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Sa'id Hawwa and Islamic Revivalism in Ba'thist Syria (*)

Introduction

Islamic revivalism has passed through three major phases in modern times. The *tajdid* (renewal) of the 17th to early 19th centuries was the orthodox reaction to the inner decline of Islam, which has been pervaded by saint worship and popular practices that ran contrary to the Sharia. The most prominent component of this revival was the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sufi order, which received its reformist drive from Ahmad Sirhindi in India and reached its apex under the guidance of Shaikh Khaled in the Ottoman Empire. The *salafiyya* of the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries reflected Islamic modernizing effort to challenge Western political and cultural dominance. It sought to free Islam of the shackles of traditionalism by a return to the example of the ancestors (the *salaf*), and thus to restore its initial strength. By its ever-growing rejection of the religious institutions of later generations – the schools of law and the mystical orders – it made room for modern organizations such as the Muslim Brethren and the national movement. The *sabwa* (awakening) of the second half of the 20th century expresses Islamic disillusionment and plight under the authoritarian military regimes that swept the Middle East after independence. This most radical type of revival has turned against the modern all-pervasive secularized state and seeks to replace nationalism with Islam as the basic identity of society.

Tajdid, *salafiyya* and *sabwa* are not only historical phases, but also the roots of the current revival of Islam. Contemporary Islamic thinkers may exclusively identify with one of them, but more often combine

(*) Author's note : I am deeply indebted to Dr. Butrus Abu-Manneh for his encouragement and consult in preparing this article for publication.

elements from all three. The special blend of each thinker is determined by his personal inclination, particular upbringing and, above all, the unique circumstances of his country. Western analysis of contemporary Islamic revivalism tends to rely on Egypt and on the radical manifestations of its *sabwa*. Indeed, this seems to be the most conspicuous type of revival in this country, owing, to a large extent, to its centralized form of government. Yet, an analysis of Islamic revival in other, less centralized, countries might show that more scope is given to revised forms of the older types as well. A case in point is the thought of Sa'id Hawwa, the leading ideologue of the Islamic movement in Syria under the Ba'th.

This article analyses the ideological and conceptual framework of Hawwa's thought. It examines his views toward the fundamental question of modern Islam as to the nature of Islamic decline and the ways for its revival. The article tries to place Hawwa's ideas within the broader trends of Islamic revivalism, and thus to give an example to the impact of former layers on its present formulations. On the other hand, the article seeks to show Hawwa's special contribution to contemporary revival and to demonstrate that his particular blend of these trends is modeled by his own experiences and by the realities of the Muslims' condition in Syria. Finally, the article tries to give an example to the advantages of the semantic method in analysing modern Islamic thought. It examines Hawwa's attitude towards the three historical phases, and Syrian current trends, of Islamic revival by tracing the origins and showing the special use that he makes of three principal concepts : *ridda*, the conceptual tool for analysing the decline of Islam as well as for criticizing the radical wing of the *sabwa* ; *salafiyya*, the well-known concept that Hawwa redefines in order to rehabilitate orthodox Islam and especially the sufi orders ; and *rabbaniyya*, the innovative concept for a revised form of the *tajdid* that denotes Hawwa's own program for the revival of Islam. The implementation of Islamic revivalism in Ba'thist Syria is analysed in the last section of the article by Hawwa's treatment of the fourth concept of *jihad*.

The life of Sa'id Hawwa (1)

Sa'id Hawwa (1935-1989) was born in a poor quarter of Hama, the city which has always been regarded as the stronghold of religious conservatism in Syria. His father was a political activist in the movement of Akram Hourani, the instigator of the peasants of Hama against their

(1) On the biography of Hawwa see my, "Sa'id Hawwa – The Making of a Radical Muslim Thinker in Modern Syria", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, n°. 4 (October 1993), p. 601-623.

landlords. Hawwa was impressed by the political dynamism of Hourani, but under the influence of his teacher of Islam, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hamid, he chose the adverse direction of religion. Al-Hamid was the preacher of the Sultan mosque, the principal mosque of Hama, a Sufi shaykh of the Naqshbandi order and one of the founders of the Muslim Brethren branch in the city. Under his guidance Hawwa became a member of the Brethren in 1953 as well as a practising Sufi. He remained committed to both for the rest of his life.

During the second half of the 1950'S, while completing his studies at the Sharia Faculty in Damascus, Hawwa had the opportunity to meet Mustafa al-Siba'i, the founder and general supervisor of the Muslim Brethren in Syria. However, this acquaintance bore little affect upon Hawwa, who was more interested in visiting the Sufi shaykhs of the capital. The teachings of al-Siba'i and his colleagues seemed to him no more adequate to cope with the rise of the radical parties and the involvement of the military in politics. The position of the Brethren was in decline and soon after the rise of the Ba'th to power in 1963 the old leadership, now headed by 'Isam al-'Attar, found itself in exile.

A new leadership had to organize the Islamic opposition to the Ba'th regime. Its most militant figure was Marwan Hadid, the man who had brought Qutb's radical teaching to Syria and who, in defiance of al-'Attar's authority, propagated an uncompromising jihad against the regime. He was the leading spirit of the Hama disturbances of 1964 as well as a principal cause to the split within the Brethren's ranks in 1970 between al-'Attar's adherents, who rejected a violent course, and his own radicals who approved it at any cost. Hawwa represented a middle way between them of careful preparing for a future struggle. He became the actual head of the Brethren's branch in Hama after the 1964 disturbances were quelled and subsequently he was charged with the task of reformulating the Brethren's doctrine in the face of the Ba'th rule. He was able to carry out the task only after he left Syria for Saudi Arabia, fleeing the heavy hand of the regime. The publication of his books in 1968 and thereafter turned him into a prominent Islamic thinker in Syria.

Hawwa was allowed to return to Syria in 1971 by the new regime of Asad. He was imprisoned two years later for his role in the organization of the Syrian ulema in opposition to Asad's proposal of a new constitution which failed to mention that the president has to be Muslim. During his five years of imprisonment Hawwa's moderating influence on the Islamic movement in Syria began to fade. The violent turn that the Islamic struggle had taken in 1976 proved that after Hadid's murder his legacy was to prevail. Hawwa joined the struggle after his release and departure from Syria in 1978. He was elected to the collective leadership of the Muslim Brethren and later of the Islamic Front. He was described as the chief ideologue of the confrontation which he initially disappro-

ved. This confrontation reached its climax in the Hama uprising of 1982 and its bloody suppression by the Asad regime.

The Return of the Ridda

Hawwa's point of departure, like of other contemporary Islamic thinkers, is the lamentable state of Islam in the modern world (2). Like them he feels compelled to confess that the Muslim world is weakened from within and inferior, both materially and spiritually, to the West. The 19th-century conquest of the Muslim world by imperialist Europe, Hawwa claims, gave the West free hand to carry out its plots against Islam, and the consequences today are the division of the Muslim world and the domination of its countries by military regimes. The West aims in his opinion to destroy Islam as an ideological and moral system by introducing to the Muslim world its own moral principles of secularism and permissiveness and by disseminating its ideologies of nationalism, communism and existentialism (3). Under Western dominance, Hawwa maintains, corruption (*fasad*) has become widespread in the Muslim world and Islam has turned into an object of contempt and derision. The extent of disbelief differs from one Muslim country to the other, but the evil, he argues, can be found in all. All governments and most of the Muslim leaders have become enemies of Islam, and the masses (*jamahir al-Muslimin*) are drawing after them submissively. At a time when the state has become all-powerful, intruding on all spheres of life, only a few can escape heresy (4).

