited fellow-Ikhwānī, Yasir Qadhi to an online interview in which Qadhi made insinuations about the preservation of the Qurʾān on the basis of Orientalist licquor he had been drinking at Yale University. This created a backlash from many quarters and Ḥijāb then brought another Ikhwānī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḥasan as a means of placation. He did not refute his friend Qadhī and he actually deleted a large portion of his interview when publishing it online.

Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) which entails preservation of the Sunnah. Likewise the correct meanings and applications of the texts, and this is through the understanding of the Companions and the Righteous Salaf.

Unity can never be based upon that which is muḥarraf and mubaddal.

This is why only Salafis can be true callers to unity. All other calls are based upon innovated ideas, principles and doctrines or upon emotions, sentiments and feelings. Both of these come under the generic label of ahwā’ (desires) because the Salaf considered innovations to be “desires”, meaning, not rooted in sound revealed knowledge.

From this we know by necessity that those who are not upon the way of the Salaf, upon the methodology of the Prophets in calling to Allāh and in rectifying the servant and the land, they can never be callers to the true, genuine unity that is commanded in the Book and the Sunnah. Rather, they call to a fake, artificial type of unity whose artificiality and spurious nature would at once become apparent given the right tribulation taking place.

3. Differing, Splitting and Weakening of the Ummah

Once the above two points are clear, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed us of the emergence of the sects and of splitting in the ummah. This was an elucidation of what came in the Qur'ān of the splitting of past nations and admonition for this nation not to follow their ways. In the Sunnah, it is made clear that this nation will indeed follow the ways of those who came before and that there will always be people who remain up on the truth.

Misguided callers introduced beliefs and methodologies which gained followers. In many cases, these doctrines and methodologies became institutionalised as they turned into fully-developed schools of thought over the passing of centuries, many of which remain today in substance, absent the name.

Thus we have the Khārijites (Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS, al-Qaeda), the Jahmites and Murji'ites (Asharīs, Mātūrīdis), the Qadarites (there are Islamic callers today who are reviving the doctrine of the very first Qadarites), the Rāfiḍites, the Mu'tazilah who are making a comeback in the form of Modernists, Rationalists. And we can go on through the ages and list all the various sects throughout history whose doctrines and methodologies remain today, even if the original names and labels are not employed.

In the 20th century, these errant beliefs and methodologies were **masked** by the appearance of **misguided political groups** who imported the ways of the disbelievers for social and political change, after they had grossly misdiagnosed the true causes of splitting, weakness and humiliation. We mean here groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and the concept of the “political jamā‘ah” which is alien to Islām and is simply a manifestation of the politics of the disbelievers.

They usurped the label of “jamā‘ah” which has a very specific meaning in the Book and the Sunnah and they distorted it and gave it incorrect meanings through which they aimed to gather everyone into a mass, irrespective of creed, all for political objectives.⁴

Despite calling to unity and claiming to rectify the land, these groups were repositories for the bid‘ahs of the Jahmiyyah, Mu‘tazilah, Rāfiḍah, Murji‘ah, Şūfiyyah and others and perpetuated the actual causes of differing, splitting, disunity and weakness. They adopted the ways of the disbelievers such as rebellions, coups, assassinations, marches, demonstrations, parliaments,

⁴ They also invented many false, destructive principles which clash with what the Qur‘ān and Sunnah came with and which the Companions and their students and their students understood and applied when they saw the deviants and deviant sects emerge around them. These are the principles that callers such as Yasir Qadhi and Muḥammad HĪjāb operate upon today.

voting, democracy and so on—and just as it was said of the Ahl al-Kalām (that they neither refuted the philosophers, nor did they aid Islām)—then these groups neither repelled the humiliation, nor did they unite and aid the people of Islām. Rather, they increased them in weakness, splitting, humiliation and onslaught and became tools for the enemies to make inroads.

4. Muslim ⇔ Sunnī ⇔ Salafi

From the third point, we then realise that only in the era of the Companions, during the lifetime of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and afterwards, during the caliphates of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, the Ummah was united and strong, because it was free of innovations, free of splitting in matters of creed and methodology and united in terms of bodies, in addition to hearts.

