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AN INVESTIGATION INTO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

THE HON ALASTAIR CAMPBELL
FRGS   MA (OXON)
BRITISH ARMY

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THE HON ALASTAIR CAMPBELL
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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: The Hon AJC Campbell, British Army

Title of Thesis: Islamic Fundamentalism and Jihad

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chairman
George W. Gawrych, Ph.D.

_____, Member
MAJ Jeffrey M. Young, M.Div.

Accepted this 5th day of June 1992 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.   Programs

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD by the Hon Alastair Campbell, British Army, 127 pages.

Islamic fundamentalism and Jihad are terms which have become prominent over the last two decades but are frequently misunderstood as concepts. Fundamentalism essentially means reviving Islam with its original pure principles as outlined by Mohammad and as demonstrated by his own example. Jihad means active struggle in the path of Allah both against evil and against enemies who threaten Islam.

Fundamentalism is a recurring theme in Islam which is a religion of continual renewal. Frequent attempts have been made to cleanse Islam of the potential impurities of mysticism and the secular influences of nationalism and modernization.

Sunni and Shia fundamentalist movements present interesting contrasts as exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Khomeini in Iran. The Sunnis have acted as a transnational 'conscience' of Islam without gaining power. The Shia appeal to emotion, through re-enactment of dramatic history, inspired fanatical martyrdom and produced a remarkable revolution.

Jihad has been used by fundamentalists as a unifying and as an energising force but with varying intensity. For the Brotherhood it meant obedience and loyalty; for Khomeini it meant struggle against the Great Satan, personified by America, and self-sacrifice at the command of the Imam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

GENERAL

Islamic fundamentalism and Jihad are terms which have become increasingly commonplace in our vocabulary over the last two decades. They are highly charged words which can be misunderstood; indeed it is possible that they could mean different things to different people even the Middle East. But it is partly because of the fast changing and volatile nature of that part of the world that these terms have come to achieve global prominence recently.

The Middle East has never been a quiet area, lying as it does at the crossroads of three continents and playing host to traditional trade routes. But with the establishment of the State of Israel and the discovery of large quantities of fossil fuels, the West has been inextricably drawn into its affairs. Recently several new elements have been added which have made the area even more complex and difficult to fathom: the realization of the power of oil as a political weapon; the Iranian Revolution; the Iran/Iraq War with fanatical fervour from one side and resort to unconventional warfare, by way of gas, from the other; and, more immediate to our security interests, hostage taking and the use of terrorism against Western targets.

Many religions have contributed to the cultural mosaic of the Middle East, but it is Islam that currently dominates both the lifestyle of most of those who live there and, it appears, the attitude of many Western observers. The concepts of fundamentalism and Jihad have respectable positions in Islamic theology and have played their part in the historical development of Islam; but they have become convenient epithets or even 'buzzwords' to describe the extreme behaviour of some Muslims. In fact, at times, they have also been exploited for effect by certain Muslim leaders themselves.

Fundamentalism is an English word used to describe the various movements to renew or revive Islam over the centuries. Muslims have used several different words in Arabic and other languages for this concept - such as 'Islamism' or 'tajdeed' (renewing) - to name but two. While acknowledging its strict semantic inaccuracy, fundamentalism is the most suitable word for the purposes of this study, owing to common usage in the West.

In contrast, Jihad is an Arabic word which features prominently in Islamic doctrine and theology. It literally means 'struggle', denoting both mental and physical efforts in the path of Islam, but it has normally been translated inaccurately as 'holy war'. This thesis will attempt to clarify these terms by examining their modern interpretation within an Islamic context; and it will seek to establish if there is a significant or consistent relationship between the two.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE WEST

Although Islam was the last of the world's great religions to be revealed, it is one of the least understood,

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particularly by the industrialized nations of the Western world. Originating in western Arabia in the 7th Century, Islam almost immediately provided the inspiration and cohesiveness to create an extensive, powerful empire; and it still draws an increasing number of adherents throughout the world today. Yet despite its achievements, popularity and relative modernity, it is frequently misrepresented as a religion of fanatical radicals. As Professor Albert Hourani of Oxford says:

> It is easy to see the historical relationship of Christians and Muslims in terms of holy war, of crusade and Jihad, and there is some historical justification for this. The first great Muslim expansion in Christian lands, Syria, Egypt and North Africa, Spain and Sicily; the first Christian reconquests, in Spain, Sicily and the Holy Land; the spread of Ottoman power in Asia Minor and the Balkans; and then the spread of European power in the last two centuries: all these processes have created and maintained an attitude of suspicion and hostility on both sides.[1]

It is of course true that extreme elements of Islam have at times come into focus as expressions of political militancy: fanaticism has often been a characteristic of religious groups and in the last few years this trait has reappeared in modern Islamic movements. Rightly or wrongly many of these groups have been dubbed 'fundamentalists' and this description has stuck as a term of convenience. But whatever term they go by, such movements can impinge on our lives. Indeed the power such renewed religious vigour can exert on Western interests is evident in President Bush's words in March 1990:

> Religious fanaticism may continue to endanger American lives, or countries friendly to us in the Middle East, on whose energy resources the free world continues to depend.[2]

The industrialised world's commitment to retain access to such resources was underlined by overwhelming United Nations support for Operation DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM following the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Whereas the conventional threat posed by Iraq may have receded, the more sinister and oblique threat prompted by religious fanaticism remains.

A significant way to reduce this danger might be to seek a greater understanding of this fanaticism. For a start it would be wrong always to equate Islamic fundamentalism with fanaticism: by no means have all fundamentalists been fanatical revolutionaries with political agendas; many have been quiet and sincere scholars simply advocating a return to the pure fundamentals of their faith. Fundamentalism has too frequently been used as an expedient label to be stuck on a variety of movements without sufficient thought or sensitivity. By analysing some recent examples of Islamic fundamentalism, placing them in a greater Islamic context and relating them to current political attitudes, a more coherent picture of these religious forces may emerge; and with it a clearer picture of the significance of Jihad.

Jihad has frequently been invoked by the leaders of the Muslim world. But at times, when the Muslim world has come into conflict with the West, it has been called on for political as well as religious reasons, as Rudolph Peters of the University of Amsterdam writes:

> Muslims...appealed to the doctrine of Jihad to mobilize the population, to justify the struggle and to define the enemy.[3]

As Peters suggests there can be no doubt that militant elements have rallied round the exhortation to Jihad and have given Islam a belligerent reputation which it has not always deserved. But it is this area that arouses great

interest: why and how far Jihad has been exploited as a rallying cry when purely religious demands did not necessarily justify or sanction such exploitation.

Of course Jihad can be a powerful motivating force on the battlefield: soldiers will generally be more willing to sacrifice themselves if they feel they are fighting for God and a divine cause than if they are simply laying down their lives for a soulless idea or, worse, the megalomaniacal fantasies of a mere man. The creation and maintenance of morale in war is an intriguing challenge which bequeathes no definite formula; but the call to Jihad has been a recurring theme in military campaigns throughout Islamic history and thus merits serious analysis.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

This thesis will look at two particular areas of Islamic fundamentalism: the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, who are Sunni or orthodox, and the modern Iranian Fundamentalists who are Shia, as represented by the Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers. It will also assess and compare the role of Jihad has played for each.

Fundamentalism, almost by definition, is concerned with the fundamentals of belief and practice. Consequently much of the thesis will be spent discussing the beginnings and early life of Islam as the baseline from which to analyse later fundamentalist movements. Chapters One and Two will concentrate on the birth of Islam and the development of Jihad as a powerful and, at times vital, force in Islam's spread and survival. There will be some discussion of the gradual emergence of doctrine and the Sunni-Shia rift. Chapter Three will take an overview of fundamentalism to provide some background to Chapters Four and Five which will

examine the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian revolutionaries respectively. Conclusions will be found in Chapter Six.

ENDNOTES

¹ Albert Hourani, <u>Europe and the Middle East</u> (Los
Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p.4.

² President George Bush, "Third World Conflicts and
Regional Wars" from a report dated March 1990. Quotation
taken from excerpt published in <u>C4000 Low Intensity Conflict</u>
(Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College), p.63.

³ Rudolph Peters, <u>Islam and Colonialism</u> (The Hague:
Mouton Publishers, 1979), p.2.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BEGINNINGS OF ISLAM AND THE BASIS OF JIHAD

PRE-ISLAMIC WORLD AND ATTITUDES

The Middle East in the 7th century was a violent and belligerent world. The dominant regional powers, the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires, had been fighting intermittently for nearly 100 years to the North of Arabia. The final Great War took place between 603-629 and left them both exhausted. Although the Arabian Peninsula was not directly affected by this fighting, there were indirect effects, not least being an increase in trade in the Hijaz as the more traditional Northern trade routes became too dangerous. But these wars also produced a backdrop of violence and conflict into which Islam would be born.

The Arabian Peninsula itself was not without its own brand of violence. There had always been a precarious balance between the settled and nomadic peoples with an inevitable degree of animosity surrounding the rights to oases and the best areas for grazing. The settled population tended to be involved with trade; but they were dependent on

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good relations with the nomads who dominated the access routes to the cities of the Hijaz.

A nomadic rhythm ruled the life of the desert Arab: indeed the semitic word 'arab' is synonymous with nomad. The traditional human group in a nomadic existence is the tribe. It was to this grouping rather than a sentimental attachment to the soil that the Arab devoted his loyalty and allegiance. He had no real concept of land ownership either towards what might have been regarded as his own territory or in terms of his respect for the territory of others. The harsh life in the interior of the Arabian peninsula was characterized by perpetual wandering to find grazing for livestock. It was essentially a dull and repetitive life, despite the constant struggle to survive, and the only escape from the routine of watching camels or goats graze was in contact outside the family group or tribe, whether aggressively or peacefully.

Raids to steal crops, camels or commodities formed the best chance for escape from this monotony. Such escapades, furthermore, were the only opportunities for individuals to make names for themselves, which in extreme cases could become immortalised in oral poetry. Such poems honoured deeds of exceptional generosity, extraordinary bargains or, more commonly, feats of arms in dashing raids.[1]

There is little recorded about the Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia, partly because there was inevitably so little permanence in their lives and partly because Muslim doctrine describes this period as the 'jahiliya' or 'period of ignorance': a Muslim ideological construct suggesting a lack of worthwhile achievement. But we can get a glimpse of their lives through their poetry which survives. These poems betray strong sentiments, which fall short of sentimentality, but reveal deep pride in their way of life.

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There was a clear attachment to the environment and a particularly powerful association of feelings with certain parts of the desert. But this association dwelt on transient images such as campsites, areas where the poet passed a night or two and moved on, not the more permanent features of the landscape which have characterized poetic images from similar cultural periods. But the images were just as vivid and poignant despite - or even perhaps because of - their ephemeral nature. A campsite was only a campsite when occupied; the land only had significance when the Arab was there and associated it with some event or personality; and it only endured through the metre of poetry and the seductive rhythm of recited Arabic.

> In li himma ashad min al-sakhr wa aqwa min risa'il
> al-jibal
> wa hissamam idha dharabtu bihi al-dihr takhallat
> anha al-qurun al-khawali
>
> (I have a high purpose firmer than a rock and stronger than immovable mountains, and a sword which, when I strike with it ever, the useless spearheads give way before it).[2]

Through this powerful medium of verse the heroic deeds of men were recounted: their bold raids, their resilience to suffering in the harsh desert conditions, their romantic love for women of wild beauty encountered briefly in dangerous circumstances. The heroic figure was neither a conqueror of lands nor a usurper of territory. He lived within a hostile environment, survived despite hardship and deprivation, and exploited his flair for adventure and fighting skills. He generally did not wish to dominate people or places.

Pre-Islamic Arabia admired and ennobled the raid or 'ghazwa'[3] as an important part of life. Through oral tradition, two significant strands of 7th century life were

culturally connected: poetry and armed action. This
traditional combination helped to shape the new religion of
Islam as it emerged.

MOHAMMAD'S APPEARANCE

The trading community formed a large part of life in
Arabia in the 7th century. It is wrong to think of Islam
entirely as a religion of the desert, for although the
nomadic Arabs played an important part, and although
Mohammad apparently enjoyed the solitude of desert caves, he
was a merchant from Mecca. Not only was Mecca the most
important city in Arabia at that time, Mohammad came from
the ruling tribe. As Professor Gibb says: 'Humanly speaking,
Mohammad succeeded because he was a Meccan'.[4]

In comparison to other revelatory religions, much is
known about the founder. It is sometimes said that Islam
grew in the full light of history.[5] Mohammad was born in
about 570 and earned a reputation as an honest and reliable
trader before starting his preaching in 610 at the age of
about 40. He received his message from Allah by going into a
trance and reciting Arabic verse of an inspirational nature.
These recitations, which Muslims regard as the word of
Allah, form the basis of Islam.[6]

The central part of Mohammad's preaching is to stress
the 'oneness' of Allah and his position as the only god.[7]
His motivation may have been the evident corruption and
moral decline of the community he saw around him, perhaps
exacerbated by the new found wealth brought by the diverted
trade routes from the North, as the Byzantines and Sasanians
fought their destructive wars. The solution lay in
submission to simple belief in the One God and a return to
the pure morality bestowed by Allah's mercy.

Initially his message was accepted, or at least tolerated, but after several years, and as his adherents increased in number, he began to come into conflict with the ruling Meccan families. This tribal hierarchy had commercial interests in maintaining the shrines and idols which were a traditional attraction for the many visitors who brought wealth to Mecca. Any challenge to the sanctity of these 300 or so shrines might injure this profitable business. To escape from his enemies, Mohammad moved secretly one night in the year 622 to Yathrib, a city 250 miles north, with a group of companions. This move is known to Muslims as the Hijra[8] and has such significance that their lunar calendar dates from this moment. The city was renamed Medina al Nabi - City of the Prophet - or simply Medina.

In Medina both his style and his message changed. He became a political as well as a religious leader. Indeed his Quranic recitations reflect this by becoming longer and more oriented towards practical matters. The most urgent need was to subdue the Meccans who still regarded Mohammad and his message as a threat to their pagan, commercial interests. The Meccans also knew that Medina lay astride their routes to the north. Conflict was inevitable. This task required military action and Mohammad set the example by participating in 27 expeditions against the Meccans, actually fighting in nine.[9] Not all these actions were successful, and it took ten years before Mecca was finally defeated in 630, just over a year before Mohammad himself died.

During this period the concept of active struggle developed through the example of the Prophet himself in action. He harnessed the tribal tradition of Ghazwa and found that the general atmosphere of violence and warfare allowed him to pursue his political and religious aims with armed force. Muslims regard Mohammad's life as a model which

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should be followed as the supreme example; and virtually all Muslims justify armed struggle to ensure the survival of the faith and the defeat of the idolaters by reference to his exploits against the Meccans.

DEVELOPMENT OF JIHAD

By employing the martial skills of the tribesmen as warriors Mohammad activated what has been interpreted as the first practical manifestations of physical Jihad. He was not introducing a new form of warfare, he simply used existing skills in the customary inter-tribal way of settling disputes. As Hitti says: Ghazwa was "raised by the economic and social conditions of desert life to the rank of a national institution".[10] The Ghazwa involved dash and elan but little bloodshed, since nomads could ill afford heavy loss of life, and it was this form of fighting that characterized the early conflict against the Meccan opposition.

> It seems convincing to suggest that these doctrines did, in fact, emerge not so much from, as in conjunction with, the nomadic antecedents, that they were *not* superimposed religious dogma. Jihad, in effect, replaced ghazwa and represented a channeling of a sociological trait to serve the purposes of the state, purposes that are in themselves devised in the context of the given social environment. In this context, it can be speculated that Jihad is partially an ideological rationalization for ghazwa.[11]

What Mohammad did have to overcome, however, was the concept of what they were fighting for. In the past the tribesmen would have fought for narrow reasons concerning, at best personal or family honour, at worst the lure of booty; the largest grouping to which an Arab might have pledged his life would have been the tribe. Mohammad raised

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the tribesman's hitherto limited sights and adjusted the focus for loyalty to the 'umma',[12] or community of Muslims. This new attachment had to transcend the traditional group loyalty and required an extra ingredient to make it endure: this ingredient was faith in Islam.

Mohammad continued the Semitic tradition of God speaking through the mouths of his prophets.[13] As Professor Gibb says: "All religion has developed by a gradual process of revaluation of existing ideas..."[14] Mohammad's central message was the revival of pure monotheism, emphasizing the 'oneness' of Allah; but he also used familiar and traditional means to spread this message. By cloaking his invocation to fight against the unbelievers in the muscular rhythm of Arabic metre, he combined two prominent features of Arab society. He was able to sublimate the traditional loyalty from the tribe to Islam through the idioms of powerful Arabic and positive action: the language that his followers understood.

THE JIHAD TRADITION

Jihad comes from the Arabic 'jahada' meaning to struggle. Although it is frequently translated into English as 'holy war', this is strictly inaccurate: for Muslims, church and state are one and therefore, theoretically, there can be no distinction between holy and secular war. Furthermore, Jihad can apply to any form of struggle short of war; it does not necessarily imply armed or mortal conflict.

However, by invoking Jihad, Mohammad was clearly encouraging his followers to struggle against the enemies of Islam through their traditional form of armed action, and he

set the example himself by leading from the front in several military expeditions.

> Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not trangress limits; for God loveth not transgressors. and slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter.[16] 2:190

> And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail justice and faith everywhere.[17] 8:39

In these two examples Mohammad uses 'qatala' meaning 'to fight' rather than 'jahada' which he uses in the more general sense in perhaps the best known injunction to Jihad in the Quran: "_Jahid al kufar wal munfiqin wa aghladh alayhim_ (Strive hard against the unbelievers and be firm against them)"[18] 66:9.

Jihad became the term associated with religious warfare, but there is a deeper meaning. Muslims acknowledge the Greater Jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) which refers to the inner struggle each believer wages personally and continually against the evils of temptation and vice. The Lesser Jihad (al-jihad al-asghar) describes the outward struggle, which can escalate to physical force, against the enemies of Islam.[19]

Jihad is not one of the five pillars of the faith,[20] but it is nonetheless accepted universally as a pivotal part of Islam, if not the sixth pillar. Its exact meaning and interpretation are difficult to establish owing to the variety and generality of its use. But there are some common themes. One of the most prominent is its use as a means of rallying loyalty to the cause of Islam. This was evident when Mohammad needed unity of purpose and an allegiance that

transcended family or tribal ties. The call to action,
particularly when conveyed in emotive poetry, provided the
cohesiveness and morale that proved to be winning factors.
It appealed to loyalty and demanded obedience; and these
features would recur.

> In the classic tradition...the banner of militant
> Islam, purged of heretical accretions and restored
> to pristine purity, would be the rallying point
> around which tribal forces would coalesce...[21]

The world in which Islam appeared was coloured by
turbulence and violence. It was both natural and sensible
for Mohammad to come to terms with these features in
advocacy of his religion and to use them to further the
cause of Islam. By harnessing the skirmishing skills of the
tribesmen he underpinned his polity and spread his message.
He inspired them with the most powerful and effective Arabic
yet heard; and he unified them with the call to Jihad.

ENDNOTES

1 John Glubb, <u>The Life and Times of Mohammad</u> (London: History Book Club, 1970). Chapter One vividly describes Arabia and its people at the time of Mohammad.