In Hawwa's opinion, the extraordinary success of the West and of its local agents was made possible not by Western military and technological superiority but by the internal weakness which has taken hold of the Muslim *umma* itself. Most Muslims, he claims, have become ignorant of their own religion and seek guidance in heretical teachings, most of them imported from the West (5). Particularly damaging is the tendency among Muslims to stay away from political activity, as if politics is not part of Islam, and this clears the way for the heretics and hypocrites to take over government and keep Islam out of politics (6). Ulema and Sufis alike, he claims, are responsible for this ignorance and political inactivity.

(2) Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New-Haven and London, 1985), p. 1-15.

(3) Sa'id Hawwa, *Min Ajl Khutwa ila al-Amam 'ala Tariq al-Jihad al-Mubarak*, 2nd ed. (n. p., 1979), p. 80-82.

(4) Sa'id Hawwa, *Jund Allah Thaqafa wa-Akblaq*, 2nd ed. (Beirut, n.d.), p. 5-9.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 51-54.

(6) Hawwa, *Min Ajl Khutwa*, p. 129-130.

For centuries they have nourished the fatalistic attitude that resistance to any government is sinful and instilled submissiveness in their pupils through their study groups, *dbiker* ceremonies, and charity organizations (7). The Salafiyya movement, which emerged in opposition to both the legalistic and the mystic trends in Islam, went too far by rejecting the Islamic tradition as a whole (8). Thus ignorance and schism have created conditions that have made it easy to spread foreign teachings all over the Muslim world. Hawwa analyses this lamentable state of Islam through the historical and legal concept of *ridda*.

Ridda is a concept that dates from the period immediately following the death of the Prophet. A number of tribes who had made agreements with Muhammad now regarded themselves, in accordance with Arab custom, as free of any obligation to his successor, the caliph. Some of the tribes were led by opposing prophets, representing teachings different from those of Muhammad. The Muslim attitude toward their withdrawal was quite the reverse. Because the tribes had accepted Islam and joined its community, their withdrawal turned them into apostates and traitors, whom it was necessary to bring back or crush. To this end Abu Bakr, the first caliph, initiated *Hurub al-Ridda*, the Wars of Apostasy, a series of battles that eventually restored Muslim rule to the entire Arabian peninsula (9).

The political use to which Hawwa put the concept of *ridda* calls to mind Sayyid Qutb's use of the concept of *jabiliyya* (10). Undoubtedly, Hawwa derives the idea of applying historical concepts to contemporary societies from Qutb, but at the same time he turns this method against him. The differences between the two concepts are important for understanding Hawwa's criticism of Qutb's thought. First of all semantically, no Muslim society can be defined as *jabili* because *jabiliyya* denotes a pre-Islamic condition. *Ridda* is therefore a more accurate term, since it denotes a situation in which Islam was abandoned by those who had already professed it. In addition, there is a resemblance between the prophets of the *ridda* and the "prophets" of foreign ideologies that have been imported to the contemporary Muslim world, such as Nasser or Aflaq.

More important, however, are the practical implications of the two concepts. The idea of *jabiliyya* proved to be too ambiguous to provide Qutb's followers with a clear course of action. The Meccan society and the Arab tribes had been both adversaries and potential recruits of Mu-

(7) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 394-395.

(8) Sa'id Hawwa, *Jawlat fi al-Fiqhaini al-Kabir wal-Akbar wa-Usulibima*, 2nd ed. (Amman, 1981), p. 8.

(9) Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago and London, 1988), p. 85.

(10) Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, many editions.

hammad and attitude toward them took different forms, depending on time and circumstance. These attitudes ranged from withdrawal from the infidel society (*bijra*), through preaching among its members (*da'wa*) to fighting it (*jihad*). This ambiguity generated a variety of Islamic movements in Egypt during the 1970'S (11), each preferring to apply one of the attitudes at the expense of the others. The concept of *ridda* is not only a historical but also a legal concept, and it is much more unequivocal than *jabiliyya*. The only course of action it points to is that of war. The laws governing such a war are far more stringent than those governing wars against non-Muslim infidels, and leave no room for compromise or agreement. *Ridda* is betrayal, and the punishment for those who refuse to repent is death (12).

The concept of *ridda* enables Hawwa also to establish an order of priorities in the Holy War against the infidels. Qutb delineated a polar world system of Islam and disbelief. Hawwa adds an important distinction between the unbelievers themselves. One category includes the non-Muslim peoples who believe in a variety of man-made ideologies, the other comprises Muslims who adopt those ideologies at the expense of Islam. In contrast to Qutb, it is only to the first group, who are from his point of view still in a pre-Islamic condition, that Hawwa applies the term *jabiliyya*. The second group are the *murtaddun*, and war must be waged against them *before* it is waged against the world of *jabiliyya*. This was the case in the historical wars of the *ridda*, that preceded the Muslim conquests outside the Arabian peninsula, and this is the commandment of the Holy Law.

Another important difference lies in the way each of the two thinkers applies his terms. For Qutb *jabiliyya* was a fact and an Islamic description of the realities of the Egyptian society of his time. For Hawwa, in contrast, *ridda* is a conceptual tool, an Islamic hypothesis, which enables him to analyze in an Islamic manner the Syrian society and Islamic society as a whole. This is a much more flexible and penetrating approach.

Hawwa is well aware of the severe consequences that applying the concept of *ridda* to Muslim societies will have, but the grave threat that Islam is facing compels him to carry out the necessary analysis. His purpose is twofold : to establish the extent to which these societies are afflicted with apostasy, and to prescribe the remedy. The long lament over the condition of the contemporary Muslim world is a part of this analysis. The concept of *ridda* adds to it the historical perspective. The present-day crisis is in Hawwa's view the most severe in the history of

(11) See Gilles Kepel, *The Prophet and Pharaoh : Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (London, 1985).

(12) Lewis, *Political Language*, p. 85.

the Muslim *umma*. Muslims had suffered difficult times in the past – the *ridda* following the death of the Prophet, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions – but the period following the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate and the imperialistic attack of Europe has been the most difficult of all. In the face of the original *ridda*, he explains, stood a unified nation led by one amir ; the Crusades succeeded in conquering only part of the Islamic land, and the *umma* was unified against them too ; the Mongols converted to Islam and were assimilated. In the present situation, in contrast, the political entity of the Muslims is being destroyed. They have no leader left in the world, and Islam is despised even in its own land. The enemies of Islam are more sophisticated and present their ideas as noble ideas. Their control of communications enables them to reach the minds and feelings of Muslims and non-Muslims alike ⁽¹³⁾. As a result, Hawwa maintains many Muslims have fallen into a state of *ridda*, or have at least partially abandoned Islam, and only a few are exceptions. *Ridda* is shaping the destiny of the Muslim world, since most of the positions of power have fallen into its hands ⁽¹⁴⁾. Nevertheless,

In spite of what has been said, we do not find most of the societies belonging to the countries of the Muslim world guilty of heresy because if we did, we would regard them all as *dar barb*. We prefer to wait with this verdict despite the increase in the number of *murtaddun* and despite their domination, because of the religious laws that such a verdict would entail... we will be content with regarding them as societies in error (*fasiqa*), whose affairs are controlled by *murtaddun*, deviators, heretics and hypocrites (*munafiqun*), who are deepening the deviation and lead the Muslims towards complete *ridda* ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Almost in contradiction to his own findings, to prevent all-out war against most Muslim societies and governments, Hawwa prefers to postpone the declaration of complete *ridda*. He feels that time is running out, but that it is still possible in most cases to turn the tide without recourse to violence. Reform still can bring the revival of Islam and therefore revolt must be avoided. In order to succeed this reform must begin within the Islamic movement itself.