In such an era, it can be said that the foundation with respect to a Muslims was soundness of creed and everyone is referred to as a “**Muslim**” and no other attribute was necessary.

However, when the fitnah occurred—assassination of ‘Uthmān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)—then caution and care was taken in the transmission of knowledge and the term **Ahl al-Sunnah** came into being. **This was an attribute, additional to the attribute of Islām, a necessary attribute**

demanded by the circumstances, so that truth and its people remained clear from falsehood.

Then, the term **Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah**, to distinguish Muslims upon the sound creed and united behind the ruler from the likes of the Khārijites and Rāfiḍah.

Then by the time the innovations of the Murji'ah, Qadariyyah, Jahmiyyah and Mu'tazilah had appeared by the early 2nd century, the Tābi'īn began to speak of the **Righteous Salaf** and sticking to their way, and by the end of the second century, the word "**Salafi**" was employed as a description, additional to that of Islām, but which meant the original Islām that the Companions were upon.⁵

It then became obligatory to follow the way of the Salaf, because only that was the Islām that was revealed—the Qur'ān and the Sunnah—as properly understood and applied. And this began to appear in the speech of the Imāms of the Salaf.

This way is referred to by Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمة الله) as follows:

⁵ For more details refer to articles on Salafis.Com, we do not wish to prolong the affair with lots of citations.

As for the **Legislated, Muḥammadan, Salafi, Sunni, Prophetic** way (الطريقة النبوية السنية السلفية المحمدية الشرعية), then only he debates them by way of it who is well-versed in it and in the statements that contradict it.⁶

In the era of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) it was known as Islām, the **Legislated Muḥammadan Prophetic** way. Then it took on the attribute of being a **Sunnī** way, when the Khārijites and Rāfiḍites appeared. Then it took on the attribute of being the **Salafi** way when the various other sects appeared and multiplied and the Ummah splintered.

5. The Components of 'Adālah

Once the above is clear then we should understand that when we speak of any Muslim after the splitting and differing took place in the ummah—an affair decreed by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) for wisdoms—then we are speaking about three aspects:

- a) whether that Muslim is upon the creed and methodology of the Salaf or not
- b) whether that Muslim is honest, reliable, precise and trustworthy in transmission
- c) whether that person is upright, being free of apparent fisq (sin) and anything that is a revilement in his religiosity.

⁶ Dar al-Ta'āruḍ (1/164).

The confusion in this subject lies when ignorant and arrogant people such as Qadhī and Ḥijab person do not distinguish between the meanings that are intended by the word “adālah” in the usage of scholars, past and present, and for this reason, they will make mistakes. It is unclear whether this is truly due to ignorance—it may be in the case of Ḥijāb—or whether it is due to intent, with full knowledge, because one has a deviant methodology to push and promote for certain goals and objectives.

ḤĪJĀB'S CONFUSION

The above five points provide the foundation and framework to make the intended clarification on Muḥammad Ḥijāb's comments:

1. His statement in his video:

So if I see someone from Pakistan or this school or that school, I am not going to declare them as innovators because I believe, and this is the belief I have that someone is 'adl, which is the status of 'udūl which means they are good individuals, trustworthy, salāmat al-ī'tiqād, which means that they do not have any problems with ī'tiqād. Even if they fell into bid'ah, that is overlooked because of their ignorance.”

This is a clear error both from a legislative point of view—as in what we have been informed of and

commanded with in the authentic texts with respect to splitting, deviation and innovation in this ummah, and also from the point of view of qadar, what Allāh has decreed, as in factual historical reality about Islām and Muslims after the era of Prophethood.

Before we explain any further, we should make it clear that our statements about deviation and innovation are directed towards **callers and figureheads** and not to the average common person. Most people just blindly follow what they know from the religious figures around them with sincere and good intentions.

