

***Takfīr* and Terrorism: Historical Roots, Contemporary Challenges and
Dynamic Solutions. With special reference to al-Qaʿida and the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.**

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GLOSSARY :

- *Takfir* : Refers to the practice of one Muslim declaring another Muslim an unbeliever.
- *Al-Qa'ida* : Is a global militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden.
- *Kharijites* : The original Islamic extremist group.
- *Muctazilites* : Is an Islamic school of theology based on reason and rational thought.
- *Shi'ah*: Represent the second largest sect of Islam after Sunni Islam.
- *Jihad* : Is an Arabic word (from JAHADA meaning struggle) that has become familiar

to the people in the West.

- *Arab Spring* : The Arab Spring has brought an historic opportunity, created and led by the people of the region, to build more open, prosperous societies in the Middle East and North Africa.

- *Social closure*: A process of subordination whereby one group monopolizes advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it, which it defines as inferior and ineligible.

- *Fatwas* : The legal judgment in in the Islamic faith.

- *Ijtihād* : Independent reasoning.

- *Muftis* : Scholar who is an interpreter or expounder of Islamic Sharia,

- *Quran* : Is the religious text of Islam from God.

- *Sunnah* (Arab., 'custom'). Customary practice which, in Islam, may refer to both bad and good examples in the past. But supremely the 'sunnah refers to the way in which the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions.

- *AQAP* : Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula.

- *Zakāh* : Money or food given to help the poor Muslims.

- *Al-Takfir wal-Hijra* : is a group founded by Shukri Mustafa. Mustafa was imprisoned for distributing Muslim Brotherhood pamphlets. While in prison, he joined a splinter organization called Jama'at al Muslimin.

- *Jamā'ah al-'Islāmiyyah* : Is an Egyptian Sunni Islamist movement, and is considered a terrorist organization.

- *Jum'ah* : Group.

- *Holy Ka'bah* : The holy building in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

- *Shari'ah* : Law of Islam.

- *Hajj* : Is the largest gathering of people in the world every year for Muslims.

- *Sheikh* : Leader or governor.

- *Muslim Brotherhood* : The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 and

allowed to operate legally until the 1950s.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The global rise of violence in the name of Islam, such as the events of 9/11, 7/7 and the attempts to blow up petrol fields in Saudi Arabia have led to a realization among researchers that the concept of *takfīr*, excommunication (literally, to deem someone an unbeliever) is a grave problem. Researchers have exerted all efforts to highlight its seriousness and the threat it poses to human co-existence.

Numerous studies, by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, describing the consequences of *takfīr*, its intellectual and political impact, the increasing hatred between some Muslim and non-Muslim communities and the nexus between *takfīr* and Islamic terrorism have been published.

Arguably one of the foremost challenges today is the emergence of a *takfīri* orientation, which claims for itself mastery of Islamic jurisprudence and seeks to utilize this discipline to justify its actions. This orientation in some cases may issue *fatwas*, (legal verdicts), against individuals and even whole societies. By appropriating the juristic discourse, this movement attracts followers and is able to persuade members to commit acts of murder against innocent civilians; that often do not even discriminate between Muslims and non-Muslims. The followers of this ideology do not hesitate in committing suicide, blowing themselves up in populated cities, busy markets and in public and private property under the so-called legitimate duty of *Jihād*, claiming that this is the shortest path to Paradise.

The above translation however of *takfīr* does not convey the precise meaning of the word. It would be fair to say that the meaning of *takfīr* in the Islamic world is closely related to the English word “disbelief”. However, while disbelief implies the acts which individuals perform against certain (e.g. religious) principles, *takfīr* goes further and encompasses the act of imposing a punishment or passing a verdict on those whose acts or utterances manifest such disbelief (Skelly, 2010). It should be noted that *takfīr* is a complex term, embedded with ideological, religious, and social connotations. *Takfīr* is also associated with serious legal, ethical, and ethnic considerations. More often than not, Islamic organizations utilize *takfīr* to pronounce an individual, a group of individuals, or whole states who have professed the Islamic faith to be non-Muslims

(Skelly 2010). It is in this sense that *takfīr* is currently used in literature and Islamic studies. Needless to say, in the history of Islam, *takfīr* is regarded as one of the most dreadful and least understood of Islamic practices. *Takfīr* is often equated with a cancer that permeates the whole Islamic world (Skelly, 2010). Skelly believes that *takfīr* is responsible for the vast majority of atrocities caused by terrorists in different countries of the world. It is due to *takfīr* that fundamentalist Islamic organizations can readily justify their actions against all non-Muslims. *Takfīr* gives these organizations an opportunity to act in the name of Islam (Skelly, 2010).

Throughout the history of Islam, groups known for their use and over-use of *takfīr* exemplified the radical side of Islamic ideology. Yet despite the severe implications of *takfīr*, many groups have sought to adopt it to impose their views on the rest of the Muslim and non-Muslim world. In Saudi Arabia, for example, several extremist groups have organised themselves around the principle of *takfīr*.

As an example of what we might call a *takfīri* organization, and the inner dynamics of its functionality, we can cite the Military Technical College Organization, formed in Egypt in 1967. It adopted and promoted the ideology of *takfīr* (Marty & Appleby, 1996). With time, the organization became one of the most attractive representatives of *takfīr* and a part of the complex organizational network in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The Military Technical College Organization was different from other fundamentalist organizations in that it rejected the gradualist view of seizing political power and sought to overthrow the existing political order by force and with immediacy (Marty & Appleby, 1996). The organization's leaders stated that the gradualist approach to seizing power was one of the basic mistakes their predecessor had made and the very reason why they had not achieved any political or ideological success (Marty & Appleby, 1996). Yet, the organization was not powerful enough to realize its intentions. More importantly, other *takfīr* organizations condemned the ideas promoted by the Technical College Organization (Marty & Appleby, 1996).

It should be noted that despite the commonalities in the *takfīri* ideology and the understanding of the *takfīr* concept in the Islamic world, the idea of *takfīr* itself typically varies from organization to organization. After the defeat of *al-'Ikhwān al-*

Muslimūn, the Muslim Brotherhood¹, by the government, the society of Muslims abandoned the idea of seizing the state and adopted a new idea of emigration to another country to find a suitable place for them for the implementation of their plans. Although directly related to *takfīr*, the idea of emigration signified a new stage in the development of *takfīr* organizations in the Middle East and the rest of the Islamic world. This doctrine held that there must be an emigration of the good elements of society who work for God and His mission, and for Islam and its Sharīʿa (Islamic law), to a place suitable for the growth of the Islamic concept and the flourishing of the Muḥammadan mission (Marty & Appleby, 1996). *Takfīr* organizations and their leaders were confident that doing this would allow for *God's* mercy and would provide better opportunities to resist societies that either do not accept or who, in their view, only pretend to accept Islam. The emigration, according to these *takfīris*, would help the faithful to get rid of polytheism and would prepare the Islamic society to fight against non-religious authority (Marty & Appleby, 1996). The Society of Muslims (*al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah*) was among the first to use the concept of *takfīr* to promote the call for killing infidels, either single individuals or groups of them (Marty & Appleby, 1996). The organization proclaimed every infidel's wealth, life, and blood as forfeit to the Muslim (Marty & Appleby, 1996). Later, the ideology and ideas of *takfīr* as presented by The Society of Muslims were followed by numerous other organizations, including some Jihādi Organizations, such as *al-Jamā'ah al-'Islāmiyyah* (Marty & Appleby, 1996). Unfortunately, the true state of *takfīr* and its place in Islamic religion and ideology have yet to be fully investigated.

Today, the concept of *takfīr* is the basic feature and the definitive element of Islamic terror. Ruthven (2006) is correct in saying that Islamist terror is a murderous combination of *takfīr* and *Jihād*. Without *takfīr*, which Ruthven describes as the anathematizing of one's enemies, the fight for the stability of the Islamic world still carries some hint of morality and is religiously and ideologically justified. Without *takfīr*, the war of some sections of the Islamic world against secular societies looks

¹ "The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 and allowed to operate legally until the 1950s. In the early 1950s, the Brotherhood was banned, and its activities—religious, social, and political—were prohibited. In the 1970s the movement was allowed to re-enter spheres of religious and social activism and to operate in the political sphere by contesting legislative elections in a nonthreatening fashion". (Hamzawy & Grebowski , 2010 :15)

similar to the nationalist movements and resistance in Algeria, Afghanistan, and Russian Chechnya: people there fight against the secular invasion and occupation of their territories. *Takfīr*, however, crosses the reasonable boundaries of self-defense and creates a complex political situation in the Islamic world and indeed the rest of the world. It makes it virtually impossible for Islamist organizations to justify their violent actions against western societies.

In the postmodern political reality, *takfīr* is no longer confined to the representation and condemnation of ‘disbelief’, but is an extremely narrow view of the sectarian polemics that simply divide the whole world into “us” and “them” and gives the Islamic world, as viewed by those holding such beliefs, the right to fight against those who adhere to a different religion. In the continuous bifurcation of “us” and “them”, the “us” is constantly associated with self-defining and self-selecting ideological activism. This binary implies the cleavage that currently exists between the Muslim world and non-Muslim societies and it is equally relevant whenever the conflicts between the *Jihād*ist vanguard and the imams who vote against violence and terrorism in mosques are discussed (Ruthven, 2006). *Takfīr* is a useful way for Islamic organizations to communicate their social resentment, to charge the ideological conflict with fervor, and to add fuel to the existing nationalist controversies (Ruthven, 2006).

The context and notion of *takfīr* is becoming ever more complex, given the political changes that we are currently witnessing, such as the Arab Spring² and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, these are changes that make the nature of *takfīr* more elusive and less visible, which in turn renders the battle against *Jihād* and *takfīr* into a fight against shadows. To further exasperate this, the *takfīris* are no longer restrained by geographical borders. The Internet and communication have made it easier to penetrate territories and communities that were historically inaccessible. As a result, the concept of a less visible enemy is vague, while fundamentalist groups conveniently use this vagueness of the postmodern enemy to justify their intentions:

²The Arab Spring has brought an historic opportunity, created and led by the people of the region, to build more open, prosperous societies in the Middle East and North Africa. Change has been most pronounced in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, where regimes have been toppled by the power of the people .The Arab Spring. Human Rights and Democracy . <http://fcohrdreport.readandcomment.com/the-arab-spring/>.

they no longer need a physical enemy to fight against. It is enough for them to declare a border between “us” and “them” as the major criterion of judging the invalidity of one’s religious beliefs.

Needless to say, *takfīr* and its attack on disbelief is one of the basic problems in the modern Islamic world. *Takfīr* and terrorism go hand in hand. Islamist terrorists commit suicides and public acts of terrorism to promote their ideas and to convey the meaning of their militant ideology. They operate numerous criteria to exclude communities and societies from the Muslim world and use this exclusion as the incendiary of violent change. However, while many scholars in Islamic studies link *takfīr* to terrorism, none of them have ever tried to explain the roots of *takfīr* and terrorism through the prism of social closure³. The concept of social closure is not new to literature, and numerous scientists and social researchers have sought to explain its relevance and meaning. Social closure has been used to explain the roots of extremism and social exclusion, but never before has anyone tried to look at terrorism as the ultimate form of social exclusion based on religion and ideology. The links between social closure and *takfīr* are extremely complex⁴. They signify the radical organizations’ beliefs in their omniscience and omnipotence. The links between social closure and *takfīr* support the self-selecting and self-defining vision of religious activism: based on who is excluded from the Muslim community, radical organizations decide what actions they must take to teach the excluded a valuable lesson for their disbelief. More importantly, these are the radical organizations that decide for themselves who deserves to be excluded from the Islamic world; these organizations themselves operate based on social exclusion of the non-believers and those who do not believe enough, to promote their ideas through violence. That is why it is important to reconsider the link between Islam, terrorism, and *takfīr* through the prism of social closure and exclusion.

Fatwas issued in flagrant disregard of basic Islamic principles and in conflict with reason are not outcomes of valid *’ijtihād* scientific research, but rather outcomes of ignorance and intellectual narrow-mindedness, which illustrate readings of the wrong

³ Social closure: “a process of subordination whereby one group monopolizes advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it, which it defines as inferior and ineligible (Murphy 1988:8)

⁴ *Takfīri* Organizations build their own social class with strict doctrines to be upheld therefore making it difficult for interrelations with other members of the society who are not *Kafirs*. This social setting leads to social closure (Hollis, 2003:69).

part of the texts of legitimacy, and thus signify ignorance of the purposes of Shari‘a and its general rules. Many of these opinions do not depend on legal or scientific support and a great deal of Muslims in our time are still suffering from the spread of *takfiri* ideology, in particular the Muslim youth who have been greatly affected by such dangerous opinions. It is regrettable to mention here that those Muftis (i.e. religious scholars who are qualified to issue legal verdicts) are sincerely misguided individuals who have harmed Muslims as much as they harm anyone else, spilling innocent blood, exploiting women and usurping property. They conveniently ignore narrations from the prophet such as when he was looking at the Ka‘ba and said: “You have been honored and glorified by God but the believer’s blood is more sacred and valuable” (Al-Albani, 3420). There is an example of radical *fatwas*, such as the *fatwa* of Sheikh Hamud Shu‘aibi: “Any decision rendered by the State of America, in particular resolutions of war, does not only by public opinion or by a vote by the House of Representatives, represent the councils primarily the opinion of the people through Parliament, so any voice on the U.S. is fighting a warrior (Shu‘aibi web,2002).

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been afflicted by the *takfir* doctrine particularly upon the advent of Al-Qa‘idah. Not only have many Saudi youths been influenced by it, but it has spread to other nations too (Riyadh news, (2006.

The current research will tackle the subject of *takfir* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The emergence, causes and effects, the way the Kingdom has managed it, as well as the handling process and the counseling provided by the Saudi Ministry of Interior to face such threats and provide protection to both the individuals and community, have all been discussed. I have chosen Saudi Arabia as a case study since it has been suffering from terrorism most significantly since 1995 (Janko,2007). The suffering has appeared in several guises, but particularly in the loss of human life and property. The stamp of Al-Qa‘idah in that process has been clear and it is therefore considered one of the most serious threats facing the security services. This study aims to find some solutions to this critical case and to present some of the successes of the government in fighting terrorism in general and Al-Qa‘idah in particular, for the benefit of the wider academic community.

1.1 Research Problem:

There is great debate on the precise definition of *takfīr*. Therefore the context in that domain shall be stemmed from the Quran and *Sunnah*⁵. Here we take them as our main references as the topic of *takfīr*'s causes and management are discussed from the Islamic standpoint. It is the view of the author that the core of *takfīr* is based on the misinterpretation of Islamic teachings particularly *Quran* and *Sunnah*, and the faith of some Muslims in the ideology of *takfīr* that 'legalizes' the murdering of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Since the emergence of *takfīr* ideologies among Muslim communities, there have been many fatalities: even Caliphs and scholars have not been spared. The continuation of the ideology still has the power to persist in causing bloodshed to many innocent people.

More recent investigations have stated that terrorist acts have cost the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia more than one billion Saudi Riyals in losses in property and assets (Ukaz, 2011). The study administered by Colonel Abdullah Alseryani, a security expert in the police station of Qebaā district and police station director, has shown that terrorism is an intolerable threat to national security. Indeed, it has immediate effect on the comprehensive security systems of faith, politics society, economics as well as many other damaging side effects. These in turn, will disable the development of tourism in countries where it is the main source of income and economical growth. Between 2001 and 2006, around 88 terrorism incidences occurred in Saudi Arabia. They varied between bomb blasts, assaults and airplane hijacking. These acts of terrorism were committed in Riyadh, the eastern region, Makka, Medina, the northern and southern regions. Approximately 252 persons have been killed and 494 injured (Ukaz, 2011).

Furthermore, there was an assisination attempt on Deputy Interior Minister, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef on August 27, 2009. The perpetrator entered the office of the Prince at his home in Jeddah and blew himself up using a mobile phone bomb device instantly killing himself and injuring the Prince. Prince Muḥammad bin Nāyef became prey to such an attack due to his position as Saudi Arabia's counter-terrorism campaign director. The Prince is responsible for all internal security and he has been recognized by other world counterparts for his achievements in the struggle to fight terrorism in Saudi Arabia. The office of Prince Muḥammad is also responsible for

⁵ *'sunnah* (Arab., 'custom'). Customary practice which, in Islam, may refer to both bad and good examples in the past. But supremely the *'sunnah* refers to the way in which the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions (*Ṣahāba*) lived, and to what they said and did. See Encyclopedia *'sunnah*. Provide a reference to Encyclopedia of Islam

prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs in the country (Boucek, 2008). Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula claimed responsibility for the attack in a message which was broadcast via terrorist forums on the internet, such as Network Shamikh Islam. These causalities were the consequence of the *takfir* ideologies which are linked with the emergence of Al-Qa'ida and have played a vital role particularly in the recruitment of disenfranchised youth.

1.2 Research Questions:

Through this research the concept of *takfir* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be addressed; its emergence, effects and how the government agencies have to fight this ideology are presented. The following questions have been set forth:

- 1 - What are the bases for the thought of *takfir* in previous and present times?
- 2 - What are the factors that led to the spread of the contemporary phenomenon of *takfir* in the Muslim world in the latter half of the twentieth century?
- 3 - What are the reasons that led to the emergence of the doctrine of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia?
- 4 - What are the implications of the phenomenon of *takfir* on the Muslim community?
- 5- How is the government of Saudi Arabia presently tackling *takfiri* thought?

Chapter 2: The Literature

2.1 Introduction

Takfīr has been the subject of a great deal of studies that have delicately dissected the issue of *takfīr*, and the factors and reasons that led to the *takfīr*, such as extremism and misinterpretation of religion. In this section we are going to shed light on some of the studies and literature that delved deep into the issue of *takfīr*. Writers have written about *takfīrism* under different titles and concepts.

Alistair Harris (2010) wrote “Exploiting Grievances by Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula” explaining that the evolution of Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula indicates that Al-Qa’ida and its center in Yemen, had aimed at launching attacks on Saudi Arabia in particular. Harris also referred to terrorist attacks, such as the assassination attempt of Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, assistant minister of Interior at the time, as the most serious attack against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Harris says the following:

Following the attempted assassination of Saudi Assistant Minister of Interior for Security Affairs Prince Muhammad bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz in August 2009 and the failed attempt by 23-year-old Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to detonate an explosive device on a flight to Detroit on Christmas Day last year, the U.S. response was swift and predictable. CENTCOM Commander Gen. David Petraeus immediately visited Yemen and announced the American intention to double security aid to the country. In the face of increasingly alarmist claims about the nature of the threat posed by AQAP⁶, U.S.-assisted missile and air strikes have attempted to decapitate AQAP in a series of targeted strikes. Such a strategy had proved effective in

2002, when an American drone killed the head of al-Qaeda in Yemen at the time, Abu Ali al-Harithi. Dealing with symptoms is no substitute for dealing with causes, however. In the rush to offer prescriptive advice, key questions remain unanswered. What do we actually know about AQAP? How has the organization evolved in terms of membership, structure, tactics, and goals? What is it trying to achieve, and crucially, why? What lessons can we learn

AQAP : *Al-Qa’ida* in the Arabian Peninsula⁶

for countering processes of radicalization? Prevention and the promotion of community resilience, as much as protective and offensive measures, need to form part of the counter-terrorism tool kit⁷.

Harris also pointed out that the United States tried to eliminate Al-Qa'ida through missile strikes, and the author stated in the book that there is important information about Al-Qa'ida. Harris believes that the world should work to fight terrorism everywhere, but he fails to mention the most important point, which is the relationship between Al-Qa'ida and *takfīr*.⁸

Shmuel Bar (2006) in *Jihād Ideology in Light of Contemporary Fatwas* discusses the rise of the modern Islamist Jihād movement, pointing out that certain fatwas that declare *Jihād* as an obligation are leading to an increase in recruitment for the cause. Bar goes on to suggest that these fatwas should be subject to anti-terrorism laws, due to their inflammatory nature and blatant propagation of terrorism. While he does mention many significant points, he too fails to highlight the relationship between terrorism and extremist fatwas. Nonetheless, Bar does touch on the more recent examples of fatwas and their roles in Islam, particularly with regard to the beliefs by some that fatwas are intertwined with particular points in Quran which are unclear. It is clear from the research conducted by Bar, that there is division in the Islamic scholarly community with regard to jihad and its function. In particular, the questions of how jihad is applied, when it should be applied, who is a valid target, how jihad should be funded and how Muslims should respond to *kuffar*, disbelievers, have been discussed in some detail

Benedict Wilkinson and Jack Barclay (2011) in *The Language of Jihād Narratives and Strategies of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula and UK Responses* describe how Al-Qa'ida was founded and describe Al-Qa'ida after the killing of Usāmah bin Lādin. Also, they talk about the role of Al-Qa'ida in the Arab Spring, which happened recently within some Arab countries. Wilkinson and Barclay write

Harris, *Exploiting Grievances: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula* (Washington : 2010),pp. 2⁷

Harris(2010) says “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an offshoot of Osama Bin Laden’s terrorist network and a group that has been operating in Yemen and Saudi Arabia, presents a .”growing regional and international security challenge

extensively about the relationship between Al-Qa'ida in Yemen and certain Arab countries.

AQAP has become one of the most vocally and textually productive organisations in the history of terrorism. Clearly, the group has conducted (or attempted to conduct) a range of high-profile attacks in recent years and these have brought widespread attention to their cause. Similarly, a substantial proportion of their traditional publications in both Arabic and English have been devoted, both to presenting a unified strategic doctrine and to providing the underlying, supportive narratives which describe the cause which their attacks advertise. In comparison to other terrorist organizations however, AQAP in its current guise in Yemen, has avoided the debates and fall outs so often associated with the production of strategic communications. The organisation has managed to maintain control over its supporters is a statement not only to the quantity of its strategic communication, but also to the quality of those communications. (Benedict Wilkinson and Jack Barclay, 2011)

A Whitehall Report looks at the ways in which Al-Qa'ida builds up its communications apparatus with regard to the context of the Arabian Peninsula. The report suggests that there is a threat to Western countries, but this threat should not be over or under-estimated. In Yemen the political situation is unstable and there is a real and present threat from Al-Qa'ida, which the UK and other partners have tried to destabilize.

Kent Bob Huzen (2008) in his thesis "Politics of Islamic *Jihād*", describes *Jihād* and the relationship between *Jihād* and terrorism, but does not mention Al-Qa'ida or other *Jihādi* organizations.⁹

Marc Sageman (2008) in *Understanding Terror Networks* stated that the study of terrorism requires an unusual combination of experience and skills to conduct studies. Sageman worked with Islamic organizations on a daily basis during the Afghan-Soviet war, from 1987 to 1989. These interactions gave him some insight into the Mujahedin's beliefs and practices. Sageman demonstrates a lot of important points

Huzen, "Jihad is an Arabic word (from JAHADA meaning struggle) that has become familiar to the people⁹ in the West" (2008), pp 12

in the case of *takfir* and terrorism, especially with regard to the Jihād. The research has had one particular positive impact, in that it has led to an increased interest in the topic and in particular an increased focus on Al-Qa^cidah. Unfortunately, there is no mention of any other terrorist network bar the link made with psychological research on historical groups and the global Salafi jihad, which is a worldwide religious revivalist movement. The goal of this movement is to build an Islamic state, to go back to authentic Islamic principles and to attack the West using principles of *jihad*. Salafi jihadists use the principles of Sayyid Qutb's 1964 Milestones in order to make their causes legitimate. The arguments of Qutb also provide the foundations for research conducted by Salm Faraj of the Tanzim al-Jihad, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Ladin. Most notably, the Salafi jihad ideology has been a promoter of militant groups.

Alrāis (2007) in *The Clear Proof against the Doubts of the People of Takfir and Explosions* elucidates his belief that the *takfirists* and terrorists embrace ideologies and dogmas circulated on the internet, which eventually lead to a condition of uncertainty and chaos about the real and proper understanding of Islam and Islamic teachings. The writer defends Saudi Arabia and describes it as a society and a country free from *takfirists* and extremists. He believes that the type of *takfirism* existing in Saudi Arabia is not good because Saudis follow the footsteps of the early generations of Muslims. Saudis are always careful about whom to call *kafir* and there is no extremism in Saudi Arabia, according to Alrais. Alrais quoted many of prophet's Muḥammad sayings and the events that took place at the time of Prophet's companions Abubaker and ʿUmar Ibn Al-Khattāb. The book does not mention the analysis work conducted and it is weak from this side.

Al Rāshid (2006) in *The Rules of Takfir According to Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn ʿAbdul Wahhab*, writes that *takfir* can have disastrous consequences if practiced without strict criteria and conditions. *Takfir* shall be governed by the criteria set by Muslim scholars, such as Muḥammad Bin ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Ibn Taymiyyah and will always be governed by the teachings and principles of Islam.

Yuns (1999) wrote *Takfir between Religion and Politics* in which he presents a long account on Islamic intellectual history wherein Muslim thinkers were suppressed and killed by their opponents just because of their thoughts and opinions. However, the real reason behind suppressing and killing them was a political one, and that was the

early misuse of religion in politics, says Yuns. After having listed many Muslim thinkers from Islamic history, the writer calls for apostates not to be killed, but rather that they be asked to repent and change their minds. He also calls for launching a dialogue with confirmed apostates and with those who do not believe in any of the basic principles of Islam such as the oneness of God, the angels, the holy books, the messengers of God, doomsday, destiny, or with those who deny the obligation of prayer, fasting, alms-giving (*Zakāt*), *Hajj*, or denying the prohibition of alcoholic drinks and generally denying what the God of Islam or the Prophet Muḥammad have said. Yuns further calls for discussing everything with the apostates in order to discover the reasons and factors that make them skeptical about Islam and that may have led them to their apostasy. The book mentioned important points, specially the issue of dialogue with apostates.

Al Albāni (1996) wrote in “*The Trial of Takfīr*” that there are many Muslims who like to easily declare others as *kafir*, even those who believe that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, even if they fast and pray, and commit to all other rituals of Islam too. Some Muslims hold sects like the Khawarij and other similar schools of Islamic thought as apostates. Others believe that if a person believes that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, then they shall not be deemed *kafir*. Such Muslim further contend that one shall not call a person *kafir* as, in their opinion the label *kafir* shall be used to describe deeds, not people. In their estimation, even those who are apostates or claim to be Prophets, or deny prayer, for instance, are not *kafir*. Most of these acts are considered by Muslim scholars unanimously as a reason to make one a *kafir* or a convert.

Contrary to that, *Sunni* Muslims believe that a person can become *kafir* or apostate but they are very cautious in labeling people as *kafir*. They do not declare specific individuals as apostates. They always assume that Muslims are practicing authentic Islam and they warmly welcome new Muslims or would-be Muslims. This book is a very famous book in the Arab countries and mentions a lot of important points with regard to the *takfīr*.

In *The Ostensible Word On Takfir*” Al-Qaradawi (1990) stresses the danger of *takfīr* and the importance of making the *Quran* and the *sunnah* the sole reference for measuring the correctness of Islamic practice and for deciding whether an individual is

or is not an apostate. Al-Qaradawi also categorizes *kafirs* (unbelievers) into two categories: major and minor and he quotes the opinions of the most important Imams in Islam, such as Malik, Abuhanifah, Ibn Hanbal, Imam al-Shafi'i and other independent scholars. Al-Qaradawi is a very famous author and the book calls for following of the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

Although *takfir* is considered one of the most important issues of our time, which shall be studied and explored at all levels and from all aspects, it is regrettable that most of the previous studies focused only on the historical origins of *takfir* and its negative impacts. Only a small number of studies dealt with the other negative impacts of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia, such as the security, economic, political and touristic impacts of the phenomenon. *Takfir* in Saudi Arabia has not been sufficiently studied and so this study will look in much more detail at this understudied topic within the context of Saudi Arabia. The study will look at all aspects: analytical, historical, social, economic, and religious, in addition to all delving deeper into the reasons behind the phenomenon of *takfir* and the opinions of Muslim scholars on the topic.

2.2 Research Significance:

Throughout the history of the Islamic world, wars have been the distinctive element of the Muslims' interaction with other countries. Wars in the Muslim world were regular and diverse. In the traditional typology of wars, terrorism always stood separately. It should be noted, that professionals in the field of Islamic studies tend to differentiate between different types of wars: these include comprehensive wars, limited wars, civil wars and, finally terrorism. Comprehensive wars imply the fight in which one state wages war to conquer another state, for example in 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and virtually annexed it. Limited wars are a form of military actions which aim "to gain some objective short of the surrender and capture of the enemy" (El-Fatih, 2006). For example, the U.S. was the head of the Middle Eastern movement against Iraq, which resulted in retaking the territory of Kuwait back in 1991, but the United States did not hit Baghdad directly because those actions would not provide the U.S. with additional benefits. Obviously, limited wars in the Islamic world used to be the most popular form of attack. Egypt's occupation of Sinai, Israel's attacks on Palestinians, and Israel's bombings of the Iraqi targets are all the instruments and the results of the short-term limited military strategies which Middle Eastern players use from time to time to

occupy new territories and defend their gains (El-Fatih, 2006).

Civil wars are another form of military conflict characteristic of the Middle East. These wars refer to military actions between different factions of one and the same state, which seek to overthrow and create a new government or political regime (Hibbard & Little, 1997). More often than not, civil wars in the Islamic world grow and transform into so-called guerilla wars, which avoid fighting on the front lines, but include irregular forces, which are hidden by the civilian population and fight against the regime. Today, the Iraqi resistance to the American occupation is just another guerilla war in the Middle East (Huntington, 1996). Finally, terrorism is the final form of war which recently emerged and proved an effective force of fighting against those who disagree with the dominant regime and the Muslim faith. Terrorism is a step away from civil war, closer to the guerrilla war – it is a logical continuation of the traditional war by other means. Like guerrilla war, terrorism does avoid using frontlines and promotes violence as the means of protecting certain political ideals (Rapoport, 1988). However, the meanings of terrorism in the Islamic and Western worlds differ greatly.

Where the Western world interprets terrorism as the direct attack on the political and religious rights of individuals, the Islamic world considers terrorism as the basic form of fighting against those who do not belong or refuse to accept the standards and values of the Muslim religion. Islamic fundamentalist organizations resort to terrorism because it produces a mass psychological effect on the public. More importantly, terrorism as a war against disbelief amplifies these effects and allows small fundamentalist organizations to attack stronger enemies (Springer, Regens & Edger 2009). The proposed research is significant to the extent that it allows investigating terrorism as another form of military action in Saudi Arabia and its effects on the public in the Muslim and the rest of the world. The significance of the study is difficult to underestimate due to its openness in understanding the realities of the Saudi wars, Saudi life, and Saudi terrorism. As the whole world lives in confidence that the Middle East attracts, accumulates, and produces terrorists and that all Middle Eastern populations are terrorists, the time has come to analyze the reality of these assumptions. The historical and cultural differences between the Western and the Eastern world do not disappear, but on the contrary, grow and become even more significant. The time has come when professional research must reduce the scope of stereotyping with regard to

the Islamic world and to provide western societies with a better understanding of the Saudi perception.

The current study is significant because it allows linking the concept of *takfīr* to the concept of social closure and social exclusion. In the field of social studies, the concept of social closure has been continuously under researched. However, analyzing the meaning and significance of *takfīr* in Saudi Arabia is difficult without trying to understand the meaning of social exclusion, which fundamentalist organizations utilize to justify their violent intentions. Noticeably, whenever fundamentalist organizations in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East engage in terrorism and the concept of disbelief, they seek to isolate those who reject Islam and do not adhere to the Muslim religious traditions and go further to condemn and punish those outside of their own faith. It would be fair to assume that *takfīr* is just another form of social closure and exclusion which fundamentalist organizations in the Middle East use to preserve the coherence and unity of the Muslim world.

The concept of social closure can contribute significantly to the study of *takfīr* in Saudi Arabia because it makes it possible to understand the processes which give rise to the reinforcement of the Islamic fundamentalist groups (Vertigans & Marron, 2009). The concept of social closure helps to examine the origins of these social closures and exclusions and the methods of power usurpation into the hands of the Islamic militants. In the context of *takfīr*, the concept of social closure has a double meaning. On the one hand, the fundamentalist *takfīr* organizations keep to a strict line of criteria, which they use to maintain the stability of the organizational membership and to test those who are willing to become a part of their organizations. On the other hand, *takfīr* organizations promote social closure and social exclusion toward those who, according to their criteria and beliefs, exemplify religious and ideological disbelief and thus do not deserve the right for self-expression and life.

It is more than interesting to see what the Saudi Arabian population perceives with regard to these expressions and to *takfīr*, in particular. It is important to understand whether the Saudi population agrees to terrorism as a means of excluding the unfaithful from the pool of the religious community in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is an interesting object of research and discovery because social closure and exclusion based

on religion is characteristic of Muslim societies and countries and is often difficult to understand in the western world. As a result, Saudi Arabia looks like an excellent source of the primary and secondary knowledge about takfīr and its social closure implications.

Although the history of excluding non-Muslims from the Islamic community as those, which live in disbelief dates back to the beginnings of the *Quran*, modern history has become another driver in the development of the new religious and ideological consciousness. Saudi Arabia is not an exception: the country is well-known for its growing commitment to the value of education and culture. I am confident that the choice of Saudi Arabia as the object of the proposed research and analysis is valuable because it will help to investigate the role which education plays in the development of the fundamentalist visions of the world and the social closure/ exclusion attitudes in the individual and groups' way to becoming terrorists. The fact is that, according to Brachman (2008) the widespread introduction of education had another consequence, namely that new forms of derivative and contingent codes of exclusion were implemented which placed emphasis upon credentialism and the internalization of secular methods and values. As a result, individualism and the specificity of the Islamic culture and the Muslim religion are gradually losing their specificity and uniqueness and are becoming internalized – the processes which, for many fundamentalist groups, are unacceptable. These are also the processes that give rise to numerous other fundamentalist groups which view education and internalization as the direct threat to the stability of the Islamic world.

These internationalization policies are however grounded in the state-wide attitudes to the postmodern reality. Many Muslim nation-states consider internalization as the direct prerequisite for the continuous political and global success (Aaron, 2008). At the same time, to preserve the uniqueness of their culture, these states will seek to emphasize the relevance and importance of their history, religion and ideology. As a result, national education will become more nationalized while hidden curricula will contribute to the development of the new rational identities (Aaron, 2008). Even if internalization of education and individual and cultural values promotes individual and political progression in the modern nation-states, the influence of religion on education is difficult to counter. Islam continues to be prominent in schools and universities

across the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Iran; the Muslim countries that traditionally considered themselves as secular are giving more attention to Islam and religion in schools and curricula (Aaron, 2008). Despite the claims to promote secular education and secular worldviews, Islamic countries continue to rely on Islam in various areas of life and keep to a belief that Islam, the language and the culture are the vehicles for national integration, development, regeneration and modernization (Brachman, 2008). As a result, the growing number of educational institutions does not decrease, but on the contrary, increases the conflict between secularism that is coming from the West and Islam that has been historically the dominant religion in the Middle East. Education gives the food and fuel for the development of the fundamentalist organizations which learn the value of the national culture and religion and seek the means to protect the stability of the Islamic world from Western intrusion.

Many Muslim nation-states grew open to the incoming knowledge and innovations, and provided immigrants with the opportunities for self-realization and growth. Never is the content of the Islamic curriculum radical or violent but the growing role of religion in school and university curricula is responsible for the development of the more Islamic views on the world (Lane & Redissi, 2009). The latter results in “the development of more militant moods and help militant Muslims to attain credentials to succeed in their rational *takfir* criteria” (Lane & Redissi, 2009). The specific cultural and ideological atmosphere in the Muslim states reduces the social opportunities to deny the fundamentalist and radical interpretations of the *Quran* and school/university curricula (Vertigans & Marron, 2009). As a result, the country itself delegitimizes the secular processes that occur in the Muslim world and lets the militants who pursue influential positions after graduation use their posts to enhance the radical religious and ideological discourse (Vertigans & Marron, 2009). In this sense, it is interesting to reconsider the attitudes toward *takfir* among the educated Saudi population and to explore what people think about *takfir*. It is very probable that the country may face the highest risks of social exclusion and closure, which will subsequently lead to the development of more radical attitudes and *takfir* organizations and, as a result, the expansion of terrorism.

2.3 Research methodology:

In this thesis the following methodology has been adopted:

1. **The Analytical Inductive Approach Method:**

This method determines the characteristics of the phenomenon and describes its nature and the relationship between its variables reasons, directions, and other aspects that characterize the phenomenon. The method tries to interpret and explain the current status, determine the circumstances and the relationships that connect the variables together and finally extract the conclusions out of all that. This kind of method is used to realize the goal and to find out the extent to which phenomenon are interrelated. The inductive approach method can be defined as “the process of observing phenomena and collecting data about them in order to reach general principles and relationships”. This inductive approach method has been used when dealing with the topic of the study from a theoretical point of view. I have gone through what the previous researchers have written about the issue of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia. I have read all the previous studies that dealt with this topic and analyzed them for the purpose of finding out the impact of *takfir* on Saudi Arabia and how Saudi Arabia has handled the *takfir* phenomenon.

2. **Historical Method:**

The research has used the historical method in many areas of this study where it drew a lot from the historical resources that dealt with the topic of the research from various perspectives. The historical references include history books, jurisprudence books, hadith (prophet Mohamed sayings and events) books, *Quran* interpretation books, *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) books, Islamic legacy books related to the subject and the previous research that have dealt with the topic of the study. Through this historical methodology, the study understood the past events that helped us understand the present ones and anticipate the future events as well. We have studied the issue of *takfir* during the time of early Muslim societies and generations and how the issue of *takfir* has developed through the course of time as well as its impacts in our present time. On the other hand, we also tried to determine the relationship between the old (historical) *takfir* and terrorist movements and the current Islamic movements of

our time. This methodology also contributes to solving current troubles in light of past experiences and it also helps to understand the interactions that happened in the past with regard to such kinds of phenomenon and how those past events and experiences may affect similar events today. On the other hand, this historical methodology helps in the process of re-evaluating data, hypotheses, and current theories rather than past ones.