The Reform of the Salafiyya

True Muslim believers cannot remain indifferent to the error (*fusuq*) in which Muslim societies live, and to the apostasy of Muslim governments in particular. It is incumbent upon each of them to fight the

(13) Hawwa, *Min Ajl Kbutwa*, p. 147-148.

(14) Hawwa, *Jund Allab*, p. 8.

(15) *Ibid.*, p. 10-11.

murtaddun and guide the erring back to the true path. Only a few have been able to escape the impact of the internal deterioration of Islam and of Westernization, but these few must carry on the struggle to reform Islam and to repel the *jabiliyya*. Thus, from Hawwa's point of view, the only true Muslim believers today are the Islamic activists, who together constitute the Islamic movement and who together assume the task of Islamic revival.

The most important component of the Islamic movement since the 1930'S, at least in the Arab world, has been the Muslim Brethren, to which Hawwa himself belonged. Yet, in his view, this movement too was weakened from within in his own generation, because it deviated from the teaching of its founder, Hasan al-Banna, on two important points. His criticism can be applied to the movement in general, but his main concern was undoubtedly with its Syrian branch. Hawwa's criticism of Qutb's concept of *jabiliyya* is directed to a large extent against the radical wing of Qutb's Syrian adherent, Marwan Hadid. He criticizes also the leadership of 'Isam al-'Attar, the general guide (*al-murshid al-'am*) of the Muslim Brethren in Syria, who was regarded as a Salafi⁽¹⁶⁾. His criticism again is not direct but conceptual. He accepts the *salafi* idea as a principal foundation of the Islamic movement, but he objects to the Salafi movement's interpretation of this idea, which he regards as a major threat to the integrity of the Islamic movement and to the whole revival of Islam. Therefore, reform of the Salafiyya movement is essential so that it can contribute its important share to the Islamic movement.

The Salafiyya movement arose as an effort to carry the modernist trend to its logical conclusion. It was founded by Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh, who were distressed by the material and spiritual decline of Islam and regarded a return to the way of their ancestors (the *salaf*) to be the only road to its restoration. 'Abduh's concept of *salaf* was large enough to contain all the creators of the central current of Islamic thought. His pupil, Rashid Rida, an important spiritual forefather of the Muslim Brethren, confined the meaning of this concept to the first generation in Islam, that of the Prophet and his Companions, thus extending the range of application of *ijtihad* at the expense of the opposite principle of *taqlid* (blind imitation). In practical terms it meant a greater exertion of independent reasoning and less reliance on tradition, as it was crystalized in the schools of law (*madhabib*).

The idea of a return to the example of the ancestors received enthusiastic support. The Salafiyya became a popular movement, but its very popularity made it incapable of holding to the learned formulations of Rida, and it became increasingly radical. This had already been evident

(16) Umar F. Abd-allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 102-103.

during the lifetime of Rida himself, who welcomed the revival of the Wahhabiyya, the staunch fighters against any innovation (*bid'a*) which has been attached to Islam since the time of the Prophet (17). Among his followers the concept of *salaf* brought about the rejection of the Islamic history in its entirety (18). It is precisely this radical form of *salafiyya* that Hawwa vehemently resists :

Those who call for the abandonment of all that the ulema of the Muslims have said for generations are destroying the entire culture of a nation, on behalf of which millions of intellects have labored, and which the experience of the ages has brought into maturity. Those who bring into doubt the value of this tradition are not equal to the most humble of those who have contributed to it. Are we to abandon this tradition which these great ulema created, so as to begin the creation of a new legislative (*tashri'i*) tradition ? There is no fault in our inquiry of others, but to cast doubt on the value of the inquiry of others (*abl al-tabqiq*) is nothing but leading astray, which testifies of evil thought towards the fathers of this nation (*salaf badhibi al-umma*) (19). Does religion remain for a man when he despises the best among the ulema of this nation and regards himself as better than they are ? (20).

Hawwa's most profound motive in resisting the Salafiyya movement's radicalisation is its casting out of the Sufis. As a committed Sufi he could not accept the idea that Sufism is not part of the *salafi* tradition. Rida drew a distinction, as did 'Abduh before him, between the "correct" and the "false" forms of Sufism. The first was the believer's need for spiritual experience ; the second was its deterioration into superstition and practices incompatible with the shari'a. On the whole Rida's hostility to "false" Sufism was far greater than his master's, but his two most important sources of inspiration were, characteristically, al-Ghazali, the great Sufi thinker who established a synthesis of inner faith and pure monotheism, and Ibn Taymiya, the Hanbalite fundamentalist who vigorously fought

(17) H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (New-York, 1972), p. 34-35.

(18) An example of Salafi writing that categorically rejects both the legal schools and Sufism is Salim Hilali, *Muallafat Sa'id Hawwa : Dirasa wa-Taqwim* (Cairo, 1983). For Hilali, Sufism is an innovation that has no trace in the Qur'an or in the Sunna. He regards Hawwa's Sufi sources, especially al-Ghazali, as unreliable, since in his opinion they were not experts in the science of hadith. Hilali proceeds to attack the acceptance of the schools as a blind imitation (*taqlid*), which has also no foundation in the sources and approves of a wide application of *ijtihad*. Hawwa's attempt to prove the existence of God through the findings of modern science (in his first book, *Allah Jalla Jalaluhu*, 3rd ed. [Beirut, 1981]) is for him nothing but *kalam*. Hilali explains the success of Sufism as being a result of the awkward casuistry of the schools, which wearied the Muslim public. Hawwa's *al-Ijabat* (Cairo, 1984) is a reply to this book.

(19) A pun which demonstrates that the essence of the controversy is who should be included in the concept of *salaf*.

(20) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 117-118.

Sufi innovations ⁽²¹⁾. The Salafiyya movement after Rida made no such distinction and condemned Sufism as a whole.

In his defence of Sufism Hawwa has to argue against both the excessive mystics (*qbulab al-sufiyya*), who brook no criticism against any of their attitudes or practices, and their opponents, who refuse even to hear their name pronounced, much less reasonably discuss their teachings. Hawwa takes upon himself the task of finding "the golden mean" between the two, by bringing the Sufis back to the sharia and by convincing their opponents of the indispensable place of *tasawwuf* in Islam. Thus he joins a long tradition of reconciliation between orthodoxy and Sufism, which found its clearest expression in al-Ghazali, and which has been revived since the reform movements of the eighteenth century ⁽²²⁾. The Muslim Brethren itself, he recalls, initially supported Sufi education and Hasan al-Banna regarded the Sufi truth, just like the *salafi* message, as one of the foundations of his movement ⁽²³⁾. Nevertheless, Hawwa claims the Brethren failed to define clearly the place of Sufism in their teachings, and it is precisely this that he seeks to accomplish. His aim is to create a kind of *salafi tasawwuf*, with its own shaykhs to instruct its teachings and its own *dhikr* circles. *Tasawwuf*, he declares, is an impulse rooted in man's soul and an indispensable feature of Islam ⁽²⁴⁾.