2 AJ Arberry, <u>Arabic Poetry</u> (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965). A two line excerpt from Antara, the great 6th century poet. Translation by Arberry, p.36.

3 'Ghazwa' means 'raid' as it applied to inter-tribal skirmishing. It is more usually transliterated as 'razzia' and has been adopted in some European military handbooks as a tactical description of a type of attack during the colonial era. It was in common use with the French in Algeria.

4 HAR Gibb, <u>Mohammadanism</u> (London: Oxford University Press 1949), p.17.

5 This well known description of Islam's early history has been attributed to Ernest Renan in 1851, but has probably been more widely disseminated as a quote by the leading post war French orientalist, the popular Maxime Rodinson.

6 These recitations formed the Quran which literally means 'recited'. Muslims consider these recitations to be the actual word of Allah delivered through the mouth of the Prophet. The Quran therefore becomes the infallible, unchangeable and even intranslatable word of God. It is arranged into chapters or 'suras' in no chronological order.

7 The concept of oneness or 'tawhid' is not simply affirmation of monotheism. It acknowledges the unique, overwhelming and transcendental nature of Allah as well.

[8] Hijra means to emigrate or separate. It has acquired a hallowed aura which the English translation of 'emigration' cannot match.

[9] George Gawrych, "Jihad in the Twentieth Century" in _Modern Military History of the Middle East_ (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, Army Command and General Staff Course, 1991), p.2.

[10] Philip Hitti, _The Arabs a Short History_ (New York: St Martin's Press, 1968), p.13.

[11] Manoucher Parvin & Maurie Sommer "Dar al Islam: the Evolution of Muslim Territoriality and its implications for Conflict Resolution in the Middle East" in _International Journal of Middle East Studies_ (Cambridge: 1980), p.8.

[12] 'Umma' comes from the root 'umm' meaning 'mother'. It has greater universality and cohesiveness than the English translation 'community' implies.

[13] Malise Ruthven, _Islam in the World_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.63.

[14] Gibb, p.46.

[15] See Note 9.

[16] A Yusuf Ali _The Holy Quran_. Translation and commentary. Beirut 1934. This quotation and all subsequent Quranic exerpts will be taken from this text.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Gawrych, p.2.

[20] The five pillars of faith for a Muslim are: The Shahada (witnessing the faith), Prayer, Fasting, Alms giving and Pilgrimage.

[21] Ruthven, p.99.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EARLY CONQUESTS AND SPREAD OF ISLAM

EARLY CONQUESTS

Almost as important to Muslims as the events of
Mohammad's lifetime are those that took place during the
development of Islam in the early days. The immediate
success of Islam, by way of its rapid expansion to create
within 100 years an Empire that stretched from the Atlantic
to the Himalayas, seemed to be clear validation of the truth
of their religion.

On the Prophet's death in 632 there was a potential
crisis. No system or instructions had been left for his
succession, but with surprising despatch Abu Bakr was
appointed. He was Mohammad's father-in-law and had once
stood in for the Prophet to lead the Friday prayers; but as
a relatively old man, he was clearly only a short term
answer. Nonetheless he provided the unity and leadership
needed at the time, particularly since another crisis was
looming. Some tribes who had pledged allegiance to Mohammad
regarded such alliances as dissolved on his death. Abu Bakr
was able to assert his authority immediately by sanctioning

bold military action against those tribes who threatened to disregard their former agreements. This was the first major test for Islam without the personal guidance of the Prophet himself. It was passed by the use of decisive action indicating to Muslims that the way to preserve and spread the message of Islam was not simply through prayer and fasting, but more immediately through active struggle - Jihad.

These armed engagements with the wayward tribesmen were known as the wars of the Ridda;[1] and they had a byproduct which was that they re-united the Arabian peninsula under Islamic leadership. Furthermore an army of sorts developed out of the small force that Mohammad had bequeathed Abu Bakr; and the conquests beyond Arabia began.

The success of these conquests was surprisingly complete and rapid. For Muslims this was clear justification of Islam's claims as a universal religion, but other factors can be discerned which played their part. The destructive wars between the Byzantines and the Sasanians had left a political vacuum north of Arabia, ready to be filled. The former subjects of these Empires were weary of war and were prepared to succumb without much struggle to the fresh, powerful forces that emerged from Western and Central Arabia. They were happy to settle for what they hoped would be a peaceful existence under a regime that seemed to offer greater forbearance and less subjugation than they were accustomed to: the Muslim promise of tolerance bore dividends.

The traditional mobility and fighting skills of the Arabs - the Ghazwa which we have mentioned - played a crucial tactical role; and the Muslim armies were fortunate to harness the abilities of two inspired generals: Khalid ibn al-Walid and Amr ibn al-Aas.[2] But these factors would

have been insufficient on their own to sustain the Muslim armies for 100 years of conquest and expansion. Good leadership and apt tactics can dominate the battlefield, but maintaining a long term strategy of conquest requires the addition of a less tangible ingredient. Admittedly there was the enticing prospect of booty and for soldiers with a 'ghazwa' mentality this must have been a strong incentive. However, such plundering can ultimately be a divisive force and does not endear conquering armies to their subjects.

In fact, Islam undoubtedly gave the Muslims a cohesiveness almost unknown in previous tribal Arab armies; it gave them a sense of purpose over and above personal or family loyalties. "Allahu Akbar"[3] was the rallying cry, and the Jihad against the unbelievers was the cause.

> The strength of the Muslim army lay neither in the superiority of its arms nor in the excellence of its organization but in its higher morale, to which religion undoubtedly contributed its share; in its power of endurance, which the desert breeding fostered; and in its remarkable mobility, due mainly to camel transport.[4]

Indeed as an indication of the value Muslims placed on Islam as a battle winning factor, the Muslim army would at times deliberately appoint leaders for the staunchness of their faith rather than military expertise.[5]

JIHAD

The world has been divided for Muslims into three realms, which are seen both territorially and figuratively. These realms are first, the Abode of Islam (dar al-Islam) where an Islamic order holds sway; second the Abode of War (dar al-harb) describing those areas inhabited by those who oppose Islam either physically or doctrinally; and thirdly,

the Abode of Peace (dar al-sulh) where Muslims are permitted freedom of worship despite the un-Islamic nature of the area. Muslims are obliged to wage Jihad against those living in the Abode of War only. "In this case, Muslims conceptualize the armed struggle as against unbelief (kufr) and infidels (kuffar)".[6]

The early conquests were the formative experience for Muslims in the development of these concepts. The seemingly inexorable spread of Islam acquired an aura of invincibility and the cry of Jihad against the unbelievers developed a momentum of its own, permitting Islam to spread far beyond the bounds the first Muslims could have dreamed of. To maintain the Islamic impetus, preachers would accompany the armies, and mosques would be built in the garrison towns and conquered cities.

The conquests finally reached their culminating point at peripheries in France and Asia. They halted partly because of the physical limits of exhausted armies, but also because of the at   tion of the cohesion that Islam could provide. The exho   n to Jihad was less clearly audible the further from   it was proclaimed.

From the earliest moments of Islam's history, Jihad played an important, even formative, role. It was seen to be pivotal in both the survival and spread of Islam. After the life of Mohammad and his Medinan polity, it is these events that fundamentalists recall; and it is the confidence in Islam and its self evident success which they seek to replicate in order to revive their religion.

INTERNAL DIVISION

The world of Islam was never completely unified. Early on the split between Sunni and Shia took place, and this profound rift endures to this day. The Sunni/Shia division is of central significance to an understanding of both Islam itself and aspects of fundamentalism which will be discussed later. The issue concerned the successor or 'Caliph' to the Prophet.

There is still some uncertainty over the exact role and position of the Caliph. Philip Hitti sees it as an office with virtually no religious authority, only as a protector or guardian of Islam:

> We should here guard against the fallacy that the caliphate was a religious office...As commander of the believers, the military office of the caliph was emphasized...Succession to Mohammad (khalifah) meant succession to the sovereignty of the state. Mohammad as a prophet, as an instrument of revelation, as a messenger of Allah, could have no successor.[7]

Hitti argues that although the Caliph is the head of the Islamic state, he has not inherited the revelatory mantle of the Prophet, only his position of authority and its concomitant duty to serve and lead the community. Albert Hourani, however, suggests that despite the Caliph's theoretical position purely as leader, there was inevitably a perceived sanctity, verging on divinity, in the early Caliphs through their closeness to the Prophet:

> The Caliph was not a prophet. Leader of the community, but not in any sense a messenger of God, he could not claim to be the spokesman of continuing revelations; but an aura of holiness and divine choice still lingered around the person and office of the early caliphs, and they did claim to have some kind of religious authority.[8]

The doctrinal split between Sunni and Shia concerned the element of sanctity inherent in the office of the Caliph. As Hourani says, the first few Caliphs seemed close enough to the Prophet to have inherited some portion of his holiness, however slight. But as time lapsed, such inherited sanctity would need a stronger basis. For some Muslims this could only be provided by the Prophet's bloodline.

The first four Caliphs, known as the 'Rightly Guided Caliphs',[9] were appointed by the community with no established system. The fourth was Ali, son-in-law to Mohammad; he succeeded after the murder of Uthman, the third Caliph. Civil war broke out as not all the community supported Ali, despite his relationship to Mohammad. Some preferred the Governor of Syria, Mu'awiya', a relation of the murdered Uthman.

The issue came to a head at the Battle of Siffin, in Syria in 657. This was developing into a bloody but indecisive engagement when elements of both sides decided that arbitration should settle the matter: Muslims should not fight Muslims; Jihad should not be directed against fellow believers. When Ali was assassinated in 661 and Mu'awiya became the Caliph, he was accepted by the majority and started a new dynasty in the process. Those who remained faithful to Ali and did not accept the authority of Mu'awiya were known as the party of Ali or Shia of Ali; and this has been abbreviated simply to Shia.

For Shias, Ali's relationship to the Prophet is all important, as they regard the inherited divinity as an essential part of the Caliph's authority. Unfortunately this direct inheritance is not continuous. Shia groups differ over when they believe the bloodline peters out, with the two main ones staking their faith on either the seventh or the twelfth. It is the Twelver Shias, as they are known, who

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form the majority in Iran and Iraq today where Shiism has most of its adherents. They believe that the Twelfth Imam disappeared and went into occultation in the 9th century; he will reappear as the 'Mahdi' to save the world at some later date. This is known as the doctrine of the Hidden Imam. Stemming from these beliefs, a special place is given to the appointed Imam who is both the leader of prayers and the leader of the community. To Shias, this Imam holds much of the authority - and perhaps even the sanctity - of the Hidden Imam, while waiting for his reappearance. This accounts for the awe with which many Shias regarded the Ayatollah Khomeini during the Iran revolution.

There is also the concept of martyrdom which features large in the lives of Shias. It was developed following the death of Ali's second son, Hussein, at Karbala in 680 during a Shia revolt. Since then Karbala has been a Shia shrine, preferred by many Shias over Mecca as a place for pilgrimage. Shias identify strongly with the suffering and self sacrifice of Hussein, whose martyrdom is regarded as pre-ordained, and each year emotional re-enactments of the scenes at Karbala take place to keep the images vivid. Martyrdom and Jihad are closely connected in Shia doctrine.

In contrast Sunnis believe in interpreting Islam through the exercise of reason and through the expert scholarship of specialists known as Ulama.[10] They do not give their leaders as much authority as the Shias do, for they think that decisions should be made by the individual believer from the examination of the Quran and Sunna alone.[11] A hierarchical structure similar to Shia Imams, or even Christian clergy, should be unnecessary for Muslims.

Some people have suggested that Sunnis are closer to the Judaism with its emphasis on legalism;[12] while Shias take after Christianity with suffering and self sacrifice as

central themes. Sunnis compose nearly 90% of Muslims; Shias about 10% with a geographical predominance in Iran and Iraq. The doctrinal differences persist unabated to this day.

ENDNOTES

[1] 'Ridda' in Arabic means 'apostasy'. It is rather a strong term to describe those tribes who saw no reason to honour agreements after Mohammad's death; but it indicates the uncompromising nature of the Muslims' response to those who tried to disrupt the unity of the early community. It was another indication of the firm action enjoined by Jihad.

[2] Khalid ibn al-Walid was the outstanding general of the Muslim campaigns. After inflicting a defeat on Mohammad at Uhud in 625 through an inspired cavalry charge, while representing the Meccan forces, he was subsequently won over to the Muslims. He was responsible for most of the early victories against the Byzantines and Persians. Amr ibn al-Aas was the conqueror of Egypt and part of North Africa.

[3] 'Allahu Akbar' literally means 'God is greater'. But it is normally translated as 'God is great'.

[4] Philip Hitti, The Arabs a Short History (New York: St Martin's Press, 1968), p.44.

[5] During the Caliphate of Omar, a certain Abu Obaid of Medina, although completely inexperienced in war, was made Commander-in-Chief simply as a gesture to his piety and eagerness to volunteer for active duty in the service of Islam. He led the army to engage the Persians but despite defiant courage, his tactical errors in choice of ground resulted in disaster for his forces at the Battle of the Bridge in 634.

[6] George Gawrych, "Jihad in the Twentieth Century" from Modern Military History of the Middle East (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, Command and General Staff Course, 1991), p.2.

[7] Hitti, p.57.

[8] Albert Hourani, <u>A History of the Arab Peoples</u> (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.22.

[9] The Arabic term of the 'rightly guided caliphs' is 'Al-Kholafa ar-Rashidun'.

[10] 'Ulama' is the plural of 'alim' meaning expert or professional. The original root is 'ilm' meaning knowledge.

[11] 'Sunna' literally means customary procedure or traditional norm. In Islamic theology it refers to the collection of traditions or 'hadith' that accumulated around the life of the Prophet and his companions to supplement the Quran as a consultative body of doctrine. Orthodox Muslims are called Sunnis, from this root. In theory, Sunnis should only trust in four foundations of Islamic jurisprudence or 'usul al-fiqh': Quran, Sunna, Qiyas (analogy) and Ijma (consensus).

[12] The old Semitic word for law is 'din'. In Arabic this has come to mean 'religion', indicating a strong connection in the Semitic mind with religion and law or 'the word'.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BASIS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

GENERAL

Fundamentalism, as an English term, has its origins in the Biblical literalist movements within Christianity.[1] It is generally disliked by Muslims, but since it is almost universally applied to describe religious movements who seek to assert basic essentials or revive original principles, it will be used as a generic term to describe such movements in Islam. More descriptive epithets exist: revivalism, renewing, puritanism, and even Islamism - as well as fundamentalism and neo-fundamentalism.[2]

Before assessing the 20th century movements of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Khomeini's revolution in Iran, it is necessary to look at the nature and history of fundamentalism, as an overview, and attempt to establish its position in Islam. It will then be possible to judge the modern movements against a historical background.

In the first two chapters the key points of Islam that affect fundamentalists were discussed. In particular we looked at the concept of Jihad and its place in early Islam:

that Muslims must view life as a constant struggle against
the forces of evil and the Abode of War; that Islam is a
religion of action not reflection and monasticism; that the
Prophet combined political and military effort to achieve
his goals. The second chapter focused on the first few years
after Mohammad's death and stressed that during the time of
the first four 'Rightly Guided' Caliphs Islam achieved a
remarkable expansion as a result of this clear policy of
action in both the military and political spheres. Many
believed and still believe that the truth of Islam was
validated by its immediate success in spreading the message
so widely and so quickly. Furthermore, this message was
spread not through contemplation or vacillation but through
decisive action; it was the readiness of the early Muslims
and their leaders to act positively that produced su .
overwhelming results. 'Islamic orthodoxy has always coupled
faith with works'.[3]

Despite this conquering glory and the unifying cohesion
which the new religion bestowed, the early years of Islam
were not without internal difficulty. The final part of the
second chapter outlined the profound disagreement over the
succession to the Prophet which caused the major rift
between Sunni and Shia, a rift which survives as strongly
today as it has in the past.

GENERIC FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism, generically, is neither a new nor an
exclusively Islamic phenomenon. There is something in human
nature that makes us believe from time to time that things
were better in the past and we should look to our ancestors
for guiding principles and examples. As the Roman Empire
declined many Roman senators urged the populace to hark back
to the days of 'Patrician Rome' as though the answers to

contemporary problems lay in a return to the bygone age of the early republic when life appeared simple and successful. In modern times Mrs Thatcher, Britain's prime minister during the 1980s, once suggested that British people should adopt the values of 19th century Victorian England - the apogee of British enterprise and power. In such cases the message is not to recreate the exact conditions of the time (which would be impossible) but to restore the beliefs, values and ethos that made such a time appear fresh and pure, and an example to be followed.

When this is translated into a religious context it tends to gather a more intensely uncompromising flavour. In Christian history, the most notable fundamentalists have urged their adherents to return to the simple and pure life that Jesus led before the Church elaborated the ritual and contaminated the faith. Martin Luther was the most prominent of such reformers breaking away from the heavily ritualised and increasingly wealthy Roman Catholic Church. In England the Puritans rejected the acquisitive and luxurious life that their fellow Christians were leading, but despite - or even perhaps because of - a brief spell of authority under Oliver Cromwell in the 17th century, they were unsuccessful in persuading many to share their beliefs.[4] Indeed the Pilgrim Fathers who set sail in the Mayflower were similarly Puritans who had become frustrated by England's popular rejection of their message.

In Islam where religion is totalist and permeates the comlete society, such movements take on a more embracing mantle with a greater impact on the population at large. A call to the faith's basic principles would not just apply to religious observance but to the whole life of the community. Furthermore, such movements have probably been more frequent than in other religions. The main reason for this is that Islam is in essence a dynamic religion of continual renewal:

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it is a primitive but pure monotheism, inherited from the common forefather Abraham, neither Jew nor Christian, and constantly revived by the prophets of which Mohammad was the last - the seal: "Thus Islam appeared not as a new religion, but as a revival of pure Abrahamic monotheism."[5] But there are other reasons for revivalist movements.

ELABORATION OF ISLAM

Islam can seem a dry religion in comparison to others. It lacks the poignancy and drama of Christ on the cross; it does not have the racial identity that gives so much strength to Judaism; there is not the universal appeal and attachment to nature that Hinduism inspires, nor the peaceful and logical harmony of Buddhism. In contrast the central message of Islam is one of simplicity and purity: Allah is one, Mohammad is his Prophet. Its principles are clear, its tenets are few. In theory, all a Muslim needs to know is the message of the Quran, supplemented by the Sunna.

However, the original principles, although containing a remarkably universal application, given the narrow geographical and social milieu in which Mohammad lived, have never been adequate on their own to satisfy the whole Islamic community. It would have been amazing and almost too miraculous if they had. Diversions from these basics have come in many different forms. The external ones have simply resulted from the pressures created by living in areas where there were previous cultural attitudes and beliefs which could not be extinguished when Islam appeared. The local populations could not just assimilate a new religion and its way of life completely; and in fact during the early conquests one of the welcome aspects of the Muslims was their tolerance towards native customs. Inevitably as the local populace became Muslim themselves, they were tempted

to incorporate some of their pre-Islamic background, if not into the daily ritual, certainly into their underlying attitudes and socio-religious behaviour. Examples of such moves are a reverence for saints, falling short of worship but at times not far off; and some of the mystical practices of the Sufi movement, including expectations of a messiah. It is often argued that such forms of Islam, especially when expressed at the popular level, have contributed to the vitality, colour and variety of the community as a whole.