Our statements, when we speak of innovation are in the context of the callers to innovation, the figureheads, guides and leaders among the misguided scholars and students. Or anyone who showed bigotry after the truth was made clear. As for common people, then they are treated with gentleness, kindness and are taught and corrected.⁷

Coming back to the issue, the Prophetic Sunnah informs us explicitly of the appearance of the Khārijites, the Qadarites, and then the splitting of the ummah in general, and that it is from faith to strive against those

⁷ From the ways of misguided callers is to claim that Salafis make tabdī' of the common people and that they treat the caller and the called to be in the same category.

who innovate into the dīn of Allāh and to beware of them, such as the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) regarding every Prophet having helpers and that after them will come people who say what they do not do and do what they have not been commanded.⁸

So here we could cite abundant texts in this regard and the consensus of the Salaf on this issue. However, the intent here is be brief and provide a framework to answer the doubt.

How can the aṣl be “salāmat al-i'tiqād” when we have with us Jahmiyyah who deny Allāh is above His Throne, and reject His names and attributes, and we have the Murji'āh who expel actions from faith, and so on.

We could at this point provide a long list of deviant beliefs current among Muslims to show that the belief of Muḥammad Hijāb that the aṣl is “salāmat al-i'tiqād” is false and opposes factual reality in addition to what Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has already informed us of regarding the ummah.

In his statement: “...**this is the belief I have that someone is 'adl, which is the status of 'udūl which means they are good individuals, trustworthy, salāmat al-i'tiqād...**” Hijāb is basically saying in a

⁸ Related by Muslim.

roundabout way that every Muslim you come across, is basically safe in his creed, trustworthy in speech and a good individual, meaning righteous. Basically, **just assume everyone is a Salafi** when you meet them and any errors he has can be excused because of ignorance. This is very similar to Qadhī's "Ecumenical Islām"—just assume everyone is a Sunnī "broadly-speaking", and that's all we need for unity and an end to the splitting and differing.

2. Built upon Muḥammad Hijāb's misunderstanding, he then sought to use as proof the statement of scholars which are not really a proof for him. So for example, he used the statement of Shaykh al-Fawzān in which the Shaykh says that the aṣl of a Muslim is 'adālah.

As we indicated, the reason why there are differing statements between scholars which make it appear as if there is a difference of opinion is because they intend different things by "adālah". Earlier, we explained three meanings that come under this phrase:

- a) **safety in creed**
- b) **integrity and precision in transmission**
- c) **uprightness in religiosity (absence of major sin)**

So here, the Shaykh intends that we assume a Muslim to be free of apparent fisq (sins) and of anything that is a revilement in his religiosity. We cannot possibly know that without knowing more about that person through

other routes. So in the absence of that knowledge, we have to assume he is innocent and free of fisq.

However, by affirming salāmah (safety, innocence) for a Muslim in this respect, does not mean that he is automatically upgraded to having ʿadālah in the sense that he is truthful and accurate in transmission. Rather, this is **an additional attribute** that has to be verified and established before it can be affirmed and Islām does not confer that attribute upon a person, it is additional to Islām.

Similarly, affirming salāmah from fisq and what reviles his religiosity does not automatically confer upon a person a sound creed, because we are not living in a time when all Muslims were upon a sound creed, which was in the time of the Companions.

So you might have a Şūfī, Ashʿarī who does not commit major sins, but that does not confer upon him purity and soundness of belief. So this must be clearly understood so that we come to realise that in reality, when we put all of the statements of the scholars together, they are actually complement each other and explain each other and that each statement of a scholar, points to an aspect of the whole reality, and not the entire reality itself.

3. Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

وأما قول من يقول: الأصل في المسلمين العدالة فهو باطل، بل الأصل في بني آدم الظلم والجهل، كما قال تعالى: { وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا } . ومجرد التكلم بالشهادتين لا يوجب انتقال الإنسان عن الظلم والجهل إلى العدل

As for the saying of the one who says, “The base rule (asl) concerning Muslims is al-’adaalah (uprightness, trustworthiness, integrity, honesty), then it is baatil (false, futile). Rather, the base rule concerning the Son of Ādam is zulm (oppression) and jahl (ignorance), just as the Most High has said, “...**But man took it upon himself (i.e. the trust that was refused by the Heavens and Earth). Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results).**” (33:70). And the mere utterance of the two testimonies of faith does not necessitate that a person has moved from oppression and ignorance into al-’adl (integrity, justice, honesty).⁹

The above quote gives another reason for Muḥammad Hījāb to attack Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) because Ibn Taymiyyah spoke a truth which goes against his Ikhwānī deviation.