Hawwa emphasizes that Sufism is subordinate to theology (*'ilm al-'aqaid*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and certainly to the Qur'an and the Sunna ⁽²⁵⁾. The purpose of the Sufi, he declares, is to reach the sound heart (*al-qalb al-salim*), that is prepared to accept God's command with total submissiveness and with love. He must not add new beliefs that contradict the Qur'an and the Sunna or the traditional beliefs of orthodoxy (*abl al-sunna wal-jama'a*), as these have been inherited from the ancestors, the *salaf*. Such additions are deviations and evil innovations ⁽²⁶⁾. Sufism is knowledge which complements theology and jurisprudence in their spiritual aspect, and therefore everyone is in need of it, all the more so in this materialistic (*maddi*) and voluptuous (*shaba-*

(21) The analysis of Rida's thought is based on Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London, 1986), p. 69-83 ; Albert Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam : Rashid Rida", in idem, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London, 1981), p. 90-102.

(22) John O. Voll, *Islam : Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, Colo., 1982), p. 33-86.

(23) This constitutes a part of Hasan al-Banna's definition of his movement. Al-Banna himself had been a Sufi in his youth, but it appears that later on he became more removed from it. See Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London, 1969), p. 14.

(24) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 17-20.

(25) Hawwa, *Jawlat*, p. 119.

(26) Sa'id Hawwa, *Tarbiyatuna al-Rubiyya*, 2nd ed. (Amman, 1981), p. 67.

wani) age in which we live, and everyone can learn it. Only spiritual strength can resist the temptations of the modern world (27).

In his attack upon those Sufis who exceed the legitimate limits posed by theology and jurisprudence, Hawwa is no less severe than the Salafis. He distinguishes a number of types among the "false" Sufis, although they undoubtedly overlap. First are the criers of *shatabat*, the ecstatic exclamations that border on heresy. They deserve nothing but the sword (28). The other types are more relevant to the realities of the time. There are Sufis who think that since they have "arrived" at the inner consciousness of Him, they need no longer be bothered by the external dictates of the faith (29). There is a larger circle of shaykhs' disciples, who believe that the miraculous event of their master is a proof of his infallibility and that he is the only one who knows the true path. Finally, there is the large multitude of Muslims, who use to beg their saints for personal favors, or even worse, to visit the tombs of saints who perished in search of these same worldly ends. They do not understand that such practices are nothing but *shirk* (polytheism, associating other gods to Allah) (30).

The deviations of Sufis have long posed problems for Islam, but under the present circumstances Hawwa regards them as a real threat, especially in the political sphere, in the struggle between the *umma* and the Western world and its Muslim agents. Sufi shaykhs, he explains, are divisive because there are many of them in the *umma*, and if every group of Muslims were to bestow the leadership (*imama*) on its own shaykh and obey just him, the consequence would be the disintegration of the *umma*. Corrupt shaykhs might also turn their disciples against Islam. Some shaykhs think that their disciples (*muridun*) are also their slaves, as if these disciples seek (*irada*) the shaykh and not God. In their search for honor they might even help the infidels in the war against Islam, and their disciples, who imitate them (*muqallidun*), follow suit. Finally, many Sufis, just like the ulema, detach themselves completely from the affairs of this world. They have a narrow view of Islam and they live remote from their age and from the basic concepts of their Muslim contemporaries. All these Sufis together, concludes Hawwa, have the same fault – they separate Islam from politics, weaken the *umma* from within, and let its enemies overcome it (31).

Hawwa accepts Rida's distinction between "correct" and "false" Sufism, though his emphasis is different. He acknowledges the miraculous

(27) *Ibid.*, passim.

(28) *Ibid.*, p. 68; see also *ibid.*, p. 332-338.

(29) Sa'id Hawwa, *al-Mustakblas fi Tazkia al-Anfus*, 4th ed. (Cairo, 1988), p. 158.

(30) Hawwa, *Tarbiyatuna*, p. 170, 232.

(31) *Ibid.*, p. 172.

deeds (*karamat*) of the Sufis, and has nothing against their ecstatic behavior, so long as it does not fail to conform to the oneness of God. It is neither a sickness nor a fault, he explains, if man's feelings (*balat shu'uriyya*) overcome him (32). The furthest Hawwa is ready to go in the direction of mysticism is to claim that revelation of God (*kashf*) is possible for those who are not prophets, because he finds nothing in the sharia to contradict it (33).

The most important point for Hawwa is, however, to demonstrate the role of Sufism in the social and political spheres. Sufism, he emphasizes, does not oppose, and indeed requires, activity. No doubt, the Salafis are correct when they condemn the "false" Sufis for evading the duty of jihad. But history furnishes the best proof that Sufism in its "correct" form is different, and the role of the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*, to which Hawwa himself belonged, serves to illustrate the Sufis' readiness to carry out this duty.

Whoever examines the practical history (*al-ta'rikh al-'amali*) of the Muslims in the later generations will find that the strongest, purest, most disciplined, and most ready to self-sacrifice Islamic movements were Sufi. The movement of Shaykh al-Faruqi al-Sirhindi [the Naqshbandi I.W.] restored Islam to India ... The struggle against Russian colonialism was led by Shaykh Shamil al-Naqshbandi. The armed struggle against Ataturk was led by Shaykh Sa'id al-Kurdi al-Naqshbandi. The struggle against Italy in Lybia was led by the Sanusis and the struggle against Britian in the Sudan was led by the people of the Mahdi... The movement of the Muslim Brethren was itself founded by a Sufi, and adopted Sufi truth without its disadvantages (34).

Hawwa's criticism of the Salafis' treatment of Sufism is that they deviate from the thought of Rashid Rida. In the Salafi movement, he claims, the proper balance between the teachings of Ibn Taymiya and al-Ghazali, Rida's two great sources of inspiration, has been lost. The Salafis argue that al-Ghazali weakened the spirit of jihad, since it is not mentioned at all in his major work *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*. They fail to notice, Hawwa maintains that jihad is discussed in his jurisprudence books and that the "*ihya*" itself by strengthening the spirit in general, encourages the spirit of jihad as well (35). They forget that even the strict and uncompromising Ibn Taymiya, whom the Salafiyya regards as its spiritual forefather, never condemned Sufism as such, but only its "innovations". Moreover, he had

(32) Hawwa, *Jawlat*, p. 120.

(33) *Ibid.*, p. 207.

(34) Hawwa, *Jawlat*, p. 153-154. These Sufi movements are designated as jihad movements (*al-ljabat*, p. 118) or even as revolutions (*tbawra*) (*Tarbiyatuma*, p. 9).

(35) Hawwa, *al-ljabat*, p. 117-118. See the attack of Hilali on al-Ghazali in Hilali, p. 36-39.

unequivocally extolled Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the founder of the great Qadiriyya Sufi order (36).