It has been a common socio-religious feature for people to personalize and localize seemingly dry doctrine to give it a vitality or a mystique. The cult of the messianic figure as a symbol of hope in a harsh life which lacks consolation or escape, appears as an attractive addition to the standard body of belief. However, such local variations from doctrine can be seen as a dilution of Islam and something that should be rectified; and fundamentalist forces have frequently come into conflict with local communities.

Such campaigns for 'purification' have generally not succeeded, as the local Ulama have seen the value of diverse customs based on indigenous rather than Meccan tradition: they can provide a more satisfactory emotional dimension to a faith that might otherwise appear alien and distant. Sometimes it is in the greater interest of Islam to observe flexibility in doctrine even if strict purity is sacrificed. Indeed it was an attempt to accommodate variety and codify the different responses to the problem that resulted in Sunni Islam developing four separate schools of Islamic law.[6]

The dilemma facing Muslims lay between the diversity and enrichment that such influences brought and the need to

follow the strict purity of the original message. As Malise Ruthven says:

> Muslim society was subject, like all other human societies, to the conditioning of a particular time and circumstance. The problem of finding a balance between the ideal and the real, the perfection of Islam and the human and material facts of life, became the stuff of Islamic history...[7]

Apart from the reassertion of indigenous customs to humanise the new religion and adapt it to the local milieu, there have also been external influences which have threatened the purity and perhaps the health of Islam. When the Islamic and Ottoman Empires were dominant such threats were limited and were generally easy to counter. But in the last century the ideologies of the West and Russia have presented serious challenges to Muslim scholars, rulers and societies. Consequently fundamentalist movements have seemed to become more prominent and more militant as such threats have posed increased danger to the community.

Various approaches were adopted to tackle these problems. They have ranged from the adaptational, where Islamic practices could be amended to suit local conditions and where faith was thought to have been enhanced as a result; to the fundamentalist where only the most literal and rigorous adherence to the basic principles was acceptable. Such fundamentalists would argue that it was a similar reaction to the accumulation of pagan shrines and the worship of figures other than Allah that Mohammad started preaching in Mecca. To tolerate such practices would be to negate the central message of Islam.[8]

FUNDAMENTALIST LEGACY

The first trace of fundamentalist action came at the Battle of Siffin in 657. As mentioned in the last chapter, when the battle was to be settled by arbitration rather than the decisive purity of the sword, some Muslims decided to opt out or secede from a community that they believed had given way to un-Islamic compromise. They were known as Kharijites;[9] they moved off and left the community but were to remain as 'agents provocateurs' in the broader Islamic context both to instigate revolts against the Umayyad regime and to represent a focus of opposition. They accused the Umayyads of abandoning the pure simplicities of Medinese life and indulging in the new found luxuries of empire.[10] Tracing their exact history is not possible as they dispersed and broke up into several groups after Siffin, surviving still in isolated communities in Algeria, Tunisia, Oman and East Africa.[11] But their significance to this study is their position as the first fundamentalist movement in Islam and the politically militant role they played from the earliest moments.

> They played an important, albeit indirect, part in the development of Islamic political thought by acting for a while as the incorruptible conscience of the Muslims...in their efforts to construct an Islamic society.[12]

During Abbasid times (749-1258), as the Ulama gradually evolved an orthodox doctrine based on the Quran and Sunna, the four main schools developed, striving to enjoin a more rigorous interpretation of these basics.[13] The most orthodox of these was Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855). He was one of the first prominent radical thinkers in Sunni doctrine; he set a standard and suggested a method of religious analysis that left a clear and simple example for later Sunni fundamentalists to follow. "God was the God of the Quran and

Hadith, to be accepted and worshipped in his Reality as He had revealed it."[14] Above all the community should remain united; dissension and conflict should be avoided. Notable followers include Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) and Mohammad ibn Abd al Wahhab in the 18th century.

Ibn Taymiyya was an important figure in 13th century Syria and Egypt where a number of varied influences were beginning to affect Islam and threaten the unity of the community. There were doctrinal controversies raised by the rationalist views of Ibn Sina (980-1037) and the Sufi views of Ibn Arabi (1165-1240). Ibn Sina's views, although adding to the intellectual quality of Islamic commentary, were divisive; Ibn Arabi's faith in saints and divine graces were more dangerous to Islamic purity and were opposed even more strongly.[15] Finally there were problems associated with the periodic mass conversions of new subjects in the Islamic Empire: the speed of conversion sometimes lent doubt to their genuine adherence to the new religion. Meanwhile Shia groups provided continual dissidence on the fringes. Ibn Taymiyya's answer to these problems was to call for unity of belief; and such unity could only be found through direct reference to the Quran and Sunna, echoing the clear, uncompromising line of Ibn Hanbal.

The significance of Ibn Taymiyya to the history of Islamic thought was his 'up-to-date' interpretation of Ibn Hanbal. He was able to articulate the principles of the most orthodox school and give them a practical role in renewing and reforming religious attitudes. He sought to prove that returning to basic and simple principles was a positive rather than a retrogressive way to unity and harmony in the community. He made the Hanbali tradition a powerful force which could help to shape and unify Islamic trends in a contemporary world.

Indeed the major reforming movement in Sunni Islam which followed owed much to Ibn Taymiyya's thought even though it followed several centuries later. Wahhabism inherited much from Ibn Taymiyya's principles but developed a more open and expansive character of its own. Its eponymous founder was Mohammad ibn Abd al Wahhab (1703-1792). He began his movement in central Arabia and it still flourishes today as the official sect in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Wahhabism is virtually the paradigm of Sunni fundamentalism and could almost serve as a prototype for reforming religious movements. Since it also serves as a precursor to the Muslim Brothers in the 20th century, it is worth examining it in some detail to identify patterns.

The seductive influences of Sufism threatened a dangerous penetration of impurity into Islam, as explained previously, to add mystique and charisma to the basic doctrine. These popular beliefs proliferated in eastern and central areas of the Muslim world after the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, and by the 18th century such practices were widespread and were beginning to dominate the populist approach to the religion. As Malise Ruthven says: "From the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries Sufism in all its varieties became so widespread and pervasive as to be virtually synonymous with Islam itself."[16] Although many Ulama practised mysticism, most opposed this trend and attempted to prevent it, but were neither sufficiently powerful nor unified to provide an effective counter. The vivid style of anthropomorphic images and the mystical bonds with saints had more popular appeal than the scholarly injunctions to return to the polity of Medina.

The approach of the Ulama was more doctrinal than practical, and it was several centuries before an effective movement appeared to revive the basic principles. Al-Wahhab called above all for unity in Islam and his followers were

initially known as the 'muwahidun' or 'unifiers'.[17] But they are now more generally called Wahhabis after their founder.

Mohammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab knew much about Sufism as he had himself dabbled in it as young man. He was also a scholar in the Hanbali tradition and an admirer of Ibn Taymiyya. He advocated primarily 'tawhid' that is, unity or oneness. This seemingly simple concept embraces a number of ideas: it insists on the oneness of Allah and the indivisibility of his person and holiness; it suggests the totality of his message with the implication that little else is required in life except what the Quran enjoins; it preaches the unity of the Muslim community and a standardization of belief based on the purest principles. Above all it stresses the transcendence of Allah which cannot be diluted through anthropomorphism or cultural tampering with his divine message.

The movement found expression in the 'Arabness' of the Najd region of Central Arabia where Mohammad ibn Abd al Wahhab came from. He studied in Mecca and Medina and then travelled widely in the Islamic world before returning to his homeland to preach his ideas.[18] It is significant that this movement was realised by Arabs from Central Arabia. Although Islam is a universal religion, it seemed to some that the essential message had been contaminated largely by contact with new societies and integration of indigenous populations; this had given Islam a broadly based legitimacy but had also diluted the Quranic message. The Arabs had just claim to ownership of the religion and a role as leaders in revival: Mohammad was an Arab from the most important Arab city of the day; Islam was initially spread by Arabs. But above all Allah had transmitted his Word through his Prophet in Arabic and consequently there should be a pivotal place for Arabs in Islam owing to the central role of their language.[19] It was therefore fitting that the strongest

revivalist movement so far seen should come from the same source as the original message. The Wahhabis saw a pristine Islam derived directly from Medina: "Culturally speaking, Wahhabism represented a primitive, pre-modern version of Arab nationalism".[20]

Wahhabism was a movement that grew from within Islam. On the one hand it appeared as part of the pattern of 'tajdid' or renewing within the religion. Such a pattern is common and the role of the 'mujaddid' (the renewer) as a voice or pressure group advocating purity and reform is a recurring theme in Islam. On the other hand there are unique and significant qualities to Wahhabism which mark it out as exceptional. It had a more lasting influence - surviving strongly even today in the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - and it combined religious fervour with a military power that helped to ensure its success: Wahhabism acknowledged that the force of ideas alone was not enough to carry the day, as Mohammad himself demonstrated in the 7th century. Its significance to our study is that it served as a prototype for fundamentalist thought and movements for the following centuries where the challenges came from outside as well as from within the world of Islam.

The momentum came from the founder but he was aided by the alliance he made with Mohammad ibn Saud of Dariya. With the vigorous assistance and military support from the Najd's most powerful tribal chief, Wahhabism soon dominated much of the peninsula. It seemed an irresistible combination where religious, reforming zeal was apparently validated by military success, much as early Islam had been in the 7th Century. Moreover, like early Islam, it appeared from the hub of the Arab/Islamic world and spread outwards with a sudden and, at times, relentless ferocity.

Its position as an important prototype derives from two aspects: first, because it maintained and developed a traditional theme of indigenous religious reform; and second, because it unhesitatingly harnessed military force to assist the achievement of its goals.

The traditional theme of renewal and reform found its Wahhabi identity in several ways. It opposed primarily the practices of the Sufis. Such religious practices had some value as a way of converting people who might otherwise have found the fundamental doctrine too alien in the initial stages of encountering Islam; but, in the views of the Wahhabis, they had become too elaborate and pagan and verged on the major, unforgivable sin of 'shirk'.[21] Shirk means 'sharing' worship with other deities or objects and ranks as one of the worst sins for a Muslim: Allah could not be shared with anything that might suggest either a rival or an idol. To equate Sufism with Shirk was a bold and uncompromising step.

As well as consistently opposing Sufism, Wahhabism stressed a moral reconstruction from within. Both society and the individual should undergo rigorous purification; a dangerous gap had developed between the Sunna and the 18th century Muslim's behaviour and this needed instant rectification, by force if necessary. The Wahhabis had little respect for the theological writings of the Ulama that had appeared over the last few centuries; they did not consider them as sensible developments of Islamic thought to adjust to changes, but as unnecessary and dangerous elaborations of the stringent verities found in the Quran and Hadith.

As an Arabian movement it harnessed neatly the uncompromising scriptualism of Ibn Hanbal which as Malise Ruthven suggests, was unsuited to the metropolitan and

pluralistic civilization of the Fertile Crescent.[22] Wahhabism was able to release and direct Ibn Hanbal's doctrine which pleased the Ulama of the Najd. They found in this movement an ideology which would justify, in Islamic terms, the superiority of Arabian Islam over the more cosmopolitan and apparently sophisticated versions that characterized Islam in Iraq and the Hijaz.

Wahhabism was to show that the true protectors of the Islamic faith were not the remote and increasingly ineffectual Ottomans but the Arabs of Central Arabia. The health and survival of Islam lay not in the distant decadence of Istanbul, but in the virulent purity of the unforgiving deserts of the Najd.

To convince Muslims of this message required visible proof. Ever pragmatic, this proof came with the sword. The language which was best understood and which spoke the most decisively was that of action, as Mohammad had convinced his followers at Badr shortly after his emigration to Medina. Even after the deaths of both Mohammad ibn Abd al Wahhab and Ibn Saud, the cult of militancy as the right arm of revivalism continued. The Shia shrines at Karbala were raided in 1802 and Mecca was captured in 1803 by Wahhabi forces. However, when the Ottomans reacted by way of surrogate Egyptian troops, organized and armed on a more European style, the Wahhabis were forced back. But despite these defeats, the outline of an Arab/Islamic state had been clearly drawn on which the modern Saudi Arabia would develop.

The message of Wahhabism was penetrating and powerful: the rigorous integrity of the faith and its validation through successful armed action. It was dynamically Islamic in a very visible, defined way, revealing a clear ideological path to be followed. As William Cantwell-Smith

says: "Islam for Muslims is not an abstract idea but an idea in operative practice."[23]

So clear was this idea that it was not difficult for Abd al Aziz ibn Saud (1880-1953) to pick up the Wahhabi/Saudi state and lead another revival, culminating in 1932 with a country that occupied most of the Arabian Peninsula, including the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina and the potentially lucrative oilfields on the Eastern coast. He achieved this by some clever diplomacy, particularly with the British, and by a strong militant arm: the so called Ikhwan[24]. These Ikhwan were a fraternity dedicated to the instant and physical purification of the un-Islamic. Their methods were tough and at times brutal, many of their members were clearly fanatics, but, with their purges, they activated a Jihad which was a central part of the initial Saudi success in the early part of the 20th Century.

Wahhabism represents a fundamentalism which acknowledges the open use of force to achieve Islamic ends. It created and maintained a spiritual momentum which is still evident today, albeit more institutionalised, in the religious policing of the streets of Riyadh. But this momentum began before the West presented a serious challenge to Islam: it was essentially a reformist movement within itself. As a prototype of the fundamentalist movements that have appeared in the 20th century, it stood for three main positions: reconstruction of Muslim society, reassertion of the unity of Allah, and the equality of all men.[25]

Wahhabism also related its religious revival to a nation-state and helped to bring Islam into the modern age. Fundamentalism could be defined not just in strictly Islamic terms but in a defined political context; and the link was a quest for legitimacy. A claim to represent the fundamentals of Islam would often be used as a legitimizing factor to

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justify the preservation of a monarchical system or the accumulation of great wealth.

MODERN CHALLENGES TO ISLAM

Wahhabism was the most prominent of the reforming movements and set an example for others to follow, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries when fresh challenges beset the world of Islam in the form of Communism and Westernization. Much of the world suffered the indignity of colonialism, which for all its benefits of modernization, sought to inflict a supposedly superior value system on its subject people.

> Political and military imperialism was bad enough, but more heinous is the ethical, cultural and intellectual arrogance of the West.[26]

It was this moral arrogance more than anything else that upset Muslims. Both the West and communists seemed to assume that just because the Islamic world relied on their technology and markets, it would automatically accept their ethics and standards as well. This revealed a deep misunderstanding of Muslims.

It was not until after the First World War that the Middle East took shape as we now know it. The colonial influence was still there with rulers who were perceived by many to be simply puppet monarchies who would adopt pro-West policies in return for power and protection. In fact it was the perceived failure of the Arabs to achieve real self determination which they believed had been promised to them in return for their part in overthrowing the Ottoman Empire, that spawned much of the discontent. When it became apparent at the Treaty of Sevres[27] in 1920 that colonial rule would, to all intents and purposes, continue, various

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fundamentalist movements began to take on a more blatantly anti-Western and militant attitude. Some of them were aligned to nationalism, while some of them were against it as they believed Islam should not be confined within such a narrow outlook.

The perceived injustice of the partition of the Middle East after the First World War was one accelerator to fundamentalists: Muslims felt the need to find an Islamic identity within a system that did not owe its existence to Western influences and artificially imposed borders. The other main catalyst was the establishment of the State of Israel after the Second World War and the subsequent defeat of combined Arab armies in 1948 and 1967. The Six Day War was especially humiliating as the Arabs could find no real excuse for failure other than their own incompetence and over confidence. It also reduced the appeal of pure nationalism to many Muslims, and fundamentalists sought to separate themselves from such associations. They lifted their sights from traditional targets of Western political influence, although they did not ignore the dangers of Western ideological influence, and instead aimed their attacks at their own leaders with their nationalist aspirations, for failing to adhere to Islamic principles.

FUNDAMENTALIST METHODOLOGY

Fundamentalist movements have varied depending on time and place. But there are common factors and characteristics, particularly after the Wahhabis' effective example. If a methodology can be discerned it would look a bit like this:[28]

Step 1: recognition that the community is both weak and disorganized. It has failed to live up to its standards and

has let down its people. Such a realization might be the result of too much influence from external non-Islamic sources or simply a moral and material decay from within itself.

Step 2: diagnosis and cure. The simple diagnosis is that Islam has been abandoned, if not in theory, certainly in practice; or that the brand of Islam operating is far removed from the pristine principles that comprise the true faith. The cure is a return to Islam; or a concerted effort to revive the simple purity of the Quranic message by returning to the fundamentals.

There are certain stages which apply to this methodology. The first is the over-riding principle of Tawhid or 'oneness' of Allah. This is the starting point of any analysis of Islam. Challenges to this precept come externally from Christians who regard their God as three persons in one – an idea that Muslims simply do not comprehend. Other challenges come from within Islam, particularly from mystic practices where local saints have achieved a deified status not tolerated by orthodox Islam.

The second stage allows individuals to make some degree of personal interpretation provided that it falls within the principles of orthodox Islam. Fundamentalists agree that the Quran and Sunna cannot provide an exact blueprint for all the problems encountered in this changing world, but they do have the answers if the texts are examined properly. Thus an interpretative system, based on analogy with previous examples, is a reasonable way of making moral decisions. This process is known as 'ijtihad' and comes from the same Arabic root as Jihad. However, in this case it means 'personal effort' and in the context extends to making a personal judgement in accordance with the fundamentals of Islam and analogy.

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The third stage is the admission that the scholars during the Middle Ages were misguided and should largely be ignored.[29] These scholastic theologians misinterpreted Islam, allowing revisions and contamination to creep in, because they were too much under the influence of their secular and self-interested rulers to show sufficiently pure Islamic judgement. The only way to find the 'right path' is by jumping back to the fundamentals as promoted in the Quran and Sunna.

The fourth stage is Jihad. This means, in general, mental and physical struggle in the pursuit of Islam. But in this context it means not only pursuing the fundamental purity of the faith with energy and vigour on a personal level but also resorting to armed force if necessary, using Mohammad himself as the example and, frequently, the Wahhabis as a model.

SUMMARY

If a fundamentalist theme can be summarized it would be the strong belief in the continuing relevance of Islam, both as an inspiration to lead a responsible and fruitful life, and also as a source of doctrine where answers are found for life's difficult and changing questions. This belief is not just based on the religious conviction of a committed Muslim, but on the model of Mohammad's behaviour: he was sufficiently flexible and adaptive to emigrate to Medina and was prepared to change his tactics and policies when reality forced him to take a different direction. This allows Muslims to search for solutions to contemporary problems in the fundamentals of Islam; there should be no need to discard Islamic beliefs for more modern, pagan or Western ideas. If Islam is given its proper position it can still be the complete way of life it was intended to be.

This chapter has sought to show that fundamentalism is many faceted but has some common themes and principles; that it has grown as much from a need to reform within Islam as from a reaction to a heavy handed Westernization. It has existed from the earliest Islamic times when the Kharijites seceded; its modern manifestations grew out of the prototypal Wahhabism and a rough methodology is discernible which most contemporary movements follow. In the next two chapters we shall investigate more closely two contemporary movements and analyse their principles and methodologies against the patterns outlined above.

