

### 3. India, Afghanistan and Iraq (1930-1936): Polemics against the Aḥmadiyya and against the Niqāb

The three years Al-Hilālī spent in Mecca and Medina assisting and guiding the Wahhābīs and the time he lived in Upper Egypt both provide evidence of his early commitment to international preaching.<sup>1</sup> He quickly adopted the role of a travelling Salafī missionary prepared to roam the whole world to propagate his message.<sup>2</sup>

After leaving Saudi Arabia in 1930, Al-Hilālī continued spreading the Salafīyya message in his travels in India, Afghanistan and Iraq, criticizing any belief which contradicted its principles. Nevertheless, he was not always consistent in abiding by the teachings of Salafism which he so vigorously promoted. For instance, when he went to Afghanistan in 1352/1934 and fell ill with malaria and became so frantic he decided to submit to a strange treatment, which he said he had had to resort to in his ‘time of Ignorance’ (before his conversion). He decided to write invocations on pieces of paper and almond shells and burn them.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, his fever receded, something Al-Hilālī could not explain.<sup>4</sup> Al-Hilālī states categorically that he was obliged to use this method to ease the pain he was suffering.<sup>5</sup> Another example which shows that Al-Hilālī sometimes contradicted Salafī teachings was his belief that it is not obligatory for Muslims to follow the sayings of the Prophet concerning *ādāb* (decorum), especially in matters related to beard growth, dressing and eating. To substantiate his view, he argued that commands and prohibitions related to personal embellishment and natural customs should be understood in terms of recommendations and not in terms of commands. Al-Hilālī’s reply was based on lengthy quotations from the *ḥadīth*<sup>6</sup> and this the reason he did not let his beard grow. When a scholar from the *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’* advised him to stop shaving his beard, he unwarily told the man to stop interfering in matters which did not concern him and to worry about his own affairs.<sup>7</sup> His intemperance led to his temporary dismissal from the *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’* for one year. In fact, there are many *fatwas*

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<sup>1</sup> Lauzière (2008), 199.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 224.

<sup>3</sup> Before his conversion, he advised people to apply this kind of treatment. See Al-Hilālī (2005a), 181-182.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 243.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005A), 46.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 227.

in the unpublished collection *Al-Fatāwā Al-Hilālīyya* in which Al-Hilālī, in contrast to many other Salafist scholars, declares he does not think that shaving the beard constitutes a major sin.<sup>8</sup> In Muḥarram 1349/ June 1930,<sup>9</sup> Al-Hilālī had been invited to teach in the *Kullīyyat Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’*<sup>10</sup> in Lucknow (India) by Sulayman al-Nadawī (d.1953)<sup>11</sup> and ‘Abd al-‘Alī al-Ḥasan al-Nadawī (1895-1961).<sup>12</sup> Three months later, in September 1930, he was actually selected to become the chairman of the Arabic Literature Department at a monthly salary of 125 Indian Rupees.<sup>13</sup> In the precarious economic situation in which he found himself, which had been aggravated after his temporary dismissal, Al-Hilālī continued to enjoy the financial support of his rich friend *Shaykh* Muṣṭafa Āl-Ibrāhīm.<sup>14</sup>

In late 1931, Al-Hilālī made a short trip the city of Azamgarh with Sulayman al-Nadawī and Abū al-Ḥasan Al-Nadawī.<sup>15</sup> During that trip, Sulayman al-Nadawī and Al-Hilālī agreed to establish an Arabic magazine which they called *al-Ḍiyā’*.<sup>16</sup> Al-Hilālī was appointed director and Mas‘ūd al-Nadawī the managing editor.<sup>17</sup> *al-Ḍiyā’* was first published in the month of Muḥarram 1351/May 1932. Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadawī said that the publication of *al-Ḍiyā’* heralded a new era in the Arab press in India. The magazine was indeed a kind of symposium through to communicate with Muslims and make the *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’* known

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<sup>8</sup> These *fatwas* will be discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 224.

<sup>10</sup> *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’* was established in 1892 (1316), for further detailed information see Al-Nadawī (1975), 61.

<sup>11</sup> About Sulaymān Al-Nadawī (1884-1953), see Al-Nadawī (1987), 275-276.

<sup>12</sup> About him see Al-Nadawī (1987), 276. He was the older brother of the well-known Abū al-Ḥasan al-Nadawī (d.1999) and Vice-President of the *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’* until his death in 1961.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Nadawī* (1987), 99. In his autobiography, *Al-Da‘wa ‘ilā Allah*, Al-Hilālī mentioned a monthly salary of 100 Rupees. See Al-Hilālī (2005a), 226.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 158.

<sup>15</sup> In his book, Al-Nadawī makes the following remarks about Al-Hilālī, ‘One of the most important events that took place in this period and which made a glorious history, was the introduction of the great scholar and researcher of Arabic literature and the successful teacher, Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, to the *Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’*. It is suffices to show his value to mention that whenever the scholars Rashīd Riḍā and Shakīb Arsalān, disagreed on any issue related to the Arabic language, they referred to Al-Hilālī to end up their linguistic disagreement.’. See Al-Nadawī (1987), 99-100.