The ideal Islamic movement, to which Hawwa preaches, is therefore modeled on the example of the *salaf*, is orthodox in its legal and theological outlook, and is Sufi in its inner conviction. The reform of the Salafiyya movement implies the incorporation of the ulema's heritage and the Sufi path in the original concept of the *salaf*. It is no less the reform of orthodoxy and Sufism by returning to the example of the *salaf*.

The Revivification of the Rabbaniyya

In shaping the requirements and the modes of action of the Islamic movement Hawwa's personal experience is most evident. He does not lay down clear cut rulings that derive from pure ideology or faith, but by trial and error he takes pains to find the best practical ways to revive Islam. As a long-standing propagandist and organizer Hawwa was well acquainted with reality and with the difficulties which the Islamic activists faced. Therefore, his plans are detailed but flexible enough to fit the ever-changing circumstances. This flexibility reflects the different possible practical answers to his fundamental question : to what extent is the Muslim world in a state of *riidda* ? They all range, and combine, between two opposing paths – education and preaching, on the one hand, dictation and violence, on the other, corresponding to the Islamic paths of *da'wa* and *jihad*.

Undoubtedly Hawwa prefers the peaceful path of education and preaching, as is evident in his discussion of the *riidda*, in which he refrains from drawing the final conclusion from his own analysis, if only to prevent a war. He justifies war only as a last resort. The Muslim Brethren, he says, prefer to act through Parliament, mass propaganda and free elections. It is only when the rulers wage war against Islam and alienate the Muslim public from it, that they turn to the path of violence. This clearly defensive statement does not contradict the subsequent affirmation that the Islamists are ordained by God to be in government, whatever the way to achieve it (37).

Hawwa regards education (*ta'lim*) and information (*i'lam*) as the two most important tools available to society for shaping the attitudes of its members and for presenting itself to other societies. Jointly they serve to mold the unique features of each society and the individual's identi-

(36) Hawwa, *Tarbiyatuna*, p. 206.

(37) Sa'id Hawwa, *Fi Afaq al-Ta'lim*, 2nd ed. (Amman, 1981), p. 58.

fiction with it (38). In the modern age, he claims, the Islamic movement has lost both tools. Its efforts to regain control, to revive the *da'wa*, have encountered two obstacles. The more serious one is the monopoly of the secular state over the educational institutions and mass media, one aspect of its more general intrusion into all spheres of life (39). The enemies of Islam, Hawwa states have managed to take control of the schools and determine curriculum and textbooks. The introduction of compulsory education has only increased their influence (40). These enemies dominate also newspapers, journals, publishing houses, and all other means of communication and turn them against Islam. The international media are no less hostile. They rarely mention political movements in Islam and when they do, they depict them in a false and distorted manner (41). The most dangerous of all is television, the corruptor of morals, which Hawwa recommends to keep out of the house altogether (42). The second obstacle the Islamic movement must face is the existing Muslim associations. Sufi heads of orders and ulema guiding study groups or running charity organizations are all afraid that the Islamic movement will deprive them of their disciples and their dignity.

Hawwa proposes to counter the monopoly of the state over education and information by a return to the mosque, which has always filled a vital political role in Muslim public life. It was once the task of the preachers to announce the new regulations of the ruler, as well as to declare rebellion in the name of the public against an oppressive ruler by omitting his name from the *khutba*. With the emergence of modern communication, the mosque lost its importance as a governmental instrument. Under the tight grip of the secular state on the media and the strict censorship against all its opponents, however, the mosque remained the only channel of expression for the ulema and Islamists, who represent for Hawwa the public. Yet, it was also clear to him that the mosque must adapt itself to the new circumstances if it is to keep its independence.

Like other contemporary thinkers of the Islamic movement, Hawwa admits the tremendous impact modern communication has had on the Muslim public and he has no illusions as to the ability of the mosque to resist it. The use of the media is not objectionable to him, only their improper manipulation by the secular state. When the Islamic state is established, he declares, it will exert the same monopoly as its enemies

(38) Sa'id Hawwa, *al-Islam*, 3rd ed. (Beirut, 1981), p. 542.

(39) Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 3-10.

(40) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 59; see also Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 51-52.

(41) Sa'id Hawwa, *Durus fi al-'Amal al-Islami*, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1983), p. 126.

(42) Sa'id Hawwa, *al-Madkhal ila Da'wa al-Ikhwana al-Mustlimin*, 2nd ed. (Amman, 1984), p. 119-120.

do today. It will act to wean (*fitam*) the people from alien teachings and will not allow any voice to reach its subjects without its permission ⁽⁴³⁾. This is, however, a vision and not a practical way of action. The real way pass through the mosque which, due to its weakness as against the media and due to the weakness of Islam as a whole in front of the secular state, must undergo a profound change in its role – from open political exhortation on the minbar to the longer but less provocative way of education.

Hawwa proposes to establish a school in every mosque, which will serve as a substitute for, or as a complement to, the basically secular formal education of the state schools. He draws on the idea of Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim al-Rifa'i, the head of a mosque in Damascus, whom Hawwa met during his studies in the city in the 1950'S ⁽⁴⁴⁾. Al-Rifa'i wanted every mosque to offer a number of study circles (*halaqat 'ilm*) in various subjects and at different levels. His scheme proved successful and a large cultural movement was created. The mosques have qualified experts in the various aspects of religious studies and in this way have recruited new forces to Islam. In the characteristic Sufi organizational system, his disciples spread out over the country and established study circles at mosques wherever they settled ⁽⁴⁵⁾. Hawwa extends both the organizational and the educational scope of al-Rifa'i's scheme, and adds to it a social dimension. He designates the extended system as *ihya al-rabbaniyya*.

Rabbaniyya is the second key concept in Hawwa's thought and the counterpart to the concept of *ridda*. It is drawn from the Qur'an, in which the *rabbaniyyun* appear a number of times, usually in conjunction with the *abbar*, the Jewish religious scholars who follow the straight path. No importance is attached to their being Jews since, according to the Muslim doctrine, they are actually Muslims. The importance lies rather in the relation between them. The sharia refers to the *rabbani* and the *habr* as identical, but in Hawwa's writings two different types of religious men are clearly discernible. They have also existed separately through large periods of history, as ulema and Sufis. Thus, in Hawwa's thought the *rabbani* is the Sufi who possesses 'ilm ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

From a different point of view, *rabbaniyya* means strictly following the path of the Prophet down to its smallest detail. This is the full inheritance (*al-wiratha al-kamila*), which every Muslim is required to

(43) Hawwa, *al-Islam*, p. 543 ; see also *ibid.*, *Fusul fi al-Imara wal-Amir*, 2nd ed. (Hebron, 1983), p. 160-161.

(44) Sa'id Hawwa, *Hadhibi Tajribati... wa-Hadhibi Shabadati* (Cairo, 1987), p. 53.

(45) *Ibid.*, p. 53-54 ; See also Muhammad Muti' al-Hafiz and Nizar Abaza, *Tarikh 'Ulama Dimasq fi al-Qarn al-Rabi' 'Ashar al-Hijri* (Damascus, 1986), p. 905-906.