3. Social Closure theory:

This study applies social closure theory, which means exploring the reality about Islamic extremist movements and relates the terrorist activities in Muslim and non-Muslim communities to this theory. The theory also deals with the social conditions of the current Islamic terrorist movements in Muslim communities and tries to determine the reasons that lead these terrorist movements to be socially secluded. The social closure theory is supported by the opinions of academics specializing in researching this particular subject as well as by the review of some criminal activities committed by the extremists in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim communities. Through this theory, we also explained the importance of the issue of *takfīr* and terrorism as well as the importance of the study itself.

Chapter Three: The Concept of Takfir:

3.1 Definitions of Takfir

The majority of Muslims understand *kufir* to mean disbelief, i.e. not believing in God, whether a person believes in the opposite and whether they declare it or not (Saodah, 1994). According to Andersen (2005), *takfir* is an Arabic word that means the practice of announcing a person or a group to be no longer of the Islamic religion. It can also be said to be excommunication of an individual or a group of people from the Islamic religion if the said person(s) do not follow *Shari'ah* law. Curra (2005) claims that: “*Takfir* traces its origin from a group known as the Muslim Brotherhood, which was led by Sayyid Qutb” (Curra, 2005:23).

An excommunicated person or a group is called as a *kafir*. Being declared a *kafir* arises from actions that the Islamic believers feel that are not in accordance to the true teachings of the *Quran*, various interpretations of the *Quran* have led to a different understanding by different people. Muslims refer to the *Quran* for political, philosophical and sociological interpretations and advice. Some people may interpret it in a way that fits their personal needs and when others disagree, this leads to excommunication of either group. *Kufir* is a crime of which bloodshed is its punishment (Bosworth, 2004).

Ibn Taymiyyah said: "Blasphemy is not believing in God and His messengers, whether accompanied by denial or not but rather doubt, or turning away from all, due to envy or arrogance, or following the desires that prevent one from following the message" (Group Fatawa Shaykh al-Islam, 2002:335). Newby (2004) suggests that *takfir* is the act of declaring someone as a disbeliever.

In *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *kufir* is considered the opposite of faith; “we believe in God and disbelief in the idols. It is said to the people of war as: ‘they disbelieved, that is they are refrained and disobeyed’” (Ibn Manzur, 1999:18).

Takfir is commonly translated as excommunication (Skelly, 2010). There is

another definition of *takfir* that is in the relationship between the people of Islam - the Muslims – and the non-Muslims (Ṭaḥāwī, 1982). However, while disbelief implies the acts which individuals perform against certain, for example religious principles, *takfir* goes further and means the act of passing the punishment or the verdict on those whose acts or utterances manifest such disbelief (Skelly, 2010). The meaning of disbelief has been mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim as: “infidelity, which is the denial of what has been learned from the Prophet, whether it is related to what you call practical or theoretical. Anyone who denies what has been delivered by the messenger, after coming to know it, he is an infidel in the religion and its teachings” (Ibn al-Qayyim aL-Jawzīyāh, 1995: 412). Therefore, the infidelity takes away a person from the circle of faith and these people will be permanently abide in hell as per the Islamic texts, which are of the two following types stated below. The Islamic texts have stated that he will permanently reside in hell. This has six types: denial, apostasy, negation, stubbornness, hypocrisy and doubt.

Minor *kufir* is that which does not expel a person from the faith. It has been classified by Islamic Legislation as infidelity, but all evidence has shown that it is not to the level of the first type and the legislator intends only to warn and threaten.

There are verses in the *Quran* containing the word *kafir* (disbeliever) or *takfir*. Some of these verses are related to the rulers who do not abide by the *Quran* in their sovereignty to the people. They are worded in general *وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ* - Whoever does not judge by what God has revealed, they are the unbelievers (Q5:44). *وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ* - Whoever does not judge by what God has revealed, they are unjust (Q5:45). *وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْقَاسِقُونَ* - - And whosoever does not judge by what God has revealed (then) such (people) are the rebellious i.e. the disobedient to *God* (Q5:47). It is evident that the ruler who does not govern by God’s law is a disbeliever. Various interpretations have been proffered regarding the true meaning of this verse. Some say that it is addressed to all Muslims to rule by the revelation of God in His book and the prophets’ sayings. Others say that such verses have been revealed to the hypocrites because they are not honoring God’s legislation. The third one says the verses are addressed to Israeli people from the Jews who have known the messenger sent by God, but they do not believe in him (Hidayat Hiyari, 1996: 300)

3.2: Types of kufr:

1 - *Kufr* of resistance and arrogance, such as the Satan's *kufr* who was commanded by God to prostrate to Adam but refused in arrogance. God Almighty says in the Quran "And We said to the angels prostrate to Adam, they fell prostrate, except Satan refused and was arrogant and was one of the disbelievers" (Q2: 34). *Kufr* can be made through uttering words such as in the case of insulting God, His messenger, or cursing Islam or mocking God, His book, His apostles or His religion. God addresses a group of people who mocked the prophet and his companions at the battle of Tabuk: "Was it at God, and His Signs, and His Messenger that you were mocking? Make no excuses: you have rejected Faith after you had accepted it" (Q9: 65). This is to indicate that *kufr* can be made by act or deed, such as by belief and also by utterance.

2 – *Kufr* can be expressed through denial, as in the case of atheists or agnostics, or by disbelieving in the religious principles and Islam's provisions which are agreed upon: such as the rejection of God's divinity or the denial of All Mastership or His deservedness of worship. It may also be caused by refusing to recognize any of the angels, messengers, apostles, or holy books revealed from the heaven, or resurrection, or heaven, the fire of hell or the Day of Judgement. It also encompasses any denial of the obligations of prayer, or the legal necessity of *Zakāh*, the obligation to fulfil the pilgrimage, to fast the month of Ramadan, to be obedient to ones parents, or the obligation of kinship, or any similar religiously known matters that should be abided by and adhered to. Denial of the prohibited nature of usury, adultery, alcohol consumption, disobedience of parents, breaking ties with ones kins, offerings of bribes and other forbidden religiously known matters are also significant (Al-Shebil, 2010:4423).

3 –*Kufr* can be expressed by disbelief, even if it is apparent, such as the attitude of infidels, Christians and Jews towards the apostle. They denied him openly while they heartily believed in his sincerity and his prophecy.

4 – *Kufr* can be expressed by turning away from the path of God and His religion, or the denial of *God's* religion and or not worshipping Him. Such denial and turning away is surely a disbelief of God. God said: "But those who disbelieve, from that of which they are warned, are turning away" (Q46: 3) and the Almighty said: "And

who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the *Ayat* (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of his Lord, then turns aside there from? Verily, we shall exact retribution from the *Mujrim* (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners” (Q32: 22).

5 – Infidelity can be shown through deeds deemed abhorrent in the Quran such as suspicion, hypocrisy, showing disdain towards Islam and hating God’s religion or His apostles. This is done through raising doubts and suspicions in the religion’s origins “Only those who are the believers who have believed in God and His Messenger, and afterward do not doubt, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of God. Those! They are the truthful (Q49: 15). Hence *kufr* can be, by faith, or by denial. It can be by utterance or by avoidance, disbelief or rejection (Al-Shibel, 2010: 4434).

6 - Apostasy: It is the renunciation of Islam and hence apostasy is judged as a *takfīr* and the cause for *takfīr*, which is about straying from the path of faith. It has two types:

Firstly, simple apostasy, which is not followed by hurt, or war, or insult to Islam and Muslims. One found guilty of this type should be asked before he is executed, if he repented and returned from his *kufr* it would be good, otherwise the Muslim guardian shall execute him.

Secondly, severe apostasy: This kind is always accompanied by hurt, conspiracy, killing and insulting the messenger or the true religion or God, Self or the Muslims.

One found guilty of this kind shall not ask for repentance, nor shall his repentance be accepted after being caught and his case shall not be dealt with as the case of the first type as per the narrations in the references of '*Sunna* (Al-Shebil, 2010: 4434).

3.3: The intellectual basis of the *takfīr*

The concept of *takfīr* originated gradually and in correlation with the events of

the conflict experienced by the movement of the Khawārij, particularly their opposition to the authority of the Caliph Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and those who came after him from the rulers of the Muslims (Ben-Amo, 1996). Kharijite theology is essentially based on the principle of *takfīr*, which laid the basis for other important rules. The concept of *Bara'ah* (Freedom) from the debaters and *takfīr* are greatly interrelated in the thought of the past and of today's new Kharijite (Al-Hariri, 2010:1303). Such opinions arose when some Muslims were objecting the succession of Abū Bakr as-Ṣiddīq as the Caliph for the Muslims where some argued that 'Ali bin Abe Talib is the one deserving of succession, other than Abu Baker, by virtue of his position and his relationship from the Messenger of God" (Ben-Amo, 1996: 30).

Takfīri thought emerged most conspicuously at the time of Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib who ruled between 656-661 and who had a dispute with the later caliph Mu'āwiyah; it emerged in the form of the Kharijites and then followed a century later by the Mu'tazilites. The appearance of Kharijites, Mu'tazilites, Shi'ites and their thoughts on the issue of *takfīr* will be hereafter discussed.

3.4: Kharijite and the emergence of *takfīr* thought:

Kharijite thought is a political and religious phenomenon, which has had an adverse effect on the Islamic communities where it has been able to have an influence ever since the great dispute: the murder of Caliphate 'Uthman. Such incidents have been the main cause for the emergence of *takfīri* thought and they have paved the way for an attack on the successor and often times, his murder too. These events and other related consequences have been seen as the true roots for the concept of *takfīr*. It became the basis for Kharijite principles, which contradict all Islamic teachings and values and invaluable doctrines (Al-Hariri, 2010:1302).

The origin of the concept of *takfīr* stemmed from the Kharijites. Newby (2004) suggests that *takfīr* is as a concept given to a select group of individuals with a belief in supporting 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in his struggle with Mu'āwiyah ibn 'Abī Sufyān. These groups of people are understood to be democratic as they allow minorities to become the Caliph, but they are also fanatical because their definition of who is Muslim and who is a sinner are too narrowly defined. Many people have been labelled as 'terrorists' as a result of their actions. It was said that during the battle of Siffin in 657, 'Alī ibn

Abī Ṭālib accepted an offer made by Mu‘āwiyah ibn ‘Abī Sufyān which led to his army defecting. This suggested that the judgement was a matter of God’s Judgement and not a human one.¹⁰

In terms of terminology, scholars have differed in defining Khārijites. Some have defined them in the context of politics where the revolution against the successor at any time will be regarded as dissenting khawārij activity.

Al-Shahrastani has said: Anyone who rebels against the selected successor by the majority of Muslims is Khārijī (rebel) irrespective of whether such acts have been done during the reign of the Companions or if they were after them and against Imams at any time (Al-Shahrastani, 1993).

Some scholars have only attributed the designation to those who have rebelled against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Al-Ash‘ari said: “The reason for naming them Khārijites is due to their Khoruj (rebellion) against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘Awaji, 2008). Other scholars have said that the name of Kharijite will be attributed to any one doing the same deed of the Kharijites or having the same opinion at any time.

Al-Baghdadi has differentiated between the sects of the Khārijites and has divided them into twenty groups including the first arbitrators, Al-Azariqa, Al-Najdat, Al-Safryah, Al-Shabanyah, Al-Rashidyah, Al-Makramyah, Al-Ibrahimayh and Al-Abadyah. He added that the commonality among the Kharijites is *takfīr* of ‘Alī, ‘Uthman, the one who committed arbitration, camel companions and those that accepted the arbitration. The *takfīr* is against those who have committed grievous activities and they have an obligation to rebel against tyrants or the dictator Imam (Al-Baghdadi, 1995).

The Kharijites are the ones who rebelled against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib after their full support of him in the fighting that had ensued. This sect is characterized by emotion

¹⁰ Ibn Hajar says “Kharijite is the plural of *Khârijah* which to mean a sector. They are a group of people who make heresy in the religious beliefs; they are named by such a name because they invented matter in religion, which was not done by the Prophet, the Companion or the Successors and they deviate from the path of Muslims” (Ibn Hajar, 1999).

and radical attitudes. They are extremists in religion and are fervently narrow-minded. The sect emerged after the Siffin battle due to its rejection of the arbitration. The statement uttered by one member “No arbitration but for God becomes the sect’s emblem came out in the first half of the Hijri century after the Siffin battle. This group comprises the pioneer Kharijites” (Zakaryah, 2010: 1062). Jonathon (2006) declares that the Khārijites came about around the same time and they were popularised by their terrorism of villages and towns across the Muslim world.

3.5: The reasons for the emergence of the Kharijites:

1-The issue of arbitration:

The issue of arbitration is the main cause for the emergence of the Kharijites. It is doubtless to say that their emergence was after the incidence of arbitration, but it is known that they were the ones who forced ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to accept arbitration. When ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib did that, the Karijites asked him to return back and even announced his conversion to Islam. He violently answered them and showed them their faults in such a way as to show their narrow-mindedness, which is the major cause for their walkout against him after the arbitration issue.

Al-Shahrastani has mentioned in his book *Al-Milal wa l-nihal – Religious Traditions and Sects* (1993) that the first that walked-out against ‘Ali was the Siffin group who participated in the Siffin battle and all those who agreed on the arbitration. The Kawarijites were the ones who forced him to accept the arbitration. He was to send ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abass away, but the kawarijites refused and said ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abass is your kin and forced him to replace him by ‘Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari who has to make arbitration according to the *Quran*. They disagreed and walked-out and asked why did you accept the arbitrators? No arbitration but by God (Al-Shahristani, 1993). At the Battle of Siffin, which is one of the most significant events in the conflict, the two sides accepted the arbitration of the Quran, which was initially suggested by the Syrians and to which Ali reluctantly accepted after possibly being pushed towards this route by the Kharijites, who later, deserted ‘Ali. Although this argument has not been developed and there has been some thought that there is a lack of evidence o the claim (Demircan, 2005).

Fazlur Rahman says that "The occasion of the Khārijites split was the arbitration (*tahkim*) to which the fourth Caliph, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, after being victorious against Mu'awiyah in the battle of Siffin in the year 37/648, submitted (Fazlur Rahman, 60:2002). The arbitration issue is the most important matter in the case of *takfīr* because it is the one under which the *takfīri* people committed murder and destruction in the Islamic world.

2 – Illiteracy of Religion's Core and Religious laws:

One of the main reasons that guided the Khārijites to *takfīr* and other related matters was their ignorance of Islamic principles. Hence they have committed several deviations, such as extremism, literally over adherence to the religious provisions. They pronounce as infidels anyone with committing the slightest fault; following the ambiguous verses of the Quran rather than the clear ones and they honored the corrupted interpretation. The Khārijites issued judgments on the basis of personal passions rather than the Islamic texts. They suffer a fundamental misunderstanding of the threats and rewards put forth in Islamic texts. Likewise, major flaws are found in their doctrine of loyalty and disavowal. These are all as a result of their ignorance of the provisions of Islamic faith (Zakariya, 2010: 1063).

3 – The Kharijites and *Quran* :

The Kharijites claim that it is sufficient to refer to the *Quran* rather than to go back to the messenger's *Sunnah* and the caliphs after him. There is strict adherence of the Kharijites to the *Quran* without reference to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. This deprives them of the Prophetic interpretations of unclear verses of the *Quran* leading them to deviate from the right path of the community. They call for violence to enforce their understandings upon the people. However their doubt will not reach the extent of uncertainty.

4 – Passion for the worldly life and seeking leadership:

The Khārijites have a peculiar and complex view of Imamate. They believe that the rulers in succession do not deserve the caliphate because they do not meet the requirements. They also interpreted the dispute between ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Mu‘awiyah as a dispute over succession and put it in the sense of political contention. Hence they easily walked out against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Mu‘awiyah. The dispute over the caliphate is the most influential reason for their walking out against ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (Boukran, 1999: 3).

5 – Obligating one’s saying:

The Kharijites have taken to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib by adhering to what he has uttered. They said: He wiped out the traits of the believers’ prince and then he will be the prince of unbelievers. Therefore they dealt with others in the same way.

6 – Ruler’s Dictatorship and the Proliferation of Sins

The Kharijites were chanting in their sermons and books that the rulers are dictators and corrupt. Indeed when they revolted they exceeded any existing acts of evils and sins. They fought those having disagreement with their opinions and regarded that as a sort of worship to God. They execute the administration of justice and forbidden evils, but through the blood of their opponents whether those are among the rulers or people (Zakariya, 2010). There is no doubt that some of these reasons are found in modern day *takfiris*.

3.6: The Muctazilites and their takfiri ideas:

The Mu‘tazilites are one of the Islamic sects that emerged at the beginning of the second Islamic century. The emergence of this sect was due to the theological disagreement about the status of one who has committed a major sin, as has been noted by Wasil bin ‘Ataa. The core disagreement is whether the sinner is a believer or become an unbeliever.

The Emergence of Mu‘tazilites:

The Mu‘tazilite sect was founded by Wasil bin Ghazal (d.131) and ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd

al-Basri (d.144). A man came to al-Hassan al-Basri and asked about one who commits a major sin. While al-Hassan was silent in contemplation of an answer, Wasil said: “I think the sinner of a major sin is neither an absolute believer nor an absolute unbeliever; he is in between. Then he stood up and rested his back on one of the pillars of the mosque waiting for the response to the group of the companions of al-Hassan. Al-Hassan said: Wasil isolated us and so did they (Alchehrsata, 1993).

It is from complex interrelated factors, such as the political and intellectual debates in respect to the issue of selecting the legitimate ruler (Caliph) for the Islamic nation and its strife and consequences from which the sects, such as Khārijites, Murji'ites¹¹ and Mu'tazilites have come into existence. However, the emergence of Mu'tazilites in its formal concept was at the beginning of the second Hijri Century (Al-Rabi, 2000). Leading ideas of Mu'tazilites for *takfīr* Muslims include:

1 - The issue of the perpetrator of any major sin, where their beliefs are shared with the doctrine of Kharijites in the judgment of sinners in the afterlife. That is to say their permanence in Hell, but in the worldly life they did not permit any blood and funds of the dissolute – as the opinions of Kharijites – but they agreed with them on the issue of dismissing them from faith. They differed with them on the issue of engaging them in fidelity. However, it was the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mun, (198-218/813-833) who was the Mu'tazilites's greatest patron and it was he who created the tribunals (Miḥnah) for the trial of the non-Mu'tazilite. It is believed by Orthodox Muslims that the Qur'ān represents the true reproduction of celestial origin. However, in Mu'tazila thought, the belief is that celestial origin is from creation (*khalq*). Mu'tazilah sects have several commonalities as would be expected but there is also great division among thoughts. Of the commonalities, the most significant is the assertions that strict *tanzih* (via remotions) requires divine unity and that the *tatīl* of the Jabriyya is clear contradiction of divine unity. The Mu'tazilite purport that clarity of God is a feature of His nature and that there is no place for rationality in this belief (Tariq, 2008).

Mu'tazilites said: “They stepped out of faith but did not engage in disbelief”. The Kharijites have said that they dismiss dissolution from faith and expiate them on committing great sins. The Mu'tazilites further argue that the sinners are neither believers nor disbelievers, but they shall be called dissolute. They consider the

.Is an early Islamic school¹¹

dissolution to be between both ranks. They have not judged that they will eternally reside in hell, while Muʿtazilites judged that the one who committed a major sin shall be between the two ranks in the worldly life and in hell permanently on the day of resurrection if he does not repent.

2 – Fanaticism in what they name “Calling for virtue and prevention of vice” is as per their inclinations. Hence Muʿtazilites adhered to strict religious interpretations, with particular retribution upon those who did not perform religious duty as they deemed correct. They supported the killing and fighting of such criminals. They are strict also towards those who do not believe in the concept of the creation of the *Quran*. They would torture and abuse those who opposed this view. When this group began to be known as the Muʿtazilites (those who have withdrawn), there was an increased awareness of the groups having a large influence in the Muslim world. One of the key components of the Muʿtazilites, was an application of systematical thought, which influenced even caliphate thought in Baghdad by 833. Though these thoughts are now largely archaic, there are some modern thinkers who include aspects of Muʿtazilite thinking (Nygard, 1996) ¹²

As a result of Muʿtazilite doctrine being adopted by the Abbasid caliphs, including the Caliph al-Maʿmun and al-Muʿtasim, many Muslim scholars had been imprisoned and tortured on the grounds of their disagreement with Muʿtazilites. Perhaps most famously, among those scholars, is Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.

Consideration of the dogmatic literature and careful scrutiny of the position and thinking of some influential people in the past has led to the argument that there has been much change to the development of Islam in theological terms. Anthropomorphist ideas enjoyed early acknowledgment, which later in the 9th Century swayed towards the Sunni doctrine, a doctrine led by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Williams, 2002). Ahmad ibn Hanbal resisted the ideology of Muʿtazilites and said that the *Quran* is *God’s* holy word

¹² Muʿtazilites have provided evidence from the noble *Qur’an*, such as: Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger Muḥammad from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well), It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty, He [Muḥammad] is anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to God, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire); for the believers he is full of pity, kindness and mercy (Q9:128). For them it is not acceptable that the messenger is full of pity, kindness and mercy on the great sinner and his deed (Zakariyah, 2010).

and not a created object. He also purported that *God* shall not be described more than what He has described Himself (Shawawrah, 2010) Ibn Hanbal was deeply opposed to the thinking of the Mu‘tazilis. He believed in the written word of God, supported by the Hadith (Canonical Tradition), and not the interpretations sought by the Mu‘tazilite (Winger, 1997).

The public did not follow the policy of Al-Wathiq in imposing the Mu‘tazilite doctrine, instead they intensely disliked such thought (*Bashir Mas‘udi*, d.975). As a result Al-Wathiq was heavily engaged in attempting to test the people in religion, thus spoiling their hearts and paving their way to challenge him. His support was taken from his court people and those close to him. Mu‘tazilites remained the ones in power and with dominion; the most famous of which are Ahmad bin ‘Abi Dawud, his judge, and his minister Muhammed bin ‘Abdul-Malik Al-Zayat.¹³

The Mu‘tazilites had decided to assassinate those disagreeing with them. They argued that since they were in power, the public would be obliged to submit to their beliefs, particularly with regards to monotheism and destiny, otherwise they would face execution. This is a drastic violation of *Sunnah*. The true Islamic scholars had to refute Mu‘tazilite views and provide the evidence to that effect.

3.7: Shi‘ite thought:

Shiites are those who supported ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, in particular. They hold that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is the best person after the messenger of God, the one who was most entitled to Imamate as well as his sons after him. They called for his Imamate and Caliphate, believing the Imamate shall not depart from his sons and if it happens it is because of the tyranny of other people or due to his holiness.

Twelver Shi‘ism is the most common orientation today, widely acknowledged in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain. Twelvers believe in the twelve infallible and divine imams who are descendents of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and hold that these imams are the interpreters of law and theology. They also suggest that the final (twelfth) imam disappeared and thus believe that the ‘hidden’ imam is expected to return and lead

Al-Harith bin Miskin was A scholar who lived in Egypt and was born in 766. He refused the idea of the *Qur’an*’s creation; a claim made by Al-Mu‘tazialh during the reign of M’amun. Al-Harith bin Miskin was arrested and imprisoned till being released by Al- Mutawakil who freed and honed him. He returned to .(Egypt and assigned to the capacity of a judge. He died in the year 860 (Shawawrah, 2010:1264

Muslims. Commonly, Twelvers have stayed away from politics, but it has become increasingly evident that this is not the case in Iran and Lebanon. In particular and of high political significance is the late Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini (Blanchard, 2009).

The Shi'ites add: "The issue of imamate is not a beneficial one for caring for public affairs, but it is a religious case and the core of religion for which the messenger should not ignore, or neglect and that it should be delegated to the public. They all agreed in the belief that Imams are protected from committing sins whether minor or major. They believed in the assignment of an Imam and in his poise in word and deed except in the situation of *Taqiyah* (Zakaria, 2010: 1077).

The Shi'ites are among the largest sects belonging to Islam, encompassing many further sub-sects, such as the Nasiriyah, the Fatimid, 'Ubaydi, Yazidi, Druze, and Imamiyah Ithnah 'asher. The Shi'ite will be discussed here as they are a significant contemporary sect.

Aspects of *Takfir* by the Shi'ite

Some Shi'ites pronounce Abu Bakr and 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab infidels. The scholar Ne'mat Allāh Al-Jazari said: "Abu Bakr was praying behind the Messenger of God while an idol hung around his neck, prostrating to it" (1984: 53). One group that does not follow this understanding are the *Ridah* (Zakaria, 2010: 1078).

The Shi'ites have been distinct in the concept of *takfir*. The texts of their scholars have the *takfir* of the prophet's companions. Al-Majlisi in his book '*Behar al-Anwar*' has a chapter under the title '*Kufr Althalath*' (*Takfir* of the three). This was meant as *takfir* of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman (Al-Zahrani, 2011: 61). Also, some Shi'ites deny other Muslims in general and those who disagree with their opinions, beliefs and their faith. They regard them as infidels and anyone who does not believe in the theory of the Imamate is considered an unbeliever, even if he believes in monotheism. Muḥammad Hassan Najafi says: "The violator of the right people is an infidel without any argument. He justified that by saying: "He is the one who denies the theory of Imamate because it is the core of religion" (Al-Zahrani, 2011: 73).

3.8: Emergence and development of *Takfir*:

Emergence of *Takfir* among Muslims today

It is already established that *takfir* is not an act of the contemporary Islamic groups, but one that is historic. The present *takfiri* thoughts have arisen as a result of the presence of persons, writers and Islamic movements that called for *takfir*. The current research will discuss the emergence of *takfir* among Muslims as a contemporary issue. Another aspect adopted by some groups is that of pronouncing a person as a *kāfir*. This label is most commonly used to describe an enemy and it is taken from interpretation of Islamic law, which calls for this person to be killed, to have their spouse divorce them and to become exiled from all other Muslims. The adoption of such measures has been seen to be very corrosive to Muslim communities by some historical and modern thinkers, such as the Ikhwa'ân al-Muslimu'în (Newby, 2004). *Takfir* has multiple types including the early augmentation against *Shiites*, the *Wahhabi* conflict with Ottoman Islam and the *Sufis* and the *Shiites*. Ultimately, some modern jihadists may also be included in this group as well (Schwartz, 2008).

There have been some *takfiri* ideas written by Muslim thinkers and scholars in India:-

Abū 'l-A'īlā Mawdūdī

Mawdūdī was born on 25 September 1903 in the Ornik Abad in the city of Hyderabad in India. He does however belong to a family rooted in the Arabian Peninsula. His father Abu Sa'īd Ahmed Hassan was one of the Aligah university students while his son Mawdūdī was well educated and was in charge of press from his age, particularly the Torjoman newspaper. Mawdudi is also known in the West for being a notable Pakistani religious scholar, journalist and political activist of the modern age (Iftikhar, 2004).

His book reveals to the researchers that he exerted all efforts in the progression of Islam and Muslims. For achieving such goal, there should be a scientific methodology based on the Islamic dogma, however he has been influenced by the politics as many of his interpretations for the Islamic idioms have been affected politically due to his understanding of the Islamic texts. Unfortunately most of the

studies administered by him have strayed away from the intended meanings and correctness.

Mawdūdī has written on various topics in which the dogma methodology as per his understanding of the Islamic origins has been compiled and in these works it is clear to see how deeply he had been affected by the political environment. In his book entitled, '*Four Terms in the Quran*' he endeavored in the to conclude that religion, *God* and worship of *God* revolve around the control of authority, governance and legislation. The book is merely, in my view, a replication of political idioms of authority, governance, succession, politics, law and order and their other related deprivations.

This idiom in the book expresses the most vital issues in the faith. They are those related to deism, divinity, worship and religion. It is an indication that Islam as a whole is a political system of power and governance. It even has no indication to the relation between God and humans in the context of such idioms, which indicates only the governance.

Summary of Mawdūdī's Methodology:

1. Mawdūdī's views were heavily influenced by the events of his age, this distorting his concepts of Islamic law.
2. Mawdūdī has searched in books of Arabic philology for the origins to support his own thoughts.
3. Mawdūdī has reviewed the holy *Quran* to deduce the verses, which are applicable to him so he can put them in the context intended by him, rather than explaining the actual meanings.
4. Mawdūdī did not follow the understanding of the early Muslims about the origins of Islam. In fact he did not pay any attention to them.
5. This methodology of deducing is the way of exaggerators who at the first moment believe in one thing and then look for the evidence that serves that particular belief (Zakaria, 2010: 1087).

ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam

ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam¹⁴ is known as the strategic founder of Al-Qaʿidah. There are many lectures on the internet about Al-Qaʿidah and he wrote ‘Alasas Al Mutain’ from the basis and origins of Jihādī organizations, such as Al-Qaʿidah. ʿAzzam made an infamous statement concerning Jihād: “there is no difference between those who leave prayers when they are capable and those who leave Jihād who are capable” (John C. M., 2007). Although Bin Laden was a disciple of Azzam, he was not in complete agreement of everything with the latter. For example ʿAzzam believed in unifying Muslims in an ultimate clash against Western powers. ʿAzzam never alienated Arab regimes the way ʿUsāmah bin Lādin did. After the death of ʿAzzam, despite these variations in outlook, the basic structure of Islamic schools and media, and clinics for the Jihādī organization were adopted by ʿUsāmah bin Lādin.

Sageman mentions that many founders of various global Jihādī Organizations came to Afghanistan in the 1980s from different countries without prior connection to each other, under the leadership of ʿUsāmah bin Lādin (Sageman, 2008).

A fundamentally important point to note is the issue of Jihād being considered a collective obligation as a core construct in Islamist militant ideology. This is something that can and must be debated among Muslim scholars who disagree with this opinion. These scholars must be given a voice and there should be support for the scholars to dispel this opinion using contradictory interpretations of moderate Islam. The West must not deal with Islam as the enemy, but must label the ideology of *takfīr* as an enemy ideology and Muslims and non-Muslims have to deal with the issue with equal ferocity (Aboul-Enein, 2008). ʿAzzam stated that Jihād is incumbent on all Muslims *fard ʿayn*. *Jihād* becomes a *fard ʿayn* when Muslim territory is directly threatened or occupied. Due to the disastrous consequence of occupation, Jihād trumps certain other individual duties, such as hajj (John C. M., 2007)

Sayyid Qutb

Sayyid Qutb was born in Mosha village in Egypt in 1906. The village is in the vicinity of the Assyut governorate. His parents were among the middle class, but he used to read Arabic literature, reading western books, which have greatly influenced him. He has been continuously attracted to the religious books and Islamic faith like

¹⁴ʿAbdullah ʿAzzam was born in a village in the North of Palestine named Selat Al¹⁴.Harithia in Genine District in the year 1941

other intellectuals who had studied religion. Sayyid Qutb had been influenced by Abū 'l-A'ālā from whom he quoted many of his thoughts, particularly in his book *Al-Zilal - Mistakes*. Yusuf Al-Qarādawi, an Islamic scholar published on his own site that if Qutb were alive today he would surely be changing a lot of his ideas with respect to *takfīr*. He mentioned also that Sayyed Qutb had admired Hassan Al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. He wrote an article entitled 'Hassan Al-Banna and his genius of construction' in which he states that *Albana* too had been influenced too much by Al-Mawdudi, particularly in his adopting the concept of 'Succession and Ignorance'. However Sayyed Qutb concluded by declaring *takfīr* on the community and did regard in his book *Ma'ālim fi Al-Tariq – Milestones on the Way*. Al-Qarādawi said that Qutb committed a big mistake for the *takfīr* of society as a whole and he is responsible for the trend of present day *takfīr* as he quoted the thoughts of Al-Mawdudi (Al-Qarādawi, 2012).

Sayyid Qutb was a leading member of *Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimīn*. Qutb had extremely radical ideas and he believed that the entire Egyptian society was in a state of ignorance while all the other Muslims were infidels. While the book, '*Ma'ālim fi Al-Tariq*' was denounced by all mainstream Muslims, its ideology was adopted by some of the more radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood. The original ideology of Qutb blamed Christianity and Judaism for corrupting the world and straying from the true path (Livesey, 2005). He advocated Islamization of the world using the tenets of *takfīr* and *hijra*. His ideology were adopted by several radical groups, the most important of which being Al-Takfīri wal-Hijra¹⁵. Takfīr wal-Hijra is an extremely radical group that believes that then end justifies the means, and hence they are willing to break all the rules of Islam in order, ironically, to establish an Islamist state. They also practice *hijra*, that is, migration from their community, so as to gather forces and return home to rid the world of infidels. The founder of the *takfīri* movement, Shukri Mustafa, proposed his ideology of *hijra*. Among the violations in his books are:

His interpretation of 'No God but Allah' for the succession: He said that the ordinary Arab man who understands his connotation of the language will be granted succession. It is well known that the rightly guided predecessors have perceived the

Al-Takfir wal-Hijra is a group founded by Shukri Mustafa. Mustafa was imprisoned for ¹⁵ distributing Muslim Brotherhood pamphlets. While in prison, he joined a splinter .(organization called Jama'at al Muslimin (Muslim Society

meaning of ‘No god but Allah’ as: No one is worth worshipping other than God. It means that worship will only be for God; denying the false gods. The worship of God will include all duties whether outward or inward. It includes both words and deeds and must be as delegated by God. It includes the performance of religious duties, and leaving sins and prohibited deeds. Sayyid Qutb deviated from the path of the predecessors in understanding its true meaning. He made the political succession a matter of religious import, yet the true meaning of governance is to rule as per the revelation of God. Governance is part of the unification of divinity and not divinity itself (Zakariya, 2010: 1088). This shows that Sayyid Qutb did not perceive the true meaning of the Islamic idioms. It is merely an idea coming to his mind and for which he looked for evidence from the Quran.

Such an idea comes out originally from Mawdūdī. He only expanded its interpretation as he believed the testimony that ‘there is no god but God’ has no meaning except that the Supreme governance is for God in the lives of human beings. God also has governance in the order of the universe either.

1 - Interpretation of religion by Sovereign: Qutb says: The existence of this religion is the existence of governance of God, once the idea is not found there will be no religion

2 - Meaning of Islam by Sovereign. Qutb says: “It is enough to prove” Islam “through the submission of people to the law of God and his messengers’ teachings”

3 - *Takfīr* of the communities and isolating the mosques: Dr. Yusuf Al-Qarādawi in his book ‘The priorities of the Islamic movement in the next phase’ states that:

“At this stage the books of Martyr Sayyid Qutb appeared; representing the last phase of his thinking; accusing the community with *Takfīr*; postponing the call of an Islamic society till there is revival for the Islamic doctrine. It calls for the feeling of isolation from others and the discontinuation of a relationship, for the declaration of aggressive *Jihād* to all people devoid of tolerance and leniency. He condemned them and called them naive and psychologically defeated in front of

Western civilization, and this is reflected clearly in his interpretation of ‘fi Zilal al- Quran ’ in its second edition, and in the milestones on the road”. (Al-Qarādawi,; 1990: 110)

Sayyid Qutb’s ideas:

- 1 - Missing the sense or meaning of the words by interpreting Islamic terms as understood from the words of Mawdudi.
- 2 - Limiting the meaning of religion, Islam, *Shahadatyn* and divinity.
- 3 - Accusing the Islamic societies of *takfīr*.

The adoption of *takfīr* spread among the youth of the Muslim Brotherhood in *Qanatir* prison in the late fifties and were affected by the ideology of ‘Sayyid Qutb through his writings (Rehaily, 1998: 41). Those who adopted this ideology then diverged from the Muslim Brotherhood and they accused them of *takfīr* (Rehaily, 1998:41). They were in Egyptian prisons on charges of trying to assassinate President Jamal Abdel Nasser.

Takfīr Wa al-Hijra

Since the excess in *takfīr* in the present era was through some of the writings and ideas of Mawdūdī, and developed further by Sayyid Qutb, who has in turn been affected by Mawdudi who was describing the community from ignorance of Islam, they began to make judgments, making plans to build a Muslim society as imagined by a writer and not from a well educated scholar. His words opened the door of *takfīr* giving rise to extremeist groups including:

Takfīr wa al-Hijra, Jamā‘ah al-‘Islāmiyyah and those who have taken some of their beliefs, such as Islamic *Jihād* and the Islamic Organization in Egypt, before giving up their thoughts and many others (Zakaria, 2010: 1091).

Takfīri calls itself a representative of the Muslim community, but it is known in the

media as an Islamist group of extreme thought. It has followed the approach of the *Kharijites* in pronouncing *takfīr* upon sinners. It originated in Egyptian prisons, and after the release of its members, its thoughts were finalized and numerous followers in Upper Egypt were recruited, especially university students (Rehaily, 1998).

The ideas and principles of this group were enriched in Egyptian prisons, especially after the 1965 arrests, in which Sayyid Qutb and his brothers were executed upon the order of the former Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser. Religious people were severely tortured in prisons and it was there that extremism originated. The idea of *takfīr* grew and found sympathy. A small group of young people announced that the Head of State was an apostate, his regime illegitimate, and even accused anyone supporting the regime as an infidel. The whole society, because of its loyalty to the rulers, was condemned as being infidels. The *imam* of this group and their ideas, the thinker Sheikh ‘Alī Bin Ismail, later rejected this approach and repented. However, the approach was then advanced by Shukri bin Mustafa (Zakaria, 2010).

Al-Qa’ida:

’Usāmah bin Lādin, who was head of this organization, announced on television that all Muslims holding membership to the United Nation (UN) are disbelievers. He added that these people disbelieve in that which has been revealed to Muḥammad. This despite the UN having been founded upon a treaty among nations for the purpose of mutual interests and universal protection of rights, as stipulated in the Geneva Convention. Nonetheless, Al-Qa’ida as an entity was not fully realized until after the August 1998 U.S. embassy bombings. Even prior to the attacks on September 11th, ’Usāmah bin Lādin did not use the name Al-Qa’ida. The leaders of the group simply referred to it as ‘the society’. The name came from ‘Abdallah ‘Azzam who named it in 1988 when the Soviets began to pull out of Afghanistan (Chaliand & Blin, 2007).