ENDNOTES

1 Malise Ruthven, <u>Islam in the World</u> (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1984), p.295.

2 Andrew Kimmens, <u>Islamic Politics</u> (New York: HW Wilson
Company, 1991), p.31.

3 HAR Gibb, <u>Mohammadanism</u> (London: Oxford University
Press, 1949), p.42.

4 Oliver Cromwell's 'Commonwealth' was replaced in 1660
by a restoration of the Monarchy following popular demand.
His puritanical policies found little general appeal after a
few years of office.

5 Gibb, p.32.

6 The four Sunni schools or 'madhdhabs' were: Hanafi
(founder Abu Hanifa 699-767), Maliki (Malik 715-795),
Shafi'i (al-Shafii 767-820) and Hanbali (Ibn Hanbal 780-
855). Each represented different doctrinal interpretations
and each school had a geographic base: the Hanbali, the most
orthodox, centred on central Arabia.

7 Ruthven, p 98.

8 John Voll, <u>Islam Continuity and Change in the Modern
World</u> (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p.29.

9 The origin of the name 'Kharijite' is the Arabic word
'kharaja' meaning to go out. They are sometimes called the
'seceders' in English.

10 Ruthven, p.146.

11 Hamid Enayat, <u>Modern Islamic Political Thought</u>
(Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p.7.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Note 6.

[14] Albert Hourani, <u>A History of the Arab Peoples</u> (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1991), p.179.

[15] Ibid, p.180.

[16] Ruthven, p.253.

[17] Voll, p.59.

[18] Ibid, p.60.

[19] Enayat, p.75.

[20] Ruthven, p.271.

[21] 'Shirk' comes from the Arabic word 'sharaka' meaning to share. To share any object of worship with Allah is the equivalent of idolatry.

[22] Ruthven, p.271.

[23] Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, <u>Islam in Modern History</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p.43.

[24] 'Ikhwan' literally means 'brothers' or 'brethren'. It is an evocative word and implies strong, irrevocable bonding between members of the organization.

[25] Voll, p.60.

[26] Ruthven, p.34.

[27] The Treaty of Sevres in 1920 divided up the old Ottoman Empire between the victorious allies of the First World War, with the largest portions going to Britain and France. It served to shape the countries and borders of the current Middle East. It was not popular locally as it was thought to satisfy the colonial aspirations of European powers rather than the Arabs, who felt they deserved better after their support during the war.

[28] John Esposito, <u>Islam and Politics</u> (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984), p.39.

[29] The Middle Ages in Islamic terms are normally defined as the years between the Fall of Baghdad in 1258 and the end of the 18th century.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD
IN EGYPT

BACKGROUND

The direct influence of the Wahhabi movement was
confined to Central Arabia; and it was not until well into
the 20th Century that the movement reasserted itself fully
under the leadership of Abdul Aziz al Saud (Ibn Saud) to
form the current state of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But
the indirect influence of the Wahhabis as religious
reformers was felt throughout the Islamic world and most
particularly in Egypt where the religious university of Al
Azhar, representing the official Sunni viewpoint, often felt
challenged. The leading Ulama of Al Azhar were often
reluctant to embrace revivalist doctrine as they owed their
official position to the incumbent authorities and did not
necessarily wish to encourage change. This attitude may have
assisted the founding of separate movements aimed at
purifying Islam in the face of both Westernization and
deviation from basic principles. One of these movements was
known as the Society of Muslim Brotherhood.[1]

Egypt has a unique character and a special place in the Arab world. The Wahhabis operated in Central Arabia and were able to emphasize the unique Arab legacy in Islam since there were few, if any, non-Arabs living there. They saw themselves as pure Arabs and were able to express themselves as such, thus creating a powerful combination of religion and a form of nationalism; this could not occur in a country like Egypt with its long and diverse history.

Egypt holds an important position in the world because of its extraordinary cultural background and its strategically important location. An appreciation of Egypt as a country is an essential precursor to examining the Muslim Brotherhood.

Early civilizations were based on rivers. The Nile valley nursed one of the earliest such civilizations and spawned what was probably the first city-state on earth at Thebes.[2] Today the rest of the world remains fascinated by the era of the Pharaohs with their vivid art and their sepulchral achievements - the Pyramids, the ornate tombs and the mummified figures. Visitors to Egypt today are attracted as much, if not more, by the relics of this civilization, with its impressive and unique splendours, than they are by the comparatively recent Islamic achievements. For most foreigners Egypt means the inscrutable Sphynx not the learned Al Azhar Mosque.

Egypt also has the privilege of being one of the first civilizations to invent and use a form of written communication by way of hieroglyphic symbols etched on papyrus.[3] This remarkable leap in the development of mankind puts the ancient Egyptians into that special category reserved for those who have left more than simply vainglorious, albeit impressive, architectural structures.

But despite its great past, Egypt has always been beset with problems. It has been a difficult country to unite with a natural division falling between Upper and Lower Egypt, and little supports the country outside the fertile part of the Nile valley and Delta. It has been prey to invasion from East and West. The Greeks arrived in the 3rd Century BC, founding the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria on the coast, and since then Egypt has never finally resolved whether it should be oriented towards the Mediterranean or the Orient[4].

The coming of the Arabs in the 7th century with Islam provided a unity that has largely survived. Generally the Muslims governed successfully through their customary tolerance and allowed other religions to continue their worship so long as they did not threaten Islam. The Christian Copts survived as a community and still play an active role in Egyptian society today.[5] But as the last chapter mentioned, it was the very tolerance of Islam that allowed some pagan, indigenous practices to be incorporated into Islamic ritual, thus posing a challenge to strict orthodoxy.

Cairo became the main focus of power as the government gradually moved inland from Alexandria to the base of the Delta. Here urban centres had appeared at a natural strategic point, successively developed as Fustat, Qata'i and finally al-Qahira (Cairo). With the arrival of the Fatimids and their Shiism in the 10th century, the famous Al Azhar mosque was founded both as a congregational mosque and as a centre of Islamic learning to rival Baghdad. It first followed the Ismaili (Sevener) creed but later became the authority and arbiter for Sunni doctrine; and remains so today.[6]

The unity and international importance of the country was further enhanced when Saladin operated from Egypt in his

struggles against the Christian crusaders. During this period he rallied the Muslims in the area to fight against the 'infidel crusaders' and in so doing provided what many regard as the classic historical example of Jihad against the most serious external threat to Islam yet faced by the community. Egyptian Muslims frequently invoke this memory as evidence of their timeless role as leaders of the Islamic world. However, with the relative decline of the Middle East during the Ottoman Empire, Egypt faded from sight until awoken in the 19th Century by Mohammad Ali, an Albanian who was given *de facto* autonomy by Istanbul as governor or Wali.

Mohammad Ali (ruled 1805-1848) gave Egypt a renewed sense of nationhood, partly through his military adventures on behalf of the Ottomans and partly through the infrastructure and organization that he introduced. But the inevitable contact with Europe allowed some penetration of western ideas into the traditional Muslim way of life. By the end of the 19th century his successors witnessed the country's virtual usurpation by European powers. The American Civil War (1861-5) prompted Britain to look to Egypt as an alternative source for her supply of cotton; at about the same time the building of the Suez Canal in the 1860s ensured European interest in the country, as steam replaced sail and the route to the East by way of the canal was shortened by several weeks. Such interest was reciprocated, and the Khedive Ismail (ruled 1863-79) made the official opening of the canal a grand occasion; in his ostentatious ceremonies of 1869, he displayed his country's symbolic identification with Europe rather than Africa by involving European heads of state. In 1882 Britain occupied the country and Egyptians lost whatever prospects of sovereignty they might have hoped for. Egypt was paying for its position, by geographic accident, at a strategic choke point which connected Europe with her colonies.

Egypt in the 1920s presented a very complex society. The First World War had resulted in the defeat and break up of the Ottoman Empire. Its previous dominions were then split up amongst the victorious allies at the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 with the largest part falling under the direct or vicarious rule of Britain. Little changed in Egypt, which was firmly under British control already, except that the status of Fuad I (ruled 1917-36) was altered from sultan to king. Despite the show of autonomy, Fuad was regarded by many Egyptians as simply a puppet for Westminster to manipulate. Independence was granted in 1922 but it was more theoretical than real; actual power still lay with the British High Commissioner. There were political parties, notably the nationalist Wafd party and the Liberal Constitutionalists, but even if there were lively debate or elections, power seldom reflected the pattern of votes or the wishes of the majority.

Egypt was a country with an almost unparalleled background of cultural wealth: Pharaonic, Hellenic, Roman, Islamic and industrial European. It stood at a vital crossroads between East and West but was temporarily humiliated by the indignity of colonialism and the arrogant, insensitive attitudes of the European powers. It needed to find its identity once more and reassert itself as an Egypt which could play a proud role. But exactly how was far from clear. From the 1920s onwards the attempts to define and realise this identity were the subjects of debate and strife. The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood was one such effort to formulate a way forward for Egyptians using an Islamic model.

THE FORMATION OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

To the immediate east of Egypt, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud was actively extending his Wahhabi kingdom to include most of Arabia, with the eventual agreement of Britain.[7] He employed a band of 'storm troopers' called the Ikhwan who were drawn from the most fanatical of the followers of Wahhabism. They were full of zealous enthusiasm, lived in their own colonies and were exceptional warriors. They believed in martyrdom and regarded themselves as fighters against sin. Gradually the Ikhwan achieved a power and momentum of their own which had to be reined in by Abdul Aziz. He realised that he had reached his culminating point in expansion, given the size of his subject population, and he had conquered as much as the British would allow without encroaching on their imperial interests. But the Ikhwan were fired by the notion of a pan-Islamic Umma which recognized no boundaries. They were defeated first by Abdul Aziz himself in March 1929 then by the British, to whom they surrendered in December.

To a Muslim observer from Egypt it might seem that Abdul Aziz, despite his professions to Islamic purity, had compromised his principles by submitting to Western imposed territorial borders and by defeating committed fellow Muslims in battle with the help of a colonial, European and Christian power. He had cut short the Jihad against the Abode of War to suit his own personal ambitions. Although there were some Egyptians who were alarmed about the strength and potential fanaticism of the Ikhwan, most were concerned at the position of Saudi in its new form. Abd al Aziz had styled himself as a king, which was not an Islamic office, and had proclaimed himself the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques at Mecca and Medina. Ironically this last move would give him some legitimacy among certain sections of the Islamic world.

It is no coincidence that the society that was founded in 1928 in Egypt was called 'Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin' - the Muslim Brothers. There was no traceable political connection between the Wahhabi warriors but solidarity is evident in the choice of name, which evokes an emotional bond for those who wish to fight for Islamic principles.

The founder of the Brothers was Hassan al Banna. He was born in 1906 in Mahmudiyya, 90 miles north-west of Cairo. His father had been educated at Al Azhar University and was both a teacher at the local mosque and the author of various works on the Hadith.[8] Banna inevitably fell under the influence of his father's piety and scholarship and with his formal, religious education he soon became a devout Muslim and a firm believer in moral reform. At an early age he joined societies and organizations which pressed for a return to Islamic values and standards of behaviour, but it was not until 1928 that he and others formed the Muslim Brothers. There is no official account of the events leading up the foundation of the society. After the formation of the Young Men's Muslim Association in 1927, it seems clear that about a year later he was asked by a group of workers in the British camp labour force to be the leader of those who were dissatisfied with the moral and political state of Egypt. They had heard his teaching and believed that he was capable of articulating their message and organizing their movement. They took a solemn oath as 'troops for the message of Islam' and Banna decided on the name 'Brothers in the service of Islam'.[9]

INFLUENCES ON BANNA'S LIFE

The influences on Banna's life were many and varied. Apart from the thorough teaching of Sunni Islam, he became closely acquainted with Sufi practices, particularly the

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'dhikr' or recitations, and he would retain a deep respect for this aspect of mystical belief for the rest of his life. He was also heavily influenced by the radical teachers who had appeared at the end of the 19th Century, notably Afghani and his followers, Mohammad Abduh and Rashid Rida.

Jamal al Din al Afghani (1839-1897) was an Iranian and might be described as one of the modernists. In this context modernist means a Muslim who is prepared to accept some secular elements into Islam while otherwise maintaining strict Islamic principles. His writing was often unclear and obscure but the weight of his ideas and his personal influence were widespread. His central point was that Muslims must be alive to the need to change society, but they must find ways of doing this while remaining faithful to Islamic principles.

> If to live in the modern world demanded changes in their ways of organizing society, they must try to make them while remaining true to themselves; and this was only possible if Islam was interpreted to make it compatible with survival, strength and progress in the world.[10]

Afghani's work was developed and propagated more intelligibly by the Egyptian Mohammad Abduh (1849-1905). He founded the 'Salafiyah' school of thought where he differentiated between the simple and basic religious beliefs, inherited from pious ancestors (al-salaf al-salih), which are unchanging, and details of law and social morality which can be adapted to suit different times and places. His arguments were presented rationally and appealed to many educated Muslims, particularly when they were further developed by his main follower, the Syrian Rashid Rida (1865-1935). Rida thought that some of the laws of the modern world could be adapted in the light of Islamic

fundamentals and be accommodated into orthodox Sunnism, in line with Abduh's principles.

These three influential figures were modernist rather than fundamentalist; they wished to relate the modern world, with its inevitable progress and change, to the unchanging principles of true Islam. To achieve this they were prepared to compromise in some areas; they regarded an absolute and uncritical acceptance of all details of Islam as unrealistic.

Ideologically Banna was in sympathy with this Salafiyah reformism and was influenced by the works of its proponents. He believed in 'ijtihad' or independent reasoning and 'maslah' which means following an interpretation that might result in the greatest good. But he differed from these earlier modernists in two main ways. His first difference concerned the methods employed to achieve this Islamic state. Whereas his predecessors had limited themselves to writing and giving sermons, Banna believed in political action.[11] Mor   ʋ ⸱ ⸱ s could not be separated from the political an   ⸱⸱s⸱ ⸱ ional framework in which Muslims live; he adv⸱ ⸱⸱⸱ ⸱ d act⸱ ⸱ sm. The second difference was his fundamental   ⸱ief t⸱   only by amending the existing European codes   ⸱ ⸱ ⸱⸱   replacing most, if not all them, with the Islamic   ⸱ ⸱   ⸱ould this state be brought into being.

The main formative influence on Banna's life, however, was the occupation of his country by the British. He was acutely aware of the loss of dignity and self determination suffered by his people, not so much as Egyptians or Arabs, but as Muslims. He recognized that the government in Cairo was an extension of Westminster and that policy was based on the imperial interests of Britain and not on either the national aspirations of Egypt or the moral values of Islam.

All these influences contributed to Banna's decision to form the Brotherhood as a means primarily to cleanse the moral state of Egyptian life and subsequently to create an Islamic community based on the principles of the Quran and Sunna. To begin with he was more interested in the souls of the individual Muslims than in building an Islamic state, but as his work progressed he realized that the first objective would not be possible without the second. In other words the Greater Jihad was closely connected to the Lesser Jihad. Above all he had learned that these aims could only be achieved through active political struggle and, if necessary, violence. He certainly believed in the value of Jihad.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY

The Society started appropriately in Isma'iliyya, a British garrison town on the Suez Canal, where Banna was a teacher. Initially Banna and his companions sought to increase the membership and spread the Society's influence and ideas gradually before engaging in major activities; they did this at first locally and then nationally. The early efforts were directed mainly towards moral and social reform especially among the young, but Banna soon encountered opposition to his ideas from those who perceived the Society as a potentially subversive political organization which might threaten stability. After an investigation by the Ministry of Education, which discovered nothing illegal and in effect did little more than advertize the Society, Banna left Isma'iliyya for Cairo.

For the first few years of their existence the Brothers kept a low profile, relying on small gatherings and meetings to propagate business and policy; they used their political allies to represent their cause. Membership increased during

force.[14] The war years were characterized by chaos and frustration, and Banna felt the need to tighten his control and ensure the absolute loyalty of his members. He created a special section in a way that was seen as potentially sinister and hence dubbed 'the secret apparatus'. It was really only a group of the most dedicated and trusted Brothers. In fact this merely continued his earlier categorisation of the membership into several class-ifications of which the most active and assiduous were known as 'mujahid' or those who were prepared to struggle fervently for the cause of Allah.

> Inspired in the first instance as an idea by the concept of Jihad, formalized into an organization under the pressures of nationalist agitation, the secret apparatus was almost immediately rationalized as an instrument for the defence of Islam and the Society.[15]

Added to this secret apparatus was a system of cells known as 'families'. These were largely for political indoctrination rather than local or area administration, but combined with the para-military 'rover' system, Banna had developed a formidable infrastructure within the Society which was capable of militant action even if not actually created for that purpose.

During the war the Brotherhood acquired many new members from those who had become even more conscious of Egypt's position as a subjugated country. The weakness of the palace was exposed when the British forced the choice of Nahhas Pasha as prime minister in February 1942 rather than the one King Farouq and most Egyptians would have preferred.[16] The Society not only increased its ranks in numbers but also in diversity, including support from: "Students, civil servants, artisans, petty traders and middling peasants."[17]

The war against Israel in 1948 proved to be a watershed in the development both of Arab nationalism and the Brothers. The Arab armies were defeated but they were able to transfer the blame to the poor organization and the old equipment that they had inherited from the British or the French. Rather than expose weakness this defeat gave strength to anti-colonial feelings.

Mulsim Brotherhood volunteers had fought in this war alongside the regular army and had actually rallied Muslims to fight the Jihad against Israel. In turn army officers had joined the ranks of the Brothers, increasing the membership to nearly a million, organized into 5,000 branches. The slogan was coined: "The Quran is our constitution, the Prophet is our guide; death for the glory of Allah is our greatest ambition."[18]

The monarchy was discredited as it had become closely identified with those things that had gone wrong in the war. The Azhar hierarchy remained loyal, as usual, to the palace, and they too suffered in popularity and prestige. In the political chaos that followed the 1948 debacle, the government dissolved the Brothers as a society. Some of them remained in Palestine where they were still engaged in the struggle against Israel, but most returned to Cairo where they laid down their arms. Some went underground.

Admittedly some Brothers had been actively involved in subversive activities, not all of which had been sanctioned by Banna, but the main effort of the Society had been in loyal support of the Arab cause against Israel. Nonetheless, the Society was seen by the prime minister to be behind all anti-government moves; but this may simply have been because they were identified as the only organization capable of such activity in the political chaos. In retaliation to the dissolution, the prime minister Nuqrashi was assassinated by

a Brother. Despite obvious overtures made by Banna to cooperate with the government to restore order and normality, he himself was killed by government, agents three weeks later on 12 February 1949.

How far the Society had sanctioned the assassination of the prime minister will probably never be established. Banna would have argued firstly that his members got out of hand in a fit of excessive zeal and secondly that, since the Society had officially been dissolved some weeks earlier, it could not be held responsible. However, the overtly militant organization of the Brothers into battalions and troops were a flagrant indication that violence was generally sanctioned against those perceived to be their enemies. If such enemies were identified as government officials then it would be no surprise if such violence were directed at them. However, Banna would not have allowed violence to be carried out in a manner that might have been interpreted as a personal vendetta in revenge for outlawing the Society: to be worthy of Jihad, the armed struggle needed discipline and obedience to authority.