(46) Sa'id Hawwa, *Ihya al-Rabbaniyya* (Cairo, 1984), p. 45-48.

fulfil to the best of his ability. Not every person is capable of reaching this ideal, but when Muslims strive toward it, some among them will succeed ⁽⁴⁷⁾. There are four prerequisites for the emergence of the *rabbani* : *dbikr*, which secures the integrity of faith ; *'ilm*, which enables the specialization (*takbassus*) in at least one aspect of it ; a supportive environment (*al-ajwa al-musa'ida*), which is the company of the *dbikr* and *'ilm* men ; and last but not least, propagation and instruction (*al-'amal al-da'wi wal-ta'limi*), for a person who reached such a degree cannot be confined within himself, he must be active on behalf of his community ⁽⁴⁸⁾. Thus the *rabbani* must be not only Sufi and *'alim* but also activist.

Hawwa's analysis of the present condition of the Muslim world leads him to the conclusion that these prerequisites, and certainly the four of them together, very rarely occur. The falling of the Muslim *umma* into the hands of the *murtaddun* has considerably weakened the degree of *rabbaniyya*. Yet the situation is not lost, just as the *ridda* is not complete. In other words, the revivification of the *rabbaniyya* is the most effective means to fight the *ridda*. Given the tight control of the secular state, the only way still open for such a revival is through the formation of local organizations, centered around the mosques. The faithful of every neighborhood and every village must establish a group which will take upon itself the mission of re-creating the preconditions for the revivification of the *rabbaniyya* in their own local community. Through the mosque this group will acquire the proper form of *dbikr* and *'ilm*, will constitute the supportive environment for the emergence of new forces and will organize and guide the whole community back to Islam. Its activity will be social as well as religious. It will teach in study circles in the mosque and practically guide others to enjoin the good and remove the evil, but also will organize mutual assistance (*takaful*) among the members of their community and find jobs for the unemployed ⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Rabbaniyya diverts also the opposition of the existing Muslim associations of ulema and Sufis to the work of the Islamic movement. Hawwa makes clear that his idea does no harm to any of them ⁽⁵⁰⁾. The movement of *rabbaniyya*, he asserts, will serve as the common denominator of all the Islamic associations without belonging to, or fighting against, any of them. Therefore, joining it does not imply abandoning others. It is the only body capable of guiding the existing Islamic associations in accordance with a comprehensive Islamic outlook and of bridging the

(47) Sa'id Hawwa, *Mudbakkirat fi Manazil al-Siddiqiyyina wal-Rabbaniyyina* (Cairo, 1986), p. 29.

(48) Hawwa, *Ihya al-Rabbaniyya*, p. 23-24.

(49) *Ibid.*, p. 6-8.

(50) Sa'id Hawwa, *Ijaza Tukbassisu al-Du'ab* (Cairo, 1987), p. 29-30.

struggles and disputes among them, which prevent them from unified action. Furthermore, *rabbaniyya* is basically a non political movement. It refrains not only from inter-Islamic conflicts, but also from anti-state opposition (51). *Rabbaniyya* is the religious-spiritual leadership of the Islamic political and social organizations.

The spreading of local *rabbaniyya* associations will in due course allow the setting up of a coordinating office (*maktab tansiq*) in every country and of a world-wide general secretariat (*amana 'ama*), which will further expand the movement and coordinate the activities of the local associations. They will have only a loose organizational structure and will not be essentially different from the basic local unit. The culmination of the activity of the general secretariat will be the foundation of an Islamic university. It will avoid any attempt to dominate Islamic political activity, and will not try to interfere with the internal affairs of its various components. Just like every local *rabbaniyya* association, it will serve as a means of cooperation between them and provide guidance to the entire Islamic movement (52).

Both the Islamic movement and the *rabbaniyya* have in Hawwa's thought an additional, more specific meaning. The Islamic movement denotes for him first and foremost his own movement, the Muslim Brethren. His long experience in its ranks has convinced him that as an operational movement it is unable to confer spiritual perfection and knowledge on its members. Therefore, it must refer them to a religious-spiritual guidance for the perfection of their practical activity. This guidance is the mission of the *rabbaniyyun*. Among the Brethren this duty is being neglected, with the result that the young generation does not reach appropriate spiritual maturity and is not sufficiently knowledgeable in Islam (53). This is, in the last resort, the cause of the deviation of the movement from the original teachings of al-Banna and its adoption of the radical teachings of unqualified religious thinkers such as Qutb and Hadid.

The more specific meaning of *rabbaniyya* can be indicated from its relation to the more familiar term *siddiqiyya*, which means both the absolute truth and complete faithfulness. In Sufi terminology these are the knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) and His worship (*'ubudiyya*). *Rabbaniyya* is defined by Hawwa in this connection as *siddiqiyya* with additional qualities, the most important among them being knowledge, teaching and counsel (54). All these qualities were certainly possessed by the exemplar *rabbani* Abu-Bakr, the immediate successor of the Prophet

(51) Hawwa, *Ihya al-Rabbaniyya*, p. 15-16.

(52) Sa'id Hawwa, *'Aqd al-Qarn al-Khamis 'Ashar al-Hijri* (Cairo, 1985), p. 81-82.

(53) Hawwa, *Ihya al-Rabbaniyya*, p. 49.

(54) Hawwa, *Fi Manazil*, p. 3.

and the great fighter against the historical *ridda*, whose unique title in Islam is al-Siddiq. Abu-Bakr is also the first link in the *silsila* of the Naqshbandi order ⁽⁵⁵⁾, which can thus be referred to as *siddiqiyya*. *Rabbani* was the title of Ahmad Sirhindi, the initiator of the Mujaddidi branch of this order ⁽⁵⁶⁾, and thus this branch can also be referred to as *rabbaniyya*. Thus, *rabbani* could mean also the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi, *al-'alim al-'amil*.

It is therefore the Naqshbandi order which is capable of providing the religious-spiritual guidance for the Muslim Brethren, and to its shaykhs they should turn for knowledge and advice. The exemplar *rabbani* for Hawwa is undoubtedly his master, Muhammad al-Hamid, who counselled and at times criticized Hasan al-Banna during his stay in Egypt and the spiritual guide of the Brethren in his hometown of Hama after his return to Syria. Hawwa relates how

when we were young, we would feel this lack [of guidance]. We would hasten to the ulema and *rabbaniyyun* to receive knowledge and spirit. God granted us ulema and *rabbaniyyun*, who loved the *du'ab* and the members of the movement (*mutabarrikin*). In their existence their actions were perfected ⁽⁵⁷⁾.

Rabbani also has a more personal dimension for Hawwa. This was actually the mission he designated for himself within the framework of the Muslim Brethren in Syria. After all, he was the most prolific disciple of al-Hamid. His various books constitute an attempt at molding a broad-minded Islamic outlook to serve as a spiritual guidance for his movement. Yet, toward the Hama revolt of 1982 he was pushed aside by its more radical wing, about which he complained that "even if the *fakih* or the *rabbani* wish to do something we find that his voice is lost, as the members of the movement have no time to stop ⁽⁵⁸⁾."

Nevertheless, *ihya al-rabbaniyya* does not depend solely on the Naqshbandiyya. *Rabbaniyya* is a new order, actually a supra-order of Sufis, which stands above the existing orders, including the Naqshbandiyya. As the common denominator of *all* the Islamic associations, it cannot identify itself exclusively with one of them without alienating the rest. In order to reach a full understanding of the nature of its revivification, all three meanings of *rabbaniyya* should be taken into consideration. In its most fundamental meaning *rabbaniyya* denotes the combination of *tasawwuf* and *'ilm*, as it was practiced by the *salaf*. It is

(55) Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order : A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance", *Studia Islamica*, N°. 44 (1976), p. 128.