Al-Qa’idah has taken a strategy aiming at provoking a war on religious grounds that should be spread in all the directions of the world, east and west. It is obvious that such a strategy upon implementation has shown considerable defects, which have indicated the deviation of Al-Qa’idah in the process of understanding the actual global situation at the time. Al-Qa’idah has roused the logic of clashes and the circle of conflict

regardless of the powers, competencies, interests, damages and consequences and the mistaken comprehensions of the duty of *Jihād*.

Jihād Organization: (*Tanthem Aljehād*)

Jihād as an organization appeared in early 1974, under the leadership of Saleh ʿAbdullah Saryah, a Palestinian who called for the establishment of an Islamic state for the purpose of implementing *God's* Islamic law. Saleh ʿAbdullah Saryah had a lot of followers especially among university students; his first violent act was an attempt to capture the military technical college but he failed and was sentenced to death.

ʿAbdul-Salam Faraj took over the leadership of the group. He had called for *takfīr* of the entire society and said that there was no other way for salvation, but through killing and violence. He said that the verses of the Quran calling for forgiveness, pardon, and tolerance have been abrogated while the verses calling for *Jihād* are true and valid. The sect issued the book of 'The Absent Obligation', which is the *Jihād*; the name given to the group (Hariri, 2010).

3.9: Key Doctrines and Methodologies of *Takfiri* Groups:

The majority of Muslim countries are actually governed by non-representative regimes not answerable to the general public, dictators and autocrats. Populations in Muslim societies subsist in miserable conditions and severe poverty, corruption, cronyism and exploitation are inseparable fragments of life for the citizens of the Islamic World (Abul-ʿEnein & Zuhur, 2004). The current situations in Muslim societies compel discontented small Muslim splinter groups to stage armed struggles because they have realised that the main Islamic factions have failed to gain authority through electoral processes (Bianchi, 2004). The extremists believe that attempting to ease difficulties by armed struggles is the simplest and surest method to alleviate the wretched and desolate conditions of their people. This is the justification given by most scholars for the emergence of Islamic militancy in Muslim states, such as Saudi Arabia (Khan, 2006).

The differentiation between doubt in action and doubt in heart is an essential notion of primary significance in Islam. The misinterpretation of this idea has resulted in vicious types of sectarianism in the past and in the present (Esposito, 1992). Indeed, the separation of the first sect from the parent fold of Islam was the immediate consequence of this misinterpretation. During the Siffin conflict between the followers of Mu^ʿawiyah and ^ʿAlī arbitrations were carried out that resulted in a ceasefire between warring groups (Commins, 2006). Yet, several of the advocates of ^ʿAlī separated from his group stating that arbitrations, in their opinion, were not by means of the Quʿran, and proclaimed both parties as atheists (DeLong-Bas, 2004). Eventually, the Kharijites created their distinct set of convictions prominent among which was the notion that anyone who perpetrated a capital sin becomes a true atheist. They hence assumed that the blood and riches of militant Muslims did not merit the safeguard from Muslim individuals or groups and they may do something against them (Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2007).

With this inaccurate understanding the Kharijites unleashed terrorist activities on the Muslim Ummah, perpetrating violence. Militancy reaches its maximum bound when a particular group dispossesses all citizens of the right to protection and security (Khan, 2006).

Yet over time the contrast between the Islamic ideologies to which they were naming people and life realities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia brought about disappointment among its constituents. Eventually a radical group broke away from the Movement as a response to the conflict between reality and ideologies (Cordesman, 2003). This breakaway group categorised the Saudi Arabian government as non-Islamic because the banking system of the Kingdom functions under interest and hence it is rightful to declare war or oppose such a leader (Cordesman, 2003). As a proof they cited the Quʿranic verse: “Give up what remains of your demand for usury... if you do not, take notice of war” (Ali, 2001: 36). They assumed that anyone who works with the Saudi Arabian government and obtains salary from the state treasury were in a position of atheism (Furnish, 2005). This faction, later under Juhaymaan’s rule - a traitor of the Saudi Arabian National Guard – and Muḥammad Ibn al Qahtaani, who had been informally prohibited from conferring Friday Sermon for the duration of Jum^ʿah prayers because of political associations, mobilised weapons and invaded the Holy Ka^ʿbah and

requested everybody to renew their pledge of allegiance (Khan, 2006).

The armed forces of the Kingdom finally interfered 1979 and the resistance was defeated. Muḥammad al Qahtaani was eradicated during the Saudi armed forces' operations to seize the Holy Shrine. Juhayman, soon after, was executed in public (Cordesman, 2003). Throughout the event, multitudes of innocent lives were lost. The earlier events confirm that a line has to be drawn between a Muslim doing something often in relation to a real non-believer and non-believers (Gold, 2004). It is vital to analyse Quran alongside Hadith literature to come up with an accurate interpretation of the verse: "And whoever does not judge by what God has revealed are disbelievers for Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is reported to have said: The fornicator is not a believer while in the act of fornication, nor is the thief a true believer while stealing, nor is the wine drinker while drinking" (Shakir, 2007: 50). Another account of this Hadith asserts: "Nor a murderer a believer while committing murder" (French, 2005: 237). That implies conviction has to be abandoned for the time being for these capital sins to be perpetrated, for such actions cannot be accomplished in its presence. Specifically, those who commit immorality enter a position of disbelief, which differs in duration, dependent on the severity of the sin (French, 2005). Once the immoral act is accomplished, faith comes back if the perpetrator feels grief and repents (Shakir, 2007).

Islam does not allow killing of people for not abiding by a particular mandate of Islam. Once a crusade has begun killing on behalf of God, it has entered a nihilistic process that refutes the most basic religious beliefs (Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2007). A number of idealist dreamers forge a place thinking that they can hide all kinds of corruption and build an Islamic society and state at once. Physical force, in their view, is the single method, which must be exercised to eliminate evil (Khan, 2006). They fail to remember the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad to Muslims to tolerate the prejudices and unfairness of the leaders in case this should generate a more serious dissension and result in calamitous outcomes, such as the slaughter of Muslims and insecurity without having realised a concrete outcome (Shakir, 2007).

Islam has faith in a pluralistic society (Crone, 2004). As stated in the Quran: "If *God* so willed, He could make you all one people". In Islam, religious freedom is guaranteed (Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2007: 21). Also stated in the *Qu'ran is*: "There is no

compulsion in religion” (Crone, 2004: 162). Likewise, in another verse the Quran maintains: “Let anyone who wishes to, believe, and let anyone who wishes to, disbelieve” (Shakir, 2007: 337). Therefore, there is no basis for imposing Islam by aggressive and brutal means.

3.10: Conclusion

Takfiri thought in the Islamic world has gradually been accompanied by aggression towards Muslims. The promotion of *takfir* is historic, undergoing morphoses in more recent times, but still maintaining a strong link to its origins. In the past, the ideas of the Kharjites were the original roots for the phenomenon of *takfir*. The thoughts of Mu‘tazilites and Shi‘ites have been adopted later. At the present time, the works of some scholars and thinkers have played a vital role in rousing the phenomenon of *takfir* among Muslims. Subsequently, there has been a trend in the emergence of *takfir* by some Islamic groups, such as the *takfir*, *Jihād* groups, Al-Qa’ida, and other sects. In addition, there is a historical root for *takfiri* thought among Christians and Jews. This is clear when they declare as unbelievers all those not following the beliefs, ideas and dogma of the religious men in both these religions.

The emergence of the crusades and the inquisition were the product of *takfiri* thought. Thus, the one who comes up with new ideas contrary to the views of the church was sentenced to death or murder.

The *takfiri* thought does not come from religion, but it is due to the reactions of the clergymen in any religion and those who have violent ideas against other people. *Takfiri* thought is always related with extremists or those practising exaggeration in their religion. It is from the clergymen, whether they are among the one paid by the government or the church, to take up the matter of religion. *Takfir* thought often comes from non-official persons who consider themselves guardians of religion.

Saudi Arabia can present numerous examples for a method to crush Islamic militancy. At the greatest extent of such a method, the author views the interconnectedness of social, economic, security, political, and informational factors, and that summons their coordination together to build strength in numbers. At the national operational stage, an intelligence and military conflict can more effortlessly be

won with mass collaboration and recognition, as well as advocacy for the kind of changeover, which is intended to be transparent, effective and civic-minded. The aim is to maintain public obligations with open discussions between citizens and the government in a sustainable manner.

The 'soft' features of an antiterrorism policy, dissimilar from the 'hard' realities of the needs of counterterrorism are much more problematic to integrate into a significant policy status. Counterterrorist strategies are only adequate to weaken Islamist influence or to discourage recruitment. As Islamic militancy has dominated the region for the last two decades, Saudi Arabia and other regimes have hesitantly built a pragmatic method of crushing the violent dissension and attempting to recruit people who may share their beliefs, but take actions with control.

Chapter Four: Causes of *Takfīr*

The *takfīr* trend has not come out of nowhere, nor has it emerged by accident. There were indeed many causes, which helped the emergence and proliferation of this dogma. There were also interrelated factors, such as political, social, economical, cultural, educational, psychological and the media. They are complicated and intertwined reasons. While many other subsidiary factors may have played a great role in the rise of *takfīr*, here the intellectual, educational, psychological and social causes will be discussed as the major initiators for extremism in religion, which in turn has led to the adoption of exaggerated *takfīr*.

4.1: Sociology of *takfīr*:

According to Andersen (2005), *takfīr* is an Arabic word that means the practice of announcing a person or a group to be no longer of the Islamic religion. It can also be said to be excommunication of an individual or a group of people from the Islamic religion if the said person(s) do not follow *Shari'ah* law. Curra (2005) claims that: “*Takfīr* traces its origin from a group known as the Muslim Brotherhood, which was led by Sayyid Qutb” (Curra, 2005:23).

An excommunicated person or a group is called as a *kafir*. Being declared a *kafir* arises from actions that the Islamic believers feel that are not in accordance to the true teachings of the *Qur'an*, various interpretations of the *Qur'an* have led to a different understanding by different people. Muslims refer to the *Qur'an* for political, philosophical and sociological interpretations and advice. Some people may interpret it in a way that fits their personal needs and when others disagree, this leads to excommunication of either group. *Kufir* is a crime of which bloodshed is its punishment (Bosworth, 2004).

Kafir groups are excluded from the rest of the community and they use this to perpetrate their heinous acts of violence. They use the fact that they are excommunicated to violate the rest of the community by causing unrest, for example, kidnappings, drug trafficking and killings. This is since it is not permissible to violate a

fellow Muslim (Sokolo, 2006:49). *Kafir* groups use illegal activities like robbery, drug dealing and compulsory taxes to fund their illegal activities (‘Ukaz newspaper, 2011)

4.2: Weber and Social Closure or Exclusion:

Max Weber the German sociologist, regarded as one of the founders of sociology alongside Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, defines sociology as the science whose main aim is to explain the meaning of human behavior, how the actions of a human proceed until they produce a certain result, which are its consequences. He further states that social stature is a major factor that contributes towards social closure (Curra, 2005). The profession that a person is involved in, or the kind of religion that a person follows, can bring about social stature. When closure of a certain group becomes whole, it is referred to as a caste. This caste becomes recognizable by law and any relation with an inferior caste is considered sinful, only cleansed by a religious expiation (Magarey, 2003).

Max Weber presented sociology as an area, which must interpret social action and the importance that an individual attaches to what they do by understanding the consequences. He emphasizes the importance of how social cultural practices affect religion. Social closure according to Weber’s definition can result in the development of processes that lead to the formation of Islamic militias. These militias use codes, such as complex religious interpretations to segregate themselves from the rest of society, hence creating closure (Sokolo, 2006). Weber used the sociology of belief to clarify the effects of religion on social stratification. He goes further to set a connection between economic activities and religion. He explored religions in India, China and Western countries and how these religions affect social practices of these people. Weber’s works have been cited by many and have helped shape the course of sociology even in modern times. Therefore, Weber’s concept of social closure can be applied to explain and give meaning to *takfir* (Curra, 2005). Max Weber states that social closure is a situation within a larger group, for example the Muslim community in a certain country takes charge of the national resources and governance and denies the lesser group of people, let’s say the Jews in that country, their share (Bosworth, 2004). This dominant group controls the resources putting the minors in an oppressive and difficult position.. Occasionally these groups may use this as a way to recruit more followers into their

religion.

In Muslim dominated countries, religion is used as the main criteria for exclusion. People of different religions are not supposed to intermarry or even be seen together. Social exclusion is well known to bring about political strife in such places. This is caused by the oppression of the minority group and when the oppression becomes too much, the minority groups react accordingly, causing riots (Garvie, 2005). One good example is in the Middle East where Christians and other lesser represented religions are not given chances in governing the Muslim dominated areas. Non-Muslims are oppressed to the point where they pay special taxes. A person or a group considered to be *kafir* is secluded from the rest of the community and more often than not, they are denied social rights. They cannot mingle with the rest of the people since they are considered sinful (Sokolo, 2006).

4.3: Takfir as Social Closure and Exclusion

As discussed above, social closure or exclusion can be defined as discrimination of certain groups of people against desired opportunities like jobs, schools and other social places. Weber's works explain how social stratum can be created and maintained by achieving social mobility. Social classes are mainly created by difference in religions and professions (Hollis, 2003). People of a certain profession or religion set themselves aside and avoid any social activities involving their counterparts, hence creating social closure.

Takfir denies social stature to certain people on the grounds of religion, profession and other social activities. They become alienated and they form groups of their own kind, so that they become strong (Bosworth, 2004). Mostly, their aim is to declare the Muslims and Arab countries apostate. They hold desperately to doctrines that bind them together and they use these doctrines to perpetrate their activities. Since the *takfiri* believe that the rest of society sin, they make legal (*ḥalāl*) activities that are otherwise prohibited by using legal means, financial ability and constitutional institution. The *takfiri* organizations use the doctrine of *istehlal*, which is a doctrine that legalizes what God has prohibited. That allows members of *takfir* to do what is not allowed by religion (Kowalski, 2005). These *takfiri* organizations take advantage of

wars and use it to get finances to carry out their activities.

The existence of such groups has destabilized nations as well as brought discord among countries. Countries known to host these *takfiri* organizations are avoided by other countries, citing national insecurity as the reason. But it is hard to avoid them altogether because of business since these countries are rich in oil (Garvie, 2005). As *takfir* came to be from Egyptian jails when *Qutbism* was formed, they appraised *Jihād*. They declared the whole of Egypt apostate because they were agreeing to be ruled by those whom they considered to be, non-Muslims. Members of *takfir* isolated themselves completely from the rest of society (also known as *al-uzla*). Leader of *Qutbism* even believed that a world war would help them gain power to rule (Curra, 2005). After he was executed in 1977, the members of this *takfir* group spread far and wide in the Muslim countries. This encouraged the springing up of other *takfir* groups, although they were disconnected.

Worldwide, *takfiri* organizations like Al-Qa'idah are known and feared for their heinous activities. This should not imply that all *takfiri* organizations are members of Al-Qa'idah though. *Takfir* is a good example of social closure and exclusion. As Weber explains in the sociology theory, religion affects the social stratum of a community. *Takfiri* organizations build their own social class with strict doctrines to be upheld therefore making it difficult for interrelations with other members of the society who are not *Kafirs*. This social setting leads to social closure (Hollis, 2003). Their violent activities also make the rest of the community exclude them socially. No one wants to be associated with a group of people who believe that taking other peoples' lives is right and who believe that the use of violence to get their way is acceptable. Therefore *takfiris* are generally avoided. *Takfiris* are also said to break any Islamic rule that may give wrong impressions that they are Muslims. So, some indulge in drugs and alcohol just to alienate themselves (Magarey, 2003).

4.4: *Takfir* and Terrorism

Takfir has been associated with a lot of violence in the past years. This may be attributed to the fact that they believe in *Jihād* (holy wars) and this gives them the idea of sinless sin. This makes these groups get away with very major crimes like drug trafficking, kidnappings, robbery and murder. They also believe that Western people are

sinners and it is their duty to punish them. That is why there are a number of reported terrorist attacks in the West. This paper will therefore give substantial examples of attacks carried out by *takfir* groups to serve as evidence of how these groups use violence and get away with it easily.

After the execution of Sayyid Qutb, members of *takfiri* groups went their separate ways and formed establishments all over the world. An Islamist radical group calling itself Takfir wal-Hijra emerged. Takfir wal-hijra is an Arabic interpretation of excommunication and migration. This is because when a society was said to be apostate, members of the Takfir wal-hijra saw it as their duty to leave the said community, and fight to re-conquer it (Kaplan, 2007). These *takfiri* groups believed that it was their duty to separate from the rest of the society, which they considered sinful and Godless. They also believe that to cleanse the sinful society, killing them is justified. Al-Qa'ida was blamed for the September 11 attacks in the United States. This shocked many as they realized just how widespread the group was. In Northern Lebanon, in December 2000 a *takfiri* group mounted an attack, suddenly clashing with the Lebanese army and killing many civilians (Kowalski, 2005). *Takfiris* are also suspected to have taken part in the murder of a US diplomat called Laurence Foley in the year 2002. *Takfiris* are also said to be in Africa, as Kenyan authorities have warned of their presence in the country. In 1990, there was a plan to bomb Al-Azhar University but it was stopped by security forces. In 2006, a *takfiri* group was connected to drug trafficking, robbery and forging of documents in Europe (Belle, 2003). The said group has its logistical support in France and Italy. In Morocco, in 2002, mutilated bodies were discovered and their numbers rose to 166 in that year alone. Takfir wal-hijra was allegedly involved with this as well as an attack in Sudan in 2000, where 20 people were killed in a mosque when a member of Takfir wal-hijra attacked them. Their aim was to kill journalists and prominent politicians in the country. In Spain in the year 2004, a group linked to Takfir wal-hijra was uncovered trying to plan to bomb a court of law in Spain (Kaplan, 2007). In Egypt, 2011, Takfir wal-hijra attacked whereby an altercation between them and the Egyptian security ensued, leaving two dead and several injured. In August 1998, a *takfiri* linked to Al-Qa'idah attacked the American Embassy in Kenya killing many people and leaving scores of others badly injured. They were targeting the Americans since they have this ideology that the West is a heathen and it is their duty to ruin them (Bosworth, 2004). In Pakistan a bomber killed children

and women as he exploded along a city street. The suspect is a member of Takfīr wal-hijra. This was recently, on the 3rd March 2012.

On the same day in Iraq, a suicide bomber killed eight people when he walked into a crowded banking hall and detonated his bomb. In Frankfurt, Germany, a gunman shot at a US military bus killing two people. In February 2012, a rival mosque was attacked by a *takfīri* suicide bomber killing one. In Pakistan, Islamabad, a Catholic minister was brutally murdered by members of a *takfīri* group (Belle, 2003). The minister was charged for blasphemy against the Islamic religion.

Western countries and countries with high numbers of Westerners are on high alert since they seem to be frequent targets of *takfīri* groups. Countries that are not Islamic are also targeted in an attempt to convert its citizens and its government to Islam. There appears a trend in the type of person becoming a terrorist; they are often young people looking for fame or a thrill (Sageman, 2008). These people believe that their actions are part of a frontline attempting to create a better world sculpted around the fair ideologies of the Prophet. Because, these people have such strong feelings towards their views, they are prepared to sacrifice themselves in the name of their cause. It is sometimes reported that these terrorists are escaping from a life of poverty and that they have been brainwashed by others to act in certain ways, but these views are not always true. These organisations are instead, created by young people with a shared interest and with shared ideals. Those terrorists living in western countries are second or third generation immigrants. This certainly seems to be the case for some of the terrorists in Europe and America that have been arrested in the past few years (Bakker, 2007; Sageman, 2008).

4.5: The Intellectual Causes:

Through thoroughly studying *takfīri* thought and suggesting its roots and directives, it has been obvious that there are a variety of apparently intellectual causes and factors behind this very destructive trend. The ignorance of the true meaning of religion and illiteracy of the multifarious Islamic sciences are the main factors of the *takfīr* phenomenon. This trait will make a person unaware of the real intent of Islamic teachings and instead will adhere literally to the meaning of the *Quranic* verses and the prophet's sayings. A person may never understand the metaphor of deep interpretation,

the real intent of God, but they may have a deep misunderstanding of the religious texts, which is based on the erroneous perceptions that do not consider the origins of religion's references. In addition, mingling with deviant groups and being under the tutelage of those leaders of *takfiri* thought, is a basis for these attitudes. The self-concentration, intolerance of opinion, the exclusion of debate, claiming the sole monopoly of truth, the limitation of reason in a dark narrow corner away from a community's understanding and interaction with others are the direct causes for the propagation of *takfir*.

These intellectual factors and other related causes will interact together to produce mental incitements that turn into destructive energies destroying everything around them, and through the intellectual reasons, I shall divide these causes into the following:

First: Ignorance of religious teachings

Unawareness of religion and poor knowledge of religious teachings are among the main reasons leading to *takfir*. They are the causes for deviating from the right path. The ignorant person as a consequence will follow trends, which may be considered by him to be the best one, but indeed they are misguiding him toward a harmful form of religious practice. He will commit reprehensible deeds while thinking he is reforming. Many errors are the results of such activity. Hence ignorance is always associated with tyranny. It is obvious that the adherents of *takfiri* ideology have little penetrative knowledge of Islam, leading them to an ideology fraught with extremism and condemnation of contrary opinions. Those people may be university or even school students.

Sadlan has said that among the most pertinent causes of violence and extremism is ignorance of the true meaning of Shari'ah, just as the Kharijite revolted against religion due to the ignorance of its true meaning (Sadlan, 2004).

If *takfiris* are granted the authentic reading and education of the Shari'ah, they will easily realize that there are many texts forbidding violence and others forbidding and even condemning bloodshed and corruption in the earth as well as any act terrorizing civilians (Qurashi, 1990).

Second: The literal reading of the texts without depth

Takfiris do not thoroughly read the *Quran* and nor the prophet's sayings to know the true sense of the text; its intents, aims, and meanings. They only take the superficial meanings of the text and then match it with their purposes. They do not adhere to the rules of deducing nor do they combine the religious directives together (Ibn Taymiyah, 1987).

Sheikh Al-Qarādawi has pointed out the persistence of *takfiris* to read texts literally,, especially those related to *takfir* of the rulers and their refusal to engage in any debate or discussion. They claimed that those who do not pronounce kufr upon the rulers and their courts are themselves *kāfir*. It is known that doubting the *takfir* of unbelievers is in itself Kufr, such as the doubt in the *takfir* of Jews, Christians, Majus and likewise.

Takfir then “proliferated largely not to have only the rulers but also those who accepted them and kept quiet, which in turn involve the Islamic scholars” (Al-Qarādawi , 1990: 7).

Takfiris adhere to the verses saying “Who is ruling without what has been bestowed by God, are the unbelievers” *Quran* Based on this they issued another law such as *takfir* for the nations without even discussing or giving some more details. They say the nation has kept silent on the rulers and disobeyed them, while those rulers did not apply the *Quran* and Islamic teaching in their countries. They *Ūkafron* the scholars because they abstain from condemning the rulers and *Ūkafron* those rejecting their deviated trends, refusing to join them and follow their leader. (Al-Qarādawi, 1990)

The one who follows the *takfiri* leader and his group may find out that they are not on the right path due to one reason or another and they may decide to leave them. As a result, this person will be condemned as a deviator from the religion and his blood is now free for shedding. Other sects shall follow them; otherwise they are unbelievers (Al-Qarādawi, 1990). For example, Al-Qa'idah leader in Iraq ordered to kill the Swedish painter caricature (BBC, 2012).

Third: Erroneous interpretation of religion's texts

To be in harmony with *takfiri* ideas and dogma, one has to believe in their way of deducing the text from its true intent for which the *Quran* has been revealed. Such true intent is substituted with an erroneous one and then taken for their own interpretations that will be according to their moods and justifications. They discard all rules and principles followed by the Islamic scholars today and in the past. Such rules and principles are agreed upon among the majority of Muslims for the interpretation of *Quranic* verses, the prophetic traditions and deduction of legislations according to the intent of God. *Takfiris* are different from the rest of the Muslims by rejecting many of the prophetic traditions narrated from the Prophet and by rejecting what has been told by the ancient companions of the Messenger of God. So they are twisting the necks of the texts that do not support their point of view; they exaggerate and interpret them in a way that strays from the tenants of God, and what is meant by the law (Abu Husam, 2001).

One reason for the prevailing interpretation of *takfir* is a result of misunderstanding of the *Quranic* verses or Hadiths, in particular by taking a particular meaning without linking to other verses and looking at it as a whole. For example, Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was killed by one of the Kharijites, Abdur-Rahman Ibn Miljim leaped and hit the forehead of Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib because he understood from religious texts that Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib should be killed.

Fourth: following deviant pseudo-Scholars:

Many energetic and confident young people have accused the Muslim scholars of hypocrisy and flattering the rulers. They accused them of being in conspiracy with those rulers and the enemies of Islam to keep the nation of Islam in a humiliated status, or they are afraid to speak the truth or they are hopeless and humble before the rulers. They may also be unqualified and unfit to handle the Islamic nation's problems and they thus hinder progress. If they have the correct knowledge, they will announce their opposition to the rulers, their intentional exploitation, depletion of the national resources and capabilities, sins and corrupt actions. Hence the *takfir* have sought the shelter and resorted to the deviant Mashyakh represented by fanatical extremists who have lost the right guidance in understanding the texts and religious provisions.

Their beliefs are aired in the hearts of the youth overflowing with energy,

vitality, lacking in patience and wisdom; the young people are misguided onto this path, which is full of thorns, and many reasons and excuses were mobilized by *takfiris* to justify the killing of innocents, robbing innocents of money, intimidating people and revolting against the régime. All these evil acts are committed under the claim and the pretext of *Jihād*.

Many of the fatwas of these fanatics and their ideas are based on a narrow perception of religion, and they have formulated a deviant mission with a lot of ambiguity and uncertainty and apparent inclination towards militancy and extremism in all things so that it will have a collision with common sense and alienate the peoples' (Baghdadi, 1987).

Fifth: Concentration on the self

A particular group of *takfiris* ordered all Muslims to submit a pledge to its prince as the Imam of the Muslims, and to obey him in prosperity and adversity. It had designated a Muslim country where its members did not bow to their teachings as, Dar al Harb (Abode of War) while at the same time marked the places where their supporters are residing as Dar al Islam (Abode of Safety, Islam). The group has driven away the ones who differed with them from the doctrine of Islam. It permits bloodshed, money confiscation and humiliation of dignity and it left no room for communicating with others to meet or make constructive dialogue. This is because all people outside of their belief are unbelievers and must be dismissed, rejected and ostracised whenever chance and strength are available.

The firm belief of the *takfiri* is that they are the only ones that are right, while all other people are on the wrong path. This has made them spin around themselves and consider that they are the core of the world, the center of attraction and oblige others to follow them, otherwise be eliminated or face death. The extremist conveys a message that: I have the right to speak while you should listen; my right is to lead, but yours is to obey and follow; my view is always right, but yours has never been right. Therefore the extremist will never make a dialogue with anyone because such a meeting may make a compromise in their opinions, which he or she tries to avoid (Al-Qarādwī, 1981).

The issue of concentration on the self is one of the most dangerous matters

leading to blasphemy and extremist attitudes. The unilateral radical belief is based on the concept of self-sanctification, the encouragement of self-desires that make humans blind. He or she may not see the truth, except the one that matches his or her mood and desires. Most importantly, the most serious causes of extremism, tyranny and corruption is self- concentration and ignorance of the world around.

We have seen and discussed so far how the idea of extremism leads its believers to persist in murdering innocent lives, dissipation of public and private fortune, the terrorizing of people and to letting them live in fear and horror. It leads them further to commit unbelievably terrible crimes, to attack the security and stability of many territories of Muslims and to make other people vulnerable to strife and unrest because their word is supreme. For example, Ibn Miljim was proud of himself and did not listen to others when they told him not kill Abī but Ibn Miljim killed Abī.

Sixth: Beliefs and claims to the possession of absolute truth:

The *takfiris* have persuaded themselves that they are the only ones who know the absolute truth and adhere to it. They are the only group who will be saved from hell while others are led astray. The *takfiri* doctrine is the ideal one and their arrogance and scorning of other people have led them to not accept any debate, argument or exchange of views. No-one is permitted to criticize them, or give them any advice on any issue.

Their extreme belief has led them to believe in the denial of prophets' companions sayings as well as their deeds even if they are among Caliphs. They arrogantly say that they are men and we are men.

The *takfir* groups strictly believe that they are right and anyone else has been led astray and into falsehood. Hence, there is no need to meet others for any discussion. Either the second party has to waive its stand or shall be regarded deserving of exile and elimination. In their opinion, there are two types of people: either with them or against them. There is no middle way where opposition can meet for discussing a compromise for living and mingling in peace.

So, the conflict with their opponents has been deeply embedded in their minds. Whenever they have the chance to do so hit hard those opponents, they surely will. Their brutal behavior is due to their belief of other's elimination and deprivation of life,

fortune and honor.

The *takfiri* mentality is based on the refusal to debate, condemning the dissenter, denying the people their own views and trends. The *takfiris* will follow the way of threat, intimidation, force and violence, to deprive others from their right to belief and or opinions. It is a wrong path with dangers and temptations, which ends with tragedy because they begin a deadly struggle between those who want to impose guardianship of religious and intellectual rights on the other, and those who defend their right to have faith and believe in something without coercion. The loss of security, stability, wellbeing and prosperity are all results of the *takfiri* mentality.

The differing of opinion is human nature and a universal fact that forces people to adapt their behaviour in order to live with others and avoid conflict. Those who have assigned themselves as the guardians of the creation start to commit horrible mistakes by spreading intellectual confusion, confiscating dissenting views, limiting the scope of freedom and trying to put all minds in one template, so that the people are replicate copies of each other; here they contradict the common sense and human nature (Zrman 2010). For example, when Juhayman entered Makkah and killed people, man of whom were pilgrims, all because he believed that the people who were in Makkah were not Muslims.

Seventh: Intellectual isolation:

Intellectual fanaticism and belief in individual views, along with pride in a believed knowledge, even if it is just a little, is in itself intellectual isolation. This trait will surely isolate a person to viewing all evidence and deciding upon the right path. It has been known that the Takferis do isolate themselves on their only resources of knowledge and members are forbidden to contact anyone or to read books contrary to their ideas. They are also instructed not to watch satellite TV broadcasts that are opposed to their ideas or which contradict their views. The intolerance of other opinions generates a sense of denying the people the right to freedom of expression. It will create the desire for dictating the choices of others and it closes the doors of knowledge delivered to humanity by open-minded individuals. Such a trend is the main cause for confinement and isolation of the mind, intellectual thinking and socialism. The one who isolates himself from the open resource of sciences is indeed closing his mental

reception to all knowledge that has been accepted and enriched by those having mature minds and vast constructive views. His mind will become shallow and while his desire is to be wider, his knowledge will not be beneficial to him even if he thinks it is.

This explains the scientific dilemma and intellectual imbalance that characterizes advocates of *takfir* due to their poor understanding of the Islamic, social and natural disciplines. It explains also their claim to the issue of *Fatwa*, which allows or prevents matters related to religion and *takfir* on others, when they are not qualified to do so. They lack the intellectual and religious knowledge to issue such *Fatwa*.

Fanaticism is a destructive disease and a chronic illness. Isolation of thought is inevitable to vanish sooner or later, whereas openness to other opinions is a healthy step towards breathing in fresh air and training the mind and self to get rid of the inclination towards violence in the process of settling disputes with others. Openness is an effective way to reduce the extremism of individual selfishness. It teaches humans how to give up on the fanaticism of his beliefs and opinions and the arrogance of their feelings. It also teaches higher values that open up debate, discussion, compromise and relationships. Such a trait reinforces the permanent desire for self-criticism and control, which on another hand paves the way for healthy thinking (Jalabi, 1998).

Takfiri thought in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has spread as a result of the proliferation of religion, ignorance among some youth, the artificial literal reading of the *Quranic* verses and *sunnah*, the lack of understanding of the deep true indications, meanings and aims of Islamic sources, the erroneous interpretation of the religious texts as documented in the *Quran* and *sunnah*. The *takfiri* approach of the deviated so called religious scholars, who are characterized by an unawareness of the true religion, their untrue interpretations of the *Quran* and *sunnah* and their claim to possessing the absolute facts and truths, are the main reasons behind the mocking of the true Islamic scholars by young people who have also joined the *takfiri* elements. This immature mentality claims that violence in all its forms and manifestations are acceptable.

4.6: International organizations and their role in *takfir*

There is an important role to be played by international organisations in promoting the global fight against terrorism and *takfir* activities. At a regional level, the media has

a vital role in educating the public to the realities of each person's place in society. It is important that each person, no matter their occupation or place in society, has the opportunity to make decisions based on open, unbiased and objective information.

Each individual family has its own unique role to play too. It is the first educational institution to educate an individual, the place in which the child's personality is personally and socially shaped and the most appropriate safe location where the adults' opinions are openly expressed and learnt by their children. The family is the first environment where the child develops feelings of loyalty and safety. Most communities exist as a family and this is the natural fruit of marriage.

The breakdown of relationships between family members, the persistence of problems, the carelessness of the family guardian of his or her duties towards their children are collectively contributing towards the delinquency of some children to embrace extremist ideology, especially if the heads of *takfir* are able to approach these families (Abdel Hamid, 2010).

Schools have a significant role as the most vital education medium for which the community has given the assignment of upbringing well-rounded individuals. This environment instills thoughts regarding religion, traditions, customs and beliefs. Schools deliver well-structured curricula, activities, values and morals for the purpose of reinforcing the talents, capabilities and abilities of children. The role of schools today is not the same as it was traditionally where teaching extended to cover all life aspects for children. It is continuous life- long education to cope with the large amount of knowledge that an individual is exposed to.

The most important school environments should instill good teaching practice, with model teachers who are able to make their pupils enjoy learning and think critically so that they can participate in social progression (Ahmad, 1985).

It is clear that educational institutions are favored places for the dissemination of *takfiri* thought, for several reasons including:

- Ease of influence over young people because they are at the stage of formation of thoughts.
- The trait of enthusiasm possessed by the young people and their ability to have general opinions about the community in which they live and their tendency to

- change through the dissemination and propagation of extremist ideas.
- Some teachers have adopted extremist concepts, which are delivered to the students.
 - The prevalence of luxury and extravagance in terms of food and clothing for some of the students, which creates a sense of inferiority among the majority of students and forces them to try to make up for it by other means, which makes these individuals easy prey in the hands of misguided intellectual groups.
 - The prevalence of the mingling of sexes and some aspects of Western culture in campuses, which are misunderstood by some groups as deviating from core principals. These are becoming places for practicing activities away from the collective university tasks. This has driven the extremist groups to protest and interfere on the pretext of combating these types of sins and vices (Qawasmeh 2010).

The educational code surely plays an important role in reinforcing the mentalities of the students with dialogue, tolerancs and sustainment of human rights. It will immediately play the given task of confronting *takfīri* thought through values. The recent educational code is based on inter-communication among students and it promotes a more tolerant culture (Qawasmeh 2010).

It is obvious that the teacher has a role in the spread of *takfīri* thought among students if they do not adhere to the correct educational methods and approaches. Such aspects can be reflected in the teacher's inability to observe the students' intellectual misconceptions, their inability to mind the negative emotions and evil attitudes of the students and inability to promote the construction of Islamic ethics, such as tolerance, respect and love.

Qawasmeh (2010) has indicated that the available curriculum does not pay great concern to the construction of critical and creative thinking. Schools do not even care to teach the means to discard the misleading and suspicious ideas, such as *takfīri* doctrine.

The curriculum has no role in promoting healthy and valid convictions of Islamic faith among the pupils. Qawasmeh pointed out that among the reasons for *takfīri* proliferation among the students is a misunderstanding of religion, idle time, and failures of a pupil in life and living, many religious sects along with its destructive thinking, failure of a student at the learning process, lack of self-confidence, inability to control anger and revenge, a sense of inferiority. All of these have led such students to

takfiri thought in a lot of Muslims communities.

The inability of the school to provide a proper environment for teaching, the failure of the school to control drop out rate, the failure of the institutional organizations to eliminate the wrong educational trends of the parents, the inability to watch all forms of conflicts and deviated inclinations of the students, the inability to form school teams for reinforcing the intellectual and psychological awareness are all reasons to create an attractive environment for *takfiri* thought (Qawasmeh, 2010).

4.7: Educational reasons leading to the adoption of *takfir*

Education has a great role in the adoption of *takfir*. When the culture is perceived by the individual as leading to exclusion and coupled with a lack of thought and little sound religion, there is no doubt it will lead to *takfir*, therefore the role of education in the rise of *takfir* can be summarized as follows:

1 - Lack of religious education in school curricula from primary to university in most Muslim countries.

What is taught at the standard level of education, does not equip the individual with a suitable understanding of the Islamic teachings from which he or she is to know the basic laws of Islam and the minimum requirements of Islamic culture. The substandard religious curricula and its lack of religiously enriched information have led to a lack of awareness of religion in general and a resulting negative impact on the individuals' attitudes, behaviors and trends. Such a curriculum has contributed greatly to misguiding students and deprived them of knowing how to cope with contemporary challenges (Al-Thaheri: 2002).

2 – Not enough effort being exerted for highlighting the virtues of the Islamic religion and its ethics that urge people to do good deeds.

The Islamic religion urges and calls for compassion, tolerance, love of others, observance of the rights of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike, peace, cooperation, mercy, avoidance of injustice and aggression, objectivity while in power, and others that support and reinforce security, love and justice in communities, especially an Islamic one. Islam is a religion that promotes peace, justice and freedom. These virtues

and ethics must be taught from the the very primary levels of education, through to university levels.