⁹ Majmoo’ al-Fataawaa 15/357

4. Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

إذا شك في الشاهد هل هو عدل أم لا؟ لم يحكم بشهادته، لأن الغالب في الناس عدم العدالة، وقول من قال: الأصل في الناس العدالة، كلام مستدرِك بل العدالة طارئة متجددة، والأصل عدمها، فإن خلاف العدالة مستنده جهل الإنسان وظلمه، والإنسان خلق جهولاً ظلوماً، فالمؤمن يكمل بالعلم والعدل، وهما جماع الخير، وغيره يبقى على الأصل، أي فليس الأصل في الناس العدالة ولا الغالب

“When a person is in doubt with respect to whether a witness is trustworthy or not, then he does not judge through his testimony because the absence of trustworthiness is predominant among people. And the saying of the one who said, ‘The foundation with respect to people is ‘adālah’ is speech that is to be corrected. Rather, trustworthiness (‘adālah) is (an attribute) that arises and renews (in a person), and the foundations is that it is absent. That basis of that which opposes trustworthiness is the ignorance and oppression of man. And man was created ignorant and oppressive. A believer is perfected through knowledge and justice, and they combine goodness. But others [who do not perfect themselves] remain upon their original foundation. So trustworthiness is not the foundation with respect to people.¹⁰

¹⁰ Badā'i al-Fawā'id (3/273).

5. We can also bring many other statements from contemporary scholars such as Shaykh Rabī', Shaykh 'Abd al-Muḥsin, Shaykh 'Ubayd¹¹ and others. They explain the futility of this statement and show how the very fact that the hadīth scholars said **thiqah** or **ḍa'īf** about narrators shows that the foundation was not 'adālah and the fact that if they did not say anything about a person in disparagement, then it does not mean that 'adālah is automatically established for that person.

So all of these such citations would be brought at this point and this would allow us to make clear that the meaning of 'adālah that Shaykh al-Fawzān is speaking about, is not the 'adālah that these scholars are speaking about.

These scholars are speaking about a combination of
 —b) reliability in terms of truthfulness and accuracy
 —c) freedom from major sin, fiṣq

Whereas Shaykh al-Fawzān is speaking about
 —c) freedom from major sin, fiṣq

6. Also, there are different requirements for different settings. So for example when it comes to giving witness (shahādah) in relation to contracts, judgements,

¹¹ The Shaykh addressed the subject in a question in the lecture Jināyat al-Tamayyū' 'ala al-Manhaj al-Salafi in the early 2000s.

disputes and so on, then general religiosity is sufficient for a person to act as a witness, meaning that the person is not known for major sins, and because of that, it can be presumed that he is likely to be truthful in his speech. And as for reporting ḥadīths, with respect to narrators of ḥadīth, there is a greater requirement, precision must be established and so on.

7. In the above, we have established that not understanding what is meant by ʿadālah and its components, can lead a person to a faulty understanding and then faulty statements. We can summarise the discussion through the following points which show the correct application:

① We made it clear that the aṣl with every person is **salāmah (safety) from anything that is a revilement in his religiosity**, so we cannot assume any person to be a liar, a sinner, a drinker, a gambler and so on, merely upon meeting him.

② Having said that, by affirming this salāmah for his religiosity, that does not mean that we have thereby affirmed that he is truthful, trustworthy and accurate, precise in his reporting and his speech. That is something that has to be established separately with investigation and examination. It is an attribute

additional to his Islām. Islām does not automatically confer this attribute.

③ Likewise, just because the aşl (foundation) is salāmah in a person's religiosity, does not mean that he has a sound creed. This too has to be established upon further investigation, given the legislative (shar'īyy) and creational (kawniyy) realities with respect to the past and current splitting of this nation and the appearance and proliferation of deviation and misguidance.