(56) Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi* (Montreal and London, 1971), p. 1 ; Algar, p. 142-145.

(57) Hawwa, *Ihya al-Rabbaniyya*, p. 49.

(58) *Ibid*.

therefore *salafi tasawwuf*, the real essence of the Islamic movement, whose task it is to revive Islam. The fulfilment of this task implies the second meaning of *rabbaniyya*, which adds to the first the indispensability of activism. It is the spiritual guidance of the Muslim world in general and of the Islamic movement in particular. The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order, the third meaning of *rabbaniyya* serves as the best illustration of the activist Sufi order which follows the way of the *salaf*.

Hawwa's use of *Rabbaniyya* implies, however, that he is no more satisfied with the function of the Naqshbandiyya order in his own time. Again, his criticism can be applied to the order in general, but his main concern was with the Syrian branches. The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya led many of the Islamic revivalist movements in the past, but today, under the most severe *ridda* in Muslim history, the order is no more capable of carrying out alone the task of Islamic revival, and at times it is even affected by the general decline of Islam. In Syria the Naqshbandiyya was unable to prevent the Ba'th from taking over government. Moreover, one branch of the order, headed by Shaykh Ahmad Amin Kaftaru, the *mufti* of Damascus since 1964, was willing to be used as an instrument in the hands of the Ba'th regime⁽⁵⁹⁾. In Hawwa's view, only a unified and careful action of all the Islamic forces under the *Rabbaniyya* can bring about Islamic revival in general and restore Muslim rule to Syria in particular.

Ihya al-rabbaniyya is therefore a general call to all Sufi orders to return to the way of the *salaf*, to use their extensive though loose networks of local branches in order to bring their communities back to Islam, to turn the mosques into centers of Islamic education and propagation, and to become the religious-spiritual leaders of the Islamic revival.

The Limits of Jihad

Hawwa's treatment of the concept of jihad seems to contradict his emphatic preference for the peaceful path. He approves of its conventional meaning of waging war against the infidels and regards it as essential for the revival of Islam. Yet a closer examination shows that Hawwa drastically limits the actual application of jihad, at least so long as his basic analysis of the decline of Islam prevails. Referring to a famous hadith, he makes a clear distinction between two principal types of war

(59) Frederick de Jong, "The Naqshbandiyya in Egypt and Syria : Aspects of its History, and Observations Concerning its Present Day Condition" in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), p. 600.

against the infidels. The first is external war, *al-jihad bil-yad*, which must be waged against non-Muslims. In view of the contemporary fortunes of the Muslim world, Hawwa includes in this type of war attacking the non-Muslims on their territories (*dar al-harb*), defending themselves when they are attacked by non-Muslims, and expelling them when they hold Muslim lands (*dar al-Islam*). But, infidels are also those who have abandoned Islam, who are in a state of *ridda*. War must be waged against them too, an internal war that Hawwa terms *al-jihad bil-nafs* ⁽⁶⁰⁾. This is the practical formulation of the distinction between *ridda* and *jabi-liyya*. Hawwa does not deviate in this distinction from the traditional Muslim view of jihad ⁽⁶¹⁾, but he postpones the external war almost indefinitely. It should be declared only when Islamic unity is achieved, the Caliphate is restored, all forces and resources of the *umma* are mobilized, and industries are erected which will put it on an equal footing with the rest of the world. The war that must be waged at present, Hawwa argues, is the internal war, the war against the *murtaddun*, and it is *fard 'ayn*, incumbent upon each and every Muslim, as in the case of defensive war. Only its successful conclusion can provide the *umma* with a substantial basis for a new momentum in the submission of the world to the Word of Allah, the external jihad ⁽⁶²⁾.

The order of priorities of the Islamic movement is thus as follows : shaping the Muslim personality in an Islamic way, establishing an Islamic state in each Muslim country, unifying the Islamic *umma*, restoring the institution of the Caliphate, establishing the world-wide state of Islam ⁽⁶³⁾. As long as the Islamic movement is engaged in *da'wa*, which corresponds to the first stage of this scheme, a loose world-wide framework of local associations, such as the *rabbaniyya*, is sufficient. Once it turns to political activity, to jihad, a much firmer, even if necessarily narrower, organizational basis becomes inevitable. Political realities make it clear that only the existing Muslim country can provide such a basis. Therefore, every country-wide Islamic movement must confine its struggle to its own territory ⁽⁶⁴⁾. The success of these separate movements in their various countries will bring about a reunification of the *umma* on a solid base and the restoration of the caliph to its leadership. Only this powerful political entity, which has overcome the *ridda*, will be able, in the last stage of this scheme, to resume the struggle against the

(60) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 380.

(61) Lewis, *Political Language*, p. 84.

(62) Hawwa, *ibid.*, p. 388-389.

(63) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(64) Hawwa, *Fi Afaq al-Ta'alim*, p. 31 ; his argument is different : the need to take into consideration public opinion, which today opposes any interference in the affairs of other states.

jabiliyya, until it concludes with the establishment of the Islamic state in the entire world.

The war against the *ridda* precedes, and is also much more difficult and dangerous than, the war against *jabiliyya*. In the internal war, Hawwa maintains, the enemy is less obvious and less clearly defined. The Islamists may often have to fight their own sons and brothers, who have deviated from Islam or have abandoned it altogether. Moreover, the great majority of the *murtaddun* still profess to be Muslim. These are hypocrites (*munafiqun*), who manage to mislead the Muslims and to drag a large following behind them. Today, Hawwa asserts, only a few pay heed to the duty of *jihad bil-nafs*, and even the ulema prefer to ignore it. It is precisely this failure, in his opinion, which has led to the decline of Islam in its own territory and to the control of the corrupt (*abl al-fasad*), or even of the *murtaddun* over it. This command must be reimplemented, Hawwa warns, if we want Islam to survive ⁽⁶⁵⁾.

To identify the *murtaddun* it is important to be able to distinguish in a practical manner between them and those who have deviated (*mun-barifun*), the sinners who nevertheless remain within the boundaries of Islam. Against the latter only a peaceful struggle by *da'wa* is permissible, whereas against the infidel jihad is inevitable. In accordance with his own peaceful inclinations, Hawwa defines the demarcation line between the two as the observance of prayer. His argument is that prayer is the ultimate expression of recognizing God's sovereignty (*bakimiyya Allah*) and of shunning every law that is not sharia ⁽⁶⁶⁾. Yet, this definition is undoubtedly another limitation on the duty of jihad, since it leaves the *murtaddun* who still profess to be Muslim (and these are the great majority of all *murtaddun*) in the category of deviation. Thus, jihad must be waged only against those *murtaddun* who oppose Islam openly and expressly. These are restricted and well-defined groups, which include the sects (*tawaiif*) of the heretical *batiniyya*, the Bahais and the Qadiyanis, and the heretical parties such as the communists, the heretical nationalists and those who preach the separation of religion and state ⁽⁶⁷⁾. Hawwa explicitly mentions neither the Asad regime nor the 'Alawi community, but it is not difficult to conclude that these are his arch-enemies. The heretical parties on his list represent the various facets of Western-inspired secularism, heretical nationalists being those who substitute Islam with the creed of the nation. Bahaiyya and Qadyaniyya were the only two sects that the Muslim Brethren vehemently refused from the outset to include within the framework of Islam, and Hawwa

(65) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 46, 380.