3 –Lack of observance to order in young adults within education:

This is related to a lack of intent to train people on the applicable behaviors in social circumstances of psychological anger, rage and resistance to lustrous desires. There is no doubt that human beings harbour negative emotions and instincts that should be controlled such as anger, greed and revenge. As a result, some social events may occur due to a lack of order (Algan, 1987).

4.8: *Takfir* by non-qualified scholars:

Some fanatics and extremists are learning from non-qualified scholars who have no knowledge acquired through established institutions but rather, are self-taught. When an individual has no good role model to neither follow nor the opportunity to approach those who are well educated, their desires and emotions, become their leaders. They have been deprived of authentic knowledge derived from prophetic origins and the Islamic references. They consequently fall into delusional paths and they are not only themselves misled, but they misguide others since they have followed pseudo-teachers and avoided well reputed scholars. Due to their arrogance preventing them from seeking knowledge from the right resources, they are left in isolation, depending on each other without approaching Islamic scholars. If any of them do attend sessions with a reputable scholar, they would be arrogant and express delight at another's misfortune.

It is obvious that having an apprenticeship at the hands of pseudo-scholars and receiving knowledge form they may lead to extremism, fanaticism and *takfir*.

The extremists avoid attendance with true scholars because they do not trust them as a result of their own jealousy, desires and whims, which push them to raise suspicions about them. However, it is they themselves who are worse affected as they slander the scholars and accuse them of committing illegal acts (Mukhtar, 2010).

Additionally, the role of the media cannot be over emphasized. Its impact cannot be denied on the behavior and values of a community. Its importance in recent times has increased due to the extended development of the media. With respect to the

relationship between the media and children, the audible, visual and written means of media have greatly attracted the attention of the youth and raised their interest to use the latest available technologies in this domain. The impact of the media has been increased also by the materials being provided and presented in the form of dramas, which will have a direct and effective impact in shaping childrens' behaviors and values, which means that these methods play an important role in the life of a child.

Awareness and guidance are one of the main tasks of the media. The media has a vital role in the culture and education of young people and their roles in society. The media has a major role in guiding young peoples' education, in the formation of their convictions and in directing their attention towards the proper aims in life. The worker, the farmer, the manufacturer, the house-wife and any employee have their own roles in society, however if there is no proper guidance through the media, each one will use their own assessment for any situation that could lead them astray, or find themselves unable to cope with modern issues. It may have a bad or good effect on the individuals, but the media's role is to educate people and provide them with the correct information and advice which they may need.

It is clear that part of the media's role is educational. Education here is to provide information and knowledge to viewers, to broadcast the various political, economical, cultural and informative programs for the purpose of leading the community to higher levels of awareness, realization and rousing the attention of citizens to public issues.

The media is an effective means and has a deep impact on children even in cases where they have no previous awareness of such issues being discussed by the media. Newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasting, television, theatre and cinema are examples of how the media have an effect on the upbringing of a child (Khader, 1985).

Members of *Jihādi* organizations were generally middle class in their countries, educated young people from families with religious upbringings, who grew up with strong values of faith and spiritual values and concerns for their Muslim community (Sageman, 2008).

4.9: The media's role in the dissemination of *takfīri* thought

The media plays a significant role in being able to both nurture and support, or in the emergence of violence, terrorism and extremism. The presentation of programmes, films, bulletin boards, news presentations of events or their deliberation and characters will make the media the main player in many countries. The most popular mediums are the television and satellite channels.

Television programmes have the potential to demean minds, promote certain religious rites and morals, and even the potential to create feelings of turmoil. Irresponsible programming can exaggerate discussions of issues and topics. They are known to derive religious interpretations to support the views they wish to perpetrate and present them as absolute fact. If the media discusses the issues and analyses them on the grounds of being facts, without taking into account neither the psychological state of the receiver, nor the circumstances of time and place (Al-Shanqiti: 1998) the impact will be highly destructive.

The Internet is considered today to be the most influential means to serve the purpose of violence, international terrorism; these networks disseminate ideas, information, statements and provisions between the parties engaged in the operation to the whole world. Information is open and easy to access and some of the material, such as pornographic material and controversial subject matter can be morally corrosive. There are more than 90 million internet users worldwide and there are seven million new subscribers every year. These users have access to a wealth of information and different opinions about any topic. The rise in internet communication has changed the face of radicalization from one restricted to direct personal communication, to a cyber world, which allows people from all parts of the world to communicate with relative ease. Sharing of information changes people's beliefs and this can be seen from the rise in Islamist extremist forums on the Internet. Some of these forums and websites promote particular forms of extremist behaviour as being heroic (Hohlmann, 2008).

Publication of newspapers with depicting stories, photos and articles under the title of misunderstood freedom, or hidden support for terrorism, will produce unacceptable behavior, which is beyond logic and reasoning.

4.10: The causes and reasons of the emergence of *takfiri* thought can be summarized as:

1 – The political circumstances prevailing in certain Islamic countries where they have been the victim of foreign occupation in the modern era, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, or as in the unique situation of Palestine, a conflict for which no solution has been found. All these conditions have forced some to adopt extremism and fanaticism in the judgement of other Muslims who are accused of betraying their fellow Muslims, or of *kufr* and of lacking courage.

2- The poor economic conditions in some Islamic countries where there is a direct correlation between high rates of poverty, unemployment and the high levels of frustration in some cases, fuels the attraction to hardline *takfiri* rhetoric. Poverty in turn may lead to disbelief because it forces people to do things that they may not do in a secure environment.

3 -Some Muslim countries suffer from heavy discrimination in the media whereby religious teaching and expression are not tolerated, while opponents and detractors of Islam are given ample airtime without any opportunity for rebuttal or challenge. This creates an oppressive environment for those seeking to express or learn a religious opinion. In some cases the regimes in Muslim countries do publish their books at the expense of the state and perhaps grant them some high awards and accolades.

4 – The most important features of media circumstances in the Islamic world can be summarized as follows:

- It is easy to establish satellite channels and to access a large number of people anywhere in the world. The establishments of satellite stations are not costly and it is increasingly difficult for government to control what is being viewed in their own territories because of the extent of satellite television
- It is easy to create television channels on some sites, such as YouTube, without having to rent space or have any particular technical knowledge. This makes it easy for any person to be able to broadcast what they like on the Internet.
- It is easy to deal with the mechanisms of new media, such as creating websites, blogs, forums, and personal pages on Facebook, and other forms of media that are widely used

and have great influence, particularly among young people.

- It is easy to appear as an unreal identity on the Internet and it is not necessary for the user to disclose his or her true identity, which allows some users to exaggerate claims and information in publishing *takfiri* judgments without having to face scrutiny.
- The government has difficulty in monitoring everything that is broadcast or uploaded onto the Web. There are governments who have endeavoured to block or prevent particular sites especially those promoting political opponents. However, users have quickly created alternative sites, or found means by which to circumvent government blocks on the internet.

These media predicaments have been most pivotal in the dissemination of the strangest of fatwas. This in turn has created a situation of mistrust of the public in such mediums. This allows the opportunity for *takfiri* organizations to publish their views and to appear as if they are the ones who truly protect the religion, by fighting corruption and destruction.

4.11: The influences of *takfiri* thought broadcast in the media can be identified on three levels:

First: Perception and knowledge:

Most young people who use the internet take most of their information regarding a plethora of things, from the internet (Bartlett & Miller, 2011). Extremist propoganda available on the internet is attracting some youths who are unhappy with the state of Islamic nations and their weaknesses. Hence the media is a resource of knowledge and information for those young people.

Second: Attitudes and values:

Studies and academic investigations have indicated that the media has an important and essential role in the enrichment and formation of public opinions. It also has a very influential impact on the trends and values of the individuals who have the

tendency to adopt radical views. Those who are not willing to accept such radical ideas feel cognitive dissonance if they are exposed to such types of communicative messages.

Third: Behaviors:

The most risky impact on values and trends is related to the transition of the receiver from the influence on the trends to his or her behavior.

That may ultimately lead to an individual joining the *takfiri* sects, which have slogans of a glamorous *Jihad*, the victory of Islam, which is far from its true essence, and moderate methodology. The behavior may be to join those who call for *takfiri* ideology in the chatrooms on the internet or even among friends and colleagues. There is also room for these individuals to step into more radical environs in order to achieve what they are looking for (Amin, 2010).

4.12: Conclusion

In conclusion, *takfir* can be said to be a major cause for the terrorist attacks that have occurred around the world. *Takfir* is a notion that is mostly conjured up in the mind of an individual. When a person, or a group of people, feels that *Shari'ah* law is not being followed to the letter, they declare *takfir* upon that community. They take it upon themselves to reinstate Islamic values. They use the killing of *kafirs* to have their way with the *kafirs*. They carry their activities to as far afield as other countries, which are not Islamic. *Takfir* has also been used to topple governments as the group that sets itself aside struggle to gain power from the ones they consider *kafir*.

Takfir creates social closure as *takfiris* consider themselves to be of a social stature higher than the rest of the people. They use this ideology to intimidate others and more often than not, they get away with it. They uphold doctrines that are unique only to them and use them to legalize actions that are otherwise termed as being evil and sinful. They have legalized that which is sinful and made it acceptable among them. The *Quran* does not allow Muslims to kill their fellow Muslims, but *takfiris* legitimize their activities per the maxim, 'the end justifies the means'. Recently these secret groups have sprung up and in a show of power, carried out many attacks leaving many

dead and scores injured.

In lieu of this maybe a global understanding would help in reducing the number of *takfiri* organizations appearing. This is because different understandings by different people bring about misunderstanding. Hence, some groups brand others as *kafir*. *Takfiri* groups believe that what they alone believe in is right and these groups take it upon themselves to convert anyone else who does not share their thinking. Acceptance and respect of each others' religions would also play a big part in the reduction of these attacks. Intermarriages between different religions would also go a long way into seeing an end to these attacks.

Chapter Five: The Official View on *Takfir*

5.1: Introduction

In Saudi today, imputing *kufr* on Muslims without any legal authority, knowledge of jurisprudence and understanding of political reality is an increasingly common phenomenon. Obviously this is a very dangerous issue, as it is leading to sectarianism and terrorism. Furthermore, it seems that *takfir* is being pronounced in cases where the facts suggest only disobedience to the law rather than irrevocable theological crimes. They are far from the sort of theological contravention normally deemed worthy of *takfir*, for instance when one denies that adultery or theft are illegal (Abu Lawz, 1418).

Takfir seems to have become the individual right of every Muslim, as each one can apparently impute *kufr* on others without adhering to any guidelines or provisions and without complying with conditions that should be followed in doing so. Meanwhile, Muslim groups and scores of countries have been labeled with the non-Muslim without any guidelines or specific conditions. In this chapter we will study the conditions and guidelines that are set forth by official scholars in Saudi Arabia.

Some youngsters have been influenced by the methodology of the Talfiris who impute *kufr* on the laity, scholars and government. They even go further, to impute *kufr* on entire communities. As noted previously, the inclination towards *takfir* is attributed to many factors, such as ignorance of religious origins, non-availability of in-depth knowledge about its origins and principles and deviation from the authentic teachings that were adopted by earlier generations of Muslims. In this chapter, the Saudi orthodox perspective on *takfir* will be examined, in terms of the guidelines that regulate *takfir* and conditions thereof. These have been set forth so that individual Muslims do not take it upon themselves to excommunicate.

5.2: The conditions for *takfīr*:

It is well known that *kufr* is a term opposite to belief or denial of what the Prophet Muḥammad brought and that disbelief and *takfīr* are issues that have guidelines and conditions. From a theological perspective, one who incorrectly calls another a disbeliever is himself a disbeliever. This is evident from the following quote: “The one who unlawfully imputes *kufr* on his co-believer surely brings upon himself a great sin and it is as if he aggressively and unjustly shed his own blood; such a person deserves severe punishments” (Al-Harrani, 1995:345). *Takfīr* is a legal proclamation which requires great caution on the part of the one pronouncing it. According to Al-Ali, the suspected apostate’s intention must be examined before he is labeled as accused of *kufr* (Al-Ali, 2102).

Al-Qarrafi said, “*Kufr*, in principle, is when a specific transgression against the divinity has occurred either in terms of ignorance about the existence of the Creator or the divine attributes of God [...] To be clad in Christian dress and to follow their customs or denial of what has been necessarily known from religion [are also acts of disbelief].” However, Ibn Al-Qayyim said that *kufr* is the denial of what is known about what prophet Muḥammad has introduced, either as questions of a scientific or practical nature. The one who denies what prophet Muḥammad has introduced his knowledge about that is a *kafir* (infidel) either in part or whole of the religion” (Alrahili, 2011, 57).

According to Al-ʿAwaji (2010:911), *kufr* in the context of ‘Shariʿah can be understood in several ways:

- It can be understood as the antonym of gratitude, as stated in the Quran “And indeed We bestowed upon Luqman *Al-Hikmah* (wisdom and religious understanding, etc.)”. “Give thanks to God” and whoever gives thanks (*wa man yashkur*), he gives thanks for [the good of] his own self. And whoever is unthankful (*wa man kafar^a*), then verily, God is worthy of all praise” (Q31:12).
- It can be understood in the context of denying the blessings of God, as stated in the Quran: “The dwellers of this town disregarded God’s blessings and showed ingratitude. Thereupon God clothed them in the torment of hunger and fear due to the activities that they used to carry out” (Q16:112).

- It can be understood as renouncement, as stated in the Quran: “Then on the Resurrection Day some of you shall deny others, and some of you shall curse others, and your abode is the fire, and you shall not have any helpers (Q29:112).
- It can be understood as a synonym of polytheism, as stated at the Quran : “Ye do call upon me to blaspheme against God, and to join with Him partners of whom I have no knowledge; and I call you to the Exalted in Power, Who forgives again and again” (Q40:42) ().

In Al-[°]Awaji’s interpretation of the prophetic tradition, if anyone imputes the other with *kufr*, it will come back upon him if the status of the person who he has imputed is not as he stated. As narrated by Ibn Hajar: “Any one who imputes the other with *kufr* will surely find it come back upon him if that person who he imputed isn't as he stated. This means that the one who says to the other, “You are a *kafir*,” and it transpires that what he stated is not true, he will be the one who deserves such a description. And if what he said is true then nothing will return back on him in view of his true statement.

Similarly, Al-Shawkani said: “Please be informed that declaring a Muslim as an apostate from Islam and embracer of *kufr* is something that should not be done by a person who believes in God and the Doomsday as he shouldn’t make such statements unless he has substantial proof as clear as day light” (quoted in Al-Harithi, 2010).

[°]Abdul Wahab said: “The act of imputing *kufr* on others without legal support or evidence is an issue that contradicts the position of the Scholars and the schools of Sunni Islam. This is the way of the misguided and heretics, exhibited in speeches and deeds of those who aren't fearful of God” (Al-Abdeli, 2010:268).

The above mentioned scholars, and many besides, have prohibited a Muslim from imputing *kufr* on others randomly. Imputing *kufr* on somebody is tantamount to imputing them with the most heinous crime. It implies that this blood is no longer sacred, that his Muslim wife shall be divorced from him, that he is prohibited from inheritance, and if he dies he shouldn't be washed, shrouded and prayed upon (Al-Harithi, 2010). In Islam, imputing *kufr* on another Muslim is the greatest degradation to his honor (Ya[°]qub, 210:633). It is a legal ruling that should be confirmed and reconfirmed before pronounced. The truth of the matter is that it is the ultimate right of God. The infidel has become so because God has judged him as such. Therefore,

there is no room for mental postulation or emotional judgment in this question (Al-Mas'udi, 2010:142). Ibn Taymiyyah says that “infidelity and dissoluteness are legal provisions and are not dependent on mental judgment, as the *kafir* is imputed by God and his Messenger” (Ibn Taymiyah, 1986, v. 5, p.92).

Reinforcing this view, al-Saqar (2009) says, “There is no room for mental interference in this legal question; imputing *kufir* on someone else on the basis of retaliation and revenge is not permitted as this constitutes a transgression of God's ruling and right and transgression to his slaves”. Conscientious scholars will therefore avoid declaring another *kafir* even if their opponents impute *kufir* on them because *kufir* is a legal ruling not to be used as a tool for revenge. Similarly, *takfir* is a right of God and one shouldn't impute *kufir* on another except for those whom God have imputed *kufir* on” (Al-Saqar, 2009:13).

Despite the severity of declaring another an apostate or disbeliever, we find that some individuals in Saudi Arabia accuse others of the same, sometimes going even further and describing them as atheists, particularly those who are involved in State politics. In a public lecture, Sheikh Nasser Al-[‘]Aql illustrated the standards for *takfir*, explaining that *takfir* is of the most sensitive dimensions of the Shari[‘]ah.. The Quran says, “It is God who created you, some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers.” Disbelief is therefore a judgment of God to those who have gone astray and deviated from the way of the Prophets and the righteous. They have become distracted from the religion of God, and from its rulings; they do not respond to God's commands nor believe in monotheism, the call of the Prophets and Messengers (Annadwah newspaper, 2012). This is the reason for which the eminent scholars of Saudi Arabia distance themselves from accusing people of being apostates and discourage other members of society from accusing each other of apostasy.

5.3: Conditions of pronouncing *takfir*

Muslim jurists introduced many controls on the use of *takfir*, for example it is not permissible for any person to declare another an apostate without clear proof.

Takfīr is a serious matter with consequences that can affect the life of the person accused of it. It can only be declared on one who has breached one of the central tenets of Islam through either word or deed; therefore Islam sets conditions and controls which must be followed by the accuser of apostasy otherwise he will become himself an infidel.

5.4: Conditions of the person who produces the judgment of *takfīr*:

Lest the Muslims fall into the destructive tendency of engaging in *takfīr* and counter *takfīr*, and lest the Muslims be confused about the issue of *takfīr*, Islam sets the standards and conditions for it. The conditions set by Islam about the *takfīr* are as following:

1. To be deeply knowledgeable of the conditions and preventives of the *takfīr*:

It is impermissible to accuse a Muslim of apostasy unless made by a person who is knowledgeable of the *takfīr* conditions and preventives. This is by no means common knowledgeable. Typically it is the scholars of the Shari‘ah who know the reasons which render a person as having left Islam. Not merely for mentioning infidelity in the Shari‘ah texts is a justification for accusing any certain person of apostasy because there may be possibilities which prevent the same, as Ibn ‘Abbas said in interpreting the Quran verse: “Those who do not rule by what God revealed, those are the infidels” (Q5:44). Ibn ‘Abbas said, “It is not the infidelity which you presume; rather it is such infidelity that converting from the religion (Those who do not rule by what God revealed, those are the infidels) (an infidelity not liked the infidelity) (Narrated by Al-Hakim, 2 342).

It is now obvious that the conditions for calling a Muslim apostate are as follows:

- He must show infidelity by words or deeds even if he claims to have embraced Islam.
- He should be informed of the error of his ways to see if he is able to comprehend the charges against him.
- He should not be a new convert to Islam.
- It should be ascertained whether he was under duress to apostate.

- It should be investigated whether he was ignorant of the rules of Islam.

2. To be of those who are authorised to declare a Shari'ah judgment:

The matter of *takfir* is not an issue for the students of the Shari'ah much less the laity, but rather it is an affair of the scholars who are conversant and well-versed in the Shari'ah. It is the affair of the Shari'ah courts. Sheikh Saleh bin Fawzan Al-Fawzan was once asked who the apostate is to which he replied: "Judging one an apostate and out of the religion are from the powers of the deeply knowledgeable and established scholars of the Shari'ah; those are the judges in the Shari'ah courts. As with other issues, it is not the right of everybody, the right of the semi-educated or those affiliated to the study of the Shari'ah; neither is it for those who lack the understanding of the religion or for anyone to abuse powers they may have and judge another an apostate who is not, because this will result in corruption. Judging a Muslim an apostate when you are not a judge is a serious issue."

3. The Muslim judged to be an apostate should be proven as such:

For a judgment of *kufir* against a Muslim to be accepted the person who makes the judgement must fulfill the following conditions: the deed or the saying rendered by the Muslim who is judged to be an apostate have to be of a category which in Islamic law would render him a disbeliever; that there is clear evidence proving this.

A person cannot be considered an apostate based on doubt. *Takfir* is a paramount issue, so the believer must not be accused of disbelief unless and until there has been found a clear text that he has contravened. Apostasy can not be leveled against someone unless there is a clear Shari'ah text or a consensus of Muslim scholars that an act contravened renders one's faith void. Sunnis believe generally that no man's sin, no matter how great, should banish him from Islam.

Ibn Hazam said: "The truth is that everyone who has entered a covenant [with God] cannot have this covenant removed by means of slur, fabrication or slander" (Ibn Hazam, p. 3, pp.138). Al-Shawkani said: "You must know that judging a Muslim outside the fold of Islam is impermissible for a Muslim who believes in God and the

Last Day, unless substantial evidence has been presented.” (Al-Shawkani, 1994:4- 578).

5.5 The conditions related to the person judged of disbelieving:

Scholars consider the person who has been judged a disbeliever after belief an apostate (*murtadd*). Islam sets specific conditions for declaring a person an unbeliever:

1. Sanity and maturity:

For the declaration of apostasy to be valid the person being judged as such should be sane and an adult. The Prophet said: “There are three persons whose actions are not recorded: a sleeper till he awakes, an idiot until he is restored to reason, and a boy until he reaches puberty” (Sunan Abu Daud: 2-544). Apostasy is invalid if the judgement is made by a person who is irrational, such as children or people with mental illnesses and those that are absent-minded because they are unconscious, sleeping, sick, or those under the influence of drugs or drink.

A child who is judged to be a Muslim cannot be considered as an apostate even if he or she declares his or her disbelief in Islam, because his or her deeds will not be recorded, according to the Hadith narrated by Abu Dawud.

2. There should be no barrier/preventive, such as ignorance and coercion and the like:

A person who is accused of apostasy should be aware that what he says or does or believes is impermissible according to Islamic law (Al-Mas'udi, 2010:145). In judging a person an apostate, it should be known that such a person's willfulness and premeditation to commit an action of disbelief deliberately and intentionally, unless this is certain then the condition of judging him of apostasy is unacceptable. This is based on the verse of the Quran in relation to some companions who had transgressed: (...And there is no blame upon you for that in which you have erred but {only for} what your hearts intended. And ever is God Forgiving and Merciful. (Q33:5).

The Quran sets forth that: “Whoever disbelieves in God after his belief ... except for one who is forced to renounce his religion while his heart is secure in faith.

However, those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief face the wrath of God and great punishment” (Q16:106), which implies that judging of belief or disbelief is a judgment relating to the heart and those forced to utter a statement of disbelief should therefore not be held liable.

“The ignorant or illiterate person who says a word of disbelief and when there is no proof for judging him or her will be condoned because ignorance or illiteracy is due to a lack or inability to access the knowledge about the Islamic law text” (Al-Mas^udi, 2010:146).

3. Establishment of proof:

Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that that proof is important before accusing anyone of disbelief. He maintains that no one can accuse a Muslim of apostasy even if he or she erred or made a mistake, unless there is a proof. Islam should not be removed from someone by suspicion, but only after the establishment of proof and the removal of any suspicion; the proof is the texts from the Quran and the *Sunnah*. Establishment of proof should be presented correctly and it should be understood by the person being judged (Al-Badrani, 2010).

4. Substantiation of apostasy and admission of the same:

Judging a person of disbelief is an Islamic law (*Hadd*), and the Islamic law *Hudud*, which prescribes punishments should be based on proof, evidence or admission of guilt. However, apostasy evidenced by admission or testimony relies on two conditions being fulfilled:

- In proving apostasy, there should be two witnesses.
- The testimony about apostasy should be elaborated in detail by the witnesses in order to set forth the aspect(s) of disbelief. If the apostasy is proven by admission, the admission and acknowledgement of the apostate should be taken in detail, it should be straightforward, and there should be an explanation of the matter upon which the apostasy took place (Al-Harthy, 2010:712). It should be proven that the person being judged was intending to be a disbeliever, as intent is a condition while making a mistake is something that is preventative. It should be remarked that intent might be intended for testing; therefore intent is

negated by mistakes or coercion, (Nur, 2010:64).

5. The point of disbelief stemming from a misinterpretation of Islamic texts:

If one suspects that disbelief has occurred from misinterpretation of the Islamic texts, such as that made by the heretical theologians on questions relating to the attributes of God, where the details become delicate and ambiguous to many Muslims in spite of their care in looking for guidance and righteousness, then *takfir* must be avoided.

5.6: Types of *takfir*

It is well known that *takfir* is one of the biggest and most serious issues facing Islamic society. Sunni Muslim scholars have warned of the seriousness and gravity of *takfir* and its consequences. Ibn Taiyminyah said that: “You have to know that the issues of *takfir* and immoralities are issues of names and judgments related to matters of promise and threat in the future; it is related to loyalty, hostility, killing and preservation in this World. God the Almighty allotted paradise to the believers and made the paradise forbidden to the disbelievers. This is one of the general judgments at all times and places”.

Section one: Absolute *takfir*:

Absolute *takfir* is to judge someone a disbeliever on the basis of a saying, action or belief that is contrary to the principles or roots of Islam; it absolutely contradicts the same from the doers (Ya'qub, 2010: 643).

Absolute *takfir* is of two categories:

The first category is to make *kufr* conditional upon a saying, action or belief, such as: whoever says such and such will become a disbeliever; whoever does such and such will become a disbeliever; and who believes such and such will become a disbeliever. Therefore, it is a general description that is not assigned to a certain person (Al-Mas'udi, 2010:140).

The second category is to describe as *kufr* the actions of a particular group, for

example when in the Quran God describes the following: “A faction of the Children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved. So we supported those who believed against their enemies and they became dominant (Q6: 68). The Quran judges *kufir* as follows:

- It is judged by the infidelity of those who say that Jesus Christ and His Mother Mary are divines set forth: “They have certainly disbelieved those who say God is the Messiah, the Son of Mary while the Messiah has said: O Children of Israel worship God, My Lord and your Lord. Indeed, he who associates others with God – God has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the fire – And there is not for the wrongdoers any helper” (Q5: 73 – 74).
- The infidelity of those who falsify the Prophets is judged upon the word of God in the Quran saying that: “And they were followed in this world with a curse on the Day of Resurrection”. “Unquestionably, 'Aad denied their lord, they away with 'Aad, the people of Hud” (Q11: 60).
- It is infidelity to mock religion, as God said in the Quran: "And if you ask them, they will surely say, ‘we were only conversing and playing’. Say, ‘Was it God and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?’ Make no excuse, you have disbelieved after you believed, which is punishable (Q9: 65 – 66).
- It is judged as infidelity to proclaim divinity for oneself: “Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord because God had given him kingship? And Abraham said, ‘My lord is the one who gives life and causes death’, he said ‘I give life and cause death”. *Abraham* said, "Indeed, God brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west", so the disbelievers were overwhelmed {by astonishment}, and God does not guide the wrongdoing people (Q2: 258).
- It is judged as infidelity to deny the resurrection. The Quran says: “Have you seen he who disbelieved in our verses and said, ‘I will surely be given wealth and children in the next life” (Q19:77) (*Al-Mas‘udi*, 2010:140).
- Those who abandon any of the pillars of Islam, such as the prayers, fasting, alms giving and pilgrimage to Makkah are considered to be disbelievers. In particular abandoning of prayers even if other devotions are abided by is judged to be a major act of disbelief (*Al-Qarni*, 1992).

God is understood to judge those who are disbelievers, but provides the opportunity for those disbelievers to repent and return to monotheism and belief. God said in the Quran: “Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has

previously occurred will be given for them. But if they return to hostility then the precedent of the former rebellious nature will still be upon them (Q8:38). The disbeliever is the one who has been described as a disbeliever by God and His Prophet, and judgment over this issue should not be made from supposition. Absolute *takfīr* does not necessitate accusation of a certain person having disbelief because his or her disbelief is dependent upon proof of the conditions and negation of the preventives (Al-Mas‘udi, 2010:140 - 141).

Absolute disbelief is what is set forth in the Quran and is a category which Muslims have not disagreed about. (Khaujah, 2010:581).

Section two: *Takfīr* of a specific person:

Takfīr of a specific person is the applying of a judgment of *kufr* on a certain person. God said in the Quran: “When we said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before God’, the angels prostrated, except for Satan. He refused and was arrogant and thus became a disbeliever” (Q2:34). One is deemed to have entered the religion of Islam once he admits and acknowledges the two testimonies of faith, that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Prophet of God (Al-Qarni, 1991: 92).

Ways by which *kufr* is committed:

1- *Kufr* of the heart: *Kufr* of the heart is the negation of faith, which is replacing the feelings of the heart with falsification and disbelief. The Quran says: “Those who are more unjust than those who lie about God and deny the truth when it has come to him? Is there not in Hell a residence for the disbelievers” (Q.39). *Kufr* in words is desertion of uttering the two testimonies in spite of the ability to utter them. Ibn Taymiyyah said: “As for the two testimonies of faith, if one did not utter them with the ability to do so then he is a *kafir* by unanimity of the Muslims; he is explicitly and implicitly a disbeliever according to the opinion of the Muslim nation's predecessors, Imams and the majority of its scholars” (cited in Nur, 2010:44).

The *kufr* of the heart is to hate and dislike Islam; the person may believe in God

and His Messenger, but he is a hater and disliker of both. God said in the Quran: "Indeed, those who have reverted back [to disbelief] after guidance have been enticed by Satan. That is because they said to those who disliked what God sent down, "we will obey you in part of the matter". And God knows what they conceal. Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs? That is because they followed what angered God and disliked [what earns] His pleasure. So, He rendered their deeds worthless (Q.47). Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Whoever believed the Messenger, then hated Him and antagonized him with the heart and provoked him physically is definitely a disbeliever" (Ibn Taymiyyah, 7-556).

2-*Kufr* by the tongue: *Kufr* of the tongue is cursing, mocking and denial of the monotheism of God and the like (Khawjah, 2010:577); that is because the tongue brings about what is in the heart and in a person's thoughts unless the person is forced and coerced (Al-Qahtani, 2007:25).

3-*Kufr* of the limbs: *Kufr* of the limbs is refraining, desisting, shunning and renunciation, or committing contradictions, such as the prostration with the intent of approaching a deity other than God, as well as slaughtering for someone other than God (Khawjah, 2010:578). That is because the act of the limbs proves there is a belief exercised from the heart (Al-Qahtani, 2007:36).

Divisions of *kufr*:

***Kufr* is divided into major *kufr* and minor *kufr* according to the orthodox scholars.**

Below are details about both the major *kufr* and minor *kufr*:

Division one: The major *kufr*:

The judgment of major *kufr* banishes a person from Islam and implies that a person is doomed to Hell forever.

Types of major *Kufr*:

1-The *kufr* of doubt: this is the hesitation between believing and denial; the belief of the slave [of God] is incomplete without full sincerity and fidelity. God says in the Quran that "Only those would ask permission of you and who do not believe in God and the Last Day and whose hearts have doubt (Q9:45). The *kufr* of doubt is non-assertion of

the Prophet's sincerity and non-denial of Him, but to have doubt on Him or to have doubt and skepticism of His Message (Khawjah, 2010).

2-*Kufr* of repudiation: It is denial with knowledge; it is denial by the tongue and believing by the heart: "We know that you, [Muhammad], are saddened by what they say, and indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of God that the wrongdoers reject" (Q6: 33).

3-*Kufr* of desistance from the religion of God; linguistically it is renunciation, which involves resisting learning the essentials of the religion to which one should be submissive, or disbelief in dogma, or an action of *kufr*. God said in the Quran: "And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord, then he turns away from them? Indeed we will take vengeance on the criminals" (Q32:22). A person who relinquishes and does not listen to the Prophet with his heart and mind does not believe in Him. (Bu Qrain, 2008:36).

4-*Kufr* of mocking and sarcasm of God, or His verses, or any of His Messengers is *kufr* according to the texts of the Quran and *Sunnah* as well as the unanimity of Muslims. God says in the Quran: "And if you ask them, they will surely say 'we were only conversing and playing' and 'is it His verses and His Messengers that you were mocking?' Make no excuse, you have disbelieved after your believed. If we pardon one faction of you, we will punish another faction because they are criminals (Q9: 65 – 66).

5-*Kufr* of cursing or blasphemy towards God, or one of His Messengers, or cursing the religion of God, is in the eyes of the Quran sacrilegious. Indeed, those who abuse God and His Messenger are cursed in this World and hereafter and they should be prepared for a humiliating punishment (Q: Al-Ahzab: 57). God also said in the Quran: "And those who abuse the Messenger of God – for them is a painful punishment" (Q9:61). Ibn Taymiyyah said that Ishaq Ibn Rahweih of the prominent Imams called Muslims who revile God or His Messenger, or who push away something that is sent down by God, *kafirs* even if he or she acknowledges and admits of all that God has sent down.

6-*Kufr* of the overbearing and insolence against God and the Shari'ah is the misrecognition of what is brought by the Prophet for His Lord out of insolence and superciliousness, or it is disobeying God out of haughtiness and arrogance. God said in the Quran: "And when we said to the angels, 'Prostrate before Adam', so they

prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused because he was arrogant and he thus became a disbeliever”. The *kufr* of Al-Baqara (34) is similar to the *kufr* of Satan, as Al-Baqara is not an unbeliever in God and did not encounter the same kind of denial, disavowal and arrogance, but he is a disbeliever because he knew the truthfulness of the Prophet, and that the Prophet comes with the right from the God, but he did not obey out of superciliousness and conceitedness. Ibn Taymiyyah said: “Whoever becomes insolent from worshipping God is necessarily worshipping a lord other than God; humans are sensitive in that they move through will” (cited in Al-Qarni, 1992: 162).

7-*Kufr* of refutation and disproof is the denial of what was brought by the Prophets from God, or disavowal of something in the Shari‘ah. God said in the Quran: “And who is more unjust than one who invents lies about God or denies His verses. Indeed, the wrongdoers will not succeed” (Q6: 21).

8-*Kufr* of divination, augury and witchcraft is a person pretending to know everything about what will happen in the future. Such people claim that they know secrets and that they are familiar with the transcendental and unseen things. Some such speculations may be true, but most of them are untrue. The witch is the one who pretends that he or she knows what has happened in the past, such as knowing a thief at a site where something has been stolen, based on communication with the *Jinn*.

10-*Kufr* of hating God and the Prophet is disbelief in the unanimity of Muslims. In the Quran it says: “But those who disbelieve – for them there will be misery and He will waste their deeds. That is because they disliked what God revealed, so He rendered their deeds worthless” (Q47:8 – 9).

11-*Kufr* of making licit what God or His Messenger has made illicit, or making illicit what God and His Messenger have made licit is another important variety of *kufr* according to scholars. Al-Shawkani said, “Whoever makes licit what has been made illicit by God, he is unanimously a disbeliever”.

12-Disbelief in God. In the Quran we read: “Indeed, God does not forgive association of other people with His name, but He forgives what is less than that for whom he wills. He who associates others with God’s name has certainly gone far astray” (Q4: 116).

13-Not describing the real polytheists as infidels, doubting disbelief, or refusing to rectify their doctrine is a variety of *kufr*. These describe those people that believe in

something other than Islam, for example Jews, Christians and Pagans, as well as the believers of others religions. This is a *kufir* by unanimity of Muslims because those who do not hold a *kafir* as such are themselves considered disbelievers. We read in the Quran that whoever desires anything other than Islam as a religion will never have it accepted by God (Q3: 85).

14-The *kufir* of being loyal to the polytheists, and supporting them against the Muslims: the Quran it is said that “You will not find a person who believes in God and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose God and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers, sons or brothers” (Q58:22).

15-*Kufir* of duplicity and hypocrisy: this implies pretending to be a Muslim while one is all the while hiding disbelief and polytheism. It is to demonstrate belief in words, but to deny the feelings in the heart (Khawjah, 2010).

16-*Kufir* of denial and irreligion: This is a belief in the disavowal of the Prophets. People who deny the Messengers and Prophets are judged as being disbelievers. Muslims might fall into some of these types of the major *kufir* or polytheism. However, the scholars say that: "Whoever did it has disbelieved", but such a Muslim should not be judged of apostasy because one of the conditions for judging such a Muslim of infidelity is missing. Similarly, the existence of a preventive such as being ignorant and judging a Muslim of *kufir* when he or she is undeserving of this judgement is a great sin.

Included in the major *Kufir* is the desertion of actions, such as those people who do not perform prayers, do not pay *Zakāt*, do not fast, do not perform *Hajj*, or do not do any good, when they are able to do so. According to some scholars, belief can hardly ascribed to someone who is not doing these basic duties

Division two: Minor *kufir*:

Minor *kufir* are the sins which are called *kufir* according to Islamic law, nevertheless those who commit such types of sins are not judged as being outside the fold of Islam. An example includes the fighting of a Muslim against a fellow Muslim without legal right. Indeed, the Prophet said: “Reviling a Muslim is disobedience to God (*fisq*), and killing him is tantamount to disbelief (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). On matters of defaming lineage of people and the tribes, wailing over the

dead by slapping cheeks and slotting pockets, the Prophet said: “Two matters are signs of disbelief on the part of those who indulge in them: Defaming and speaking evil of a person's lineage, and wailing over the dead” (Muslim). This, in addition to the affiliation of the son to another other than his father in spite of his knowledge of his father according to the saying of the Prophet: “Do not turn away from your father, for he who turns away from his father, will be guilty of committing an act of disbelief” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim), and the ingratitude of the wife to the rights of her husband and his favor and kindness, the Prophet said that he was shown Hellfire, and he saw that the majority of its dwellers were ungrateful women. He was asked about the reason for that, to which he said: “They are ungrateful to their husbands and ungrateful for the favors and the good charitable deeds done to them. If you have always been good (benevolent) to one of them and then she sees something in you (not of her liking), she will say, 'I have never received any good from you' (Al-Bukhari, cited in Al-Mahmadi, 2010: 476).

The difference between major *kufr* and minor *kufr*:

With all the evils caused by the minor *kufr*, the one who made it is still considered within the house of Islam and should not be excommunicated.