THE REFORMATION OF THE SOCIETY

The loss of Banna was a severe blow to the Brothers. He had provided the charismatic leadership and organizational ability that ensured its growth and survival. Although he was often accused of secrecy and a lack of directness in his dealings with members,[19] nobody could doubt his effectiveness. He had founded the Society, built it up with painstaking care, and held it together in difficult circumstances. As the membership increased and he could exercise less direct control, he carefully formulated and continually revised a disciplined structure. This structure

included echelons established on clear military lines and based on Jihad:

> Inspired in the first instance as an idea by the concept of Jihad...the secret apparatus was almost immediately rationalized as an instrument for the defence of Islam and the Society.[20]

Banna used Jihad to maintain unity of purpose and internal cohesion within his organization. He saw it as a defence against imperialism and unbelief and had declared Jihad against the British as early as 1936 during the first armed struggles by the Egyptians against their occupiers.[21] He saw Jihad as a foundation on which the zeal and moral strength of Islamic organizations should be built. He saw Jihad as an obligation, and at the last resort, a fight to the death. It was his ability to coordinate and control the use of force, both internally and externally, that singled him out as one of the notable Islamic leaders rather than just another reformist.

The Brothers were rehabilitated as a religious society after the ending of martial law in 1951. A senior judge with moderate views, Hassan al Hudaybi, was elected leader. He opposed violence in general and terrorism in particular. He did not have the charisma of Banna but he was considered less of a threat to the establishment than his predecessor. Hudaybi tried not to become involved with political parties or become associated with non-religious policies. Ironically it was his relative mildness and inability to control the extreme members of the society that allowed it to develop into a very militant organization. The Society's militants contributed directly to the violence and riots in Cairo in January 1952 which later led to the military coup in July.[22]

On taking office, Brigadier Neguib and Colonel Nasser banned all political parties, although they allowed the

Brothers to continue in operation. This was partly in acknowledgement of their assistance in the preparation for the coup, and partly because, under Hudaybi's leaderhip, they perceived them to be a purely religious organization. But it was also because initially Nasser was not in a position to challenge them. They were even offered three seats in the cabinet. These were declined by Hudaybi for two reasons: they would always be in a minority and therefore unlikely to be in a position to influence decisions; and by becoming part of a political organization they might find themselves having to make compromises and thus risk a dilution of the strong religious principles for which they stood.

In fact the regime started to move away from the Islamic course which the Brothers would have liked them to follow. Land reform was one issue, equal rights for women was another. Gradually the Brothers became firmly opposed to the regime that they now believed was more interested in modernization on a secular model than in implementing the Islamic state; and this state, as Banna had argued, needed to recognize the supremacy of the Sharia. This opposition came to a head in a bungled assassination attempt on Nasser in 1954. The Society was outlawed with the six involved in the assassination executed and over 4000 other Brothers jailed. Many others went into voluntary exile in neighbouring Arab countries.[23]

Nasser's popularity rose after he survived the assassination attempt - he convinced himself and others that he had been saved by God. The following of the Brotherhood declined in proportion and with Nasser's prestige further enhanced by the Suez affair in 1956, his position seemed almost unassailable. The Azhar gave whatever support he asked for to buttress his policies however blatantly nationalistic they might have been.[24]

Despite the general amnesty offered to the Brothers by Nasser as a gesture in 1964, they remained firmly opposed to his policies of secular modernization. Instead of becoming a useful counterbalance to the growing forces of communism that Nasser feared, they regrouped and attempted to resume their former activities with armed attacks on government buildings.[25] There were further plots to assassinate Nasser and many of the leaders were arrested or executed in 1966.

Among those executed was Sayyid Qutb who had become the main articulator of Brotherhood policy and ideology since Banna's death. He had equated the Nasser regime with the benighted pre-Islamic period of the Jahiliyya; although he was against active violence himself he found he had no alternative to agreeing to Jihad against the regime, having painted it in such un-Islamic terms earlier. Qutb believed that all Muslims had a religious duty to strive for the nation or 'watan' of the Islamic community, which was not the same as the 'watan' equated with Egypt and patriotism; this duty was a Jihad. If such a Jihad led a Muslim into a seditious position with the government of a territory defined by un-Islamic borders and secular policies, that was all part of a Muslim's struggle.[26]

Nasser's ascendancy was not to last. The traumas of the the war with Israel in 1967 resulted in the humiliation of the Egyptian regime. The position of the Brothers was proportionately enhanced as the nationalism of Nasser was perceived to be more rhetorical than actual. During the re-examination of Arab nationalism after the debacle many turned to the profound questions that the Brothers had been asking about the way the state should be modernizing. The success of Israel was perceived by some to have been a result of their strong religous beliefs and the self evident fact that their state was founded on Judaism. On the other

side Islam seemed to provide a safe harbour for those Muslims who had lost their way while navigating the stormy waters of modernization and nationalism. "In 1948 a whole system of government was descredited. In 1967 a whole system of values was destroyed."[27]

Nasser's death in 1970 and the era of Sadat were initally welcomed by the Brothers. Sadat was noted for his piety and had previously had close relations with the Society. The 1973 war with Israel was interpreted by him as a triumph for Arabs and Islam and his personal prestige was so enhanced that he was able to negotiate a separate peace with Israel. But the Camp David Agreement, and the subsequent rapprochement with Israel, was seen by many as a betrayal and it widened the gulf between the Egyptian government and the Islamic groups.[28] After the treaty and its obvious failure to solve the Palestinian problem, even the moderate Brothers opposed Sadat: he had sold out to America just as Nasser had to the Soviets.

Sadat tried to toe a fine line between the strict fundamentalists and the liberal Islamic thinkers; but eventually he became associated with more secular forces as he came to rely on modernization from the West. Furthermore he developed his friendship with the Shah and revealed his pretensions to rule Egypt in a what was perceived by many to be a more pharaonic than Islamic style.

Sadat tried to accommodate the Brothers in his government, but since the death of Banna there had never been a sufficiently strong leadership to control the more extreme and militant elements. Many Brothers joined more radical organizations when they became disenchanted with Sadat's style and policies and when they discovered that their cause had little to show for the inclusion of some of their leaders in government.[29] Clandestine radical groups

were established which violently opposed the regime. Mukfirtiya (Denouncers of the Infidel), Jund Allah (Soldiers of God), Munazzamat al-Jihad (The Jihad Organization) and Al-Takfir wa Al-Hijra (The Denunciation and the Migration).[30] Their activities included the sacking and disruption of nightclubs as well as general rioting. Some of them were so committed they even lived in caves in Upper Egypt in order to escape from the infidel regime and carry out arms training unmolested.[31] Such splinter groups may have been inspired by Banna and his preaching of Jihad, but without his organization and leadership they were uncoordinated and less effective.

On 6th October 1981 Sadat was killed by members of the extreme Jihad Organization. His successor Hosni Mubarak has played a more cautious hand towards the Brotherhood. Although he has continued broadly the same policies as Sadat, he has managed to contain their activism with skill and sensitivity. Despite the problems of the economy, the increasing population and the risk of revolutionary fundamentalism spreading from Iran or even Libya, he has maintained his course of secular modernism.

Today the Brotherhood retains its position as the oldest fundamentalist movement in Egypt and derives respect from that position. However, it has acquired a reputation for being, if not staid, certainly moderate, and many younger activists have rejected the Society and have joined the clandestine radical splinter groups. Such groups are as keen on maintaining adherence to Muslim standards within Egypt as they are on prosecuting Jihad outside and have been known to terrorize bars and harass unveiled women.[32]

IDEOLOGY

The Brotherhood has been the principal advocate of fundamentalism in Egypt this century, overshadowing the other religious institutions which might have provided the focus for Islamic questioning of government policy: Al Azhar and the Ministry of Awqaf with its mosques and preachers.[33] Although it is not easy for such government institutions to question government policy, they might have raised some issues, particularly during colonial rule. The Brotherhood has maintained its position by good organization, by dynamic leadership in its early development, and by a general refusal to compromise its principles. But perhaps, above all, it has retained cohesion through its clear doctrine of activism.

It has also had a sound and surprisingly consistent ideology which has been articulated by its leaders; and it is this consistency that has preserved the Brotherhood as a recognizable society and a force in Arab politics, despite some of the extreme activities of those elements whose enthusiasm for action has exceeded their judgement. There have been three main figures who have represented the Brotherhood's ideas. The first was the founder Hassan al Banna. After he died his successor Hudaybi expressed a moderate, cautious line; and this was balanced by Sayyid Qutb, who took a militant approach.

> The ideological framework evolved by al-Banna was all encompassing yet so general in nature that advocates of both trends could relate to it without appearing to contradict it.[34]

As the instigator of the revivalist movement in Egypt, Banna took on the role of defining the poor state of Egyptian society and outlining the Islamic solution. In line with the fundamentalist model discussed in the last chapter

Banna saw the importance of his role as leader to diagnose the problems of life in Egypt. His views were that it had suffered at the hands of the successive influence of external powers - between the wars this influence was British - and that the social and moral fabric was disintegrating. Moreover, those who should be providing leadership to reverse this trend were at best doing nothing and at worst colluding with these unwelcome influences. The cure was a return to a more Islamic way of life. Banna articulated his philosophy around three simple principles. These were finally codified on the tenth anniversary of the movement at the fifth conference in January 1939.

> These ten years had produced a set of ideas which, though general in form, were the foundations of the ideology of the Society and the substance of its appeal for the next ten years and beyond. These ideas were, essentially, a definition of 'the Islam of the Muslim Brothers'; the insistence on (1) Islam as a total system, complete unto itself, and the final arbiter of life in all its categories; (2) an Islam formulated from and based on its two primary sources, the revelation in the Quran and the wisdom of the Prophet in the Sunna; and (3) an Islam applicable to all times and to all places.[35]

Banna maintained these principles throughout his life and used them to outline the framework within which he formulated his approach to reform. He saw his movement as widely based and as one which ideally could embrace all Muslims. In another significant definition he described it as:

> A Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea.[36]

Inherent in these proclamations was his insistence on the need for organization. He knew that simple ideology,

however pure and sincere, was insufficient on its own. He tried to make the society as appealing as possible to every section of the population. He took great pains to ensure that it was representative of Egypt as a whole with a widely distributed membership throughout the country. To do this required time and above all it required patient organization. Banna built the Society gradually but soundly and did not give way to those who demanded more immediate results. The sacrifice he made for this painstaking effort was the accusation of being too secretive during the careful formation of the secure cells.

The success of the Society was a result of the thoughtful and dynamic leadership of Banna. Such calibre and style of leadership is one of the common features of successful fundamentalist movements: Wahhabism is an example already mentioned; Khomeini in Iran will be another. Indeed such leaders would themselves merely claim to be emulating the Prophet himself when he reached Medina and demonstrated responsible, firm but inspiring leadership.

The organizational aspect of leadership is often ignored or dismissed by those historians who only concentrate on critical events, but it featured large in the early years of the Brotherhood. Banna exercised authority and discipline by categorizing loyalty to the organization in three stages: acquaintance, formation and execution.[37] These simple stages embraced a mixture of concepts: obedience, loyalty, discipline, confidence, respect and effort. The stages were progressive and moving from one to the next depended on the commitment of the individual which was never taken for granted: it had to be proved.

Banna sought to create a stronger loyalty to the Brotherhood than to rival concepts of nationalism or even family. To do this he included in his organizational

structure recognizably traditional concepts of spiritual brotherhood, echoing the Sufi or mystical way, and the group loyalty or 'asabiya' which formed the basis of tribal solidarity.[38] But this structure essentially expressed Banna's interpretation of Jihad which meant not only tireless effort but also 'complete and unqualified acceptance of the duty of absolute obedience'.[39] For him Jihad was more than just the act of struggle; it was the whole panoply of disciplined organization, loyalty and sense of purpose that was needed to revive Islam.

For Banna also it was not simply the intensity of Jihad that was important, but how it was applied. He continually stressed the interactive connection between the power to reform and the power to rule, while reminding his followers that their duty was primarily to reform and not to rule.[40] Power is not sought for its own sake, nor for the prestige of the Society, but merely as a means to bring about a return to Islam. This is one of the paradoxes of Banna's work: he sought an Islamic state and an Islamic order and yet he did not feel that his organization was ready or suitable actually to handle power.

Furthermore the dilemma of whether the Society should be defined as a political party was always present. Banna saw the need to operate within the political system, but distrusted the ability of his organization to take part equitably in the political arena and preserve its integrity. In fact the creation of his paramilitary force was an admission that he did not see the Society operating entirely within the existing constitution.

However, Banna managed to preserve this integrity not only by his masterful organization and charismatic leadership, but by conveying an uncompromisingly

straightforward and clear message - to return to the fundamentals of Islam. To do this required several things:

- Simplify Islam to its essentials

- Change the mentality of Muslims

- Reform education.

Above all this had to be done 'from within Islam, on its own terms and by its own dynamic'.[41] By this he meant through Jihad.

Hudaybi presented a complete contrast to Banna. He was a senior judge with an impressive knowledge of Islamic law. His views were moderate and restrained in comparison to many Brothers, but he was respected for his dignity, his stature as a judge, and his calmness in adversity. He distrusted violence in general and abhorred terrorism. Perhaps because he was a judge, he preached an over-riding respect for authority. He believed that the only disobedience permissible to Muslims was when the Government was flagrantly attempting to flout Islamic law; in other aspects it should be allowed to proceed unchallenged, and should have the positive allegiance of those Muslims it governs. Hudaybi was never clear over exactly how he saw an Islamic government being established. Indeed his ideas were normally vague about the collective duties of Muslims in relation to power; he stressed instead the importance of the individual's responsibility for adherence to the faith.[42] He advocated a simple faith:

> Hudaybi stressed that the only valid criteria to be applied are the profession of Islam (al Shahada) coupled with a concomitant internal conviction (Iman). It is then left to each

individual to practise religion as required by Islam.[43]

While Hudaybi preached the peaceful propagation of the message of Islam, Sayyid Qutb advocated a more militant approach. His ideas were clearly coloured by his time in prison in the early 1960s where he wrote much of his work. He failed to mention either Banna surprisingly, the Muslim Brothers, revealing an obviou_ _isappointment with the moderate line the Society was then taking.[44] He dwelt on two main themes.

The first was that Western civilization was about to collap_ ' on itself. In spite of its self evident material benefits, its technology and apparently advanced systems of government, it lacked a coherent and pervasive set of values. This led to a spiritual vacuum and an absence of God given moral guidance. Islam, however, possessed the special strength which its clearly defined moral code bestowed on its adherents, thus ensuring not only its survival but confirming its inherent superiority.

He illustrated this theme with the concept of Jahiliyya - the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance. Whereas most Muslims regarded those who lived in the Jahiliyya with a patronizing insouciance, Qutb equated it with active unbelief. He contrasted Kafir (unbelief) with Iman (belief). He echoed standard Brotherhood doctrine in likening the modern political factionalism with Pre-Islamic tribalism,[45] but he was far more intense in his attacks on Jahiliyya as an evil in itself. This would have encountered much opposition from those in Egyptian society who took pride in the achievements of ancient Egyptians.

The second main theme was the crucial combination of belief and a programme of action. Muslims should form

'organic activist associations' and seek to terminate all the trappings of the Jahiliyya. There should be no compromises, they should expect no reward other than the satisfaction of performing the duties of their faith.[46]

The central themes of the Brotherhood's ideology are that belief should be combined with action if it is to have significance. The disagreements are on exactly how and when this action should be taken, but there is a universal preference for deed over idea, for programme (minhaj) over ideology (fikra).[47] The principle of Jihad is not in doubt; only how and when it should be applied. Islam means submission; but doctrinally it is about power and control of the political system. But this power and control must never be abused: judgement must control impulsiveness; force should only be used as a last resort. The ultimate goal was the establishment of the 'Islamic order' - 'Al Nizam al Islami'; that is, a society based on the legal principles of the Sharia.[48]

As an inevitable consequence of the Society's lack of monolith structure, much of its thought seems ill defined. In some respects Banna was deliberately vague and there is no clearly identifiable work written by the Brothers that can be considered theology or philosophy.[49] As with all religions there is much in Islam that seems irrational, and it is a challenge to satisfy both intellectual and non-intellectual adherents with the same message; but the Brotherhood maintained wide appeal in all sections of the community by concentrating primarily on moral and ethical reform.[50]

To the Brothers, and certainly to Banna, action meant Jihad. For Banna, Jihad had firm military connotations and he saw it not simply as armed action but in broader terms as the whole structure of training and organization. Banna saw

it as a duty for Muslims, almost equivalent to the five pillars, and argued that his view was supported by the Quran and Sunna.[51] But above all he saw Jihad as the key to the success of the movement: unless members were willing to fight as Mohammad had done: "He who dies and has not fought [ghaza; literally: raided] and was not resolved to fight, has died a Jahiliyya death."[52]

From this it would be wrong to conclude that Banna believed in unrestrained or gratuitous force. He disapproved of many of the arbitrary acts of violence that occurred in the name of the Society mainly as emotional responses to situations. The main purpose of his training and organization was to give his militancy an ordered direction so that it could achieve the reform that Islam required. He did not see much point in killing and martyrdom if it was insufficiently coordinated to be effective. This attitude is in contrast to the extreme Shia views that will be investigated in the next chapter.

Jihad gave life and purpose to the organization that Banna took such pains to construct; the Society was also safeguarded by Jihad, which in turn provided the discipline and obedience so necessary for the movement. The tiers of membership were based on loyalty and commitment to Jihad; the rank and file were deployed into 'battalions of salvation' and 'troops of God'. Banna always said that he sought reform rather than power, but he was prepared to resort to whatever level of force was required to achieve that reform. The Muslim Brotherhood has been described as the 'conscience of Islam'; but it was a very active and disturbing conscience.

ENDNOTES

[1] The title in Arabic is Al Ikhwan al Muslimin. Although sometimes referred to as Al Ikhwan, the more general usage in English is: the Muslim Brothers, The Brothers or the Brotherhood.

[2] Thebes was thought to have been the first place in the world to have been organized as a state. The idea was transferred to Greece where another, and possibly better known, Thebes was established on similar lines.

[3] Ancient Egyptians share the honour of producing the first written communications to record events and aspects of life with the Sumerians who used cuneiform and the Phoeniceans who invented an alphabet.

[4] Other invaders and settlers in Egypt include the Phoeniceans and the Romans.

[5] The Copts were a Monophysite sect of Christianity, who believed that Christ had only a single nature. This is in contrast to standard Crhistian doctrine, as laid down by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, that Christ had two natures, divine and human.

[6] Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1991), p.124.

[7] Ibn Saud reached his final expansion in 1932 to create the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[8] Richard Mitchell, The Society of the Muslim Brothers (London: Oxford University Press 1969), p.1.

[9] Ibid, p.8.

[10] Hourani, p.307.

[11] Dilip Hiro, Holy Wars The Rise of Fundamentalism (New York: Routledge 1989), p.64.

[12] Ahmed Gomaa, "Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt during the 1930s and 1970s: Comparative Notes" in Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan (New York: Praeger, 1983), edited by Gabriel Warburg and Uri Kupferschmidt, p.144.

[13] Ibid, p.145.

[14] Mitchell, p.30.

[15] Ibid, p.32.

[16] Hiro, p.62.