(66) *Ibid.*, p. 391.

(67) *Ibid.*, p. 386.

simply repeats their customary rejection ⁽⁶⁸⁾. However, the head of the list is reserved for the most deadly enemy of all, the *batiniyya*. In Muslim history this term has come to denote the Isma'iliyya, since it had adopted an allegorical (*Batini*) interpretation of the Qur'an ⁽⁶⁹⁾. Yet the additional word heretical suggests that it is not the Isma'ilis but rather the more extremist sects of the 'Alawis and, to a far lesser extent, the Druses that he refers to. In Syrian reality the 'Alawis not the Isma'ilis pose the major threat to Islam. Hawwa's own experience as a teacher in the Isma'ili city of Salimiyya ⁽⁷⁰⁾ certainly raised no such enmity towards them. In defining his attitude toward the 'Alawis Hawwa alludes to a *fatwa* of Ibn Taymiya, which although it concerns a particular Isma'ili sect can be applied, in his opinion, to any analogous sect in the Muslim world. According to this *fatwa* jihad against this sect precedes jihad against polytheists (*mushrikun*) or against *ahl al-kitab*, as it belongs to the category of jihad against *murtaddun* ⁽⁷¹⁾. Thus, in Hawwa's view, Syria is a unique case of a Muslim state that is ruled by a heretical *batini* government, and in such a case he sees no escape from a violent confrontation. The Sunni majority, led by the Islamic movement, must wage an uncompromising war against Asad's regime and against 'Alawi dominance in Syria.

Nevertheless, after establishing the necessity of an Islamic revolt in Syria, as a salient instance of a state ruled by *ridda*, Hawwa feels compelled to impose a further limitation on jihad even in this case. The juridical definition of a regime as *murtadd* is a necessary condition for waging war against it, but not a sufficient one. It must be accompanied by a realistic and considered evaluation of the chances such a war has of succeeding. This warning is undoubtedly directed against Marwan Hadid and his adherents, who advocate violent opposition to the regime at all costs. In Hawwa's opinion this way will lead the Islamic movement to disaster, as it almost did in the Hama disturbances of 1964. We are proud to be *shubada*, he argues, but we are a movement intended to save the Muslims and not a movement of suicide. We must have adequate security, which takes into account the local and international forces that are active in Syria. We must operate reasonably in accordance with this view and overcome our emotions ⁽⁷²⁾. Hawwa is no less eager to overthrow the 'Alawis than Hadid and his followers, but he believes that only

(68) On al-Banna's stand, see Mitchell, *The Muslim Brothers*, p. 217.

(69) Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1961), p. 197-198.

(70) Hawwa, *Hadibi Tajribati*, p. 58.

(71) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 387; the complete text in 'Abd-allah al-Husayni, *al-Judbur al-Ta'rikbiyya lil-Nusayriyya al-'Alawiyya* (Cairo, 1980), p. 27-51, esp. p. 49.

(72) Hawwa, *al-'Amal al-Islami*, p. 93-95.

a prudent and cautious struggle can lead to the desired goal. The Muslim Brethren in Syria, he claims, will have no hope of establishing an Islamic state as long as the 'Alawi community dominates in the army, a situation that the traditional Sunni majority's contempt for the military profession only perpetuates. To change the balance, the younger generation must enlist in the army *en masse*. It is the duty of the *rabbaniyyun* to alter this anti-military attitude. They must instil in the young the desire for physical training and military exercise, to lead them to technological professions that can serve industrial and military progress, to encourage them to read in the martial and strategic fields, and to direct them to become professional soldiers. Thus, those with military and strategic talents will acquire the skills needed to lead the Islamic movement to victory in its jihad (73). Undoubtedly, Hawwa repeats the call of the exemplar *rabbani*, his master Muhammad al-Hamid in the 1950'S, which he himself complied with but most of his fellow disciples did not (74).

Hawwa has no doubts as to the validity of jihad in principle, but the stiff stipulations that he imposes on its implementation, in addition to his conspicuous disinclination to declare *ridda* in general, indicate that in practice not only jihad against the *jabiliyya* but also against the *ridda* must be postponed. Even in the extreme case of Syria, where *ridda* is declared, a long process of education, as well as a Sunni predominance in the army, are required before jihad can be proclaimed. Both are unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

Sa'id Hawwa's revivalist thought is part of the *sabwa*, the Islamic awakening under the post-independence authoritarian military regimes. He shared the views of his contemporary Islamic thinkers as to the deplorable state of Islam and the need to strengthen the faith of the Muslims in the face of the heretical tendencies of the modern state. He rejected, however, the radical formulations of this awakening, epitomized in Qutb's concept of *jabiliyya*, preferring instead the more accurate and flexible concept of *ridda*. In the same manner, Hawwa approved the basic ideas of the *salafiyya*, the Islamic fundamentalism that regarded a return to the example of the ancestors as the way to free Islam of Western dominance. Yet, he condemned the fundamentalists' rejection of the schools of law and sufi orders. His vision of Islamic revivalism rested ultimately on the teachings of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order,

(73) Hawwa, *Jund Allah*, p. 46.

(74) Hawwa, *Hadhibi Tajribati*, p. 28.

the leading component of the *tajdid*, the Islamic renewal of the 17th to 19th centuries, which he adapted to the modern circumstances. His concept for the combination of responsible *sabwa*, correct *salafiyya* and updated *tajdid* is *ihya al-rabbaniyya*. *Rabbaniyya* is the activist orthodox order that follows strictly the path of the *salaf*.

Ihya al-rabbaniyya reflects Hawwa's analysis of the special condition of the Islamic movement in Syria. In a centralized state like Nasserist Egypt the Islamic movement had to choose between an all-out war and acquiescence. In the less centralized Ba'hist Syria there was a third possibility of localized associations that coexist with the regime. Hawwa's *rabbaniyya* is the Syrian alternative to both the radical *sabwa* of Marwan Hadid and the practically acquiescent *salafiyya* of 'Issam al-'Attar. It is a grass-roots organization that unites in the loose fashion of the Sufi orders all the Islamic forces in the country. Its leadership is the only Islamic body capable of making an accurate analysis of the condition of Islam and therefore the only one qualified to declare *ridda*. As the spiritual leader of the Islamic movement it must also direct its members toward a reasonable course of action when *jihad* becomes unavoidable.

The uprising of the Muslim Brethren movement in Syria and its brutal suppression by the Asad regime in 1982 marks the failure of Sa'id Hawwa as a *rabbani*. His analysis of the Syrian condition was basically correct, but he failed to persuade his fellow members of the need for long preparation and restraint. Certainly, powerful factors drew the Brethren in the second half of the 1970'S to their violent course : the murder of Marwan Hadid in 1976, the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, and the apparent difficulties of the Asad regime itself throughout this period. But all these cannot relieve Hawwa of responsibility for the disaster. After all, the concept of *ridda* is no less radical than that of *jabiliyya*, perhaps even more so. For the *mujabidun*, who had neither the time nor the ability to follow his learned formulations, there was no real difference between him and Hadid. The concept of *ridda* helped to draw the Muslim Brethren in Syria to the armed struggle, it remains to be seen if their failure would convince them to try the longer but safer way of the *rabbaniyya*.

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