As explained by Sheikh Saleh Al-Fawzan:

- Major *kufr* keeps the Muslim out of religion and thwarts the actions, while the minor *kufr* does not take the Muslim out of religion and does not thwart the actions, but it decreases the actions according to their size, and exposes the doer to the threats.
- Major *kufr* keeps the doer eternally in Hellfire, while the committer of minor *Kufr* enters Hellfire, but not eternally. Indeed, God may forgive him or her and save them from Hellfire.
- Major *kufr* allows lawful shedding of blood of its committer and confiscation of his property, while the minor *kufr* does not.
- Major *kufr* necessitates plain and straight hostility between its committer and the believers. It is impermissible for believers to love and be loyal to the *kafir* even if he is one of the closer kins. While the minor *kufr* does not prevent loyalty absolutely, its committer may still be loved depending upon the faith that he has.

Among the reasons for falling into differences and disagreements on the question of *takfir* is that some make no distinction between minor and major *kufir*. By highlighting this issue and applying it to Saudi society we find that inside Saudi society there exist many people who have been labelled disbelievers. There are some Saudi writers, for example, who are not liked by segments of Saudi society because of their views, and for this reason alone are described as being disbelievers. Indeed, the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has warned of this mode of *takfir*: "Overhastiness in accusing others of immorality, heresy, *takfir* or being led astray, and judging all people heedlessly is a major problem " (Riyadh Newspaper, 2008). He further stressed the necessity of a Muslim's qualifications and certainty prior to accusing others of *kufir*, preconditioning that such utterance should only be made on the basis of knowledge, insight, awareness and knowledge about the issue and study of it. He emphasized that a lot of scholars do not accuse the article writers, though the scholars' opinions are that the writers have "strayed from the path of truth". There is a necessity for "scrutinizing and seeking to ascertain the truth about those writers and about their results and if they have suspicions, and not to be overhasty in accusing them of *kufir*, except those who have been known that their articles are leading to heresy and are the results of false belief, bad intention or erroneous purpose" (Riyadh Newspaper, 2008).

5.7: Standards of *takfir*:

The issue of *takfir* should not be left to the public and those who have not reached the status of vested and rooted scholars. No one should be accused of *kufir* unless they are a disbeliever according to Islamic law and those who are not accused of *kufir* by Islamic law should not be accused of disbelief (Ya'qub, 2010). *Takfir* is an Islamic legal judgment that should be referred back to God and His Prophet, as is the prohibited (*haram*), the permitted (*halal*) and other legal obligation (Nur, 2010). Standards of *takfir* are multiple and numerous, and these standards are aimed at protecting a Muslim from being excommunicated (Ya'qub, 2010).

Some of the standards which should be taken into consideration are as follows:

1- *Takfir* is an Islamic legal judgment: Disbelief is amongst the totality of the Islamic

law religious judgment such as the disbelief and the like which their clarification should be referred back to God and His Prophet (Nur, 2010:47). According to this standard, *takfir* is the right of God so the following are not permissible:

- *Takfir* made out of inclination, vagary and fancy. Inclination includes two types, one is the inclination based on pleasure and desire without reference to proof of suspicion, this is produced by mentally ill people that have no knowledge of the Shari'ah. The second is a heretical doctrine that is based on proof of suspicion or otherwise from which there is no correct belief. .

2-*Takfir* as an emotional response: Usually this is produced by people who are subjected to injustice and disasters, which are followed by psychological trauma which causes awareness to be lost and also balanced judgment. The judgement of disbelief, particularly if the same is coupled by religious ignorance, is significant in regard to this matter (Nur, 2010).

3-Reservation about *takfir* pronounced upon the one whose act is not agreed upon:

On this reservation, Ibn Al-Wazir said: "Judging those where there is disagreement on their *kufr* is an evil". Ibn Al-Wazir also said: "If the majority of scholars abstain from *takfir* when the Scripture seems to require *takfir*, how much greater is the need to abstain from *takfir* when no Scriptural imperative exists". There is no doubt that caution must be taken with regard to *takfir*,. According to Ibn Taymiyyah: "Precaution should be taken into account when accusing Muslims of *kufr* for their sins and transgressions. The first heresy in Islam was to accuse Muslims of *kufr*" (Nur, 2010: 50), a reference to the Kharijite heresy.

4-A disbeliever is anyone who believes in other than Islam:

Anyone who believes in a religion other than Islam is deemed a disbeliever, but there is a difference between one to whom the message reached and the one who did not receive it before death. The latter, according to most scholars, will be asked to believe in the Hereafter and then judged (Nur, 2010).

5-Verifying attributes of *kufr*: Prior to being overhasty in accusing a Muslim of *kufr* one should verify and make sure the words, deeds or beliefs that are being uttered are true of being *kufr*. When an utterance is conveyed by someone, the person being informed

should be sure of the conveyer's trustworthiness and piety. (Qatergi, 2010).

Amongst the many standards which control the Muslim from indulging in *takfir* are the following:

- It is impermissible to accuse any Muslim of *kufir*; the Sunni school of jurisprudence does not hold as disbelievers those who have disobeyed, even if such disobedience is classified among the major sins. There is unanimity on this point. Instead they judge such a person with immorality and deficiency in belief (Ahmad, 2010). The scholars do not excommunicate anyone unless there is proof from the Quran and *Sunnah* for his or her disbelief. If the sinner dies, then the matter will be dealt with by God, and He can punish, or forgive as He wills. Scholars have formulated the following maxim: 'He who has his Islam proven by certainty, then his Islam must not be removed by doubt'. When 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib was asked about the people of *Al-Nahrwan*, in regards to whether they were disbelievers, he replied "From disbelief they have fled." Then he was asked if they were hypocrites. He said: "Hypocrites do not mention God except a little, and these people mention God all day and night; they are but our brothers who have been unjust to us" (Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi, *Sunnan* 8- 173).

5.8 Conclusion

It is clear from this chapter that the view of the Saudi establishment scholars, as well as a good number of early Sunni authorities, is that *takfir* should only be a verdict issued by a qualified and representative legal body; it is a Shari'ah judgement with certain conditions.

No Muslim should accuse another of *kufir* unless specific conditions are met. To call someone a disbeliever should only be said by scholars. *Kufir* is divided into two types: major *kufir* which renders someone outside the fold of Islam; and minor *kufir*, which does not negate faith, but diminishes it.

Chapter Six: Emergence of *Takfīr* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

6.1 Introduction:

Saudi Arabia is the birth place of Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb, where he emerged in 1703 and his call set out in the 1740s, which has been adopted by Al-Saud and incorporated into the foundation of Saudi Arabia. The agreement was that Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb was to be responsible for religious matters, while Al-Saud was to assume responsibility of the political and military aspects. That cooperation succeeded in the creation of Saudi Arabia, which has been administered according to the orientation of the Salafi approach.

As Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb is regarded as the main influence in Saudi Arabian society and institutions, we will also study the emergence of movements, beliefs and thoughts that appeared in modern times, such as the thoughts of Al Qaeda which have also influenced the religious trends of Saudi Arabian society.

6.2: Stages of *takfīr* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

According to what is mentioned in scientific references, *takfīr* emerged in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in stages as follows:

Stage one: 1926– 1929

While King ʿAbdul Aziz besieged the cities of Jeddah and Taʿif in the year 1926 within the framework of his efforts to unify the Arabian Peninsula in order to include them under his rule and to raise the banner of theism, two of his military leaders rebelled against him, where they demanded the principality over the two cities of Jeddah and Taʿif. When King ʿAbdul Aziz refused that demand, the two leaders separated him and rebelled against him. They took the Islamic religion to be a means to pit people against him. The first group to emerge propagating this thought was known as the Brothers who obey God (Ekhwan men Taʿa Allah). This group started to accuse society of *kufīr*, harassed and annoyed the people, and protested against the Saudi state's adoption of modernity. It endeavored to impose its method of *takfīr* by forcing

King ^cAbdul Aziz to fight them and eliminate them.

Stage two: from 1979– 1989

An armed group consisting of different and multiple nationalities sneaked secretly into the cellars of *Al-Haram Al-Makki*, the Grand Mosque in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in 1979 then defiled and deemed lawful and permissible the sanctity, holiness and the inviolability of the House of God as an extension of the former thought of Ikhwan, Brothers, even though they were different in visions and objectives. This group claimed that amongst them was the awaited Mahdi, in an attempt to gain the sympathy of local people, as they exploited religion. Despite this the security forces eliminated them, caught their leader, killed the alleged Mahdi, and enforced the Islamic *Shari'ah* judgment, *Qisas* or the prescribed punishment on 64 of them in four different cities of Saudi Arabia (Riyadh – Makkah – Al-Madinah Al-Munnawarah - Dammam).

Stage three: from 1989– 1998

This stage featured a shift from the phase of planning, preparation and processing the formation of *takfiri* thought, which disagreed with the thought of the former stage, influenced by the thoughts of *takfiri* groups based in various Arab and Islamic areas to the stage of implementation, which was done through the exploitation of the political situations dominant at the time. For example, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, as well as the ceasing of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to contribute to the Afghan war against the former Soviet Socialist Union to support influential bodies in Afghanistan. This stage is strategically characterized by two dimensions:

The first: The active intellectual movement that the Saudi society has witnessed, where many opinions and ideas came to light that implicitly and explicitly called for militant thought, opposition to the ruler and attraction of the young people, recruiting them to take advantage of the cultural, social and psychological characteristics of young adults.

The second: A military movement, one manifestation of which was a car-bomb that exploded in Riyadh on 20/6/1426 in front of the National Guard Training Center in Al-Ulia, in which a number of foreign nationals, including those from the West and Asia, worked. This bombing resulted in the death of five American citizens and two Indian nationals. The security forces caught the four Saudi national perpetrators, who had previously travelled to Afghanistan. The *Shari'ah* punishments were applied on the

perpetrators after their confessions were ratified according to Islamic law (Ministry of Interior, 1427).

Stage four: from 1998– 2007

This stage witnessed the birth of al-Qa^ʿida; an organization which was a mixture of the various *takfīri* thoughts circulating at the time in many Arab and Islamic states, particularly in those areas of tensions in the Islamic world. The political situation, starting from the war in Afghanistan, through to other areas that witnessed conflicts such as Chechnya and Bosnia Herzegovina facilitated the same, and naturally, the Jewish occupation of Palestine including the American support of Israel, in addition to the American war in Iraq, all led to the strengthening of this thought. These international conflicts have been used to justify lofty declared objectives in order to co-opt the Arab and Islamic opinion, as well as subjugate undeclared objectives and interests in favour of the interests of ideological cover. Thus, the terrorist operations progressed resulting in some of the most destructive incidents including the attacks on the 11th September in the United States of America, and the bombings in London, United Kingdom. Following this there were incidents targeting foreign nationals in Saudi Arabia. The culmination of all these attacks has led to a lot of negative media coverage of Islam and Saudi Arabia in the global media.

6.3: The call of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb

The call of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb emerged in conjunction with the creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a polity comprised of numerous large areas in the Arabian Peninsula. A review of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb ’s call, and how such calls, which are characterized by Salafist calls, come to prevail in Saudi Arabian society and its religious, governmental and civil, as well as the military, institutions is important.

Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb is no longer a leader of an Islamic movement only, but he is one of the pioneers of religious reformation. Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb and his call were accused of considering others infidels without standards. When Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb appeared, he set a basis to purge and purify ʿ*Aqīdah*, Islamic doctrine from the flaws of the false ideas that had nothing to do

with Islam. This man came and filtered the ideas of the people from the untruths, which are flawed in their doctrine and worship. Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb shot to fame and had an effect on many of the scholars all over the Islamic world; his thoughts spread in various countries of the world. In order to have a look at the bigger picture we will outline his upbringing and thoughts briefly.

Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb was born in the year 1703 in the town of Al-'Uyynah in Najf. He had been brought up there, he memorized the Holy Quran. He received knowledge from his father who presided over the judiciary in townships of Al-'Aaridh in the regions of Najd since the year 1726, until he died in 1740.

He travelled to many countries of the Islamic world and capitals of knowledge and culture in order to acquire and draw on knowledge from their scholars. He travelled to Al-Bassrah where he lived for four years, then travelled to Baghdad where he stayed for five years. He also went to Kurdistan where he resided for one year and he lived in *Hamazan* for another two years, then he transferred to Asfahan and Qum.

6.4: The issue of *takfīr* in the thought of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb followers:

Followers of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb believe that whoever testifies that there is no God but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Prophet of God is a Muslim, enjoys the rights of Muslims and is to abide by the obligations of Muslims, but those who do not admit the two testimonies, or those who commit something contradicting to these testimonies are not Muslims. They do not hold a Muslim to be a kafir and do not keep him or her out of their circle of Islam, unless they commit one an act in contradiction to the core tenants of Islam, such as polytheism or mockery of God, his Messenger or religion or the like, which must be established by proof. ʿAbdul Wahab said: “I do not believe in the *Kufr* of a person who is deemed to be a Muslim by God, or the faith of a person who is deemed to be a kafir by God’. He also stated, ‘I do not deem a Muslim to be in Paradise or in Hellfire only those who have been deemed so by the Messenger God, but I pray for the well doer and am afraid for the offensive’”. ʿAbdul Wahāb also said: “We said of those who have died (i.e. of the Muslims) that was a nation which gone its way”.

Followers of ʿAbdul Wahāb believe that *takfīr* is one of the Islamic *Shariʿah*

judgments which are to be referred back to the Quran and *Sunnah*. They do not believe in *takfīr* of a Muslim according to what he says or does unless the *Shari'ah* evidence proves the same. It is necessary as per them to produce *Kufr* judgment on the words or deeds of the appointed person, unless the conditions are applicable and the preventives are negated. *Takfīr* is critical grave judgment so they hold it as a must to verify and be cautious in accusing a Muslim of *kufr*.

Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Latif Hasan said: “We believe in the Verses of threat, as well as the proven Hadiths from the Prophet. We do not claim that a Muslim will be eternally condemned to the hellfire for a sin, as the *Kharijite* and *M'utazilite* claim, that is according to what has been proven by the Prophet in the correct Hadiths that the one who has a whit of faith will be taken out of the Hellfire, taken out of Hellfire in concordance with the intercession of our Prophet Muḥammad. Amongst those, He will have the intercession of the Prophet of those who commit major sins in His nation of Islam, as well as the intercession of the Angels and Prophets. We do not claim to make judgments, but we know that God enters into the Hellfire those who have committed major sins, while others do not enter into the Hellfire because of reasons that prevent them from entering, such as good deeds and the expiatory tribulations and so forth” (Al-Durrar Al-Saniyah), (1/572, 573).

6.5: The doctrine of Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb on *Jihād* and in the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice:

Explaining the stance of Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb - :

From his speech in the explication of the *Sunni* doctrine in which he believed, and from his responses to his opponents who accused him of complacency in the matter of *takfīr* and the thought that Muslims in general fight for the sake of the same, they also said that he accuses *kufr* as per supposition and holds a *kafir* as an ignorant person.

Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb responded to his detractors as follows: “As for what is mentioned by the enemies that accuse me of only pronouncing *kufr* according to supposition and loyalty, or that I accuse the ignorant of *kufr* upon whom no proof was established, this is a great lie by which they want to alienate people from

the religion of God and His Messenger, he said: ‘As for the saying that we generalize kufr; that is a lie of the enemies with which they desist from this religion - that is a great lie’. In refutation of the suspicions and delusions which he has been accused of, he said: “whoever follows the religion of God and His Messenger and that he lives in his township that is not suffice him until that he comes to me, I did not say that, that is a lie about me, however what I say is that the intended is to follow the religion of God and His Messenger) at any land wherever it is”.

He also said, “...I see the necessity of the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice as imposed as a duty by sacred Muḥammadean *Shari‘ah*”. Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Latif said: ‘we see that the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice is imposed as an obligation to any capable person according to his capability by his hand, and if it is not possible then orally. If this is not possible, then to hate it in his heart as set forth in the correct Hadith from the Prophet when He said: ‘He who is amongst us and sees something abominable should modify it with his hands and if he has not enough strength to do it, then he should do it with his tongue, and if he does not have enough strength to do that, then he should abhor it in his heart, and that is the least of faith’” (Narrated by Muslim (78)) (Al-Durrar Al-Saniya (1/575)), (Al-Kharashi, 2007).

6.6: Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb on the Issue of *Takfir*

It is clear from the method of Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb that he did not use *takfir* only as per the unanimity of scholars. The proof of the same is the saying of the Imam Muḥammad: “The five pillars of Islam, the first of which is the two testimonies, then the four pillars: if he acknowledges them, and leaves them out of complacency, if we fought him for doing the same, we do not hold him *kafir* for deserting the same, and the scholars disagree about the one who deserts of them out of laziness without disbelieving in the same, we do not hold *kafir* only that all the scholars hold him *kafir*, these are the two testimonies if not uttered, we also hold him *kafir* after recognition, if he recognizes the same but denied.

When Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb explained that what he considered acts of polytheism, did not oppose any of the Muslim scholars, but that was what they unanimously agreed upon. He said, “Regarding what we have mentioned [of polytheism] we do not oppose any of the Muslims' scholars, but the righteous Salaf of

the Companions, those who had followed and the four Imams agreed upon unanimously, as well as the others who went on the same way and used to apply their method”.

Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb explains that he did not say anything about *Takfīr*, except for that which was provable through Shari’ah evidences against an offender, and that is what is said by all the renowned scholars of the four maḍāhibs and agreed upon, thus being consistent with the four maḍāhibs (schools of jurisprudence) in the issues of *takfīr*. Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb said in one of his messages: “I debate with anyone as per his *madhab*, if he is from the *Shafiyah* then I debate with him in concordance with the opinion of the *Shafiyah*, and if he is from the *Malekiyah* I debate with him in accordance with the opinion of the *Malekiyah*, or if he is from the *Hanfiyah* then I debate with him pursuant to the same”.

He encouraged his opponents to point out to him where his opinions diverged from the unanimous decisions of rightly guided scholars and predecessors. When the Sheikh mentioned *Kufr* of the one who denies the loftiness of God over his creatures and His mount on the Throne, he said: “If you heard that I produced a Fatwa in contradiction to the unanimous decision of scholars, then the speech should be directed towards me”. Of these vices, the greatest is worship of idols, either humans or otherwise, including the making of a sacrifice to this object and making a vow to that idol, as well as the request of answering of supplications from this. (Abu Dahesh, 1999).

6. The Emergence of al-Qa’ida

Al- Qa’ida thought is based on the declaration of *Jihād* against the United States of America and its interests around the world. Al Qa’idah is an international organization founded under the name of the International Islamic Front for Fighting the Jewish and the Crusaders and it has an association with Sheikh Usama Bin Laden, Ayman Al-Zawahiri and various other Jihādists. Their objective has been to target American interests all over the world, which has culminated in the operation of attacking several targets in the United States of America on September 11th. Al-Qa’ida also targets American interests in a number of countries endeavoring to force America to resign from Islamic countries, alleging that the same will lead to the collapse of

America.

Some of the doctrinal positions of al-Qa'ida are the following:

- Not to take knowledge from scholars, who they claim are scholars under the influence of rulers, and not to read the books or Fatwas of their Shari'ah committees, even if they are themselves ignorant of an Islamic understanding of a given issue, as they thought little knowledge together with enthusiasm is enough.
- They hold a *kafir* to be whoever opposes and disagrees with their ideologies.
- They claim that *Jihād* is absolutely beneficial, and that they are the guardians of the *Jihād* all over the world.
- They mix between the general *takfir* and the *takfir* of an appointed person.
- They have severe intolerance to the opinions of their rulers and they believe that they are the fanatics.
- Non-excusing of those who opposed them in diligence and jurisprudence.
- They are indulgent and tolerant in shedding the blood of Muslims (Zuraiqat, 1426).

Al Qa'idah has many similarities with guerilla warfare elements and it is a much larger organization than other terrorist movements that have existed both in the past and present. The members of Al Qa'idah go through extensive and intensive training regimes in order to become knowledgeable in terrorist tactics of warfare (Campbell and Weitz, 2006).

6.8: al-Qa'ida and the Method of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia

Al-Qa'ida organizational movement in the Arab peninsula should be looked at as a ring connected to the events that have taken place prior to its emergence, particularly the Afghan conflict at both its Soviet and Taliban stages, in addition to the three wars in the Arabian Gulf over the last quarter of the century.

With regard to *takfir*, it is clear that such experiences have left profound effects on the intellectual structure of many of the wanted persons, perhaps the most prominent of these effects is their strong inclinations towards *takfir* at all levels; that is to say, the *takfir* of individuals, groups, regimes and societies. Except for Afghan society during the era of Taliban, all the other societies are *Kafir* and based on *kafir* regimes and

governed by *kafirs* and tyrants who oppose Islamic law and substitute it with secular laws, therefore the fight against them is an obligation and a necessity for the sake of success in the worldly life and the hereafter. Within this framework countless texts appeared in their media publications. The ‘*takfiri* trend’ is not a neonate of the ‘external Afghan *Jihād ist* experience’ as far as it is of an internal source and basis, as they think that the ‘*Jihād ist* young people’ returned to their homeland from Afghanistan after the Soviet war as a result of the influence by a number of the knowledge seekers inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of whom the ‘*Jihād ist* travel’ was not known at commencement, such as Humoud Al-'Aqla Al-Shu'aibi, ‘Abdul Al-Rushoud, the tripartite of the *takfir* (*Al-Khudhair, Al-Fahad, and Al-Khaledi*), and such like. These are groups that are known for their Fatwas and opinions, and which do not stray far from an obviously ‘*takfiri* attitude. In replying to this claimed saying, the events are posed on their time frame, the majority of those who travelled to Afghanistan particularly in the second period, during the period of Taliban ruling, were of a young age, and from this it could be concluded that it is far from reality that they had been taught by any of those whose names are mentioned above prior to their travel to Afghanistan, especially that most of those *takfiris* had themselves still been studying, or that they were not known for extremism and *takfir* Fatwas. Therefore the stronger possibility is that the trend towards the *takfir* to those ‘*Jihādist* youths’ had grown at the schools of Al Qa’ida and its Sheikhs who created the fanatic ideology in the imagination of the youth by the radical ideas that they delivered to them in order to serve their future plots in settling their accounts with the regimes with which they could not coexist. However, there is no doubt that some of the homecoming ‘*Jihādist* youth’ exerted a lot of efforts to influence some of the Islamic *Shari‘ah* students to understand their thoughts and gain the support of these students by the Fatwas, which are in line with objectives of their organization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For example, Yousuf Al-'Uyyari, one of the most prominent theorists of the organization, who had been known for his discussions and debates with some of the scholars at the Province of Qasim in order to gain their support for Al Qa’ida and the actions it carried out, particularly when the events of September 11 took place.

As for their attitude towards the state, undoubtedly their *takfiri* orientations upon returning to the homeland determined a battlefield with the Americans and their allies.

On a religious level they view the state as a *Kafir* state that abandoned the

Islamic law instead of applying it. On a political level, they look at it as if it had been a state colonized by Jews and Christians who deprived the country of its political freedom and controlled its wealth and capabilities, its military bases and fortunes. On the personal level, they attack statesmen and the state's symbols, using the worst descriptions and epithets as if the matter became a personal feud rather than expressing objective disagreement. There is no doubt that the venture of a team of these radicals to undertake suicide actions upon which they bombed a number of the foreign residential complexes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the assassination of some of the Westerners by kidnapping or beheading them, led to their entering into direct confrontation with the security forces, which resulted in bloody conflict which in turn has resulted, so far, in the killing of about thirty wanted persons, which represents about 61% of the total number of wanted persons (Al-Khalifa, 2005).

Their attitude towards the state as shown is characterized by fanaticism, attack, *takfir* and the use of the severest epithets and expressions in their descriptions of statesmen and state symbols. In particular their views of the scholars, and knowledge seekers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been dominated by accusing the scholars of intellectual oppression of their opponents, producing misleading Fatwas, reviling the *Mufti* of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for his promulgating a lot of Fatwas against those who oppose the rulers, more than that they had accused the scholars of high treason to the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, concealment of the right and reluctance to show the same to the people, dressing the right / truth with falsehood, refuting the right, misinterpreting it, supporting wrongdoing, and falsifying and fabricating the right thing. They have accused the scholars of flattering the state and those who stand behind it, they have accused those whom they named the official Sheikhs or 'Television Sheikhs' of giving legal cover to the actions of the state and some of them described the scholars as 'evil' and 'servants of the tyrants', and as 'hypocrites'. They highlighted the inability and stagnancy of scholars towards Jihād, and suggested that the scholars fell short in bringing up the youth in believing in a spiritual way that implants within them a love of Jihād. From these fanatical attitudes towards the scholars and the knowledge seekers of Islamic Shari^h, it is clear that the leaders of these *takfiris* and their theoreticians were aware of the essential role of the scholars and Sheikhs in disclosure of the reality of the persons wanted for security reasons and their beliefs, and the scrutiny of the religious Fatwas produced by them.

That is because they also used the Islamic Fatwas produced by them as a destructive, devastating and annihilating weapon to be used against the state and society. The leaders of these wanted persons and their theorizers exerted ardent efforts to neutralize the influence of the scholars, *Sheikhs* and the knowledge seekers over the people in general and the followers of Al Qa'idah in particular. They found a means, better than questioning the legitimacy and credibility of the scholars, of showering and heaping upon them epithets and they looked at them in general as instruments of the state in imposing its domination as well as the obedience of people to the state through Fatwas, produced every now and then by the scholars against the wanted persons, as well as the claims and pretexts they invoked.

6.9: Types of *takfir* in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Takfiri thought, which has dominated Islamic society in the present day, includes all the categories of society: the rulers, institutions, groups and individuals. *Takfiris* profess *kufir* upon anyone that is opposed to them, and anyone incompatible with their ideologies. *Takfiris* overhastily declare *kufir* against even the scholars. Even if such person is ignorant of the judgements of Islamic law, he engages in professing *takfir* upon others, which is forbidden by Islam. Among the patterns of thinking followed by the *takfiris* we will set forth the following sections:

***Takfir* of the State:**

The biggest concern of *takfiris* is to be free from the ruler's control and thereby hold the entire state together with its all institutions and all elements *kafir*. This betrayal is the basis for any evil and sedition. The *Kharijites* betrayed at the commencement of the Caliphate of Uthman Bin 'Afan. They shed the blood of Muslims and claimed that they were preventing vices (Al-Swaylem, 2010). The *takfiris* continued to hold *kafir* at the ruling of Ali Ibn Abu Talib, even when many Muslims quitted against the government.

In the book, *Al-Kawashif Al-Jaliyah fi Kufir Al-Dawlah Al-Saudia* (The Apparent Detectives of the Saudi State's *Kufir*)¹⁶, the author, who works under an assumed name,

¹⁶ Published in the year 1994 from Darul Qaseem in London under the assumed name (Abu Al-Barra' Murshed Bin

gives a firsthand account of his close relationship with Al Qa'idah, illustrating the true thoughts of the *takfiris* towards the Saudi state. The author Al-Najdi says, "Not everyone who claims *Al-Tawhid* (monotheism) or who is associated with it, becomes from among the *Muwahideen* (monotheists), but could not be so until he becomes *Kâfir* of all what he worships apart from God and disown of the same whether worshipping the same in prostration, slaughtering, and supplication, or a worship of legislation, submission and judicial, as polytheism with God in his judgment is of the polytheism of God in worship. Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ‘Abdul Wahāb said commenting on the Hadith narrated in Muslim “He who says there is no god but God and disbelieves in anything worshipped apart from God, his property and blood are sacred, and his judgment in the hereafter will be by God,” this is one of the greatest explanations for the meaning in belief of “no god but God”. By his mere utterance of the proclamation, without any deep understandings, both his property and blood are made sacred. It is not permissible for anyone to violate these. ”

Al-Najdi said, “We are ordered to enter into Islam as a whole and look at the Book and see what God said in the Quran: ‘Fight them until there is no more Fitnah and until worship is acknowledged to be only for Allah”. The *kafir* Saudi government (according to Al-Najdi) comes out of Islam and the religion of the Tawheed from various exits:

Firstly: the legislation, adjudication of laws, and trial according to the same.

Secondly: loyalty to enemies of God, the Gulf and Arab occidental and oriental *kafirs*, making close bonds of brotherhood, intimacy, love and friendship, as well as supporting the same.

Al-Najdi criticized the entering of the Saudi government into the Arab league and the Organization of the Islamic Conference because he sees them as lands of *kâfirs*, and because the Saudi government entering into such Arab and international organizations is based upon strengthening of the solidarity among the member states. However, the entrance into these organisations supports socio-economical, cultural and scientific cooperation and creates the appropriate environment to reinforce cooperation and

Abdul Aziz Bin Sulaiman Al-Najdi), whose real name is Abu Muhammad 'Asem Al—Barqawi Al-Maqdessi, a Jordanian who had close relation to Alqaeda.

understanding between the member states and the other states, and this is based on principles such as:

- Full equality between the member states.
- Respect of self-determination and non-intervention in internal affairs.
- Respect of sovereignty, independence and unity of territories of any member state.
- Resolving the conflicts that arise in peaceful ways.
- Abstention to use force and threaten to use it.

Al-Najdi also accuses the Saudi government of diverting from the path of God and disbelieving in Him, sedition by distracting Muslims from their religion, persecution of the ‘real’ *Muwahideen* who promote the virtue and prevent the vices and those who distance themselves from all the tyrants by putting them into jails, killing them, and expelling and pursuing them, and finally being loyal to the enemies of religion; supporting them and providing them with cordiality.

Al-Najdi criticized the Saudi rulers by saying that “they make laws as if equal with God, which He did not permit. They follow the legislatures of the *Kâfirs* and enemies of the religion; they enter into the different idols' religions whether regional or global”. He criticized them for entering the Arab polytheist idols to the Holy House of God during convening the Summit conference in Makkah, and include whoever they will from the Muslims under the folling verse of the Quran: ‘O you who have believed, indeed the polytheists are unclean, so let them not approach Al-Masjid Al-Haram after this, their final year (Q9: 28).

Al-Najdi then turns his attention from *takfîr* to the Hijrah (migration) and Jihād. He says, “The scholars clearly state that if the ruler makes an expression of *kufir* by opposing, removing, altering or changing the establishment of God’s Islamic law and the entire accomplishment of His *Tawhîd* then he must be opposed, while anyone who flatters such a leader should be punished. The one who is too weak to do so must migrate and not submit to the *kufir* of its governments, but to think of *Jihād* permanently and to ingrain such thought in their offspring too. You have to know that one of the greatest obligatory types of *Hijrah* at all times is to quit any job or business in which support and help is given to those false idols and their laws”.

The author Abu Al-Barra' Al-Najdi wrote about the Saudi Afghans and *takfîr*

saying, “Here are the young cohorts that came back well trained to fight with arms and explosives, from Afghanistan. They benefitted after they quit the walls of the peninsula to Saudi Arabia and they returned as changed men.” With their thoughts of *takfir* and fighting against the government, and all those supporters that they have gained assistance from, they spread their evil to the youths. These youths defend them and praise them as idols, but the Sheikhs focus their speeches on how these deviants should have radical ideas and how people should not be swayed.

Takfir against the Saudi state is not new, and have a history predating Al Qa'idah, but why? It is because the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the only state that proclaims that it adopts and applies Islamic law. For that very reason, it faces a challenge that it should prove that it applies the Islamic law in concordance with the fundamentals of the same. Saudi Arabia has encountered criticisms on its laws and legislations. Some opinions have directed criticism of the laws of Saudi Arabia, saying that they are *kufir*.

Section One: *Takfir* of the Scholars

*Takfir*is in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make *kâfirs* of the scholars, However, *Ibn Taiymin* said, “Muslims agree that no one should proclaim another to be a *kâfir*, and any person that accuses them of *kufir* deserves heavy punishment that prevents him and his likes from accusing Muslims of *kufir*” Ibn 'Uthaimin described the *takfir* of scholars as an evil. He said “that the man who accuses the scholars of *Kufir* will be a destroyer of Islamic law because Islamic law is received from the scholars, and the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets for the Prophets did not bequest wealth, but rather they bequested the knowledge that the one who takes, may take a multitude of their heritage” (Al-Muttleq, 2010, pp.: 3934, 3935).

There are some who have said about Ibn Baz after his *Fatwa* about the impermissibility of peace with Israel that he has reached a stage closer to *kufir* and that he has reached the stage of senile, extravagance and complete weakness (Al-Muttleq, 2010).

Section Two: *Takfīr* of individuals

The one who ponders upon the situation of some of *takfīri* groups will find that they overhastily pronounce *kufir* upon their opponents. They narrow down the preventives in spite of the fact that judging a Muslim as *kāfir* is very serious and is impermissible without absolute irrefutable evidence. Some people extend their *takfīr* across the entire Muslim nations nowadays alleging that they submit to and obey the rule of law that was not sent down by God. Whenever a person undertakes an action that is in contradiction to the laws that God has sent down, then such a person is an obedient follower of an apostate ruler, believing in him as a lord other than God. Brotherhood in Islam prevents causing harm to brothers in all transactions, the one that who has right is restricted in using his right if the fulfillment of such right brings harm to the society, and among the consequences of the religious brotherhood is undertaking of the duty to promote virtue and to prevent of vice, politely, without libel or slander, and without showing professorship over others, in order for society in Islam to live free of the social sicknesses which ravaged its continuity and lead to destabilization of the previous nations. If however, the advice exceeds the limit of accusation, abstention of speech, saying the Islamic greeting, and tendency to revenge, that is unacceptable. Islam is supposed to protect the balanced thinking of the believer. The believer should infuse spiritual tranquility and hear tranquility (Zr'uom, 2010:4039). Moreover, it is prohibited for society to be engaged in the honors of such individuals, to cause slander and to mistrust them.

6.10: Conclusion

Takfīri ideologies appeared in the call of Sheikh Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb, but it did not amount to *takfīr* of whole societies, states and governments. However, it accused of *kufir* those who characterized by general and not personal attributes of *Kufir*, until the "Juhaiman" movement emerged who started to make *takfīr* on individuals as well as the government, to the extent that they occupied the Makkah Haram. As a result of what "Juhaiman" had perpetrated the Saudi society set towards adherence and maintaining the Islamic law , even some of the manifestations which were prevailing in the mass media had disappeared such as the songs and photos of female singers and

other things that were contrary to the Islamic law. Other *takfiri* calls had also appeared such as the Jamiyah, Surruriyah and *Qutbiyah*, each of them had its own form of *takfir*. There are those who consider the state, its institutions and even individuals despite the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's efforts not to engage in the topic of *takfir*, treating all its individuals equally.

Chapter Seven: Impact of *Takfirism*

7.1: Introduction:

The phenomenon of *takfir* is the single most significant issue harming Saudi Arabia, pushing the country into a dangerous vortex of sedition, dissention and unrest. *Takfir* has negative repercussions on all aspects of life, particularly with regard to security, where the emergence of *takfirism* in people lives, with all its religious, political, economic and cultural implications, has resulted in strange thoughts of extremism in the religious beliefs, customs and traditions of society.

Takfiri thought led to a range of acts of terrorism inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between the years 2004 and 2005. Indeed a total of 22 terrorist attacks have taken place, leaving 90 dead and 507 people injured. This loss of life is in addition to the one million Saudi Riyals financial loss. At the same time, 92 *takfiris* have been killed by law enforcement and 17 injured, while 52 terrorist plans have also been foiled through intelligence.

Takfirism has affected Muslims in many aspects particularly with regard to security, society and the economy. The result this has been an influence on the way Saudi Arabia is perceived on the world stage.

7.2: Security Implications of *Takfirism*:

Takfirism is considered an armed and violent activity that produces change on the social and political levels of the state, leading to the existence of numerous hotbeds of tension and dangerous disturbances of the peace, which are characterized by a wave of assassinations, acts of sabotage, targeting public government institutions, spreading of terror, an unsafe atmosphere and instability. The violent activity strategy on the internal level features a number of acts, the first of which is propaganda, attempts to influence the youth, the spread of terror, destabilization of the state and citizen trust by means of armed activity (Shalabi, 2010).

Takfiri thought has a reverse effect on security aspects in all fields. We will see

throughout this presentation the importance of security for Saudi society, and how *takfir* influences its various aspects.

7.3: Importance of Security to Saudi Society

Saudi society boasts over other Arab societies, its relative societal peace. Peace is a status in which the individuals of the society feel stability and tranquility, which is directly proportional to refraint from committing acts forbidden and prohibited by the legislations and regulations of such a society.

If we look at national security as a term, we will find that it is comprised of two elements, one is peace, which is linguistically contrary to fear, the other element of this concept is nationality, which here means the state with all its three components: land, authority and people. Definitions of national security differ, but all are agreed on the purpose and goal. National security has many definitions and through these definitions we know the extent to which the society needs peace in order to participate in development in different forms. The security of a state is underlined by three basic elements, i.e. people, land, and leadership and regime. In terms of its citizens' rights, whether private or public, security is paramount for deterring attacks against the state's sovereignty; from internal seditions and external assaults (Al-Shahrani, 1998).

Morover, the vital interests of the state are also included in security, therefore the realization of this security will be made by protecting and safeguarding the interests of the nation (Ghunaiymi, 1974). Security also contributes to ensuring the state remains as an entity and it protects it against the internal and external risks, which may threaten it. Security safeguards the interests of society and creates the optimum economic and social conditions so as to achieve the purposes and goals of a fully functioning society. Thus, the government carries out efforts aimed at developing and supporting its main political, military, intellectual, economic and social activities, pushing aside any threat, obstacle or damaging activity. In fact, the national security of the state is realized when the state is safe and in a position or stance according to which it is forced to sacrifice legitimate interests in order to avoid war or aggression, and when it is also able to protect its interests by way of war.

Saudi national security is composed of the procedures taken by the government

within the range of its capabilities in order to maintain its interests. Saudi Arabia attempts to install security systems, which have the capacity to assume the function of protection and it is these that provide the backbone for all the state's functions. Without such functions, the state cannot reach its objectives and achieve its goals, as the realization of peace is the most important purpose of the state, particularly given the paramount importance of peace to the state's stability at internal and external levels (Ghunaiymi, 1974).