[17] Ibid, p.62.

[18] Ibid, p.63.

[19] Mitchell, p.30.

[20] Ibid, p.32.

[21] Ibid, p.76.

[22] Hiro, p.60.

[23] Ibid, p.66.

[24] Ibid, p.67.

[25] Gomaa, p.146.

[26] Hiro, p.68.

[27] Gomaa, p.147.

[28] Hiro, p.75.

[29] Gomaa, p.147.

[30] Hiro, p.73.

[31] Ibid. p.73.

[32] R Scott Appleby, "The Arab Problem and the Islamic Solution" in The Christian Century, (Chicago) 19 Feb 92, p.191.

[33] Gomaa, p.148.

[34] Ibid, p.149.

[35] Mitchell, p.14.

[36] Ibid, p.14.

[37] Ibid, p.300.

[38] 'Asabiya' means 'corporate spirit'. It was defined by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) as an essential quality for a people to possess before becoming a proper community. The sharing of religious beliefs was one manifestation of Asabiya.

[39] Mitchell, p.301.

[40] Ibid, p.308.

[41] Ibid, p.323.

[42] Gomaa, p.152.

[43] Ibid, p.151.

[44] Ibid, p.149.

[45] Mitchell, p.210.

[46] Gomaa, p.150.

[47] Mitchell, p.326.

[48] Ibid, p.234.

[49] Ibid, p.327.

[50] Ibid, p.326.

[51] Ibid, p.207.

[52] Ibid, p.207.

CHAPTER FIVE

IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY FUNDAMENTALISM

GENERAL

The brand of fundamentalism that has gained power in
Iran provides an interesting contrast to that of the Muslim
Brotherhood. There are similarities in the two movements,
not least the commitment of those involved and the charisma
and dedication of the leaders; but there are important
differences. Some of these differences stem from the
doctrinal split between Sunni and Shia, others from the
geographical and political orientation of the countries
themselves. And, as ever, such orientation results in part
from history.

Both Egypt and Iran have ancient and distinguished
histories that predate Islam. Both countries take
understandable pride in their ancient glories and
acknowledge the achievements of their pre-Islamic
forefathers. In Egypt, where Sunni Islam predominates, there
has been little absorption of such pre-Islamic influences in
the orthodox faith and when such influences have appeared,
in the guise of saint worship or excessive mystic ritual as
a result of the popular influence of Sufism, they have been

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considered by the purists as challenges to true Islam. Indeed one of the criticisms of Sadat towards the end of his rule was his increasingly 'pharaonic' style of leadership. It has been the fundamentalists who have acted to seek greater adherence to the basic tenets of their religion when faced with the temptations of both pre-Islamic and modern secular attractions. In Iran, however, Islam has absorbed more easily the pre-Islamic culture and managed to maintain a closer identity with Persian roots. Consequently the fundamentalists have been able to concentrate almost exclusively on the threat of Western influence.

ANCIENT PERSIAN HISTORY

The Iranians are Indo-European not Semitic, and although they have some common characteristics with the Arabs, they are markedly different in culture, language and attitude. And they are very conscious of this difference.

The Persians had a large and wealthy empire in the 6th, 5th and 4th centuries BC. This empire was created with remarkable speed by Cyrus, Prince of Anshan, who in 552 BC revolted against Media and, with his son Cambyses, welded the kingdoms of Media, Lydia, Babylonia and Egypt into one. Although this empire under Cambyses' successor, Darius (521-486 BC), was the most powerful influence in the world at the time, it only entered Western history in its conflicts with the Greek city-states in the 5th century BC under Xerxes. But the Persian light was temporarily extinguished by Alexander the Great in his campaigns against the luckless Darius III, who finally succumbed at Gaugamela in 331 BC.[1]

Persia has no great rivers to ease communication and the cities are divided by inhospitable desert and mountain. Unity in this land requires a strong central authority to

overcome these geographical features. After the surprisingly rapid break up of Alexander's empire following his death, the Persian lands were ruled by a succession of dynasties. The last and most significant of these were the Sasanians (224-637 AD) who unified the country. The origins of the Sasanians are not clear but they probably came from southern Persia and gradually extended their influence over what is now Iran and southern Iraq. They ruled as a dynastic family, but the administration was carried out through a hierarchy of officials based at Ctesiphon in Iraq, where the fertility and communications provided by the Tigris and Euphrates eased control.[2] Indeed this strong link between Persians and the people of Southern Iraq is still evident today, and survives in the bonds of Shiism.

Good administration was not sufficient to hold the empire together. The Sasanians sought unity by reviving the ancient teachings of Zoroaster. The central feature of Zoroastrianism is the duality between good and evil, frequently represented as light and dark. It is a stark, uncompromising faith, which represents life as a continual battle between virtuous purity and evil spirits. The Sasanians incorporated Zoroastrianism as the state church with a priesthood and a formal system of worship. The religion helped to unify the empire through its support for the concept of temporal authority, as represented by a just ruler; this ruler would promote peace and harmony among men, while the forces of light struggled against darkness.

Greek ideas played a part in the development of the ancient world, even in the east, as Hellenic thought spread with Alexander's campaigns. But the influence of Hellenism in Persia was more ideological than political, for Alexander's administrative structure did not survive beyond his own lifetime. The wave of Greek ideas that surged eastwards was absorbed into Persian culture. Its

contribution to Zoroastrianism was an increased formalization of the hierarchical structure with the introduction of an official priesthood and greater emphasis on the dualism of good and evil.[3]

The salient characteristics of pre-Islamic Persian identity were a strong central government, necessitated by geography; a sophisticated administration with powerful officials; and a unifying religion which gave individuals a purpose in the continual struggle against evil. The dispersed population looked to the centre for leadership and to the organized priesthood for guidance.

MUSLIM CONQUESTS

The great powers of Byzantium and Persia counterbalanced each other producing an era of stability for several centuries. During this period the Sasanian Empire was able to develop its culture and identity, until the 6th and 7th centuries brought turbulence and change.[4]

Persia had suffered more than Byzantium during the wars that finally ended in 629 AD and was almost completely destroyed. Consequently little military resistance was offered to the Arabs in Iraq and Iran in contrast to the hard fighting that took place in the Byzantine provinces of Syria and Egypt. Although the Muslims quickly overran the old Sasanian territories, they did not destroy the strong sense of national identity that went with the Persian language and the Indo-European background. Despite military defeat it was not long before the old culture reasserted itself both spiritually in Shiism and politically in the administration of the Abbasid court.[5]

It is worth examining at this stage why the Persians so convincingly adopted Shiism. The Persian people had little respect for the Umayyads. This was not entirely because of the doctrinal question of the succession and Ali's defeat by Mu'awiya. The Persians also distrusted the kingship that the Umayyads set up in Damascus: a monarchy based on principles of Arab tribal loyalty. Furthermore the Persians had a proud imperial tradition and looked down on what they considered to be 'tribal' rule. As Malise Ruthven says:

> From the beginning there were elements in the Shiite faith which made it particularly appealing to the Persians. The dispossession of Ali and his clan from their rightful inheritance by the worldly Umayyads was a cause with which non-Arabs could identify...The doctrine of the Imamate was well suited to the needs of non-Arabs without direct access to the Quran through oral or written media.[6]

Although Muslims accorded Zoroastrianism official protection as a scriptural religion,[7] in fact, over time, it virtually disappeared after the Arab invasions, unlike the Christian churches in the west. The Iranians adopted Shiism for several reasons; not all of these reasons were necessarily conscious efforts.

First; although Islam might attempt to change the ancient traditions of the Mesopotamian and Persian cultures, it could not eradicate them. But these ancient traditions, which glorified the status of divine rulers supported by loyal urban subjects, could be redefined in Islamic terms in relation to the figure of the Prophet and his community in Medina. All that was required for this redefinition was the sort of modification that Shiism could provide.

Second; the Iranians found in Shiism an Islamic expression which maintained them as members of the community but allowed them a separate religious expression of their

own. They were thus able to preserve their Persian identity while remaining within the Islamic system.

Third; the total defeat of the Sasanians at the hands of the Arabs meant that the Persians felt downtrodden and demoralised. Shiism, with its emphasis on suffering and martyrdom, could provide a solace for those who felt deprived or disenfranchised.

The Abbasid Caliphate, which took over from the Umayyads, was not in fact Shia despite the move from Damascus to Baghdad. But it was not long before the Caliph himself became a mere figurehead with the administrative and executive power residing in the office of the 'vizier': that ancient Persian appointment made famous by the tales from the Arabian Nights.[8]

Iran witnessed change and catastrophe over the following centuries as Turks and Mongols migrated west across the plateau to the rivers, the Mongol horde finally destroying Baghdad in 1258. The Abbasid Caliphate had been in decline since the triumphant reign of Haroun ar Rashid in the first part of the 9th century and power successively slipped first to the Buyids, who were very sympathetic to Shiism if not actually Shias themselves; and then to the Seljuq Turks who, as martial immigrants, seized administrative power for themselves. The Seljuqs reasserted Sunnism. In the 13th century Islamic power left Baghdad and moved to Cairo.

Hulagu Khan's destruction of Baghdad in 1258 was a pure act of vandalism and he set up nothing in its place. In the absence of any political or ideological order, a spiritual vacuum resulted, and this was filled by Sufism and Shiism. Sufi orders increased in the absence of central authority, but, more significantly, the concept and practice of

'ijtihad' or independent reasoning was rehabilitated, putting new life into Shiism.[9] Rather earlier the Sunnis had "shut the door to 'ijtihad'" and the Sunni sect was thought by some to have become doctrinally stultified, as a result, and unable to cope imaginatively with changes. The Shia rehabilitation of 'ijtihad' was an important doctrinal step as it allowed contemporary and even local or national interpretations to be accommodated into Islamic theology. And it also set a significant precedent.

DEVELOPMENT OF SHIISM IN PERSIA

Shiism had never been declared an official religion for the Islamic empire even under the Buyids in Baghdad or the Fatimids in Cairo:[10] both dynasties simply used Shiism as a means to legitimize their power. In fact it was a major setback for Shiism when the Fatimids were overthrown by Salah al Din Ayubi (Saladin), a Sunni general, in 1171. This signalled the end of Shiism as a dominant force in the western part of the Islamic world; from that moment its focus moved irrevocably to the east.

The development of Shiism was gradual: its ascendancy in Iran was mainly because of its suitability as a vehicle for Iranian cultural and religious traditions within an Islamic context.[11] The decisive step for Shiism in Persia came when the Safavid dynasty took over in 1501. The Safavids were to rule Persia until 1722. They had originally come from Azerbaijan in northwest Persia and were Sunnis. They capitalized on the disintegration of the empire of Timur Lang which had incorporated Persia from the end of the 14th century. The founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shah Isma'il I, seized power in Tabriz, gradually extending his authority over the rest of the country with the assistance of belligerent tribesmen, many of them Sufis.[12]

The reason the Safavids embraced Shiism in the 16th century is thought to have been simply to distinguish themselves from the rival Ottoman dynasty that was emerging in the west. Indeed it may have been their institution of Shiism as the official state religion that ensured the survival of Persia as a separate entity when otherwise it might have been absorbed into the sphere of Istanbul. Shiism provided the distinct ideological features which gave Persia a sense of separate national identity.

The importance of the Safavids to our study is the precedent that they set in making Twelver Shiism the official sect. In the end they were not able to satisfy the hopes of messianic fulfilment, implicit in the doctrine of the return of the Hidden Imam, that form such a central part of Shiism; and they were ultimately a spiritual disappointment. The authority of the Safavids declined in the 18th century; but as their authority weakened, that of the Shia Ulama grew proportionately and the dynasty that replaced the Safavids, the Qajars (1785-1924), were never able to redress the balance.

It was during Qajar rule that the clergy not only increased in numbers but also established a hierarchical system of spiritual authority based on the guidance given to individuals by 'mujtahids' - or those who exercise 'ijtihad'. As previously mentioned, the concept of Ijtihad, or personal interpretation, had been incorporated as a central part of Shiism after the fall of Baghdad. But only experts in Islamic theology could make such interpretation and thus become Mujtahids. Achieving the status of Mujtahid required years of dedicated study, but the reward was great prestige. The most respected of these Mujtahids eventually earned the title of 'Ayatollah' or 'Sign of God'.

When the Pahlavi Shahs came to power in 19_5 this religious infrastructure was highly developed both as an authority on Islamic matters and as a national organization. The religious hierarchy had reached a position where it held almost exclusive judgement on Islamic matters with a supporting infrastructure that extended throughout the country. Indeed the mullahs had acquired temporal as well as spiritual power. As Ruthven remarks:

> The Mujtahids were not just a spiritual elite. They disposed of a degree of social, economic and political power which made them a growing force in the land...In addition to acting as tax collectors..., the mujtahids and mullahs controlled by them were entitled to a 10% commission...[13]

Before examining the Iranian Revolution and the downfall of the Pahlavis, we should look at the characteristics of Shiism that developed in Iran as a result of Persian history and culture..

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSIAN SHIISM

Persia's historical and cultural background has had a profound effect on the country and been a strong influence on the attitudes of the people. As we have described, Iran has an ancient and almost continuous history with a special Persian character stretching from the time of Cyrus in the 6th century BC to the present. Despite influences from Greek, Christian, Arab, Turk and Mongol, an authentic Persian character has shone through. The Persians have done this not by opposing such influences, but by gently and almost imperceptibly adapting them to their own cultural reference points. While different rulers came and went, while new ideas invaded and receded, the deeper cultural motifs, which compose Persian identity and which were

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evident in the ancient world, largely remained. The development of Shiism has been one feature of this process.

When the Sasanians were vanquished by the Arabs in the early Islamic conquests at a moment of national weakness, it was not surprising that the Persians did not immediately share the feeling of inexorable victory that Islam projected. In contrast to Christianity, which was persecuted for the first three and half centuries of its existence, Islam was 'programmed for victory'.[14] But in the circumstances it must have seemed more natural for the Persians to identify with the lost cause of Ali and Hussein than the triumphant trail of the Umayyads. Furthermore, rather like the early Christians, the Persians felt that they could salvage a victory from the suffering and martyrdom of one man. In fact, almost as an echo of Christian prophecy, many Shias insist that Hussein's death at Karbala was a voluntary sacrifice at an ordained time and place: he knew his death would have more impact than a short term victory over the Umayyads.[15]

In retrospect it seems natural that the Persians would find an alternative to the Sunni faith, which was perceived by many to be dry and legalistic. With their previous imperial organization they had no need for a new set of laws to order their lives. They were not arrayed in loose tribal affiliations like the Arabs of the Najd or the Berbers of North Africa; they had actually governed themselves successfully for centuries both as a nation and an empire. In Shiism they found a way to express both their nationality and their temporary status as a proud people who had suffered at the hands of oppressors.

The Persian identification with Shiism during the Umayyad era is understandable both as an expression of their feelings as a national entity and as a way of explaining a

seemingly unfair world of inequality and suffering. But the continued adherence throughout the Abbasid period, when the Persian ascendancy reasserted itself in government, is less obvious. The key lies in the concept of the Imam.

Once the infallibility of the Imam ¬s a descendant of the Prophet had been established it became hallowed doctrine, as explained in Chapter Two. When the Twelfth Imam disappeared and the idea developed of the Mahdi coming again to save the world, followers were less inclined to reject a faith that seemed to offer hope and salvation. This feeling held Persian Shiism together during the uncertain era before the Safavids made it the official state religion. Since then it has developed its own momentum, assisted by the prominence of the clergy and the importance that they derive from 'imamism'.

It was the perceived danger of the concept of the Imamate and the power it seemed to give the Mullahs that concerned the Pahlavis. In turn it was the increasing reliance on the West with its undermining values that alarmed the Mullahs.

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Although discontent had been apparent for a long time, the revolution that swept the Shah from power in 1979 seemed to come suddenly. It was a unique event and unprecedented in Islam: a complete government overthrown by a so called 'fundamentalist' organization representing no political party and with no official arms. The reasons for success defy simple analysis; there is a complex intermingling of political and religious factors. But it is worth highlighting a few prominent features of the revolution in order to put Shia fundamentalist ideology into context.

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The Pahlavis had never been universally popular, but it was their political ineptitude as much as anything else that hastened their downfall. The first Pahlavi, Reza, was appointed by the British and was crowned in 1925. At first he tried to mollify the Ulama by visiting Qom and promising 'to preserve and guard the majesty of Islam'.[16] However, his subsequent reforms, such as banning the veil for women and insisting on Western dress and peaked hats for men, were interpreted as un-Islamic. Furthermore by calling himself Pahlavi, an ancient Persian name, he was thought to be favouring pre-Islamic tradition. In fact he was attempting to modernise in a way that would allow Iran to develop as a modern, competitive state, using Turkey as a model.[17] But Reza Shah failed to take account of the spiritual dimension and the deeply held values among his people that had accumulated over the centuries. Despite his sincere aims, he achieved neither the popularity nor the legitimate authority to carry out his reforms.

Reza Shah was forced to abdicate by the British in 1941, following his apparent support for the Nazis, to allow his son Mohammad Reza to take over. Mohammad Reza emulated his father by initially trying to find favour with the clerics, but later embarked on the road to modernization by means of Westernization - or 'Westoxification' as it was sometimes dubbed. Modernization is generally popular in developing countries, but it has to be carried out with sensitivity to local culture and should be introduced as a coordinated and phased programme. In hindsight, the Shah clearly forced the package too quickly on the people who perceived any benefits as going mostly to the rich. Their perceptions were well founded with the emergence of a meretriciously Westernized elite who affected to prefer European to indigenous commodities, from food to clothes to attitudes.

The Shah attempted to identify himself more closely with Persian culture, but he did so not through Islam but through a contrived assertion of continuous monarchy for 2,500 years. The ceremonies he enacted at the old Achemenian capital Persepolis in 1971 were seen by many Iranians as little more than personal vanity. The final insult to Islam came when he decided to introduce the 'royalist calendar' which dated back to the Achemenian dynasty. The symbolic significance of the Hijra, so central to Islamic heritage, was neglected. Indeed some even thought it would only be a matter of time before Zoroastrianism were reintroduced as an official religion.

In a more direct way the Shah tried to undermine the authority of the Ulama. He created a Department of Religious Corps and Religious Affairs as a rival organization in an attempt to supplant the traditional clergy. He then used a combination of bribes, punishments and forcible exiles to persuade the Ulama to support his regime.[18] But as Hiro says:

> If anything, the Shah's authoritarianism and repression of the ulama, and the rush of modernism, made ordinary Iranians more, not less, religious.[19]

It was not difficult for the fertile Shia imagination to picture the Shah as the hated Yazid (who had killed Hussein at Karbala in 680) and the Pahlavis as the worldly, luxury loving Umayyads.

The Shah was vain, immature and lacked judgement. He probably acted in a way that he thought best for Iran, but he tried to bring the country into the modern world while retaining those historical and cultural roots that suited him: linkage to the old Persian system of imperial monarchy.

He failed to appreciate how strong the spiritual and emotional appeal of Shiism was in the peoples' minds and how organized the Ulama were in opposition. He had lost touch.

KHOMEINI'S FUNDAMENTALISM

Khomeini had an astute sense of politics. He knew how to appeal to a large sector of the Iranian people and unite the community in opposition to the Shah. The clergy were in fact more accustomed to playing an active, popular - albeit at this stage - largely apolitical role than the Pahlavis, who had simply come from the ranks of the Army.