④ Now, just because we do not affirm a sound creed for a person—because there is no way for us to know that except after examination—then it does not mean that we have assumed that person to be a muḥtadī' (innovator) by default. That is also another issue that has to be ascertained by knowing of the belief and speech and action of that person.

⑤ Further, there is detail to terms such “muḥtadī'”, “ṣāhib bid'ah”, “ṣāhib hawā” which the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, upon the way of the Salaf have discussed, and without knowledge of that discussion, there will be confusion in the matter. For we can refer to a common person who is upon innovation because he is a follower of whatever traditions he has been raised up with as “a person upon innovation” (ṣāhib bid'ah), without that

necessitating that we judge him a muḥtadī' (innovator). The latter meaning one who actually innovates and calls to innovations, argues for them and defends them, alongside the tafṣīl (detail) in the matter of establishing proof upon such a person.

8. So the claim that Salafīs consider every person not upon the Salafī way to be **an innovator** is false.

This is a doubt used by callers to innovation and misguidance as a form of intellectual terrorism to prevent their followers from learning and grasping the truth and from recognising the complete justice upon which the Salafi methodology is built.

Rather, Salafis only affirm that a person is upon Sunnah and Salafiyah when there is clear evidence that a person is upon them in belief, speech and action. They only affirm a person is upon Bid'ah, when there is clear evidence that a person is upon that.

And they make a distinction based upon the nature and type of innovation and also whether the person is a caller or a silent-follower and also whether the proof has been established or not (iqāmat al-hujjah) and so on.

So the manhaj of Ahl al-Sunnah is very clear and these affairs are discussed in the books of the Salafi scholars past and present. It is not permissible to make gross

misrepresentation of the manhaj of Ahl al-Sunnah by making sweeping generalisations based upon faulty understandings and the use of opinion.

ADDENDUM

From what clearly indicates Ḥijāb's lack of comprehension and confusion is that in his description of this video of 25 July 2018, he said:

Fatwas below detail that the default position of a Muslim is Adalah (Sheikh Fawzan's fatwa) that Tabdee3 (pronouncing him an innovator) is not allowed until after Iqamah al hujjah -a process of acquainting the person with the evidence - is done. **Even if we agree, for the sake of argument, that Jahalah (ignorance) is the default position one cannot say that you are ignorant of someone's state and at the same time affirm bid3ah for the person. This is as it would be tantamount to maintaining two contradictory positions, you cannot not know what someone's state is and also know they are an innovator.**

As for him not grasping the fact that some terms, such as 'adālah, have numerous meanings and scholars, when speaking about these terms, may intend a particular meaning, then that has been explained above.

The part in bold text is what concerns us. Because Ḥijāb is mired in Ikhwānī principles and poisons, which are evident in his statements, actions and loyalties, he wanders and strays further and further.

After the splitting of the Muslim nation and the proliferation of sects and groups right to this day of ours, when we meet a Muslim for the first time, whom we do not know, and we are ignorant of his state as it relates to

- a) creed,
- b) truthfulness and precision in speech and
- c) religiosity, righteousness,

then while we cannot question his religiosity upon simply meeting him except with additional credible knowledge, we would be justified in affirming that he is entangled in something of innovation if there were pointers (qarāʾīn) to indicate that.

For example, he is wearing **a green turban**, wrapped in a particular way. Or he has come to us from a land where everybody is a Māturīdī Naqshabandī and so on. So we cannot say: “You are an evil sinner, liar” just by meeting this person, but that does not mean that this person gets a free upgrade to being upon the way of the Salaf just because we affirm at this point in time that he is free from what harms his religiosity.

These are not two contradictory positions at all, they are only contradictory to people like Ḥijāb who rely upon their intellect and philosophy and speak with their opinions.

Likewise, Ḥijāb does not know the tafṣīl (detail) with respect to these terms such as “a person of, or upon innovation” and an “innovator”, and this adds to his confused thinking.

Abū 'Iyaad

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With additional notes June 2020