Promotion of an unsafe climate:

Takfiri groups always endeavor to create an atmosphere of instability inside the country, questioning the capacity of the state to maintain peace and order, attempting to impose their control, particularly if the state's reaction was confused and hesitant to impose its power and its authority (Shalabi, 2010).

Takfiri groups carry out undisciplined work. Such work could be made by small independent groups, where an activity is supervised by one of their leaders, or by the assistance of someone else, which leads and manages the logistical and military training support networks and the dissemination of *takfiri* ideologies and doctrine. These support leaders are often affiliated to an organization of political nature that has a local base (Shalabi, 2010).

Takfiri groups expand sabotage and vandalism, targeting infrastructure, by bombing and attacking government buildings, bridges, security centres, barracks, as well as attacking security forces and soldiers through ambushes and assassinating their chiefs. All of these activities are done with the aim of weakening the state apparatus, which stands as the front line in defending the state pillars. *Takfiri* groups obtain weapons, which enable these groups to continue their armed activities. They also train in making bombs and explosives through traditional means, in addition to the unlawful importation of weapons from outside the country's borders.

During the nineties armed and violent acts took place in a number of Arab and Islamic areas, such as in Algeria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Algeria, for example witnessed bloody events in 1997, followed by terrible massacres in peaceful villages, with the illegal killing of children, women and elderly people. In Upper Egypt, during 1993, armed men attacked defenseless tourists while 19 Americans were killed in the

city of Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia in 1996 in an apartment complex. This attack resulted in the injury of 286 persons, as well as huge material damage (Al-Mudkhali, 1996).

Violent acts took place also in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Somalia, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen, and while the individual circumstances of each event in the various countries were unique to each of them, they were all united in having been victims of *takfiri* violence.

The degrees of such violence and terrorism by these *takfiri* groups left no one safe from their harm and rath. The defenseless and unarmed public citizens were all made legitimate targets. One *takfiri* leader in Algeria delivered a speech in 1998, urging his subjects to pursue slaughtering people in concordance with the Fatwa of ‘General apostasy’ rendering all Algerian citizens who were not affiliated with their group, *kaafir*. Islam calls for the safekeeping of lives, as killing of human beings is unlawfully unacceptable to God and to the Messenger. Islam stresses not to kill innocent people, under any circumstance. God said in the Quran: “and whoever kills a believer, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the wrath and the curse of God are upon him” (Q4:91). The Prophet said “Where two Muslims fight each other with their swords, then both the killer and the killed are in the fire. I said to Him, ‘Messenger of God, I can understand this with regard to the killer, but what about the murdered man?’ He replied, ‘He wanted to kill his companion’”. (The Sahih Collection of *Al-Bukhari*, 1-85). Sheikh Al-Fawzan has been asked: Does there exist in this time anyone carrying the Kharijites ideaolgy? He replied : Glory to God, what existis is the Kharijite action of one Muslim accusing another Muslim of apostasy, and more than that killing of Muslims and abusing them, this is the school of the *Kharijites* (Al-Muttlaq, 2010).

Destabilization of the state's security represents a fundamental goal for the *takfiri* groups, which build all their strategies on rules of hitting the economic and political institutions in the states and blocking the normal functioning thereof. This is achieved by:

- Compromising the security, spreading terror among the population by physical and moral attacks, and exposing the citizens and their freedom, peace and properties to danger.
- Physical and moral offensives against the state's symbols.
- Threatening the integrity of the surroundings and public health and jeopardizing

- stability, through attempts to poison the water resources and light forests on fire.
- Blocking the normal functioning of public corporations, attacking users of the public utilities and standing in the face of enforcing the laws and regulations (Shalabi, 2010).

The preservation of the individual's blood is maintained in Islam by peace, as every Muslim has the right to seek protection and have their life preserved. The one who preserves and protects the community is the leader of the nation and the one that the ruler authorizes to judge amongst the people, as per the establishment of God's law, granting protection of Islam and Muslim individual is under his jurisdiction and function, and no competences are vested in other individuals or groups to compel the ruler by means of force or violence, which results in terrorizing innocent people.

In another incident, a suicide-bomber exploded a vehicle on 21st April 2004 in Saudi Arabia at the National Security building on Al-Washam Street in Riyadh the capital city. The bombing resulted in the killing of 4 people, including two security officials, a civilian and a child of eleven years old. More than 148 people were injured and some of them died later in hospital. Two children were among the injured and the bombing led to the destruction of a building and a vehicle. In May 2003 a suicide-bomber killed 35 people in an apartment complex occupied by Westerners in Riyadh, hours before the US secretary of state Collin Bowel's arrival in Saudi Arabia. In November 2003, a suicide attack carried out by armed men, suspected to be from Al-Qa'idah, on an apartment complex in Riyadh killed 17 people. In April 2004 four police officers were killed as well as a security officer on attacks near Riyadh, and a car bombing at the security forces headquarters in Riyadh resulted in killing four people and injuring 148 others. A group that is affiliated to Al-Qa'idah claimed responsibility for the attacks.

In the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia, in May 2004 an attack on an engineering petrochemical company resulted in five foreigners being killed, as well as 22 other people. There was also a hostage-taking attack on a petroleum complex in Al-Khobar city. In June 2004, Riyadh was subject to three attacks within one week. The operation resulted in an American and BBC press photographer being killed. One American engineer was kidnapped and beheaded in the same week. When the video of his beheading was broadcast it caused a state of revulsion and disgust in the United States

of America.

In September 2005 three armed men were killed and three police officers in a confrontation in Al-Dammam city which is located on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. In June 2006 six people, said to be affiliated with Al-Qa'idah, were killed in exchanged fire with police forces in Riyadh. In February 2007 four French nationals were killed in a terrorist attack that targeted tourists in the antiquities Madaen Salih area, which is located in the northwestern region of Saudi Arabia. In April 2007 the Saudi police announced that it had killed 172 of those who were suspected of involvement in terrorism, one of them had pursued training on air navigation with the purpose of implementation of suicide missions. In December 2007 the Saudi authorities also announced the arrest of a group of men suspected of planning to launch attacks on holy places during the pilgrimage season. In February 2009 the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) promulgated security notifications concerning 85 men suspected of planning to conduct attacks inside Saudi Arabia, which was the biggest bundle of notifications issued by the organization. All the suspected men were Saudis except for two of them. In April 2009 Saudi Arabia said it had arrested eleven armed men of Al-Qa'idah, saying that they were planning to launch attacks on police forces' facilities, in addition to carrying out operations of burglary, theft and kidnapping. In July 2009 a Saudi court sentenced several men, in the first public trial against those who were suspected of affiliations to Al-Qa'idah and their involvement in committing acts of terrorism. The number convicted was not revealed; nonetheless one of them was sentenced to death. In August 2009 Saudi Arabia announced the arrest of 44 armed people suspected of being affiliated to Al-Qa'idah, and on 24 March 2010 Saudi authorities announced the arrest of more than 100 people suspected of being affiliated to Al-Qa'idah headed by 'Usamah bin Ladin (BBC News,2011(

Killing of security men:

Security men have the very important task of keeping and maintaining peace, often resulting in themselves being made targets for terrorist activities. Members of terrorist groups are often arrested with different types of weapons, such as machine guns, bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and explosives, which indicates that they have deliberate intention and prior preparation of confronting and killing security officials (Al-Muttlaq, 2010). It has been realized that those who kill security men base their

actions on some of the erratic Fatwas, which allow them to murder security men as deserters and apostates. The killing of security men involved in the operations of *takfiri* groups are explained by some of the terrorists as being based on the infidelity of security personnel. These people believe the security officials are unlawfully shedding Muslim blood without legitimate justification and therefore their killing of security men and the state's officials is in fact permissible.

Arms Smuggling:

The smuggling of arms is a highly lucrative business, particularly as some of the nations involved suffer from economic problems making illegal arms trade a seductive means for enrichment, particularly along the borders between countries, which are sometimes difficult to monitor and control. Therefore criminal gangs specialising in the smuggling of arms, have close links with terrorist movements and groups all over the world. These gangs are erudite and skilled in the arms' trade and they benefit substantially from huge profits (Al-Saifi, 1420). The smuggling of arms is a violation of international laws and the Arms and Ammunitions regulation of Saudi Arabia reads as follows:

It is prohibited for non-competent governmental authorities to be involved in the following:

- The making of military weapons, their ammunitions and supplies or spare parts, the importation, possession, circulation, ownership or repair of weapons of ammunitions.
- The making of individual firearms, the supplies, spare parts, ammunitions thereof, or carrying out of any amendment of the same.
- The importation of individual firearms, hunting weapons, spare parts, ammunitions thereof, as well as the selling of the same, purchasing, carrying, or having without license from the Ministry.
- The making of exercising arms and air rifles, the spare parts, ammunitions and supplies thereof, or the importation of any of the same without license from the Ministry.
- The bringing of arms or ammunitions, spare parts or ammunitions thereof, in addition to accompanying the same without permission from the Ministry (Article No. 4.)
- The E-Importation of arms unless for that mentioned in the regulation, and the

bringing of the same without the permission of the Ministry.

The spreading of arms at the hands of illegal individuals brings a sense of fear to the security of citizens.

Impact of *takfirism* on Politics:

The main concern of *takfiris* is to stage a coup over the ruler and to take him out of the ruling position because they consider the ruler to be an infidel, having deemed his leadership as being based on other than what God has revealed (Al-Khattib, 2010). The *takfiris* objectives are as follows:

- To be out of the ruler's control, and to endeavor to incite the people against the ruler, trying to remove and topple the ruler by force and war. All these means unsettle and upset the security of Muslim society, and detract and divert the ruler from reconstructing the homeland and developing and implementing measures to help and protect the country.
- Exploitation of *takfiri* heresy and exploitation of the *takfiris* in political orientations in order to become sharp tools at the hands of the political opponents to induct a ruler into an office or topple existing ones. These destabilize the state's security, its economy and its politics and hinder its development and progress.
- Causing citizens to lose confidence in internal politics. *Takfiri* groups publicize rumors, exaggerate information and employ and utilize the same to challenge the ruler and tarnish the image thereof to the people so as to lose citizen trust in his decisions and orientations (Al-Swaylem, 2010).

Takfiri groups are not satisfied with describing the Islamic nation as apostate, but they kill peaceful tourists who come from the West to visit Islamic countries. These *takfiri* groups consider the West as a land of war, declared in the Jihād against the West. The *takfiris* have carried out many bombings, which have killed innocent people and civil institutions; they have also conducted aircraft hijackings and intimidated passengers. All of these acts are prohibited by Islamic law (Al-Khatib, 2010).

The worst act that *takfiri* groups have committed, along with aircraft hijackings, is their targetting of the two International Trade Towers in New York and the Pentagon building in the United States of America. These terrorist incidents have had a

considerable impact on the future of Islam in the West and within the territories of the Muslims. In the West, the result has been increased abuse and intolerance of Muslims, both those who have immigrated and those who are born in the West. Many of these Muslims have been accused before their innocence has been proven. The Western media has promoted a negative image of Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular, which is an image depicting Muslims as uncivilized people, who love bloodshed and the oppression of women.

Transgression and Violating Global Security:

The successive security incidents witnessed by Western countries, including most significantly the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America, revealed the emergence of a new type of trans-national severe violence, one that has attracted a high degree of media attention and has brought the word 'terrorism' into common dialogue. The nature of these armed activities have touched and infringed upon international security, perhaps they are related with the global changes which happened after the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of globalization, which has produced political and social transformation that has resulted in the creation and formation of fundamentalist groups and their cross-national activities. Perhaps, the defeat of national groups in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Algeria, have inspired the creation of a larger international group coming under the banner of Al-Qa'idah. This group exploits the Islamic and Arab worlds' elites represented in the radical ideological groups, such as *Al-Takfir* and *Al-Hijra* and *Al-Tahrir* party.

This violence is characterized by the condemning attitude towards globalization and the mechanisms which have contributed to its success. It always becomes active between the private concerns of individuals and the major international prospects. (Shibli, 2010: 2840).

Given the objectives of radical groups, which have implications for international stability and peace, Western countries set times for scenarios which could occur anywhere in the world and pose a real threat to national security. Some of the means radical groups use to threaten the peace of countries are as follows:

- Attacks by explosives: these radical groups attempt to wage offensive campaigns using explosives in places such as the airports, metros, schools and

- other transportation hubs.
- Simultaneous attacks: which take place mostly at heavily populated sites.
- Various offenses on the borders between two or more neighboring countries.
- Radiation offenses.
- Chemical and biological offenses (Shubaili, 2010).

Impact on International Relations:

The attacks carried out by *takfīri* groups nationally and internationally have a direct effect on shaking up and reversing the situations and the geopolitical balances worldwide. The war in Afghanistan involving Western countries was caused by the attacks of September 11, 2001 in which the accused of perpetrating the attacks in the United States were Al-Qaʿidah and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The declaration of war in Iraq is somewhat different, but the reasoning is based on pre-emptive attacks on countries that impose a danger from radical terrorist groups or individuals. These activities have a damaging impact on the image of Islamic and Arab countries, particularly in Western media.

Today, the West consider the areas of international terrorist operations of Islamic nature to be present within the Islamic sphere including the African Sahel, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Pakistan and Jordan, and into the major tourist centres frequented by Western tourists, such as Bali Island, Mombasa, Taba and Sharm-Al-Sheikh. Many Western people think that the origin of the Al-Qaʿidah formation was initially caused by the structuring and interaction of *takfīri* thoughts, emanating from the Muslim Brotherhood's group and the Jihādists in Afghanistan through two phases after receiving the Mujahideen who participated in the war against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan from 1979-1989. The second phase which was from 1996-2001 featured those who participated in the war alongside the Taliban movement. After that the September 11 attacks have had the most astounding effect on bringing the movement to the global stage, pushing the United States of America and many other Western countries to declare its global, relentless and comprehensive War against Terrorism (Shubaili, 2010).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and security:

The killing of non-Muslims that has appeared in Islamic countries is a situation that should not be the way in a peaceful Islamic country that attempts to preserve the

life, money and privacy of all those who visit. Killing according to the nationality of a visitor is an obscene error and heinous breach of *Shari'ah* rules. The security apparatus inside Saudi Arabia has a vested interest in protecting citizens of Saudi Arabia as well as visitors. There are multiple bodies that are in charge of protecting the security of Saudi Arabia, including the Armed forces who defend the lands of the state, regime and people against any external armed aggression, the General Intelligence who play a major role in thwarting hostile schemes, such as espionage or sabotage, and the security institutions, which are affiliated to the Ministry of Interior and which are concerned with maintaining peace against the dangers emanating from within (Al-Shalhoub, 2002).

The regulation of the internal security forces number 30, dated on 4/12/1384 AH, states in the second article that the functions of the Internal Security Force General are as follows:

“These are the forces in charge of keeping order and conserving internal public security on the land and sea, particularly with regard to the prevention of crimes prior to their occurrence, in controlling and inquiring about such crimes after committal thereof and preserving the lives, securities and moneys, according to what the regulations, Royal decrees, decisions of the Council of Ministers, Royal orders, and the decisions and the orders promulgated by the Ministry of Interior impose” (Siraj Al-Deen, 1969: 53).

1-Directorate of public security:

The Public security regulation was promulgated in 1949 in concordance to the Royal order number 3564. The regulation defined the public security forces as “The forces which are responsible for keeping order, maintaining the peace and providing the reasons of public comfort and convenience through preventing crimes prior to the occurrence thereof and controlling the same after committal and implementing all what is being asked to carry out of the regulations, instructions and orders” (Siraj Al-Deen, 1969: 96).

2-Special Emergency Force:

In 1968 the Public security director issued for the formation of the Emergency police unit to support the police in order that the force shall have special procedures in armament and training. These forces shall keep the peace in emergency conditions and

they have been equipped and furnished with the machineries and arms needed, together with the human capacities in training at special institutes internally and externally.

3-Directorate of General Investigations:

This directorate is concerned with political security and dealing with issues related to the state's security in terms of investigation, monitoring and inquiring pursuant to the regulations, instructions and orders, as it undertakes the task of protecting society from the destructive thoughts and deviant currents which clash with true Islamic thought.

4-Directorate of Civil Defense:

Pursuant to the Civil defense regulation that promulgated under number 10 in 1985, its first article defines civil defense as: “A set of procedures and works necessary to protect the population and public and private property from the dangers of fire, disasters and different wars, to preserve national wealth resources during times of peace as well as during times of war and emergency”, which takes important responsibilities for civil defense as follows:

- Organizing alarms/sirens in cases of danger, against air strikes and raids and all the means thereof, along with preparation of volunteers who can carry out civil defense force tasks.
- Rescuing injured civilians and searching for victims and those who are trapped under rubble and debris.
- Participating in restoring life to normal in affected areas.
- Educate the citizens about preventive duties in cases of war, emergency and public disaster.
- Creation and supervision of the creation of public caches.
- Monitoring and controlling execution of the means of industrial safety at the industrial and commercial facilities as well as fire fighting and extinguishing duties.
- Storage of the different materials and equipment necessary for continuation of life in cases of war, emergency and disaster.

5-The Special Security Forces:

This is one of the most modern components concerned with special operations, deputized for the works of freeing hostages in aircraft hijack operations and confronting

terrorism operations. These forces are highly qualified and trained for carrying out such works. One of the crucial duties undertaken by these forces is the support of security forces in the tasks of restoring order when needed.

6-Security Patrols:

Approval of the Interior Minister for creating the general directorate of the security patrols was announced in 1983 in general under a central administration that is directly connected to the general director of security in order to take the responsibility of planning, control, follow-up, setting policies and operational, developmental and training program tasks for the security patrols all over Saudi Arabia. The Security Patrols are also responsible for improving performance of the police staff and modernizing the mechanisms thereof so as to conduct specialized security functions (Al-Shahrani, 1419).

The Saudi citizen, at all the levels, perceives the security issues and danger associated with living in society today. Citizens are aware of the risks of terrorism and *takfiris*. Society knows the deformity of *takfiri* thought and the importance of cooperating with, and supporting, security officials. Initiatives organized by civil and public committees are well placed within society (Talib, 1997:98). Saudi national security is an array of integrated institutions with the aim of protecting national and regional security. Regional security is concerned with the neighbouring countries, which attempt to organize security and military cooperation within the Cooperation Council of the Gulf Arabian States and the Arab League. Moreover, international security is gained through collective security that aims to stabilise the global environment through international organizations.

It has been noticed that Saudi society has assisted the government in the security and stability of the country. This has been instigated by dissatisfaction and discontent about operations carried out by *takfiri* groups and the destruction and damage of properties.

7.4: The Social impact of *Takfirism*:

Peaceful society, in the eyes of Islam, is a society in which all the people feel that the sanctity of religion is preserved and safeguarded, as well as the sanctity of lives,

minds, privacy and moneys. These five roots represent the purposes of human civilization with an Islamic approach. These five roots have been unsettled and rocked by *takfīr*. Therefore, we will tackle the impact of *takfīr* on society, and describe how *takfīr* has multifaceted impacts, some of which shall be discussed below.

Destabilization of Familial Security:

- When an individual accuses society or a single person in society of being apostates or atheists then this accusation should not be contented to the rest of the family members to which the *takfīri* belongs. The *takfīri* will have enmity and hatred, which the *takfīri* diffuse inside the family members and accordingly to society, replacing innocence and abhorrence, tranquility and intimacy. Antipathy and family problems are often the result of *takfīri* influences and the families are often influenced by negative opinions and influences (Al-Swaylem, 2010). The *takfīri* movements have robbed society of the security and raised the panic and fear of the lives of families and societies.
- Disobedience of the parents: One of the damages resulting from *takfirism* is the increase in disobedience of the parents and departing from their submissiveness and dishonoring of the parents: alleging that these parents are infidels is a matter that leads to family breakup.
- Breaking of family bonds: Islam calls for and recommends for keeping the bonds and links with relatives and kinships, but when *takfīr* enters without right into the family unit and starts to spread among the brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts, these bonds of kinship are often broken and substituted by animosity and abhorrence between the children of the same family.

The *takfīri* individual will live in isolation of his family, live alone as an introvert, breaking up all relations because he or she considers their family to be infidels, which undoubtedly impairs family relations.

- The head of the household abandoning the support of the family: The follower of *takfīri* sedition may be so occupied the *takfīri* agenda that he leaves his work to earn a living on the grounds that he believes the government is an apostate one and it is impermissible to deal with. Therefore, he leaves his family to become dependent on others, and this makes the family destitute and leads them to fall under the humiliation of asking people for help. Breakdown of the family, occurrence of divorce, dissipation and separation between couples soon follow. If one person is affected by *takfīri* thought and believes his wife is unsupportive and therefore an infidel too, according to his belief he must separate and divorce his wife. The family unit is thus broken up, tainted and humiliated. The *takfīri* heresy results in broken families and citizens that have to grow up away from family security, which has an impact on society as a whole both in the short and long-term (Al-Suwaylem, 2010).

The call of *takfīr* rots society. The impacts of this heresy are a dangerous plight on society, some of which are detailed as follows:

- Lack of affinity and amicability within society becomes significant. However the Muslim should love his Muslim brother and sister and they should stand at their side because of their brotherhood of faith. If a Muslim is described by his Muslim brother as an apostate, then he has substituted affinity, animosity and loving with abhorrence. This results in conflict and breakup of family and social units.
- The spread of sectarianism and partisanship results in the conflict of interests between these sects, the religious interests, the economic and political interests and even the security ones.
- Violation of general rights of a Muslim, which Islam preserves, results in the rights of scholars, rulers, citizens and residents becoming violated under the banners of religion and *Jihād*.
- Exhaustion of human society forces. Media and education engage the population with broadcasts of suspicion and fear regarding *takfīri* groups and terrorism. Resources including financial, emotional and intellectual are all directed towards *takfīrism*. This occupies a considerable intellectual realm at the present for this generation.
- Setting of some of the society individuals towards the Westernization and globalization is a wrong reaction from the *takfīri* movements, which has

- distorted the image of the religion in the minds of Islamic societies.
- Excruciation and suffering of the society of what it sees at the state of some of its sons those who get along the *takfiri* approach as they offend their society itself, kinship and family. (Al-Suwaylem, 2010).

The impact of *takfirism* on the youth:

For the sake of supporting its argument, *takfiri* groups take refuge in working with young people by dishonestly misleading the youth to facilitate their recruitment and restructuring. This is done through direct propaganda and false preaching by modern means of communication, the Internet in particular, deluding youths to carry the banner of *Jihād* for the support of the religion against the religious enemies (Shalabi, 2010).

What assists in facilitating this propaganda is the original defect of some young Muslim people, who have been influenced by superficial messages and propaganda in the first place. Some scholars also think that the lack of democracy or excessive democracy is one of the factors that have resulted in youths confronting the regime and the state. Moreover, it has been proven that the role, played by the media and the negative media propaganda, the suspicious scientific seminars and the distorted educational programs are domains for spreading subversive ideas among young people, which typically provides erroneous interpretations of Islam. Others believe that the poor economic conditions, lack of employment opportunities and low standards of living are fertile soils for the emergence of extreme thought and its spread. Rampant corruption, as well as the ill-conduct of some public officials, is also another factor that may have had some influence. *Takfiri* groups concentrate on the young generations and have a particularly menacing influence upon them as highlighted below:

- Violence in word and action: Young people at this age are characterized by strength and impulsive decision-making and actions. Most of those who pursue the *takfiri* approach are youths, whose fervor and energy are then translated into violence, in words and in actions. Many young people also have a lot of religious enthusiasm and uncontrollable zeal to judge their opponents with infidelity and this is a dangerous combination in the rise of extremism.
- Distracting and diverting the capabilities of the youth: The youth are the next generation of our societies, the future inheritors of what previous generations have arduously built. Their passion and gusto are needed in furthering and

benefiting society but instead they are being hijacked and diverted into the fruitless *takfiri* task, promoting suspicions and planning bombings that frighten peaceful thinking.

- Youth absent from jobs in public and civil service benefitting society. Young people who believe in *takfiri* thought are often far from any role in government jobs.
- Departure of the young people who adopted *takfiri* thought from defending the nation to a different policy of attacking the country and destabilizing its security, spreading rumors and distributing suspicions.
- Reluctance of young people who adopted *takfiri* thought in gaining truly beneficial Islamic knowledge, as we find these youths are occupied with *takfiri* thoughts and they distance themselves from the knowledge of authentic scholars.
- Young people abandon their families and parents under the pretext of dedication to the group they now believe in and pledge allegiance to.
- Withdrawal and unsociability of the youth and others who have adopted the *takfiri* approach. Limiting their learning and knowledge from their chiefs, makes them non-reflective and narrow-minded and leaves no room for dialogue and discussion.
- Existence of aversion, a distance of estrangement and disaffection between the youths who adopted *takfirism* and the governors. This gap, aversion and estrangement leads to disorder in society, and the youth with their thirsty minds and power of determination, enthusiasm and speed of response will lead to the youths becoming instruments at the hands of the enemies to destroy Muslim societies.
- The heresy of *takfir* breeds in the youth intolerance and imitation without consideration, discussion and reflection following their alleged leaders (Al-Suwaylem, 2010).

There is no doubt that such sectarian strife emerges in Saudi Arabia and becomes stronger through some of the incidents, such as those which took place among the Shiite in Al-Qaṭīf where the security spokesman of the Ministry of Interior stated that a number of security patrols in Al-Qaṭīf province had been exposed to firing from an unknown person on the evening of Saturday 15th January 2012 and Wednesday 19th January 2012. These shootings resulted in the injury of three of the security officials and damage to infrastructure. The security forces also raided on the evening of Monday

24th January 2012 one of the homes in Al-Qaṭīf province resulting in the death of 9 Saudi nationals, who were responsible for the shootings. Other people were arrested and the regulatory procedures will be taken against them. No injuries were recorded during the carrying out of this operation (Riyadh newspaper, 25 January, 2012).

There is no doubt that such incidents take place as a result of *takfīri* interactions, when the Shiite in this part of the country are described as apostates or see others described as apostates and different from the rest of society. These people then seek to prove their existence and ensure that they have rights similar to the rest of society.

The Psychological Aspect:

Psychological pressures are a range of pressing external and internal sources to which the individual is exposed throughout his or her life. These pressures result in the inability of producing a suitable response in certain situations. These are often accompanied by emotional and physiological disorders. Throughout the various stages of their life, individuals are exposed to stressful situations and severe effects from different sources, such as the home, work place and society, to the degree that some have called this the era of anxiety and psychological stress. This is due to the complications of lifestyles and pressing family attitudes, as well as the work environment and the nature of social life where there are many goals and high aspirations and expectations accompanied by frustrations and obstacles.

Psychological damage is common among the people of the same society as fear prevails among them, as individuals are obsessed by fear and the specter of murder chasing them. Education, travel, tourism, medication, sports, public service, work and study are all sources of stress that may have an influence on a young person's life and the choices they make. The group that proclaims it a judge of the others and declares killing as something lawful normally has a restless mind. That is because they are probably being chased by the authorities. These individuals are often unemployed and this in itself is dissipation of capacities and wastage of time, or maybe they work but disabled by stress so they cannot produce and be proficient in their work. The seriousness of *takfīr* appears obviously as well as in its role of destabilization and reduction of security and peace within society. This becomes obvious in the effect it has on security and on other economic, commercial, tourist, political, dogmatic, intellectual, social and psychological aspects (Zeru'um, 2010).

7.5: The Economic Impact of *Takfirism*:

When the economy of any state is a strong and coherent economy then the state can maintain its integrity with the welfare and development it provides to its society, which the state endeavors to realize. *Takfiris* aim to destabilize and weaken the state and embarrass it before its society. They also aim at hitting the economy of the Islamic states as a whole. They believe the sectors of oil and tourism have been utilized more by the foreign infidels who should be deprived from benefitting from such sectors, or to be intimidated and harassed because they steal the resources of the Islamic nations. Throughout this chapter we will discuss the impact of the *takfiris* and their acts on the economy and the size of their impact below.

Weakening of the state:

The heresy of *takfir* is not satisfied with words only. Besides throwing judgments of infidelity upon the state and individuals, they feel obligated to perform *Jihad* against those who they proclaim enemies. The result is sabotage, extremism and radicalism in prevention of the vice, such as killing and bombing, whereby the shedding of Muslim blood is deemed permissible. *Takfiris* think by carrying out such killing, bombing, kidnapping and other acts of violence, extremism and radicalism they are helping the Islamic state of affairs.

Sabotage, killing and willfulness to destroy the state's vital facilities all weaken the state's security, economy and its budget as a lot of state finance will be expended in the reconstruction, reform, education and development of health, and even appeasing the outbursts of these *takfiris* and rectifying what they had made corrupt, to build what they have demolished and compensate for what they have ruined.

Since the beginning of the destructive *takfiri* movements in Saudi Arabia, the military and security spending has increased, as the losses have affected the Saudi internal and external investments through terrorism. As well as the Saudi Riyal exchange rate, capital markets, external financial assets and other economic variables, it could be estimated during the period of 2002-2008; approximately 30 million Saudi Riyals have been spent. The destabilization of security and rise of *takfiri* sedition has strained the state's economy and scattered its capacity and abilities to reconstruct the

nation and service the citizens (Al-Suwaylem, 2010).

Bombing of Buildings, Vehicles and Places of Gathering:

Much economic loss has been endured as a result of *takfiris* bombing public and private properties, as the use of explosives in terrorist acts is one of their widespread and preferable means. This is of course due to their ease of use, efficiency of achieving the destructive targets, force of the reaction from the people and personal safety for the person who detonates using remote control devices.

Takfiris target public gathering areas, vital buildings and transportation hubs with their terrorist activities as these places will allow for maximum impact. In particular, places such as ministries, embassies, airports, railway stations, seaports and shopping markets and malls are targeted because they have the biggest concentration of people and will attract the most media coverage. The aim of these operations is to destabilize national security and destroy the economy in order to destabilize the political entity. This is done by suppressing and crushing lives, terrorizing innocent people and by producing material losses.

In executing their schemes, the terrorists take refuge using specific and precise methods; as they select, pinpoint and monitor that target carefully. This methodology is used in order to develop full, knowledge of the target and the security circumstances surrounding it, which helps determine the quantity of explosives required and the most suitable method for penetrating the target to produce the biggest impact.

As the bombing takes place the destruction of the public and private properties occurs, and so do the crushing of lives that the Islamic religion prohibits, as well as a breach of peace which is one of the types of corruption that is found to be most despicable by Islam (Al-Muttlegg, 2010).

The Impact of *takfiris* on Investment and Investors:

Takfiri thought culminating in terrorist acts results in the deterioration of the economy in which the phenomenon of *takfir* spread, as huge economic projects standstill due to constant intimidation of *takfiris*. Individuals become fearful of startup development and commercial projects. Likewise major multinational and international companies become uneasy about opening regional branches where terrorism has

occured. Additionally, existing foreign investments of large amounts of capital risk being discontinued as dismay by the bombings, hitting of oil installations, destruction of the vital facilities and devastation of the infrastructure such as the bridges, factories, roads, universities, hospitals and Houses of worship increase anxiety and fear in the region.

Businessmen are often interested in security, they do not invest their funds in places where security is not established and stability is missing, even the senior employees and ordinary workers do not play their roles serenely in workplaces where *takfirism* spreads, many banks, companies and trading stores close and announce bankruptcy due to the reluctance of clients and customers in dealing with them and due to the absenteeism of workers alarmed for their lives. What will remain for the banks if they miss the main following elements:

- The capital with which they move along.
- Employees who do their jobs serenely.
- Clients who deposit their moneys and deal safely?

In the end we find all countries set toward securing their interests in land, sea and air against the attacks expected to be launched by those who were imbued with *takfiri* thought, and many families feel obliged to migrate and some instance are compelled, because of the circumstances created by the terrorism inflicted by the *takfiris* (Abu Al-Khair, 1980: 71).

***Takfiri* thought among foreign citizens:**

Due to a disdain for their own governments, many *takfiris* flee their own countries, often pursuing another nation in which they join powers with fellow *takfiris*. Thus they become a loss of potential for their own nations, and a havoc-reeking burden for the nations they enter. *Takfirism* does nothing to unite peoples, but is a source of fragmentation of society both locally and globally. People adhering to such *takfiri* thought work for their own selfish, unrealistic and nihilistic notions, retreating before any attempt for healing the rift can be made (Zr'oum, 2010:4044). Among the economic weaknesses caused by *takfiris* is abandoning government jobs and serving of the nation as they believe in the state's infidelity and more than that to endeavor overthrowing the Islamic state, toppling the ruling regime. These cause flagrant and burdensome damage to the Islamic state which lead to loss of power and strength.

***Takfiri* Economic Goals:**

- **Oil Sector:**

The oil sector is the most important economic sector targeted by *takfiris* because of its primary importance in oil rich economies, and the devastating impact that attacks on this industry can have. The oil sector faced many attacks in various countries, such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia. For example, the Abqaiq plant site in Saudi Arabia, which is one of the most important sites in Saudi Arabia producing some 5.5 million barrels of oil a day, have been attacked causing devastation to the economy of both trading countries (Al-Hawrani, 2010).

- **The Tourism Sector:**

Tourism is a vital economic resource for many Islamic countries and the industry brings in massive annual revenues, particularly in countries with a strong tourist market. The tourism sector is one of the most economically sensitive industries with regard to political unrest as attacks and political instability can lead to huge drops in the number of foreigners visiting a country. The statistics of the World Travel and Tourism Council show that the consequences of the September 11th attacks demand for tourism dropped by 4.7% between 2001 and 2002 and the result is almost complete recession for the sector of tourism and the activities connected to it, which has led to unemployment of more than ten million people worldwide. The number of employees in the tourism sector dropped from 180 million people in 2001, to 170 million people in 2002, and the number of tourists all over the world dropped also by a rate of 3.1% by the end of 2001 (Al-Azeem, 2010).

The Impact of *takfiris* on the Saudi Arabian Economy:

The *takfiri* impact on the Saudi economy is a destructive one, for example the result of the September 11th attacks directly and indirectly impacted the economy in the following ways: (Al-Mushaghel, 2005).

Decline of the exchange rate:

Given the connection of the Saudi currency with the US dollar, the decline of the US dollar exchange rate has had a considerable impact on the Saudi Arabian economy from several aspects such as the price of Saudi products being more competitive in the

world markets, while the foreign import prices rise in the local markets. From an abstract, theoretical perspective this will lead to an increase in exports and decrease in imports and consequently to the improvement to the trade balance with other countries, except the United States of America. However, this theoretical propounding faced with a number of realities and practical challenges, most important of which are the elasticity of demand, in other words the demand on exports and imports has had a negative impact. The second factor is the time taken by the movements of the exchange rate prices, which affect the balance of trade, and more than that, the balance of trade could deteriorate to a level that result in a decline in the exchange rate because the exports become more costly.

Under such a situation – decline of the US dollar – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will pay more for its imports, while the moneys yielded from its exports will be less. One of the economic studies estimates the losses for Saudi Arabia during 2003 due to the decline of the US dollar was around 4.10 million Saudi Riyals. The Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources expressed his concern as a result of the decline in the US dollar against the major currencies, saying before one of the press conferences that “The level of the US dollar is a cause of concern”, he added that “the decline of the US dollar impacted the purchasing power of the oil producing members at OPEC”.

Spreading of Real-estate Speculations:

Due to the Saudi economy absorptive capacity being less than accommodating all the funds, there was a resulting prevalence of real-estate speculations in the Saudi market. The real-estate contributions phenomena appeared again, which dominated in the days of the economic boom in Hijri in the last century and became the most prominent phenomena at the local level for capital investment together with what accompanied the same of several negative direct and indirect economic effects. Perhaps the most illustrious and notable of which was the withholding of funds from the real investment areas and the unreal participation in the development and increase of employment opportunities for the Saudi Arabian youth.

The low rate of economic development:

The close link between the Saudi economy and the United States' economy,

particularly as the United States of America is the largest trading partner of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with the European Union and Japan (the American market accounts for 20% of the Saudi Arabian exports), has led to economic depression in the United States of America leading to depression in Saudi Arabia. This led to slower rates of growth and this is aggravated by the United States dollar being used as the currency for oil exports (Oil exports account for 89% of the Saudi Arabian exports). This is compounded by the fact that the Saudi Arabian economy is characterized generally by a decline in the gross domestic product growth rate compared to the population growth rate. Indeed, the gross domestic product growth rate did not exceed 1.00% during the years of the six-year plan (1995 - 1999) and the average growth rate of the Saudi Arabian population is estimated during the same period to have increased by around 5.3%. (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, 2003).

The real growth rate in the major oil and non-oil sectors

The sector and ratio	2000	2001**	2002**
Oil sector gross domestic product*	4.9	1.7	1.00
Non-oil sector gross domestic product	4.00	3.4	3.6
- Government sector	3.1	2.9	2.2
- Private sector	4.4	3.7	4.4

*- do not include the importation charges. **- Initial figures

Source: Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, The thirty-ninth annual report, (2004: 40).

The decline of the real value of external financial assets

The real value of the financial assets owned by Saudi nationals abroad for a number of factors, the most important of which are:

- Losses in the United States' stock markets with the collapse of many of the technological companies.
- Fall in the real-estate market.
- Freezing of a number of banking deposits in United States banks.

Intervention in the Internal Affairs of the Saudi Arabian economy:

This intervention is typically made through international bodies' requests to view all documents and data related to the banking accounts of individuals and institutions in Saudi banks with the aim of drying up the resources financing terrorism and terrorist organizations (Al-Saloumi, 2005).

The Negative Impact on the Charitable Sector:

This negative impact of *takfiris* encroaches into the charity sector in Saudi Arabia with different humanitarian sectors being hit by terrorist activities. The impact is as a result of restrictions being imposed on the charitable work and programs, launching of suspicions and accusations resulting in regression and abatement of this crucial sector and shrinkage of its role at both the local and international levels. Also, there is increased fear and refrainment and desistance of many businessmen to donate and contribute to the charitable works for fear that their money and accounts will be frozen and they will then find themselves accountable (Al-Saloumi, 2005).