As explained earlier, the Ulama during the Qajar rule had developed an organization capable of exerting political power when necessary. This power had been used on two notable occasions: the Tobacco Protest in 1891-2 when the Ulama joined the opposition to concessions given to Britain which they interpreted as the beginning of unwanted penetration of Western, or at least, non-Iranian interests. The second time was the period between 1905-1911 when there was considerable turmoil over the creation of a constitution. The Ulama played an active part to ensure that this constitution was set in an Islamic framework and did not contravene the Sharia. Apart from the practical results of this involvement, this incident served to accustom the country to the activist role of the Ulama, even if they did not repeat it for another 60 years.

Khomeini took this tradition of political involvement and developed it further into a political theory and activism. He believed that Islam was a religion that was defined by action; to reduce it simply to a series of rituals and perfunctory worship was to deny the essence of the Prophet's message. Like the Shah, he sought t

legitimize his ideas with an appeal to Persian roots; but, unlike the Shah, he saw these roots as Islamic. He read the peoples' moods and aspirations with more subtelty than the occupier of the Peacock throne had done and linked his protest movement to the simple symbols of the Shia faith. These symbols could be expressed clearly and effectively in Shia images of the Great Satan (Iblis) and the martyrdom of Hussein. The Shah and his American support were portrayed as fulfilling modern roles of Yazid. And such portrayals became all the more vivid during the annual re-enactments of Shia passion at Karbala. Khomeini was able to harness the language of slogan and symbol using catchphrases and the American flag as effective props. He was also able to portray the Shah's modernization as un-Islamic as it separated state from religion. He would cite the unity of 'din' and 'dawlah' (religion and state) under the Prophet, or his successor Ali, as the ideal.

A significant factor in Khomeini's success was, ironically, his exile to Iraq. The Iraqis were delighted to allow him to campaign against the Shah, and his proximity to the holy shrines helped to identify him with the messianic hope implicit in the Shia doctrine of the Hidden Imam. It is revealing that he enjoyed being called 'imam' by many of his followers rather than 'ayatollah'.[20] Although he was clear in his own mind about his ultimate goal, and his political theory had appeared as early as 1944, he carefully avoided being too specific in describing his ideas for the political organization of the state he planned to set up in Iran. When he began his campaign in exile, he stuck to generalities and the common ground of opposition to the Shah. He also avoided direct reference to Western ideas of nationalism, democracy and socialism; his appeal was to fundamental Islamic principles, to the emotions of the Iranian people that he understood so well, and he presented his case through the powerful medium of Shia mythology.

Central to Khomeini's fundamental views was his concept of the 'wilayat al faqih' or 'guardianship of the jurisconsult'. He believed in two basic principles for Islamic government: that God is the only acceptable legislator; and that a Muslim should only "obey God, His Prophet, and those in authority among you" (Quran 4:62).[21] Although previous Shia theologians such as Sheikh Ansari (d 1864) had designated limits to the power of the Faqih, as opposed to that of the Imam who had divine authority, Khomeini succeeded in blurring the distinction between 'fiqh' (human comprehension of Islamic law) and 'sharia' (the revealed or divine law itself). For Shias the doctrine of the Wilayah, as Akhavi says:

> Stands out above all other obligations of the faith save those of the profession of the faith in the unity of God and in the prophecy of Mohammad.[22]

Furthermore, since Shias believe that only those versed in religious law are capable of deductive reasoning from Islamic principles (ijtihad), there is a central role for the Faqih until the return of the Imam. However, Khomeini made efforts to counter his Sunni and Western critics (who suggested that he attributed superhuman qualities to the Faqih, amounting to Imam infallibility) by stressing the human responsibility involved in fulfilling 'wilayat'.[23]

Nonetheless, the concept of the Wilayat al Faqih played an important part in the Iranian Revolution.

> By controlling the basic processes of government, the jurisprudent is positioned to guarantee institutional conformity to the agenda for restructuring consciousness and to articulate by expression and example the content of the genuine Islamic identity sought.[24]

Although he did not assume the position of Faqih until after the Shah's departure from Iran, Khomeini clearly saw himself in this designated role. This gave him the confidence to muster ideological unity amongst the widespread and disparate opposition to the Shah. But his skill lay in remaining unspecific on issues where precision might have caused rupture; his success was in projecting his message in the sort of terms which related to the emotions and aspirations of the Iranian people.

Fundamentalism would not have been the term used by Khomeini to describe his movement. His mission was one of reviving a vision of Islamic society based on the Quran - but with interpretation of current issues through the firm guidance of a Faqih. His views permitted a subtle merging of the Faqih with the mystique of the Imam, thereby bestowing a special, almost divine, authority on those who exercise Ijtihad on behalf of the people. He achieved this mystique through projecting his message from the proximity of Karbala and conveying it in emotional Shia slogans. The power of his message was in its direct call to action: it should only be a small step from Ijtihad to Jihad. And one of the advantages that Khomeini had was a clear target at which to direct his Jihad. In this Shiism assisted. By invoking the emotion of the Husein's martyrdom at Karbala, traditional figures of hate were recreated in images of the Shah and the USA, symbolized by the crown and the American flag.

JIHAD

Nowhere is Khomeini's sense of activism more clearly portrayed than in his utterances on Jihad. Jihad appeared frequently in his speeches and lectures both as a rallying cry and as a vibrant link to the past. Like Banna and the

Muslim Brotherhood he saw Jihad as a unifying force and as an active bond for Islamic loyalty.

There are several themes which can be discerned in Khomeini's version of Jihad. The first is its invocation in the struggle against the monarchical regime in Iran. To do this he revived images of Hussein in his struggle against the corrupt Umayyads. Here he spoke of the Lord of the Martyrs in his struggle (jihad) against oppressors and tyrannical governments in order to establish an Islamic government and implement the ordinances of Islam.[25] He elaborated this example and updated the context by explaining:

> Two important themes may be deduced from this tradition. The first is the principle of the governance of the faqih, and the second is that the faqihs, by means of Jihad and enjoining good and forbidding evil, must expose and overthrow tyrannical rulers and rouse the people so that the universal movement of all alert Muslims can establish government in place of tyrannical regimes.[26]

He invokes Shia traditions to emphasize again:

> The Imams not only fought against tyrannical rulers, oppressive governments, and corrupt courts themselves; they also summoned the Muslims to wage Jihad against those enemies.[27]

He makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the Faqih to lead: "We must take the lead over other Muslims in embarking on this sacred Jihad."[28]

The second theme in his writing on Jihad is its bonding quality between Muslims:

> ...feelings of brotherhood and cooperation may be strengthened, intellectual maturity fostered, solutions found for political and social problems,

with Jihad and collective effort as the natural outcome.[29]

The third theme is the use of Jihad as a mobilizer. Khomeini did not believe in peacetime conscription for moral reasons, but in wartime there would be a universal obligation for Jihad, imposed on every fit male.[30]

> So, courageous sons of Islam, stand up!... Arouse them to enthusiastic activity, and turn the people...into dedicated mujahids.[31]

It is probably as a mobilizing force that Iranian Islamic zeal is most widely known.

> The armed forces, the Revolutionary Guards, the gendarmerie and the police stand ready to defend the country and uphold order, and they are prepared to offer their lives in Jihad for the sake of Islam.[32]

When he achieved power Khomeini found himself involved in a war for survival against Iraq and as Dr Gawrych says: "Iranian behaviour in this war demonstrated both the rise and the decline of Jihad on the battlefield."[33] Initially, with Islam as the inspiration, and the prospect of a glorious martyrdom as the probable result, human wave assaults characterized Iranian tactics. However, common sense eventually overcame religious zeal, and enthusiasm waned for needless and almost self-indulgent slaughter, particularly when the fighting was no longer on the sacred soil of Iran.

Despite the ultimate failure of the passionate disregard for personal safety that Jihad inspired, it is nonetheless most impressive that it could have been achieved at all. At least in World War One, where the self sacrifice was frequently of a similar scale, there was a degree of training and military discipline to provide a basis for

collective morale. In Iran this almost intoxicating 'esprit' was produced almost entirely by the power of Islam, combined with some feelings of nationalism. The Shia soldiers sublimated the dusty death on Iraqi barbed wire into a glorious martyrdom; the headlong rush into the enemy's steel was a simple step to Paradise.

Khomeini did not achieve this state of mind overnight. The Iranian soldiers would not have sacrificed themselves so readily simply by virtue of professing Shiism and Islam. Khomeini succeeded in linking his contemporary struggle, first against the Shah and then against Iraq, with the passion and emotional drama of early Shiism. By hitting the right chord in the Iranian psyche, Khomeini produced a transformation in attitude. Each revolutionary or soldier would actually have felt the living presence of Hussein as he re-enacted for himself the events of Karbala in the streets of Tehran or on the banks of the Tigris. And that is the key to Khomeini's brand of fundamentalism. He translated the basic principles of Islam into the vocabulary that Shiites could understand, with sharp definitions of Good and Evil and their attendant images. He gave the modern struggle an archetypal dimension and having given himself, with some inadvertent help from the Shah, the legitimacy to rule as an autocrat, he was able to establish the state according to his principles.

Khomeini's views on Jihad were not entirely oriented towards the struggle against temporal enemies. He also observed the more traditional view of the Greater and Lesser Jihad. Although much of his turbulent life was spent preaching the Lesser Jihad, that is the struggle against the visible enemy, he acknowledged the primacy of the Greater Jihad - the inner struggle.

All forms of Jihad that may be waged in the world
depend on this greater Jihad; if we succeed in the
greater Jihad, then all our strivings will count
as Jihad, and if not, they will be satanic.[34]

Those who engaged in Jihad in the first age of
Islam advanced and pushed forward...for they had
earlier waged a Jihad against themselves. Without
the inner Jihad, the outer is impossible.[35]

Khomeini knew that the commitment for the Lesser or outer
Jihad could only be achieved after acquiring the transparent
purity of the Greater Jihad, the inner struggle. Only by
preparing his adherents mentally and spiritually for Jihad
would he be able to rely on them to make the ultimate
sacrifice without hesitation.

LIBERAL AND RADICAL FUNDAMENTALISM

This chapter is primarily concerned with the Iranian
revolution and the Shia fundamentalism as interpreted and
exploited by Khomeini. However, there were other influences
in Iran which had considerable bearing on the development of
the revolution and the shape of the regime which took over
from the Shah. These additional influences can loosely be
described as liberal fundamentalism on the one hand and
radical fundamentalism on the other. Liberal fundamentalism
is not a contradiction in terms, as it might appear, but
simply a way of labelling one end of the fundamentalist
spectrum.

The leading representative of the liberal wing was
Ayatollah Shariat Madari. Older than Khomeini but equally
respected as a scholar, he believed in a more flexible
approach to interpreting Islam in a modern context. His
position was characterized by two main themes: the first was
the position of the Ulama, the second was the accommodation

of modernization into Islam. He could almost be described as a modernist.

Madari believed that: "the Ulama should act as the guides for government but not necessarily involve themselves directly in political affairs".[36] This was in complete contrast to Khomeini who viewed the Ulama as playing a strong and active role in all aspects of social and political life and that one of them should be the supreme leader of the state. Madari's views on such involvement were essentially practical: he thought that it would be demeaning for a cleric to involve himself in the muddle of politics and have to accept the compromises and expediency of day to day dealings. He would not be able to maintain his principles or his integrity and would lose the basis of his authority as a result.

He had little difficulty with modernization in itself. He knew that the world never stood still and it would be wrong to deny people the benefits of modern science and technology simply for arcane, traditional reasons: "despite what the Government [of the Shah] says, our people do not demonstrate against modernization but against dictatorship."[37] Khomeini, to be fair, did not oppose modern science and technology either, but was happy to condemn their source.

Madari was not a political activist and his opinions were expressed quietly. While opposing the regime's centralization when it came to power in 1979, he remained true to his own principles "that the great mujtahids should not involve themselves directly in political affairs".[38] Consequently his liberal views were actively, and initially unsuccessfully, represented by Mehdi Bazargan and others.[39] But as a pressure group who voiced the concerns of Iranian minorities, such as the Azeris,[40] towards the Constitution,

the liberals played a formative part in providing constructive opposition. Their views may eventually prevail.

The radical wing of fundamentalism was represented by the personality and speeches of Ali Shariati. He spent many years abroad in exile or as a student. He was in France during the Algerian revolution and made contact with some of the Algerian 'mujahideen'. He was influenced by the dedication of such groups in the Algerian struggle and immediately saw similarities in the anti-imperial struggle in Iran.[41] He was also influenced by French writers such as Sartre and Gide who convinced him of the power of the radical thinker.

In the 1960s he was an active and tireless lecturer, advocating social and political change through the affirmation of the exclusive truth of the Quran. He interpreted the Quranic message vigorously and imaginatively while retaining the primacy of the Unity of God: Tawhid.[42]

> My world-view consists of Tawhid. Tawhid in the sense of oneness of God is of course accepted by all monotheists. But Tawhid as a world-view in the sense I intend in my theory means regarding the whole universe as a unity.[43]

How far this applies to non-Muslim societies is not clear, but it does imply a unity of mankind which is based on human bonds of brotherhood rather than the more artificial relations provided by laws. To support the basis of Tawhid he developed ideas which would reconcile the modern world with Quranic tradition; these involved social and educational reform and inevitably such views came into conflict not only with the Shah but also the current religious leadership. He vigorously attacked the clerical institution.

Shariati was a leading figure but he did not have his own organization; he was a voice of radical inspiration and a focus of discontent. However, he may indirectly have helped to found some of the active radical groups such as the Mujahidin. Shariati died in 1977, almost certainly as the hands of SAVAK.

ORGANIZATION

Khomeini's traditional fundamentalism prevailed over the liberal and radical wings mainly through his superior organization. Like Banna and his Muslim Brotherhood, Khomeini did not simply trust in divine inspiration or even timely intervention; Muslims should actively prepare the way for the Hidden Imam. Achievements for the cause of Islam had to be carried out by men; this meant action rather than introspection; and it meant organization. Banna had to build his own organization, which he did with painstaking and patient thoroughness, while Khomeini was fortunate to have an infrastructure already in place. The clergy in Iran had not only an influential position but also a system of communication throughout the country; the mosques provided meeting places, the Friday sermons spread the message. Furthermore he enjoyed the advantage that it is generally much more difficult to stamp out a religious movement than a political one.

But Khomeini did not rely exclusively on the Islamic context for his ideas and organization. Despite his condemnation of all things Western, he borrowed some institutions for his government: a written constitution, an elected assembly, and a hierarchy similar to an episcopate (which he inherited). As Professor Bernard Lewis remarked in a recent analysis of Iranian fundamentalist attitudes, even the idea of political freedom was Western.[44] Khomeini was

sufficiently astute to recognize the value and attraction of some aspects of Western civilization, although he would not publicly admit it; after all there might even have been some good things in the Umayyad court.

ASSESSMENT

Whatever our views of Khomeini as a figure, his revolution must rank as a success. Almost single handed he overthrew a regime that not only had the committed support of a superpower but was also regarded as the most stable and secure of all the Middle East monarchies. It could be argued that, rather perversely, it was the very support by the USA that hastened the Shah's downfall. But the real reasons lie in Khomeini's combination of the spiritual and practical dimensions; he called on Islamic precedents that gave his authority legitimacy and then rallied his followers against a carefully defined enemy.

The Shah had attempted to establish legitimacy by harking back to pre-Islamic times. This failed to strike the right chord except among those who could identify with the elaborate and increasingly decadent court. In contrast, Khomeini was able to recognize the need for passion and emotion in the ordinary Iranian. He did this through Shia tradition, which at times verges on mythology, but above all is shaped in a way that relates to the religious and emotional needs of the Iranian people. By subtle play on the themes of Karbala, the Great Satan and the infallibility of the Imam he was able to bring the fundamentals of Shiism to the 20th century.

It is these themes that characterized Khomeini's fundamentalism: the identification of the Great Satan, the doctrine of the Hidden Imam and the Wilayat al Faqih. The

Great Satan developed from the pre-Islamic influence of Zoroastrianism with its dualism of Good and Evil and was preserved in Shia Islam. Although Sunni Islam acknowledges Satan as well, it is not presented as such a vivid or threatening figure. For Shias, various historical figures have become incarnate in that image: Yazid, the murderer of Hussein, and latterly the Shah and Saddam. It is a powerful idea and one that focuses emotions in a tangible, realizable way. As William Beeman says:

> Few in the West were able to appreciate the full meaning of Khomeini's metaphor [the Great Satan], some perhaps equating it with the Judeo-Christian notion of the Devil. In fact, the image of the Great Satan is far richer and more potent as a rhetorical device for Iranians than the Western Mephistopheles figure...It was an important device in the reeducation of the Iranian people to the new revolutionary ideology of the Iranian state.[45]

To the perplexity of many Americans, they became the concrete symbol of the spiritual rot that afflicted Iran. They were the final invaders, albeit economic and cultural, of the Persian purity that had been successively defiled by Alexander, the Arabs, the Mongols, the Russians and the British.

The Wilayat al Faqih was a concept developed by Khomeini from the traditional theme of the subordination of the temporal to the spiritual, and a system of government that reflected this. It means the 'guardianship of the jurisconsult' and effectively implies the authority of one person "solely qualified to act as ultimate ruler or arbiter of a political order."[46] He saw himself as the supreme guardian with full administrative authority until the coming of the Hidden Imam. The surprising part of the revolution was how widely accepted this apparently anachronistic concept was. Perhaps it was the firmly held belief of the

infallibility of the Imam that allowed Khomeini to be accepted so convincingly by the Shias in Iran.

Jihad played a crucial role: "Islam is the religion of militant individuals who are committed to truth and justice": Khomeini used to say. He favoured action over ritual, militance over study. He rallied his supporters and maintained cohesion by recourse to Jihad. It was by concentrating attacks on figures of hate in a succession of holy campaigns that he kept the momentum going even after coming to power; first against America, with the hostage affair, and then against Iraq. He ensured that the object of attack was easily recognizable, either in human form or as a symbol; hence the treatment of Americans and their flag.

But a drawback to this approach was a lack of intellectual analysis of Islam among his accolytes; they were content to be swept up in the emotional link to past passions and re-enact martyrdom as ordered by the Imam. The fact that some were prepared to do this in the streets of Beirut or even Buenos Aires demonstrates the commitment they felt to the spirit of Shia fundamentalism and the powerful traditions implicit in that appeal.

ENDNOTES

1 JFC Fuller, <u>The Generalship of Alexander the Great</u> (New Brunswick: Da Capo Press 1960), p.74.

2 Albert Hourani, <u>A History of the Arab Peoples</u> (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1991), p.9.

3 Ibid.

4 When the Roman empire declined in the west it consolidated in Byzantium, the eastern part of its sphere. The Byzantines and the Sasanians lived in peaceful coexistence for several hundred years until they virtually destroyed each other during the wars of the 6th and early 7th Centuries AD.

5 The Abbasid court was characterized by a switch from monarchy to a system of a Caliph who had nominal authority advised by viziers or ministers who had considerable power. This system echoed the old Persian one and can be seen as a reassertion of Persian culture.