7.6: The Impact of *takfīrism* on the Future of Islam:

With *takfīri* opinions being diffused all over the world, the impact on Islam is inevitable. Therefore we will divide this chapter into parts, the first part discusses the accusations directed towards Islam, while the second part discusses the future of Islam in light of such accusations and how Islam attempts to refute and disprove such accusations.

Section one: Accusations directed towards Islam as a result of the *takfīri* acts:

When the *takfīri* opinions spread over the world and their acts spread in various parts of the world, accusations directed towards Islam unfold, which undoubtedly influences the future of Islam as a divine religion and the extent to which non-Muslims accept this religion (Al-Shafi, 2010).

Some of the accusations directed towards Islam are as follows:

- The first misconception is the saying that Islam has promoted *Jihād* through which Muslims aim to impose their control and extend their rule and sovereignty over the whole world. The concept of *Jihād* expresses the notion of struggle against the non-Muslims and followers of other religions, and that Islamic culture is a culture of violence, that Islam is a religion of war, that it has never been a religion of peace, and that the wars of Muslims in general were wars of aggression, and that they are connected with an hereditary culture that sanctifies violence and calls for war and rejection of tolerance.
- The second misconception is the saying that the Islamic religion is characterized by intolerance and fanaticism, and that the Quran and interpretational Islamic books contain incitements against non-Muslims, that they are filled with verses which call for pursuing and fighting of non-Muslims, and alienating them for embracing religions other than Islam, and that such thoughts only ever produce generations of fanatics, which facilitates creating a new culture in the face of non-Muslims (Al-Shafi, 2010).
- The saying that Islam is a monocular religion that does not accept dealing with the concepts of democracy: the Islamic culture is anti-democratic, and one of dictatorship. The saying that the history of governing in the Islamic states demonstrates such orientation, and that there is no room for calling the Islamic

states to adopt the Western democracy because of the absence of a common ground between the values and democratic Western culture and the Islamic culture, is another misconception (Shebril, 2002).

- Impact of oil: As some see Islamic countries dominating in the oil and gas sector, there is the common misconception that Islam is an important adversary to the West and its civilization (Emanuel, 2004).
- Fear of cultural superiority: Islam as a divine revelation belief not easy to be faced with the means used in arguing other ideologies. This conflict with Western liberal belief, therefore the Western opposition to Islam and the ideological war against Islam would cause greater harm to the Western interests than what might be made by the challenge of Islam to the Western civilization and its ideological superiority (Abd Al-Safi, 2009).

Islamophobia:

‘Islamophobia’ as a word, becomes an umbrella term for all the processes of distortion and dilution of the image of Islam. It is the most expressive term of fear and panic and it has a highly influential impact on the way people perceive the religion. The word ‘Phobia’ reiterated in psychological dictionaries means extreme fear, fright and terrorism, it specifically refers to the nervous anxiety or psychoneurosis that is not subject to the mind and which is aroused in the person in an inordinate manner as being abnormal, anomalous and uncontrollable. The word also refers to unconscious fear of the things, people or situations that are unexplainable.

In general terms, ‘Islamophobia’ indicates what is precipitated, perpetuated and diffused of anxious disorder and unconscious psychological fear by non-Muslims of Islam and whatever is related to Islam. This term is revived considerably when hostility towards Islam builds up and appears through carrying out the distortionary campaigns of the Islamic picture, particularly by the Western media (Husain, 2010).

Reasons for the aggravation and continuity of Islamophobia are as follows:

- The ability of Islam to spread and extend. In the West there seems to be some confusion that on the one hand this religion of Islam is portrayed as an entity to be feared, while on the other one witnesses its ability to grow and proliferate here. This is emphasized by some of the Western strategic experts themselves when they admit that Islam is the fastest growing religion and has a strong

- influence on the soul with plenty of followers.
- For some, the growing number of Muslim converts in the West is considered a threat to Christianity. In France alone there are approximately five million Muslims.
 - One reading of history likes to promote the idea of a contentious relationship between the Islamic East and the Christian West, and profess a continuity of this uneasy relationship. Islam is regarded as a strange religion, representing a danger to the West. The French historian Gustave Le Bon said: “We have never been liberal in our thoughts about some of the information, fanaticism which we inherited against Islam and its symbols have continued throughout several Centuries until it has become a part of our organic structure” (Ben Nabi, 2009: 29).
 - The increase in numbers of Arabs, Muslims, their children and grandchildren in Western countries, and the entry of some of them into the European parliaments can lead to the potentiality of prominence of the Arab and Muslim communities’ roles and influence on the political decisions of the hosting states. Offensive demeanors of some Muslims do give a distorted picture about Islam, that the followers of Islam will pronounce *takfir* on each other, kill one another, shed the blood of each other, and then the scenarios of bombing and killing of innocent people entrench the conviction of how bloody and cruel Islam is towards its followers and those who embrace it. Finally, this picture of Islam established in the minds of people is passed form one generation to the next (Husain, 2010).

The West’s fear of Islam, deepened by extremism born out of *takfiri* thought, has many negative impacts on Muslims in general and those who settle in those communities. Such impacts include, but are not limited to the following:

- Prevention of achieving real cooperation between Muslims and the followers of other religions is a devastating blow to growth. Cooperation can help in providing a common solution for the intractable issues of society as a whole. There are undoubtedly a great number of commonalities bewteen the West and Islam and dialogues should be entered into, in order to develop better cooperation and relationships. However, the phenomenon of fear of Islam in the West stands as a barrier for achieving this. What we are reminded of is the fact that there is a need for this cooperation and dialogue about the commonalities.

Fear of Islam prevents better international, diplomatic and commercial relationships.

- Fear in the West, represents a serious threat for Muslims living in the West. It is more difficult for them to feel like equals in a society that they actually belong to. The result is a rise in the unemployment rate, denial of equal rights in their schools, segregation on religious and racial basis, harassment and restrictions on the personal freedoms and a loss in the sense of belonging.
- Fear deprives Muslims in other countries from playing a prominent role in the national politics of those countries (Husain, 2010).

Deterioration of the Islamic Minority's situation:

The image of Islam in Western mass media is a changing picture, and Western media discourse of Islam and Muslims is characterized by fear of an 'invisible' enemy replacing the communist system, as the enemy. The 'militant Islam', 'explosion of Islam', 'the Islamic threat', 'Islamic terrorism' and 'Islamic fundamentalists' are all common phrases that have become part of the discourse on Islam in recent times. These expressions are not composed arbitrarily or in a random way, but according to a specific and clear strategy and vision in order to besiege the Islam through persecution and discrimination, in order to have an effect on the Islamic identity perhaps in response to the spread of Islam and the rising emigration of Muslim families to Western countries. Research has shown that the increase of Muslim numbers has steadily increased in Europe and America, and that Islam is a religion which has grown more rapidly than any other religion, whether in respect of the increasing birth rates, or in respect of those who embrace Islam daily. The Islamic minorities stick to their faith and identity in spite of the aggressive campaigns directed against them.

Muslim minorities all over the world differ among themselves about some of the issues of the communities in which they live, nevertheless their uniformity is obvious in their common belief and in their exercise of their religious rituals collectively. They have been faced by numerous difficulties in such communities and these have represented several psychological, religious and cultural obstacles in regard to their fate (Qasim, 1988).

Reduction in the the work, and closure of charity foundations:

The international transformations, which the world has witnessed in recent

decades, especially since September 11, 2001, have several repercussions on charitable work. This has been manifested in looking with suspicion at the charity organizations of Islamic origins and the freezing of assets of many of them in the framework of what is known as the war against terrorism. This is because Western countries make a connection between charitable work and terrorism and a lot of the Islamic charity organizations have been exposed to a campaign of attacks and widespread criticisms. The United States of America takes many actions against the branches of such organization abroad, including restricting their activities, confiscation and freezing of their balances, intensification of the penal measures against such organizations through raids, and inspection campaigns and closures (Abd Al-Shafi, 2010).

It is realized from the report of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (2004) that the organization provided aids to the poor and needy people, however as a result of the *takfiris'* views the charitable work has been harmed and all those poor and needy people all over the world have been affected.

The future of Islam in light of international variables:

Of significant importance is the history of Western colonization of many Islamic countries. Some of the international variables may be looked at as a return to colonization and Western hegemony of the Islamic world. The international variables, which mainly rely on globalization, are marked by the domination of the market economy over the world by the industrialized countries and the major companies which cross the boundaries of the states led by the the Western world under the name of 'globalization', which causes the crisis we suffer particularly in the third world in both the moral and social aspects. Competition and individualism has the upper hand over solidarity and cooperation, as economics claims that they offer the sole moral code, political way or ethical way. Some see that the balance between the social strata underlies the assembly of all the individual initiatives and does not need an external power; this tendency prevails today in ethics, politics and culture (Al-Sheikh, 2007).

The international economic system is centered on three essential pillars, which are: the international monetary system, the international investment system and the international trading system. These are operated by three international economic

institutions, which are: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Trade Organization. It is through their roles in monitoring and controlling the monetary, financial and commercial policies, that stabilises the rules and standards used in different countries of the world, and which provides the apparatus for removal of restrictions and impediments which obstruct economic activity between the various countries of the world.

This change is characterized by the emergence of new players in the economic aspects of a new type, that is the free financial and industrial groups which are governed by their activities inside the boundaries of the national state to which such groups belong to, and at the national level which has been built on the ruins of feudalism about five centuries ago. The cross continental companies are started by undermining the state, replacing it gradually starting from the sixth decade of this century and underestimating their status and value, and promoting the concepts and globalizing ideas, the end of which are to dismantle the conceptions of nation, nationalism, the national units and independent development to arrive at new conceptions, such as structural adaptation, economic reform, trade liberalization, and the unification of the markets (Al-Adba, 2005).

There is no doubt that the *takfiris* have an impact on the future international developments and the relations of the Western countries with Islamic countries, that is the *takfiris* do not want the intervention of the Western countries into the internal affairs of the Islamic countries as this is considered the fundamental principle for the evolution of the *takfiri* thought in Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia.

7.7: Conclusion:

The phenomenon of *takfir* threatens society as a whole, and frightens the entire world, it causes individuals to lose and forfeit the full spectrum of peace from religious, to intellectual, psychological, political and military, not to mention financial, economic and the social and familial loss of security.

Security plays a vital role in the lives of people, influencing the stability of society, such as the political, social and economic stability. *Takfiri* groups affect the stability

whether by their words or actions. This matter affects all affairs of life and pushes money away from needy causes such as charity, economic development, healthcare and social development programs.

Takfīr plagues political stability, threatens social security, leads to the loss of trust between the individuals and groups, and it results in fragmentation and dissipation of the capacities. *Takfīr* leaves individuals and groups fighting each other, starting from accusing each other of heresy, wantonness, debauchery and apostasy. They target the economy and seek the destruction of infrastructure. It works on displacing the scholars and workers from their countries, and over and above, *takfīrism* spreads terror against the talented persons in the community and endangers security, which is guaranteed by God for all.

Takfrism works on distorting the picture of Islam as a result of the acts committed after the *takfīri* operations and dissemination of hostility against Islam by the West and the generalization of the Islamophobic image in Western societies is a matter that eats away at perceptions of Muslims all across the world brings negative images.

Chapter Eight: *Takfir* and the Measures Taken by the Saudi Government and Community for Curbing, Combating and Limiting the Negative Impacts of *Takfir*

8.1 Introduction

Following the terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia in 2003 a widescale campaign has been set up by the Saudi government to counter terrorist activity in the country and beyond. The campaign includes several strategies including ‘soft’ measures, which have been developed to challenge and weaken the ideology underpinning extremist behaviour. This solution came about from research, which suggested that security measures alone are not enough to combat the spread of extremism. The government counter-terrorism strategy includes three unique elements aimed at prevention, rehabilitation and post-release care. All in all, the program has had great success, particularly with regard to the rehabilitation element. Indeed, since the beginning of the campaign there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of rearrests. The program has also been looked at by other countries around the world.

Takfiri ideology affects the individual and society in general. A person may escape being called an apostate, but he will probably not escape being labeled at least a libertine if for making the slightest violation of religious codes. *Takfir* causes and breeds fear, chaos and disorder in society. This has a negative impact on the educational, economic, and cultural landscape of the country. One of the negative effects of *takfir* is that it creates mentalities that tend to be violent and aggressive and these mentalities are damaging and hurt the image of Islam and Muslims. Muslims, as a result, are accused of being violent and extremists that kill and terrorize innocent people. Terrorism hurts the reputation of Islam. Since Saudi Arabia applies Islamic law in almost all of its aspects of life, its reputation has been dangerously hurt in the eyes of the international community. The media portrays Saudi Arabia as a country harboring terrorism and it is going to take Saudi Arabia years to change this impression.

This is one of the main reasons behind the country taking a heavy hand in eliminating terrorism and terrorist activities and operations. Those measures have proven to be effective and fruitful in curbing and eliminating terrorism and *takfirism* in Saudi Arabia.

8.2: Impact of *takfīr* on the Individual and the Measures Taken by the Government

Security is not the responsibility of the government alone, nor is it the responsibility of society alone. It is the responsibility of the individual in the first place. The individual is responsible for realizing all kinds of security issues, such as intellectual and religious security. People need security to enjoy living a peaceful life and in order for them to maintain a normal life.

When people feel secure and safe they will be productive and will work towards development of their country. Economic, educational and social development will be at its best when there is security. When development is realized in all aspects of life then there will be little room for extremist ideologies, sabotage and vandalism.

Takfīr deprives people from living their normal lives and deprives them from working and from practicing their business activities. It also causes anxiety, stress and disturbance. *Takfīr* also has a negative impact on social life, as a result of intolerance. *Takfīr* causes kinship relations to be neglected, intolerance, partisanship, practicing advisory opinions without qualification, worshipping individuals and parties, copying others blindly, disinterest in learning from others and from other cultures and civilizations, intellectual imbalance, issuing advisory opinions by people not authorized to do so, criticizing scholars, damaging the reputation of opponents, rudeness, violence, extremism and misunderstanding of Islam (Alkabeesi 2010).

Failure to respect counter opinion and prevent others from expressing themselves and confiscation of the freedom of speech are contrary to the basic principles of Islam.

Impact of *takfīr* on the individual and Society:

- Breakdown in communication between people living together in societies.
- A person declared as an apostate is not allowed to stay with his wife and they

must be separated from each other by divorce because a Muslim woman is not allowed to marry an apostate.

- Children should not stay within the family whose father is an apostate - as per Islamic law – because of fear of his family following him out of the religion.
- An apostate is not allowed to testify in court because testimony is accepted only from “honest” and “just people”; apostates are not considered honest or fair.
- If an apostate slaughters an animal for meat Muslims will not eat that meat. Islam permits eating meat slaughtered either by a Muslim or someone who is from the People of the Book.
- The individual will not be allowed to become a State ruler and he or she will not be helped if they need support from Muslims against his enemy.
- If an apostate dies, their body will not be treated according to the Muslim tradition.

Other dangers of *takfīr* include the spread of ignorance and religious illiteracy, harming the reputation of Islam, insecurity for Muslims, a lack of religious security, societal security, political security, military security, family security, and psychological security. Lack of security endangers peoples’ lives, properties, mental security, and religious security. Islam and other religions have all agreed upon securing all these aspects of life.

Many Muslims have suffered from this wrong understanding of Islam and Islamic teachings. When security was replaced by insecurity and when terror and fear spread, the whole world started to understand that Muslims are terrorists and their religion is a religion of killing and looting. The Saudi government has taken many measures to protect the citizens and residents including strict security procedures and check points especially in cities where terrorists are known to be planning their activities.

Effect of Measures Taken on Electronic Transactions:

Takfīrists design their own websites in order to disseminate their ideology and thoughts. They also tend to teach others how to make bombs and devices with which they can execute their terrorist activities. Other websites have been created to teach people how to prepare explosives, how to penetrate and destroy websites and email

addresses and how to open banned or blocked websites. They also use social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Paltalk, news sites and other sites to recruit new followers to their ideology. That is why Saudi Arabia has blocked and controlled so many websites that may be used for terrorist purposes.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has issued a number of regulations and laws to organize the use of the Internet. There are punishments to those who violate those regulations and legislations related to the Internet. One of these regulations is the cabinet resolution No. 163 issued on 1417H, which is about the regulations controlling and governing the use of the Internet. The resolution reads as follows:

1. The resolution directs to formulate a permanent committee headed by the Ministry of Interior and its membership is for: the Ministries of Defense, Finance, Information, Communications and Information Technology, Commerce, Islamic Affairs and Planning, Higher education, Education, the Directorate of Investigations and King ‘Abdulaziz’s City for Sciences and Technology. The committee has been established for discussing all matters related to the control and use of the Internet and for coordination between the concerned authorities that are to be blocked. The committee members have agreed on need for the following:
 - a. Security control of incoming and outgoing information.
 - b. Coordination between the authorities that benefit from the Internet with regard to the security of the national network.
 - c. Blocking harmful Internet sites that call for corruption and have evil intentions, including the websites that call for and teach terrorism and call for attacking and terrorizing others.

Saudi Arabia has issued a number of regulations that control electronic transactions. These regulations incriminate electronic attacks and aggressions. An example of this is the electronic exchange program and e-trading.

Article 20 of the law reads: “a person, who intentionally has access to a computer system or part thereof, without being authorized to do so, is considered a criminal. If a person does so by way of violating the security procedures to conduct a certain activity they will be considered a criminal according to the applied rules and regulations”.

Article 21 of the law reads: “Any person who intentionally and unlawfully sends unauthorized computerized information in a technical way, from or within a computer system, is regarded a criminal”.

Article 22 reads: “Any person, who intentionally or negligently and unlawfully puts a computer virus or allows it to get into a computer system, or a computer network, is regarded as a criminal”.

Article 23 incriminates damaging computer information by way of erasure, alteration, or blockage.

Article 25 reads: “Any person, who intentionally and unlawfully, and with the intention of deception, enters, erases, alters or blocks computerized information with the intention of making incorrect information appear as correct information, is considered a criminal”.

Article 28 is about the punishments set by law (Ministry of Commerce, 2002, : 34).

The government is now working on a system to prevent electronic hacking. The system is now being prepared by the Ministry of Interior and it is to be implemented. Those individuals and institutions will be subject to punishment for breaking the law (Alsind, 2006) these procedures certainly deprive people from having access and freedom to information.

8.3: Impact of *takfir* on Saudi Society and the Measures Taken by the Saudi Government for Elimination of *takfir*

Saudi society has its own legacy and is characterized by being receptive from other societies. Saudi Arabia, though proud of its own culture, always takes and benefits from other cultures and the country blends all local and foreign cultures together in a religious social fabric.

Applying *Shari'ah* (Islamic) law in Saudi Arabia on all daily life activities guarantees justice for all social categories and results in security. Despite the fact that the Saudi population, including expatriates, has increased over the years, the rate of

crime is still very limited when compared to the rate of crime in other countries.

Cooperation of Citizens:

Saudi security authorities expect Saudi citizens to cooperate with them with regard to the protection of themselves and their properties against terrorist attacks by providing the security authorities with any information they may have or find in order to prevent crimes and attacks before they happen. Citizens may be obliged to give up certain freedoms in order to help the government in security matters. The government cannot realize security unless it gets cooperation from its citizens. It has been proven beyond doubt that security efforts will not be fruitful unless the citizens cooperate with the authorities. Cooperation can come from individuals, as well as from personal or organized initiatives through private or public committees in society (Talib, 1997).

Saudi national security, as is the case with all countries of the world, is a domain that is complementary with the other security domains in Saudi Arabia, regional security (GCC) and international community security, which aims at the realization of the international stability and peace through international organizations (Gadoorah , 2008).

Saudi citizens have become aware of the importance of their responsibility towards the realization of security and have also become aware of the danger of the *takfirist* and extremist movements. Saudi citizens now know, more than ever before, how important it is to cooperate with the security authorities for the sake of realizing security. The issue of terrorism is now the concern of everybody in the country. That is why it is no longer easy for the Al-Qaeda movement to recruit more people to join its terrorist activities. The movement is no longer capable of recruiting more youths and that is the best example of the importance and the usefulness of cooperation between the citizens and the authorities. Some citizens even disowned their relatives who chose to join the Al-Qaeda organization (Eed, 2001).

8.4: Intellectual Seclusion and Its Impact on Recognition, Learning, and Values

When *takfirism* prevails in a society there will be intellectual seclusion. *Takfirists* will not accept counter opinions and people are categorized as being either Muslims or atheists. This kind of culture leads to intellectual conflicts and disputes.

Confiscating and terrorizing counter opinions is certainly one of the negative effects of *takfirism* (Algarni, 2010).

Takfirism also affects the youth and weakens the nation as a whole. Therefore, the message delivered by the media is considered one of the information resources for the youth (Ameen, 2010).

The value system of the youth will be affected by *takfirist* ideologies and they tend to deal with others in a cautious way or sometimes deal with them with some sort of superiority because they think that others are atheists who do not deserve to be treated in a good way.

The intellectual deviation leads to destruction. Here educational curricula can play a negative role if they are not designed in an appropriate way because they focus on indoctrination rather than analytical ways of thinking. Educational curricula today tends to widen the gap between the mind and reality. Even the relationship between the teacher and the student and the educational administration do focus on the same indoctrinational ways of learning and educating (Awashria, 2010).

The value system plays a very significant role in crystallizing the minds and the way of thinking of the young generations. Saudi Arabia tends to implant Islamic values in the educational curricula. Islamic values are easy to understand and be implemented into daily life. Students must benefit from their Islamic values in all aspects of life: educational, cultural, social, economic, artistic and sportive. Students start learning and applying those values at school where their behavior is developed and modified (Abdulghani, 1995).

Efforts of the Saudi Government in the Formation of the Intellect:

- Intellectual forums and gatherings where scholars and intellectuals meet represent official and non-official organizations, and their purpose is to establish the culture of dialogue for the Muslim nation.
- Youth symposia, which enable the youth to launch and practice their activities and present a good image about Islam.
- Academic and cultural centers, which are established for the purpose of presenting and disseminating the culture of diversity in Islam and all that is done for the sake of creating a better life in Muslim communities.

- Academic exchange programs where books and publications are exchanged in order to widen the horizons of academic activities and products (Saleh, 1995).

King ʿAbdullah Bin ʿAbdulaziz, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

These parties all call upon the youth to fight terrorism and call upon those who were deceived by extremists to repent and come back to their country and free themselves from the manacles of extremism, as their ultimate goal is to destroy the country and undermine its stability.

In the First Article of the Basic government system there is the royal decree No. (A,) dated 27/08/1412H, which reads that, Saudi Arabia is an Arab Islamic and sovereign state using the Quran and the *Sunnah* as its constitution. All other government institutions are considered the tools and means of the government to apply and implement the government policies including spreading the right understanding of Islam and Islamic teachings. The government protects *Shariʿah* (Islamic) law and promotes virtue and ensures that education is based on the right Islamic concepts of the Quran and the *Sunnah*. The judiciary is a very independent institution and operates according to *Shariʿah* law and all the rules and regulations issued by the government are in perfect agreement with *Shariʿah* (Islamic) law. This being the case and the fact that the state’s constitution is based on the Quran and the *Sunnah* is cause for the government to fight terrorism from the point of view of *Shariʿah* law. All government institutions fight terrorism, each ministry or authority in its domain of work (Nazmi, 2009).

The September 11 attacks took place during the term of King Fahd Bin ʿAbdulaziz. On 24 April 2004 King Fahd condemned the September 11 attacks and described them as “attacks done by a few people whose minds are criminal and who want to undermine the security of the country and want to terrorize and kill Muslims”. King ʿAbdullah Bin ʿAbdulaziz called upon those working with the extremists to think again and turn themselves in to the security authorities. He further said, during the meeting held by the Saudi cabinet on 19 September 2009 that “Saudi Arabia has, since its establishment, followed a solid and judicious method of government”.

King ʿAbdullah always asserts that Saudi Arabia condemns all kinds of

terrorism and calls for erasing the reasons that lead to it and to punish those who commit terrorist crimes. Saudi Arabia cooperates with other countries for the elimination of terror and terrorism. In 2004, King ʿAbdullah asserted before the president of Austria that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and that the terrorists who kill others are an isolated few in terms of the greater population of Saudi Arabia and indeed other Muslims around the world. This view is shared by all scholars and leaders of Muslim groups, in Saudi Arabia and beyond (Nazmi, 2009).

8.5: Educational Institutions

The educational institutions, from kindergarten to university, play the main role in the formation of thoughts and ideologies and mentalities. The number of graduates has significantly increased with the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions. More than 53,000 students graduated with a bachelor degree, both females and males, for the academic year 2002/2003 while in the year 1998/1999 the figure was 38,000 (a 9% rise). The number of students who graduated with a bachelor degree during the first 4 years of the 7th development plan was more than 199 thousand, of which 66% were females. The graduates were distributed over various fields as follows: 12.5% were in scientific and technical fields (natural sciences, engineering, medicine and agriculture), 66.4% in administration and social sciences (administration, economics, sociology, psychology, etc.), 11.8% in human sciences (languages, history and arts) and 9.3% in Islamic and *Shariʿah* fields.

The number of students enrolled in graduate studies (higher diploma, master's and PhDs) at universities and college's for women jumped from 8847 for the year 1998/1999 to 10670 for the year 2002/2003. This figure is equal to 2.9% of the total number of students who obtained a bachelor degree. However, this percentage is less than the percentage anticipated by the 7th development plan. The number of students enrolled in graduate levels jumped from 3063 to 3452 for the same period. The number of graduates of the three degrees of (higher diploma, Master's and PhD) jumped from 1223 to 1729 for the same period stated above. The number of PhD graduates during the first four years of the 7th development plan was 805, Master's 3091, and higher diploma 2111 (Ghanaim, 2008).

Education in Saudi Arabia suffers a lot of shortcomings, the most important of

which are:

- Imbalance between the graduates of higher institutions and the actual need in the job market.
- Lack of suitability between the qualifications and experience obtained by the graduates and the actual needs in the job market. This negatively affects the graduates' chances of employment.
- Lack of educational plans that take into account the actual needs of the job market, whether in either the public or private sector and a lack of coordination between these institutions and other institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Labor.
- The above problems naturally lead to economic, administrative and agricultural backwardness and an increasing number of jobless graduates.

Some of the educational institutions suffer intellectual deviation and the following are some of the reasons behind that:

- Lack of positive, moderate education, poor knowledge of religion and lack of modern knowledge to the original resources in terms of the faith.
- Failure to take legal and Islamic knowledge from scholars and dependents.
- Poor loyalty to government officials and to the state.
- Confusion created by conflicting advisory opinions.
- Poor knowledge of *Shari'ah* law (Abdulghaffar, 2010).

It is very important to take into consideration the role of educational institutions in safeguarding intellectual security and in supporting the ideology of moderation among students. On the other hand, educational curricula can play a major role in forming and modifying the mentality of the students toward moderate ways of thinking.

Education in Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, aims at delivering knowledge to students through imposing a great deal of information into the minds of the students at the expense of analytical ways of thinking and learning. Educational curricula depend only on indoctrination rather than analytical methods (Awashriah, 2010).

Universities and university teachers do have a role to play in preventing the spread of *takfirist* ideology in society and among students. They can achieve this goal through holding international academic conferences, symposia and forums, debates and discussions and dialogue, using all types of media to serve this purpose. It is worth mentioning here also that the design and formation of educational curricula can have an

important impact, particularly with regard to the religious, social and educational curricula (Alshibl, 2010).

Education, through all its institutions, has an important role to play in correcting the wrong understandings of religion. It can change the way of thinking of young people by making them believe in and practice dialogue instead of violence and intolerance.

The following tasks are important in this context:

- Building independent, self-dependent, educated, interactive individuals with good social communication skills and values is a core task.
- Opening the door and accepting other cultures and initiating peaceful, positive and constructive dialogues with them.
- Getting the best possible knowledge by adopting analytical and evaluative ways of thinking.

The individual should develop the skills of learning in an analytical way and they should take into consideration the fact that the learner himself or herself is the center of the learning process. The ultimate goal should be to create an environment conducive to the culture of dialogue and respect of counter opinions (Awashria, 2010).

Teaching Methods and Teaching Aids:

Teaching methods are designed to be in perfect harmony with the learner's inner rhythm and they should support the learning process and prevent learners swaying from good practice. Amongst the most important elements of learning are analytical and dialectical mentalities, working in groups, trying new ways to solve problems, self-learning, making room for cooperative styles, exchange of views and respect for others and their opinions. On the other hand, teachers should deal with their students in a way that respects their mentalities and characters.

Enhancement of Educational Outputs:

Educational outputs need to be enhanced through quality assurance of the educational curricula and the teachers as well as the school buildings and the way schools are designed. All other requirements must be provided because they ensure the

comfort of the students to guarantee the best way of delivering lessons (Awashria, 2010).

Paying Due Attention to the Teacher:

To ensure the best educational outputs, due attention has to be paid to the teacher and to provide him or her with the elements that ensure the best way of doing his or her job. The same attention should be given to the teaching methods and teaching aids. Teachers have to have good salaries and incentives to make them feel comfortable and to make them feel appreciated.

Balanced Preparation of the Human Being:

The main purpose of educational institutions should not be confined to only preparing employees or professionals. The purpose should also include encouraging all individuals to be better people and to contribute towards society. To make this purpose a reality, the educational process should aim at modifying and developing the behavior of young people while schooling. Here comes the importance of making a balance between the preparation of individuals (the learners) for the job market, as well as for his or her social contributions. In other words, we should be more concerned about preparing the learner for being a good individual to ensure that he or she will not fall into the traps of extremism and *takfirism*. We should teach him or her how to become a good member of society and how to become a good family member because the family is the smallest unit of larger society (Alalwani, 2010).

The Saudi government has heavily invested in education through the expansion of educational institutions and through the development of all educational facilities. Saudi Arabia has lived up to its commitments of expanding and developing the higher educational facilities to make higher education available and accessible to all its citizens across the country. Indeed, Saudi Arabia understands the importance of higher education and is dedicated to ensuring that higher education cadres are properly qualified. The following are the most important projects in this field:

First: King ʿAbdullah approved the establishment of King ʿAbdullah University for Science and Technology, funding it with ten thousand million Saudi Riyals on a land area of 23 million square meters for its building facilities on the shore of the red sea. The idea of the university stemmed out of the need for making a great shift in the

field of industry based on modern science and technology. The university was set up to attract distinguished teachers and experts from all over the world as well as Saudi and non-Saudi gifted students. The aims of the university are numerous, but most importantly it is to promote and develop scientific research in a highly academic environment. The university is responsible for promoting scientific research that will support the national economy and will adopt research about Nano technology, biotechnology, information technology, communications technology, water desalination and water waste control.

Second: 11 public universities with applied science colleges in the fields of medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, applied medical sciences, and nursing, computer engineering and business technologies have been created. With these new universities, the number of universities in Saudi Arabia will be as high as 19 with more than 600 thousand students being enrolled.

Third: Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Scholarship Program: more than seven thousand million Saudi Riyals have been assigned to sending Saudi students to study abroad at international universities all over the world, in the next 3 years. This program is going to significantly benefit the local job market when these students come back with certificates from highly recognized universities. So far, more than eighteen thousand students, males and females, have been traveled abroad for university during the past three years and now more than seven thousand five hundred students are on their way to study abroad.

Fourth: Private Education: private education is considered one of the most important sections of education in Saudi Arabia. By the end of the 9th development plan (2013) the target is to enroll more than 30% of current student figures in private universities. Some private universities have relationships with highly distinguished universities such as MIT, Harvard, Oxford, Union of Texas State Universities and the Steven Business Technology Institute. The government, with soft loans that may reach up to 65 million Saudi Riyals for each college, is supporting this sector.

Fifth: The National Commission for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation: this independent commission was established in 2004 and it deals with accreditation matters in order to ensure quality assurance and quality control of the higher educational institutions in Saudi Arabia.

Sixth: A Strategic Plan for University Education: this is a long-term plan (25 years) for higher education with a very effective contribution from all universities and scientific societies. So far, this plan has been moving forward steadily.

Seventh: The National Center for Electronic and Distance Education: the ministry aims at using information and communication technology to make more education opportunities available. This kind of education is going to be a new addition to the education in Saudi Arabia and it is going to be a great support to higher educational institutions. Many mutual cooperation agreements with many foreign educational institutions should be reached in this field.

Eighth: The Ministry of Higher Education is financially supporting universities with additional income to that already provided by the government in order to enable them to deliver their mission in the best possible way with the aim of developing human resources in the country. Moreover, scientific research centers of universities are going to receive special financial support to enable them expand research programs.

Ninth: The National Center for Standardization and Evaluation has been established. Though it is considered newly established, it has so far achieved great successes. It has promoted and developed the university admission criteria and it is enjoying a very good reputation locally and in the gulf area in general (Almorshid, 2006).

The above examples are a strong indication that the government is making considerable efforts to support education and to increase the quality of higher education institutions with the overall aim of preventing young people from falling victim to the traps of extremism.

8.6: Religious Institutions

Religious institutions in Saudi Arabia fight *takfir* fiercely. These authorities are responsible for *Shari'ah* law issues and other missions and responsibilities, such as the directorate of *Ifta* and Islamic research, the Ministry of Justice and courts of law, Ministry of Islamic affairs, Endowment, Dawa, Guidance, the General commission for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, colleges of *Shari'ah* and fundamentals of religion, Dawa and information, as well as some other similar authorities. This issue

is important for two reasons:

First: Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country and Shari'ah law and its Islamic institutions represent its official characteristics and traits.

Second: some of Saudi Arabia's enemies are desperately trying to undermine its security and are also trying to portray its religious institutions derogatory terms; accusing them with supporting extremism and *takfir* and also accusing them of exporting terrorism. These are simply false allegations, however. Saudi Arabia is very proud to be an Islamic country. In the First Article of the Basic government system there is a royal decree (No. (A) Dated 27/08/1412H), which reads that Saudi Arabia is an Arab Islamic and sovereign state using the Quran and the *Sunnah* as its constitution.

Saudi Arabia's religious institutions include Ifta (advisory opinions), the judiciary and justice system, Dawa and guidance, information, publication research institutions. All of these institutions represent the government in all its aspects and they play a vital role in Saudi society and refer predominately to Quran, the *Sunnah*, Islam and Islamic teachings and principles.

The judiciary is an independent institution and operates according to Shari'ah law and all the rules and regulations issued by the government, which are in perfect agreement with Shari'ah law. Scholars in Saudi Arabia have no doubt that terrorist attacks are the product of *takfirist* ideology and indeed the scholars have warned against the youth falling victim to extremism. In its 49th session on 27th July 1998 the judiciary discussed the matter of terrorism and issued an announcement condemning all types of terrorism and judging *takfir* to be a legal issue that can only be decided by God and his prophet Mohammed.

Second: *Takfir* results in killing innocent people, vandalism, sabotage, bombing of buildings and means of transportation etc. All these terrorist activities cause only terror to people. Islam preserves, for Muslims, their lives and properties and warns against violating the rights of all people, whether Muslims or non-Muslim.

Third: The council condemns those terrorist attacks in the strongest words and say that Islam disowns those terrorist activities and cannot accept the killing of people, destruction and bombing of buildings and facilities. Those activities can only be committed by people with mental illnesses (Abalkhail, 2006).

On the other hand, the council of scholars' calls upon all scholars of the Muslim world to condemn these terrorist attacks and to state that Islam is not associated with any of these terrorist activities. The following is a summary of the statements issued by the council of scholars in many sessions:

1. The council of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia, during its 32nd session held in Tâif city on 1988 issued a statement saying that there have been so many terrorist attacks and bombings that resulted in the killing of large numbers of innocent people and the destruction of many buildings. Since Islam guarantees the protection of religion, lives, honor, mind and property, Islam is innocent of such ideologies that result in the killing of people and destruction of facilities. (Nazmi, 2009).
2. When a terrorist attack took place at Olaya, Riyadh, KSA, the council of Senior Scholars issued a statement saying that the council had learned that an attack took place on Olaya Main Street on Monday 1995 where people were killed and injured. The council condemns those attacks. Such attacks can only be done by people full of hatred, betrayal and envy. Indeed, these individuals do not want any good to happen to the Muslim nation. Such attacks are strong indications of intellectual deviation. The council calls upon everyone who knows any information about those who might have been involved in these attacks to report such information to the concerned authorities (Nazmi, 2009).
3. The council of Senior Scholars during its extraordinary session held in Tâif city on 1996 issued a statement about the terrorist attacks that took place in Khobar, Dammam, KSA on 1996 where people were killed and injured. The council condemns those attacks and after due deliberations, stated the following:

First: Those attacks according to the unanimous opinion of Muslims are criminal activities for the following reasons:

- a) Those attacks are a violation of the rights of human lives and the properties of Muslims and the security of the people.
- b) In Islam people's lives are fully protected and immune against any attacks. God Almighty says in the Quran that whoever kills a believer intentionally is sentenced to Hell to abide therein, and the Wrath and the Curse of God are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him (verse 93). God says in the

same chapter, Al Nisa' that: "it is not for a believer to kill a believer except if it is by mistake. Whoever kills a believer by mistake is ordained that he must set free a believing slave". Verse 92.

- c) These criminal activities include ugly acts, such as terrorizing innocent people, betrayal and aggression and God Almighty and his Apostle reject such terrorist activities.

Second: The council condemns these terrorist attacks and announces that Islam disowns such terrorism. Such kinds of attacks can only be done by people, who are full of hatred, betrayal and envy and they a violation to the security of the people who live peacefully (Islamic Researches Magazine,).

Third: The council condemns those attacks such kinds of attacks can only be done by people, who are full of hatred, betrayal, and envy; who do not want any good to happen to the Muslim nation. Such attacks are a violation to the security of the people who live peacefully at their homes. (Islamic Researches Magazine, pages 357 – 362).