6 Malise Ruthven, <u>Islam in the World</u> (New York: Oxford University Press 1984), p.222.

7 Muslims accorded those monotheistic religions with written scripture 'Ahl al Kitab' - People of the Book and with this status came tolerance. This epithet applied mainly to Jews and Christians but Zoroastrians were also given this status.

8 The Thousand and One Nights conveys the common perception of the Arab Empire at its most romantic. It purports to describe the court of Haroun ar Rashid, but since it was written in 12th Century Cairo it probably reflects the scenes of Egypt as much as Baghdad.

[9] Dilip Hiro, <u>Holy Wars. The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism</u> (New York: Routledge 1989), p.142.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ruthven, p.221.

[12] Ibid, p.222.

[13] Ibid, p.225.

[14] Ibid, p.289.

[15] Ibid, p.189.

[16] Shahrough Akhavi, <u>Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran</u> (Albany: State University of New York Press 1980), p.29.

[17] Turkey had modernised successfully in a nationalist and secular way under Mustapha Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s. It had, however, required the leadership and drive provided by the exceptional military and political qualities of Ataturk to succeed. The Shah lacked such qualities.

[18] Hiro, p.163.

[19] Ibid, p.164.

[20] Ruthven, p.225.

[21] Azar Tabari, "Shia Clergy in Iranian Politics", in <u>Religion and Politics in Iran</u>, edited by Nikki Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press 1983), p.61.

[22] Akhavi, p.10.

[23] Hamid Enayat, "Iran: Khumayni's Concept of the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult" in <u>Islam in the Political Process</u>, edited by James Piscatori (New York: Cambridge University Press 1983), p.161.

[24] Gregory Rose, "The Thought of Khomeini" in <u>Religion and Politics in Islam</u>, edited by Nikki Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press 1983), p.187.

[25] Imam Khomeini, <u>Islam and Revolution</u>, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press 1981), p.108.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid, p.148.

[28] Ibid, p.116.

[29] Ibid, p.130.

[30] Tabari, p.63.

[31] Khomeini, p.132.

[32] Ibid, p.303.

[33] George Gawrych, "Jihad in the Twentieth Century" from Modern Military History of the Middle East (Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, Command and General Staff College, 1991), p.6.

[34] Khomeini, p.385.

[35] Ibid, p.387.

[36] John Voll, Islam Continuity and Change in the Modern World. (Boulder: Westview Press 1982), p.298.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, p.299.

[39] Mehdi Bazargan was the first prime minister after the fall of the Shah's government. He resigned after a few months.

[40] The Azeris were from western Iran enjoying a separate culture and language. They had supported the revolution in the hope that they would get special recognition for their special identity, within an Islamic context, which had been denied under the Shah.

[41] Ali Shariati, Man and Islam (Houston: Free Islamic Literature, 1974), p.X of Introduction by Publisher.

[42] Voll, p.300.

[43] Ali Shariati, On the Sociology of Islam, translated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press 1979), p.82. Taken from an endnote from Voll.

44 Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage"from _The Atlantic Monthly_. September 1990.

45 William Beeman, "Images of the Great Satan: Representations of the United States in the Iranian Revolution" from Keddie. p.191.

46 Enayat, p.160.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF THESIS

This thesis has attempted to investigate Islamic fundamentalism and establish how the concept of Jihad has been utilized in the furtherance of its aims. The study has sought to outline the main principles and common features of fundamentalist movements by taking a historical overview, starting with the beginnings of Islam and the prevailing conditions in the Hijaz in the 7th century. This brief survey included those parts of Mohammad's life and the early expansion of Islam that would have direct bearings on later fundamentalist movements. It dwelt specifically on the centrality of Mohammad's message: the revival of pure monotheism and the 'oneness' of Allah; it also discussed his policies and style of government in Medina, particularly his use of armed action to achieve his goals. Meanwhile Jihad gradually emerged as a dimension of Islam, both as a personal struggle against evil and as community obligation to fight unbelievers.

Chapter Two looked at the early years of Islam. On Mohammad's death, decisive military action not only ensured

the survival of Islam but facilitated its dynamic conquest of most of the known world. But internal dissension over succession to the Prophet resulted in a profound and lasting split between Sunni and Shia. Since then, Sunnis have formed the vast majority of Muslims and have followed orthodox Islam, relying on the Quran, the Sunna and interpretation from Ulama for religious guidance. In contrast the minority Shias have developed a more emotional, passionate response to Islam, nourished over the centuries by the blood of martyrs and the hope of messianic fulfilment in the return of the Hidden Imam.

Chapter Three assessed fundamentalism generically. In time accretions of various kinds, but particularly Sufism, were perceived by the orthodox as threats to the purity of Islam. Although theological schools and certain individuals sought a return to Islamic principles, they were not effective on a wide scale. The Wahhabis in the 18th century were the first successful movement to restore the religion to its pristine state in Central Arabia. They succeeded largely through a combination of ideological and physical force. In some ways they acted as a model for others to follow.

Chapter Four studied a modern Sunni attempt to revive Islamic principles. In Egypt the Muslim Brothers attempted to counter the perceived un-Islamic policies adopted by a government influenced by colonialism and nationalism. They sought reform rather than power and enjoyed an equivocal relationship with political parties. Although their leader, Banna, had clear ideas over the use of violence to achieve his aims, after his death the Society became too large and disorganized for sufficient control of extreme elements. Their achievement was in providing an active conscience of Islam during a difficult phase in the development of the Middle East.

Chapter Five investigated the Shia revolution which overthrew the Shah. In Iran the fundamentalists seized power in a dramatic display of religious unity and purpose. Khomeini ousted the Shah partly through his own astuteness and Pahlavi ineptitude, but mainly because he was able to appeal to the deep religious emotions of the Iranian people. The concept of martyrdom played a large part both against the Shah's forces and later against Iraq. Jihad featured strongly as a motivating and as a unifying force.

PRINCIPLES OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism is an alien term in its application to Islam. However, since it is now firmly established in Western vocabulary, there is little point in searching for more accurate epithets to describe the revival movements which have characterized Islamic history and which feature prominently in modern Middle East politics.

When used in the sense of renewing, fundamentalism is almost as old as Islam itself. It is a religion of continual renewal; indeed Mohammad would insist that he was merely restoring the ancient monotheism of Abraham rather than introducing a fresh set of ideas. Throughout its history, Islam has been invigorated by contemporary or modernizing influences which have been more or less balanced by a countering revival of its basic and timeless principles. Where this balance lay has always been a controversial doctrinal question.

Few Muslims would doubt the importance of the 'fundamentals' of their faith. They are enjoined in the clear articles of their beliefs and in the five pillars of Islam. Controversy arises, however, on interpretation. One

extreme insists on an almost literal interpretation, the
other allows a more adaptational approach. It is unlikely
that there will ever be reconciliation between the two.
Sunnis and Shias have also adopted different approaches:
Sunnis only acknowledge the Quran and Sunna as authorities
for doctrine; they accept the interpretation of the Ulama
(with the proviso that officially the door of Ijtihad is
shut) with the application of Qiyas (analogy) and Ijma
(consensus). For them this forms the Usul (basics) of
Islamic jurisprudence.

The Shia approach is coloured by their dramatic history
of self-sacrifice and the mystique of the Hidden Imam.
Consequently they allow the leaders of their religious
communities greater scope in personal interpretation of the
law. This was taken to its ultimate extent in Khomeini's
doctrine of the Wilayat al-Faqih (guardianship of the
jurisconsult).

The common ground shared by all fundamentalists is
their position on the 'oneness' of Allah and the role of
Mohammad and his Medinan polity as models. They also share a
belief that the only hope for the community is through a
return to the principles of Islam and the application of the
Sharia for all problems.

FUNDAMENTALIST METHODS

Having diagnosed that the ills of the community stemmed
from abandonment of Islamic principles, fundamentalists
would urge a return to these principles as the only cure.
The problem is how. The initial process almost replicates
Mohammad's own consciousness of Islam: it starts with the
affirmation of Tawhid - Mohammad's awareness of the need to
r store Abraham's monotheism. The process continues with an

interpretation of the situation in the light of basic Islamic principles, disregarding the views of scholars in the intervening years - Mohammad's formulation of his ideas without recourse to Judaic or Christian influences. Finally the process demands some means to put these principles into effect - Mohammad's move to Yathrib, the Medinan polity and the resort to Jihad.

This has been the basic model for fundamentalist movements. By consciously looking to the Prophet's life for guidance they have preferred action over thought; and action in the circumstances has meant Jihad.

JIHAD

To many in the West, Jihad equates with fanatical extremism. Indeed some such branches of Muslim militant organizations have included Jihad in their titles or sobriquets. However, the genuine use of Jihad as an Islamic concept by fundamentalists has been responsible and consistent with the Quran and Sunna.

The starting point has been the Greater Jihad: only with a pure inner self can a Muslim maintain the struggle against Islam's enemies with the integrity and commitment to win. After inner purification, the Lesser Jihad is invoked to pursue the wider aim of converting the Abode of War into the Abode of Islam. Mohammad used Jihad as a way of rallying his forces to a cause above the traditional tribal loyalties; his successors found in it a cohesive force which helped to unite the Muslim armies in their dramatic conquests. Similarly, fundamentalists have recognized its quality as a binding element amid the uncertainties and tensions arising from involvement in active politics.

All Muslims see Jihad as active struggle. By their nature fundamentalists advocate purification, by force if necessary. It is in the application of this force where fundamentalists differ.

Hassan al Banna saw the value of Jihad not in its intensity, but in the way it was applied. To be justifed, use of force had to be effective: arbitrary or unrestrained violence was not productive. He saw Jihad not only as an inspiring rallying cry but as a focus for loyalty and obedience. He was more military than militant. Indeed he organized the Brotherhood on blatant army lines with echelons, battalions, troops and even a hierarchical headquarter element. His view of Jihad moulded his infrastructure.

For Khomeini the emotional intensity of Jihad was all important. He needed to inspire his followers to achieve what most would have regarded as an impossible task: the overthrow of a régime which had the strongest internal and external military support in the Middle East. To do this required more than just sound use of force; it needed the zealous fervour and complete commitment that only an appeal to the deep rooted emotions of Shiism could inspire. Even after the Shah's fall this fanatical momentum continued with waves of soldiers volunteering in rushes for glorious martyrdom on Iraqi barbed wire.

Jihad is a powerful force in Islam but it defies precise definition. It is like a current of electricity where its strength and intensity can only be observed by results; it flows freely in the Muslim world, but to active fundamentalists it is primarily a force for energy and unity.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Asabiya   The spirit of group solidarity and loyalty that binds a community or tribe together.

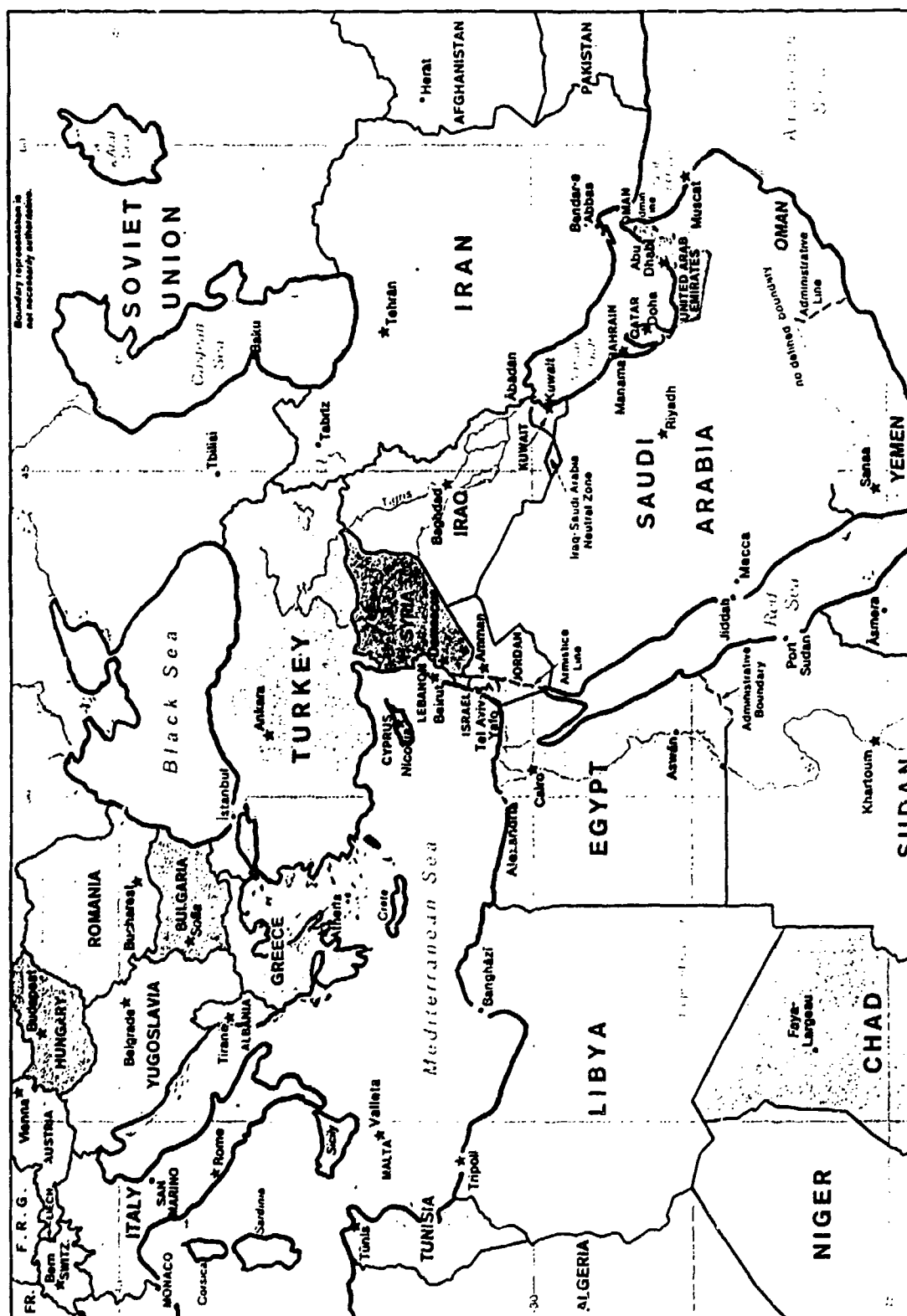**Caliph**   From the Arabic "khalifa". Successor to Prophet and leader of Islamic community.

Dhikr   Sufi recitation.

Fiqh   Islamic jurisprudence. A "faqih" is one who practises "fiqh".

Hadith   Literally "saying". In Islam it means a recorded tradition from the Prophet's life which forms part of the Sunna (qv).

Hijra   Mohammad's flight to Medina from Mecca in 622.

Ijtihad   Literally means "effort" as the verbal noun from the 8th form of the root "jahada" - to struggle. In Islam it means independent judgement on a legal or theological question.

Ijma   Literally means "agreement". In Islam it means the consensus on legal questions; in theory, consensus of the community; in reality, consensus of the Ulama.

Imam   Prayer leader of Community, especially with Shias.

Ismaili   "Sevener" Shias. Those who believe that the direct line from Ali finished with the sixth Imam Ismail when he died in 760. They believe his son Mohammad will return as the "mahdi". They are a minority Shia sect.

Jahiliyya   The period of ignorance that preceded the coming of Islam.

Kharijite   From Arabic "kharaja" to go out. Describes those who seceded from the Islamic community at Siffin in 657 in opposition to the decision to settle the dispute between Ali and Mu'awiya by arbitration.

Madhdhab   School of Sunni Islamic law and doctrine. Four schools are: Hanifi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali.

Mujtahid	One who exercises "ijtihad" (qv).
Naib	Prophet.
Qadi	Judge.
Qiyas	Literally means "measure". In Islam it means analogy, normally to a legal or theological precedent.
Quran	The holy book of Muslims. Literally from the Arabic "qar'a" to read or recite. It consists of Mohammad's recitations from Allah, assembled after his death from the ex tempore materials on which they were recorded, and from the memories of those around him. It is organized into 114 chapters (or "suras") with no chronological order.
Shahada	Witnessing the faith by saying: "There is no god but God (Allah) and Mohammad is his Prophet".
Shari'a	Literally means "approach to a waterhole". In Islam it means revealed law.
Shia	The Muslim faction who believe that Mohammad's son-in-law Ali was his rightful successor.
Sufism	Islamic mysticism.
Sunna	Literally means habitual practice or custom. It has come to mean by tradition the sayings and doings of the Prophet. In some cases this has become legally binding precedent.
Sunni	Orthodox Muslim who practises the Sunna.
Ulama	Theological scholars or teachers. "Alim" is the singular.
Umma	The Muslim Community.
Usul	Literally "basics". Probably the nearest Arabic gets to "Fundamentals". The "usul al fiqh (qv)" are Quran, Sunna, Ijma' and Qiyas (qv).
Vizier	Minister. Arabic is "wazir".

The Expansion of the Islamic Empire in the 7th & 8th Centuries

Boundaries of the Byzantine empire
Expansion of Muslim power outside Arabia

500 Miles

800 Kilometres

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Toledo
Cordoba
Jabal-Tariq
Ceuta
Saragossa
Guadalquivir
Ebro

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Qayrawan

BLACK SEA
Constantinople

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Antioch
Aleppo
Sittin
Damascus
Jerusalem
Fustat
Alexandria

CASPIAN SEA

SASANIAN EMPIRE

Amu Darya (Oxus)
Nishapur
Isfahan
Hamadhan
Nihawand
Madan
Mosul
Tigris
Euphrates
Qadisiyya
Basra

THE GULF

RED SEA

Medina
Mecca
YEMEN

ETHIOPIA

The Modern Middle East

NOTABLE EVENTS AND DATES

EARLY ERA

Birth of Mohammad	570
First revelation	610
Hijra to Medina	622
Battle of Badr	624
Battle of Uhud	ᵓ625
Peace between Byzantium and Persia	629
Muslim occupation of Mecca	630
Death of Mohammad	632
Wars of Ridda	632-3
Euphrates campaign	633
Battle of Babylon	634
Battle of Ajnadain in Palestine	634
Battle of Bridge	634
Battle of Yarmuk	636
Battle of Qadisiya	637
Invasion of Egypt	639
Surrender of Egypt	641
Conquest of Persia	642
Battle of Siffin	657
Assassination of Ali	661
Martyrdom of Hussein at Karbala	680
Ummayad dynasty	661-750
Abbasid dynasty	749-1258
Fall of Baghdad	1258

EARLY CALIPHS

Abu Bakr	)		632-34
Omar	)	The Rightly Guided	634-44
Uthman	)	or "Ar-Rashidun"	644-56
Ali	)		656-61
Mu'awiya			661-80

MODERN ERA

Napoleon occupies Egypt and Syria	1798
Mohammad Ali becomes Governor of Egypt	1805
Opening of Suez Canal	1869
Occupation of Egypt by Britain	1882
First World War	1914-18
Treaty of Sevres	1920
Pahlavi dynasty in Iran	1925-79
Second World War	1939-45
First Arab-Israeli war	1948
Suez crisis	1956
Six Day War	1967
Yom Kippur War	1973
Fall of Shah of Iran	1979
Assassination of Sadat	1981

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     England, United Kingdom

9.   Dr Derek Hopwood
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     Oxford OX2 6JF
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