Fourth: The council would like to state that it is dangerous to take peoples' lives and Islam disowns any such terrorist activity, which includes killing people, destruction and bombing of buildings and facilities. Muslims shall advise each other in a peaceful way instead of terrorizing each other. God says in the Quran that Muslims should help one another in *Al-Birr* and *Al-Taqwa* (virtue, righteousness and piety). The Quran says that you should not help one another in sin and transgression (Verse 2).

ʿAbdulaziz Bin Baz was the Mufti of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and head of the council of Senior Scholars and the Directorate of Academic Researches and Ifta, says that it is not right to believe in the atheism of a person who applies a law other than the law of God because such a person may actually do so, but in his or her heart they may be a believer.

Sheikh Ibn Othaimeen, during a lecture at Imam Mohamed Bin Saudi Islamic University, was once asked about his opinion about those who like to call other people atheists. He answered by saying that calling or declaring that this or that person is an atheist is something that shall be decided by qualified scholars and not by anyone else (Alshibl, 2010).

ʿAbdulaziz Al Alsheikh the *Mufti* (main issuer of advisory opinions) of Saudi Arabia, in an interview with the *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, said that the issuance of advisory opinions has to be organized and should not be practiced by everybody; it should be issued by qualified scholars only. He also warned against getting seduced by the ideology of al-Qaʿida terrorist organizations, saying that there is a shortcoming in fighting intellectual terrorism. He also stated the importance of including the media and university teachers, Imams of mosques and parents (Alsuhail, *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, 2008).

Sheikh Saleh Aluhaidan also said, in an interview by the *Alshark Alawsat* newspaper, that fighting terrorism requires many factors, including preventing others from attacking other people. The word *irhâb* (terrorism), with its assimilations to betrayal, is not originally an Arabic word. In the Quran, the meaning of the word is linked to terrorizing the enemy and not innocent people. *God* calls for helping people who are affected by terrorist activities, whether they are Muslim or not.

Sheikh Saleh Alfozan was asked about terrorism and he answered by saying that Islam does not approve of terrorism.

Some students of *Shariʿah* law issue advisory opinions without being qualified to do so. Issuance of advisory opinions is a dangerous and critical matter and should be practiced in a cautious way and by those who are qualified to practice it (Alraes, 2007).

The role of Mosques in Fighting Terror:

Mosques can play a very positive role in fighting terrorism, as the mosque is the place where people usually receive their religious education and the mosque has a very noble mission in educating and guiding people. In the mosque we find religious and social lectures and speeches, such as the Friday speech as well as other activities organized at the mosque from time to time and attended by large numbers of people (ʿAbduljabbar, 2004). This is why the mosque has a very special place in the hearts of Muslims. Saudi Arabia has always paid attention to mosques and to the mission and role they play in society. Indeed, many speakers and scholars have addressed the issue

of terrorism at mosques, telling audiences about the dangers of terrorism and terrorist ideology (Abduljabbar, 2004). Nevertheless, the government supervises mosques to make sure that mosque leaders are delivering their message in appropriate ways.

8.7: The Responsibility of the Saudi Media Institutions against Terrorism

The Saudi mass media institutions including radio stations, TVs, papers, magazines, and satellite channels, contribute significantly towards the war against terror. The government of Saudi Arabia tends to elevate the level of awareness by the citizens about terrorism and always talks about the importance of cooperation between the citizens and residents. There is no doubt that the distinguished coverage of the Saudi media of the terrorist attacks and activities helped the international community to be aware and informed about all terrorist attacks and activities and about the efforts exerted by Saudi Arabia in its war against terror and the disasters it suffers because of terrorism.

The message from the media to the Saudi people is that terrorism shall not be an excuse to practice injustices against Muslims. The media targets the mosques and the schools to make the people aware of the dangers of terrorism as the students can easily get affected by misinformation. (King Saud University, 2009).

The Role of the Mass media in the War against *takfir*:

The mass media personnel and officials should be aware of the dangerous role played by the mass media and they should use mass media in a strategic way. They should be wise enough to avoid giving the people and the audience useless materials in the media and should instead give the people pure Islamic ethics and values to help the youth. Media outlets should take into consideration the fact that the youth need mass media to provide them with materials that help them develop their psychological and social needs. The universities are also expected to participate in this awareness mission led by the media (Kohdir, 1998). The Public Information and Communication

campaign is a significant leader in the country's agenda on disseminating information on a large scale. The major mission of this agenda is to create a relationship between the public and the government and to underline the damaging consequences of terrorism, while squashing extremist beliefs. As an example, take the government response to the 2003 Riyadh terrorist attack. The government utilized mass media by displaying the evils of terrorism on billboards mounted around the capital. Some of these images displayed faithful worshippers along with the aftermath of the attack in Riyadh to outline the extreme difference in these two images. The posters used strong messages, such as "Our religion rejects terrorism" and "We all say no to terrorism" in order to put out their message (Boucek, 2008).

The role played by the Ministry of Information requires the following elements:

- 1) Intensive applied courses for preachers about the methodology of preaching with a focus on the preacher himself.
- 2) Direct supervision over preachers and consistent evaluation and correction of their mistakes.
- 3) Ensuring a suitable environment for preachers by giving them fair salaries, not less than the salaries of those who hold the same qualifications in other fields.
- 4) Selecting distinguished personnel for this mission.

The mass media institutions can contribute to the process of the war against *takfir* in the following ways:

- 1) Holding academic symposia for dialogue among scholars at least once a week.
- 2) More programs shall be presented to the audience; particularly programs that are expected to educate the youth and show the importance of the role they can play in building a better country by taking greater responsibility.
- 3) Organizing academic gatherings and competitions at schools and universities because this will encourage the youth to ask more questions.
- 4) Develop programs about the value of time.
- 5) Encourage students to use art, such as plays to relay the message of the dangers of *takfir* and its negative impact on society.
- 6) Discourage movies about violence and hatred.
- 7) The media shall not deceive the public through materials presented by the media. (Mega, 2010)

Holding an International Conference on Terrorism:

During the period 5 – 8 February 2005, Saudi Arabia held an international conference on terrorism under the patronage of King ʿAbdullah Bin ʿAbdulaziz – when he was crown prince. 16 Arab countries, 7 Muslim countries, 4 African countries, 10 European countries, 6 Asian countries and 3 American countries participated in the conference in addition to Australia and UN, the African Union, the European Union, Islamic Congress, Arab League, Interpol, GCC, the Arab Council of Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Islamic World League. The conference was characterized by participation from all countries present, in the spirit of cooperation and understanding. The Declaration asserted the following points:

- 1) Terrorism has no religion, race, nationality or a certain geographical area.
- 2) The importance of spreading good values and peaceful coexistence. Mass media shall refrain from making propaganda about terrorism. No media materials calling for extremism shall be disseminated. There shall be guidance regulations for media reports to prevent extremists from using them to recruit for their cause
- 3) Commitment to the international resolutions issued by the UN related to terrorism especially the Security Council resolutions, which represent solid ground for the war against terror.
- 4) Widening political participation and activating the role of the civil society institutions in confronting the factors that are conducive to the spread of violence and extremist ideologies. Likewise, it is important to develop the educational systems to help crystallize strategies to confront extremists' allegations.
- 5) National, bilateral and regional cooperation for coordination between the authorities concerned with the war against terror, money laundering, arms and explosives trafficking, drug trafficking and smuggling because coordination between organized crime mafias should be confronted.
- 6) The UN shall develop criteria to help non-profit charities and humanitarian organizations do their work.
- 7) The war against terror requires international, unified and permanent efforts within a framework of international legal commitment and a respect for human rights, refugees and humanitarian law (Eed, 2005: 172).

8.8: Conclusion

Takfir has become increasingly dangerous, and accusations of apostasy and disbelief seem to abound in modern Muslim societies such as Saudi Arabia. The situation is made more complex when murder ensues from this – when people are effectively playing God in taking the lives of others because of a dogmatic belief they hold regarding them, Misguidance in education further exacerbates the situation and this needs to be rectified if things are to change, particularly in the context of Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, defeating *takfir* in Saudi will require an intellectual battle which challenges the ideology of *takfir* head-on. Saudi Arabia has opened the door for cordial debate and national dialogue on this matter and so things are certainly moving in the right direction.

Chapter Nine: The Crisis of Authority in Islam

Unlike religious traditions such as Christianity and Judaism – and with the exception of the Shi'a sect - Islam has no central authority. Richard Bulliet, author of “The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization,” explains that this void in authority in Islam is only increasing. This is despite Muslims reaching out to various people and institutions claiming to be such an authoritative voice. The technologies of globalisation, such as the Internet, and the breakdown of traditional religious structures such as the ancient law schools, has meant that at this point in time, there is unlikely to be a religion more fractured in the world than Islam. The phenomenon of splintering, and therefore further decentering, looks set to continue.

The lack of central authority has had particularly detrimental repercussions in modernity, manifesting in the rise of radicalisation and terrorism. The crisis of authority has meant that *takfir* can be proclaimed by all and sundry; powerful and influential institutions such as the al-Azhar may reject the excommunicating of a Jihadi ideologue when he issues it, but the centuries-old institution which today is but an extension of the Egyptian state, is probably no longer perceived to hold the moral authority to do so. Especially among *jihadis* themselves, the al-Azhar is seen as nothing more than the mouth-piece of the Egyptian government. Of course, resolving this crisis of authority could take several generations; what is clear, is that it is now an urgent imperative if the Muslim world is to halt the sectarianism which beleaguers it.

From the death of the Prophet onward, Muslims who wanted to know what was expected of them religiously did not look to the government. They followed instead the practices of their local community as transmitted from generation to generation in written or oral form. Alternatively, they sought pastoral instruction from religious scholars and saintly individuals. Sometimes, these were government officials — but usually not. In most times and places, the prevailing political institutions had little interest in or control over these sources of guidance.

According to Robinson (2009), person-to-person transmission was at the heart of authoritative transmission of knowledge up until modernity:

The best way of getting at the truth was to listen to the author himself. So Muslim scholars constantly travelled throughout the Islamic world so that they could receive authoritative transmission of knowledge. And, when a scholar could not get knowledge from the author in person, he strove to get it from a scholar whose *isnâd*, or chain of transmission from the original author, was thought to be the most reliable. The preference for the oral over the written text may be explained by the central concern for the transmission of the author's meaning – for the transmission of the most authoritative understanding of the text.

Person-to-person transmission over history was believed to be the most reliable way of understanding the intent of the original author of the text in his absence. So strong was the tradition of person-to-person transmission of knowledge as an authoritative mechanism that the *Ulama* for centuries rejected print (Robinson, 2009). Print undermined personal, face-to-face instruction and could potentially ruin the monopoly that *Ulama* had over the interpretation of religious knowledge.

Of course print would eventually become accepted by *Ulama* as a tool for dissemination of knowledge, but only after the social structures in place in the Muslim world had already begun to collapse under colonial rule. It is worth noting that up until about the middle of the 19th century, when colonial rule began to destabilise the socio-political landscape of the Muslim East, the location of religious authority and the capacity to produce authoritative interpretation as it was to be found in Muslim societies in general, derived from the Quran and the life of the Prophet, and lay in the hands of *Ulama*. By the 1850s, the *Ulama* were struggling to prevent lay intellectuals from challenging their monopoly. The system for the authoritative transmission of Islamic knowledge, and for its authoritative interpretation, began to break down (Robinson, 2009). As Robinson explains:

Scholarly authority became fragmented; old hierarchies have been flattened; the old interpretative disciplines have been sidelined. All kinds of new interpreters of the faith have come forward; all kinds of new interpretations have been promulgated. No one now knows who speaks for Islam with

authority.

Robinson mentions several of the best known 19th and 20th century reformers as examples of men who capitalised on the crisis of authority: Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Mawlana Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati. But these were not really the thinkers who might instigate thinking about an intellectual crisis for the impressive nature of each man's contribution. It is men like Abd al-Salam Faraj, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Usamah bin Laden who do this. They bring an intellectual diversity which is hardly welcomed by many in the Muslim world. But uncertainty about what is authoritative has perhaps given them a voice, leading even to the rise of tenacious adherents who claims the practices and beliefs of these men to be the truest version of Islam. As Bulliet has argued, "When there is no church acting as guardian of the faith, after all, the duty falls to the individual believer".

But the situation today is perhaps that much more amplified because of the technologies which are linked with globalisation. For the first time in history, Muslims from every land and condition — a preacher in Harlem, a terrorist in Mombasa, a political party leader in Kuala Lumpur, a feminist in Marrakesh — can access a worldwide audience as easily as traditional authorities like a Shaikh al-Azhar in Cairo, an ayatollah in Najaf or a royally appointed mufti in Riyadh. Moreover, the devaluation of the old authorities by the modernizing regimes of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the creation of mass youth literacy by these same governments, have led many Muslims on the edge to believe that they are free to choose whatever brand of Islam best suits their circumstances. They contend that Islam is whatever they and their friends believe it to be on the basis of the teachings of the person whose writings, audiotapes and videotapes they find most convincing.

As posited by Bulliet, the resolution of this crisis of authority will depend less on ideas than on institutions, and in particular on institutions that convince large segments of the Muslim community that a semblance of spiritual order has returned.

This democratisation of religion has resulted in both gains and losses. The sense of ownership for the layman is certainly a gain, and has led to a renewed state of religiosity for many. But extremist ideologies have also emerged in the vacuum left by the collapse of the ancient institutions of religious learning.

Some might cite the Islamic Republic of Iran as a modern success insofar as it has attempted to combine religion with government: whatever one's view, it is a fascinating experiment in implementing democracy in an Islamic religious state. According to Bulliet, "most would agree that constitution writers boldly came to grips with the problem of institutionalizing religious authority in the person of the "governing religious jurist," otherwise known as *vilayet-e-faqih*." Until now, no parallel has emerged in the Sunni world. In fact, in the Sunni world, the widespread loss of trust in the old authorities and their institutions has resulted in hundreds of acts of *ijtihad* embodied in fatwas, otherwise known as legal opinions, or less formal declarations, but no way of telling which of them should be followed. Scholars associated with the governments of their countries are criticised by lay voices for not being independent; for being mouth-pieces of the regime. We may cite Bin Laden's criticism of Shaykh Abd al-Aziz bin Baz as an example (cited in Robinson, 2009):

Honorable Shaikh you have reached a good age, and you have achieved much in the service of Islam, so fear God and distance yourself from these tyrants and oppressors who have declared war on God and His Messenger and stand with the righteous men . . . the most prominent characteristic of these righteous scholars was the way they dissociated themselves from sultans.

As Robinson says, this sort of a pronouncement would have been laughed at in the 18th century. Bulliet makes a worrying prediction: "Judging from history, Sunni Islam will surely not continue indefinitely under the current radical breakdown in its structure of authority." In light of this assertion, new ways must be found to credential and empower religious authorities. Thereafter, ordinary believers must be persuaded to follow the decisions of those authorities.

9.1: A Radical Proposal

In light of the above, it is proposed that the Muslim world is in need of a centralised regulating power, in much the same way as exists in Christianity. This authority would be invested with the sole right to accept new converts into the house of Islam as well as to excommunicate (*takfir*) those judged to have committed a contravention warranting such a penalty. This central body would have to be

independent of the State so as to maintain its autonomy in decision making and to assure believers that it is acting in God's name rather than for earthly vested interests. Since there is no historical precedent for such an authority, at least in the Sunni world, there is need to find scriptura legitimacy to create such an institution. This can be derived from all of the following: Quranic imperatives, such as Q.16:43 and Q.21:7: "Then ask the people of knowledge if you know not"; Prophetic guidance, such as "The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets" (Bukhari) and the practice of the early Muslims, particular during the Caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, who organised a consultative body of learned companions to guide the Muslims in their affairs. The authority could thus be claimed to have been bestowed upon the regulatory body directly by God, the Prophet Muhammad and the practice of the early Muslims. For the purposes of this section, the regulatory body will now be referred to as the *'Ilmiyya* (adopting the term used for the classical Ottoman scholarly establishment). The *'Ilmiyya* would have a threefold authority: *teaching* authority, *ministerial* authority, and *ruling* authority. Since, the teaching of *'Ilmiyya* would be authoritative, the teaching authority would be traditionally included in the ruling authority; therefore, only the ministerial authority and the ruling authority would require distinguishing from one another. By ministerial authority is meant the inward, and, because of its indelible character, permanent capacity to perform acts by which is transmitted. By ruling authority, is meant the authority to guide and rule the Muslim community.

9.2: Scope of jurisdiction in a general sense

Much like the Roman Catholic church, the scope of the *'Ilmiyya* would cover only objects of contentious ecclesiastical jurisdiction: questions of faith (*masa'il i'tiqadiyya*), the administration of religious duties, particularly the contracting and maintenance of marriage, the holding of funeral services, the creation and modification of *waqf*, the appointment to and the vacation of *'Ilmiyya* offices and the administration of *'Ilmiyya*. As to the criminal jurisdiction of the *'Ilmiyya*, it should only inflict on the laity those penalties which are linked to questions of faith, i.e. theological offences. If ever civil consequences ensue, only the civil authority which governs the particular geographical area where the offence was committed can take cognizance of them. Where *'Ilmiyya* and State are not separated, the State would aid in investigating these offences, as well as in executing the legally rendered decisions of the *'Ilmiyya*. As to

theological offences, *‘Ilmiyya* is free to punish such offences by penalties which do not conflict with State law, such as excommunication.

9.3: Locus of Power, *‘Ilmiyya* Structure and Patronage

The *‘Ilmiyya* would need to be located in a part of the Muslim world which is of universal significance to facilitate acceptance of its authority and to increase its credibility. An obvious location would be Mecca, the direction for Muslim prayer, or Medina, the City of the Prophet. With a global Muslim community exceeding one and a half billion adherents, it is clear that the *‘Ilmiyya* would need representatives in every nation of the Muslim world and in countries where Muslims live as sizeable minorities. This representative would function much like bishops in the Roman-Catholic Church. Vested with power from the *‘Ilmiyya*, local representative would perform the rites on behalf of the central authority, initiate new converts, manage property, etc. On an annual basis, *‘Ilmiyya* representatives would participate in a council, much like the modern Church Synod; they would be an advisory body to the *Shaykh al-Islam*, meeting at the centre of *‘Ilmiyya* power. Within their remit would be the consideration of important issues and developing Islamic teaching. They would serve as a check against the power of the *Shaykh al-Islam*, representing in some way the democratisation of *‘Ilmiyya* power.

As for the funds to finance such an institution, these would ideally be sourced from various Muslim governments in whose interests it is that there exists a central authority; the global Muslim faithful, who would pay either all or a percentage of their *zakat* in to a central treasury (*Bayt al-mal*), which could be the responsibility of the *‘Ilmiyya* to manage, distributing charity on behalf of the Muslim faithful to needy recipients and worthwhile causes; and also capital raised from *‘Ilmiyya* property and investments. These are only suggestions and are not meant to be exhaustive.

9.4: Conclusion

Resolving the crisis of authority in Islam will take several decades, perhaps even generations; in any case, it is clear that the lack of central authority means that the Muslim community will only continue to suffer from sectarian divides, intra-Islamic violence and terrorism committed in its name. The widespread loss of trust in the present authorities and their institutions, such as the Al-Azhar or Madinah University,

has resulted in hundreds of acts of *ijtihad* embodied in fatwas, or less formal declarations, but no way of telling which of them should be followed. In the words of Bulliet, “many of these new pronouncements have been made by individuals whose religious credentials would have been laughed at in the 18th century” (Bulliet, 2006). This reality has been a cause of widespread uncertainty among the Muslim faithful as well as an untold numbers of voices laying claim to religious truth. Bulliet argues rightly that, judging from history, Sunni Islam in particular, will surely not continue indefinitely under the current radical breakdown in its structure of authority. “New ways must be found to credential and empower religious authorities. Ordinary believers must be persuaded to follow the decisions of those authorities.” As for the future, people with inadequate credentials must be accorded a lesser standing within the religious landscape of the Muslim world, particularly if *takfiri* thought is to be curtailed.

Chapter Ten: Conclusions and Recommendations

Takfir, as an ideology, is a product of the ideas of the Khārjites as well as the more modern ideologies of certain Sunni and Shiite groups. In modern times, there has been an increased emergence in the relationship between *takfir* and hostility towards Muslims and non-Muslims alike. These thoughts have been a result in part to scholars' and thinkers' ideas and the ideas of groups such as al-Qa'ida. In the past there has also been a relationship made between modern *takfir* ideologies and the thoughts among Christians and Jews and the crusades, in particular the *Ūkafron* attitudes based on disparity in beliefs, which often led to conflict and murder. It should be made clear that *takfir* is not simply a product of religion, but it comes from those people that have particularly violent ideas. *Takfir* is often correlated with extremism and those people who inflate ideas of religious reasoning. It is clear that it should be the religious professionals that take up the matter of challenging *takfir* and not simply non-official people without the proper knowledge to make clear judgements on religion.

Looking at Saudi Arabia in particular, there is evidence of the country's attempts at quashing Islamic militancy. It is clear that a unified response is required on anti-terrorist strategies and this requires support of the Saudi people and the many institutions of government. At a national operational level, it would be ill-advised to believe that collaboration between the people is the best way for the government to remove terrorist organisations and the influences of these groups. In order to allow this to take place there should be open discussion between citizens and the government.

However, the realities of putting into place these so-called 'soft' measures of anti-terrorism policy are fraught with difficulty. Such strategies can be used to weaken influence and discourage the recruitment of new people to the militant groups, but these groups have significant domination in the region and they have had for several decades. Saudi Arabia has been hesitant in its methodology, but pragmatic because there is the realisation that violent dissension needs to be suppressed with hard measures in order to distinguish the negative realities of the *takfir* phenomenon that threatens all of society. Indeed, *takfiri* thought has a destructive influence on all substrates of society including

the intellectual, political, social, economic and familial security of people living in Saudi Arabia. *Takfir* use by terrorist organisations is successful because it eats away at the security and stability of peace in regions through words and actions.

A reality of *takfiri* ideology spreading is the increase in insecurity and instability and other problems associated with the government having to put money towards destabilising *takfiri* organisations when they should be spending that money on economic development, and the development of education and healthcare programs. *Takfiri* ideology also creates a feeling of mistrust in society and causes conflict and apostasy and it erodes the economy and spreads terror and insecurity in society. Most importantly, *takfir* also erodes the image of Islam and encourages a sense of Islamophobia. This is particularly destructive with regard to the way outsiders see Islam and Muslim countries and this can cause racism and conflict. On September 11, the world witnessed the most significant product of *takfirism* with the devastating attacks on civilians in the United States. Following the attacks, much of the West and indeed the United States were swift to cast the blame towards Saudi Arabia and label the country a source of terrorism, even though the crimes committed were only committed by a few individuals from that country. Religion and education in Saudi Arabia, along with other countries in the region, were condemned as being the source of extremism and the likely cause of terrorist acts around the world. The reality is that the Saudi government and Saudi society also condemned the attacks on September 11 and the government was involved in fights against the *takfirist* sects that plague the country.

The battle to defeat *takfirism* in Saudi Arabia is ongoing, but it must step up to meet the challenges the country faces. In the past, Saudi Arabia attempted to eradicate *takfirist* ideologies by preventing people from practicing certain activities, however, it is now clear that the battle needs to focus on the intellectual components of the roots of terrorism. Saudi Arabia needs to focus on uprooting extremism and focus on educating its people on the best way to go forward with a means to maintaining peace in society. *Takfirists* have become increasingly dangerous in the way they act against so-called non-believers. They apply their own standards and means to accuse and kill people they believe to be swaying from the correct path. However, this ideology is vastly misconceived and it is being left to governments to try and eradicate this kind of behaviour. Education is an important tool for the government to eradicate misconceptions and misunderstandings about *takfir*. In Saudi Arabia, the government is

becoming more aware of the need to educate society and it is opening the doors to new dialogues between citizens and the government that will allow for change to take place.

The Muslim world is witnessing a struggle in its efforts to unify its community of believers in all of its regions. The fact that the Sunni Muslim world in particular has no point of central religious authority, and arguably has never had, has played into the hands of the *takfiri* organizations and other terrorist minded groups. One of the key proposals of this study is for there to develop, in the Muslim world, a central religious body, representing through its constituent body the diversity of Muslim thought, orientations and theologies, with its locus in Saudi Arabia, so that the Muslims have a central religious administrative and supervisory overseer. This could function much like the Vatican, and provide a source of fatwas and other religious teaching, disseminating to religious information to believers around the world. It should be politically and financially independent so that it maintains its intellectual autonomy and credibility; it should be structured much like a government, with elections, legislative councils and executive headquarters. Mecca or Medina in Saudi Arabia would probably provide the ideal location for such an institution due to the religious significance of these centres. Such an institution alone has the capacity, in the view of this author, to curtail dangerous fatwas of the al-Qa'idah variety or otherwise misguided teachings which serve only to put the Islamic world onto a crash course with all of its civilisational neighbours.

This thesis posits that growing ideological divides are the result, in part, of the absence of a central religious institution representing and serving the Muslim world. At the intellectual level, the Islamic world is witnessing a struggle between extremist ideology and moderate intellectual paradigms; this war is damaging Muslim communities across the world. Some Islamic countries are working hard to eliminate extremist ideology, for example in Saudi Arabia, as this thesis has shown, while others have yet to realise the severity of the issue. It is therefore important for an internationally legitimated institution to act as a guide for the Muslim world especially regarding crucial issues that affect its fate. The unification of fatwa, according to an institutional perspective and not an individual, one has many advantages. It is essential if we are to unify sources and reduce conflicts of scientists to guide public opinion in a directed, international approach. Bridging the clashes of interest of the Islamic world is very important for developing Islam in a progressive direction and avoiding the erosion

caused by Islamophobia.

This proposal, namely to create a central religious authority within the Muslim world, would have benefits not limited to the unification of fatwas, but also it would serve as a springboard for a revival of Islamic education, including schools and colleges, which will oversee the dissemination of the agreed upon religious teachings of the central body across the Muslim world. A clear methodology for students, professors and researchers and scientists could be established to aid cooperation in the education of the Muslim masses. The financial resources required for such an initiative would be considerable: it is envisaged that these would come from sympathetic Muslim governments, philanthropists, and supported by the central authorities own assets.

10.1 Main thesis conclusions

After analyzing the issue of *takfir* in Saudi Arabia and explaining how it first appeared and the negative impacts it had, along with analysis of the groups that support *takfir* in Saudi Arabia, and the institutions that fight *takfir* inside Saudi Arabia, the following conclusions have been reached:

The origins of *takfir* go back to the dispute that took place between ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and Mu’awia Ibn Abi Sufiyan.

Takfir is dogmatic behavior based on extremism in the evaluation of alternative interpretations and it is practiced in many religions through organized groups. The *takfirist* ideology aims towards particular social, political and military goals; however, these goals are based on principles that contradict the beliefs of the orthodox Saudi scholars.

There must be a difference between *takfir* of the individual and the absolute *takfir* (general *takfir*). There are also impediments to *takfir*, such as coercion, ignorance and misinterpretation. If a person is coerced into doing something against their will then they should not be labeled an apostate.

Intolerance is one of the main reasons for *takfir*. People should be tolerant and should always choose to organize peaceful, democratic and tolerant dialogues among themselves. They should accept and respect each other’s opinions. There are some reasons behind *takfir* that lead to *takfir* including the intolerance of schoolteachers;

these kind of thoughts are embraced by the youth especially those who receive education from such intolerant teachers. Unfortunately, the educational administration is not aware of this.

Takfīr has some conditions to be met by those who practice it. Such conditions are being a Muslim, an adult, sane and capable of providing evidence to prove that the person in question committed an act that has rendered him or her convert. He or she should also be aware of the consequences of declaring a person an apostate. One of the most important features of *takfīr* contradictions is that of coercion, extreme happiness and extreme fear.

Islam forbids killing innocent, non-fighting people who are at the same time belong to another faith but happen to be living in a Muslim land. There are many texts in the Quran and the *Sunnah* that forbid killing such people and at the same time there are warnings to these killers that they will be sent to hell if they do so. Islamic Shari'ah law does not decide that a Muslim person has become an apostate unless there is strong evidence to prove that.

The spread of the *takfīr* phenomenon damages the image of Islam internationally and jeopardizes the security and safety of Muslims worldwide. This helps the enemies of Islam to attack it and portrays Islam as a violent religion and one that is a danger to the human race.

The mass media helps spread the *takfīr* ideology and this happens through satellite channels, which have turned into forums broadcasting the ideology of the *takfīrist* groups. The same thing is done through the internet.

The spread of *takfīrist* ideologies is also partially caused by psychological and social factors. The youth are frustrated and are seeking revenge against their enemies. Moreover, some youths have destructive motives and they may be looking for an outlet to express aggressive behaviour. This outlet may come in the form of *takfīrist* and extremist groups. The ideology of *takfīrist* and extremist groups has developed a lot since the early Islamic eras. In our modern times, we have the school of Abū 'l-A'īn Mawdūdī and Sayyid Qutb. *Takfīrist* ideology has been adopted and embraced by the *Takfīri wal-Hijra* groups in Egypt and by the Al-Qa'idah organization and *Jihād* organization, among others.

There are other reasons that make some of the younger generations in Saudi Arabis

choose to identify with *takfirist* groups. Such reasons include weak family ties in Saudi society and a lack of dialogue among members of the family, illiteracy and ignorance, and the fact that some young people feel a great sense of unfairness or injustice with regard to the economic and social conditions that characterize Saudi society.

Unemployment in Saudi society also contributes a lot to the spread of extremism and *takfirism* because the young generations are frustrated and desperate.

In our modern time *takfir* is considered a complex mix of complicated thoughts and imaginations in which religious, political and economic motives come together. Also, psychological and social circumstances add to the problem. All this combined makes the *takfirist* ideology a complicated one.

People of Saudi Arabia, being generally moderate Sunni Muslims, do not declare people as apostates in an indifferent and random way. This applies to all official and religious institutions in Saudi Arabia.

Poor educational factors: the teacher, the educational curriculum, the student and the school environment all may contribute to the spread of the *takfirist* ideology.

Takfir has negative impacts on the economy, oil industry, tourism, investment opportunities and the stock market. When these sectors are affected by extremism and *takfir*, we eventually get unemployment, inflation, and a lowering in the standard of living, exchange rate and rate of economic development.

As a result of extremism and *takfir* there is what is known as Islamophobia in the world, which means fear from Islam. This limits the spread of Islam as an international religion. Moreover, this leads to the instability of the relationship between the Muslim world and other countries of the world. It also has a negative effect on Muslim populations in western countries and Europe and it damages the image of Islam in the eyes of the world.

Takfir has evil social impacts including disobedience to parents, failure to maintain kinship relationships, failure of parents to take care of their families, collapse of the family as a social unit, divorce and separation between husband and wife.

As a result of *takfir*, the youth tend to be violent and they lose loyalty to their country, let down their families.

Misunderstanding of religion and an intellectual vacuum among students is also one of

the factors that can lead to *takfīr* and extremism.

Most contemporary ideologies have a defect in their methodology, which focuses only on the sentimental influence on the followers. Their goals are confined only to political, economic and social aspects of life.

There is a defect in the upbringing of children and in parental control because the parents are too busy to take care of their children.

Saudi society in general is not interested in classifying people as converts or atheists and when it does, that happens through official religious institutions that are specialized in issuing advisory opinions, such as Muslim scholars and the ministry of endowments.

Takfīr, when practiced without control, results in bombings, assassinations, sabotage, destruction of buildings, undermining of security and terrorizing of peoples.

Takfīr activities can lead to an increase in the number of poor and the needy as a result of loss of family members to terrorist activities, erosion of the world opinion on Saudi Arabia as a society and division within the country between the pro and anti-*takfīrists*.

The religious movement started by Muḥammad Bin ʿAbdul Wahāb, which was born at the same time the Saudi state was born, is a radicalist movement that follows a moderate method that does not call people converts or atheists in a random way. When it decides that a person is a convert or atheist, it bases its decision on the provisions of the Quran and the *Sunnah*. There are some individuals in Saudi society, who just like to call people converts, but they only represent themselves and they are not related in any way to the Saudi government or the official religious institutions.

Al-Qaʿidah organization in Saudi Arabia follows a very extremist ideology because it renders a large number of Muslims and they confuse general *takfīr* with *takfīr* of a specific person. They are very intolerant and they are very indifferent about the bloodsheds they cause.

One of the reasons that cause bombings is *takfīr* because it widens the gap between people of the same society and it also causes enmity between Muslims. Moreover, *takfīr* has sabotaged facilities, means of transportation and residential buildings in the country.

Takfīr and extremism have also negatively affected charity activities that used to collect money from the rich to give to the needy inside and outside Saudi Arabia. These

organizations were deprived of money donations because there is fear that such money may be transferred to terrorist organizations.

Takfīr causes the Saudi government to be subjected to tremendous foreign pressure in order to change educational curricula wholly or partially.

Saudi Arabia has chosen to use the security solution to the problem of terrorism caused by the *takfīrists*.

Takfīr causes the people of the society to be enemies of each other instead of being friendly to each other. This kind of behavior weakens Muslim society and causes people to lose their security and safety.

Takfīr violates the general human rights of Muslims. Islam calls for respecting and protecting human rights for Muslim scholars, citizens, residents and rulers.

The Saudi government and the people, including the king, are all united against terrorism and *takfīr*. No effort is saved when it comes to the confrontation and defeat of *takfīrist* thought.

All the governmental agencies and institutions come together to fight and defeat the *takfīrists* and the terrorists. The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration and cooperation with the other agencies, such as the investigation department and the border security forces, fight terrorists and *takfīrists* everywhere.

Educational institutions play a major role in confronting and combating the *takfīrist* thoughts and in the correction of wrong concepts about religion and religious teachings.

Religious institutions, the Board of Advisory opinions, the judiciary system, mass media and research centres are all considered governmental agencies that are working together in the fight against terrorism and *takfīr*.

Although mass media can sometimes have a negative influence, it does still play an important role in curbing terrorism.

10.2 Recommendations

The following are the most important recommendations which we believe Saudi Arabia should work on in order to eliminate the concepts and ideologies of the *takfīrists* and extremists:

It is very important to educate parents. Educators, and the youth need to be made aware of the dangers of *takfir* and extremism and they should be warned against it because ignorance about it is equally dangerous. All these efforts are expected to contribute to the confrontation and defeat of extremism.

Takfir should be practiced only by those who are qualified to practice it, such as Muslim scholars, but it should not be practiced by students or lay people. The government should not allow lay people to practice *takfir*.

Mass media should try to publish and distribute academic research to guarantee that it reaches the largest possible number of citizens.

Communication should be established with the help of Islamic governmental and non-governmental media agencies and institutions in order to educate others on the issue of *takfir* and the opinions of scholars on it.

Peoples should be warned against extremism in religion and *takfir* and should be made aware of its disastrous effects.

Mosques should be used to disseminate awareness of *takfir* and religious extremism, especially in rural areas where the youth are to be educated about *takfir*.

It is important to organize and design training programs for religious scholars and Imams to upgrade their levels in education and to equip them with communication skills. They should also be told to stay away from intolerance.

The government should keep the door open for those who want to repent and quit violence and extremism and we should welcome those who stray back into society and work on integrating them into society. There have been successes in social dialogue and the government has helped those who voluntarily came back to society and repented. After being released from prison, the government created social integration programs and provided these people with employment opportunities in order to provide them with economic and social stability and a regular income.

It is equally important to design a strategy for intellectual re-assessment based on national dialogue and reconciliation.

There are some traditions and ugly practices in the Saudi society that should be corrected because such traditions are against the teachings of Islam. Preachers and scholars should educate people in poor neighborhoods to support people and needy

families that require guidance.

The youth must be taken care of and should be taught moderate Islam and not extremism. On the other hand, the religious youth should not be accused of being extremists, while they are truly innocent. This will help sustain peace between the youth and the government. Violence always results in counter violence.

It is also important to enhance parental control and children's upbringing. For this purpose, parents should seek help from psychologists and educationalists. Domestic violence and school violence should be avoided as much as possible.

People, organizations and the government must promote a culture of national dialogue and should find a solution to the problem of extremism and other social problems, such as *takfir*. All the categories of the society, from top to bottom, should be involved in this national dialogue in order to promote concepts such as diversity, tolerance and development.

Scholars, intellectuals and other figures in society should all contribute to the solution of this problem of *takfir* and other extremist problems. They should cooperate and try to curb this phenomenon and minimize the damage it causes to society. Everyone should play their roles in the best possible ways.

Educational curricula should be promoted and re-evaluated. Teaching staff at pre-university and university education stages should also be subject to screening and monitoring in order to guarantee that educational institutions are capable of delivering the education message in the proper way and to protect the youth from evil ideologies of *takfirists*. Educational reform is important and must take care of promoting the skills of dialogue and analytical thinking instead of shallow ways of thinking and of understanding things, history and cultures. Educational output can be better if technical education is also developed.

The social elite, strategists and scholars should make initiatives to support those who were seduced by the extremists. Those individuals that have been seduced should be welcomed back and integrated into society and they should be treated in a kind way and put back on the right track.

We should spread good moral concepts and proper understanding of the Quran and the *Sunnah* and we should also explain to people the right understanding of Islamic teachings and concepts that have triggered conflicts among Muslims. Moreover, we

should spread values of tolerance and moderation in society.

Business and professional incubators, scientific gatherings and forums, and educational counseling should be studied and evaluated to decide to what extent they are successful and fruitful. The goal of this is to develop and upgrade the standards of education and make it useful to society.

It is important to find a solution to the economic problems among the youth and to provide them with employment. Unemployment can create troubles.

It is important to create and establish governmental and non-governmental societies and centres specialized in dealing with the problem of *takfir*. Such centres should be run and supervised by highly qualified specialists and researchers who should be provided and equipped with all the necessary facilities and capabilities to help them do their work properly. Universities and educational institutions should play a major role in this mission and studies and research should be conducted in order to solve this problem.

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