<sup>16</sup> *al-Ḍiyā’* was an Arabic monthly magazine; it was published in Lucknow (India). It was founded by Mas‘ūd al-Nadawī. The two managing editors of the Magazine were Sulayman al-Nadawī, and Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī. See Al-Nadawī (1987), 99-100.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Nadawī (1987), 99.

throughout the Arab world.<sup>18</sup> *Al-Diyā'* also became a channel through which Al-Hilālī could preach his Salafī ideas. Published from 1932 to 1935, the magazine discussed the ideals of the Salafīyya. Al-Hilālī sent copies of the journal to his mentor, Rashīd Riḍā, who reprinted its first edition in *al-Manār*.<sup>19</sup>

Al-Hilālī remained in Luknow until the end of 1933. It was during this period that he learned English and began to insist in his articles that Muslims should master both Arabic and foreign languages.<sup>20</sup> He was convinced that in his era no complete knowledge could not be achieved without the knowledge of a foreign language. Since the predominant foreign language in India was English, he began learning it from his students and from other persons.<sup>21</sup> Despite the fact that he was still a beginner, he realized that the pronunciation of Indian English did not accord with the rules of the Received Pronunciation of British English. Therefore, he went to a Christian missionary post whose director was a Canadian.<sup>22</sup> They agreed that Al-Hilālī would be given three free lessons a week and that each lesson would last half an hour. In return, Al-Hilālī committed himself to attending the preaching sessions of his English teacher.<sup>23</sup>

In one of his letters, Al-Hilālī informed Riḍā that he had written Arabic footnotes on Matthew's Gospel in his copy of the New Testament which a young American, whose name was Smith,<sup>24</sup> had sent to him. In the same letter, Al-Hilālī asked Rashīd Riḍā if he would like to publish these notes in *al-Manār* when they were ready,<sup>25</sup> but it seems that Al-Hilālī failed to send the article to him for publication. Al-Hilālī mentioned that both Riḍā and Shakīb Aرسالān (1869–1946) were interested in reading his comments<sup>26</sup> because, when Al-Hilālī informed Shakīb Aرسالān (1869–1946) about them, he wanted a copy for himself. Al-Hilālī told him that there were no copies left at the publishing House, but that he was ready to write some explanatory comments similar to the footnotes he had previously made on Matthew's

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<sup>18</sup> Al-Nadawī (1987), 100.

<sup>19</sup> See Rashīd Riḍā, Muḥarram 1351/July 1932, *al-Manār*, 32, 345.

<sup>20</sup> See also Al-Hilālī, “Ta’ allum al-Lughāt,” October 1949.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Hilālī (2010a), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ryad (2009), 266.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Hilālī (2010a), 24.

<sup>24</sup> His full name was Fred William Smith. I found it in a letter from Al-Hilālī addressed to Rashīd Riḍā dated 24/05/1352 circa 1934. See Ryad (2009), 270.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of Al-Hilālī to Riḍā, Lucknow (28 Jumāda al-Thāniya 1352/ 18 October 1933), See Ryad (2009), 266.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Gospel.<sup>27</sup> The reason behind his writing of these Arabic footnotes was, Al-Hilālī said, the arbitrariness of the Christians, their abusiveness and the distorted vision they had of Islam, turning the evident truths upside down.<sup>28</sup>

Al-Hilālī originally entitled his booklet : *Ḥawāshī Shattā ‘alā Injīl Mattā (Various Footnotes on the Gospel of Matthew)*.<sup>29</sup> It was later republished in *Majallat al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn*<sup>30</sup> (The Young Muslims’ Magazine) in Basra by Hajj Ṭāhā Al-Fayyād (1899-1967). In spite of a long enquiry, the present author has not been able to lay hands on a copy of this booklet, nor did he find any information about the year of its publication in Basra. However, some forty years later, Al-Hilālī probably reused his *Ḥawāshī* in his book *al-Barāhīn al-Injīliyya*,<sup>31</sup> which was written in the form of a *fatwa* at the request of Ismā‘īl Mundhir al-Darūbī al-Baghdādī [d.2007] , an Iraqi engineering student in the United States. The Iraqi student wanted to use the book in the polemical debates in which he used to engage with Christians there. The title of this book is *The Evangelical Proofs that Jesus Is a Human Being and Has No Share in Divinity*. He also provided this student with the numbers of chapters and verses from the four Gospels.<sup>32</sup> A special study will be devoted to this *fatwa* in Chapter 8.

### 3.1. Polemics against the Aḥmadiyya

On 23 October, 1932, while he was still living in India, Al-Hilālī wrote an article about the Qadyaniyya Movement which was published in *al-Fath*.<sup>33</sup> Al-Hilālī began his article by talking about the reason behind the existence of such groups. He argues that they had come into being as a consequence of ignorance of the Arabic language and of having to rely on translated books to acquire religious knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Al-Hilālī thought that it was people who did not know Arabic who were likely to make such mistakes. To substantiate his argument, he

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Hilālī, *al-Barāhīn al-Injīliyya*, (n.d., approximately 1969), 6; See also Al-Hilālī (2010a), 29.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Hilālī (2010a), 24-30.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Hilālī (2006b), 311.

<sup>30</sup> The magazine *Al-Shubbān al-Muslimūn* was established by the Iraqi writer and lawyer Haj Ṭāhā Al-Fayyād [1899-1967] and had been founded in 1928. Haj Ṭāhā Al-Fayyād was also the owner of *Sahīfat al-Sijil* which was a newspaper with Islamic views and religious tendencies founded in 1937. see

<http://www.basratuna.net/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=11967> edited 10-02-2011

<sup>31</sup> Ryad (2008), 51.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Hilālī did not cite any specific sources or which Arabic version he he used.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Al-Qādyāniyyūn,” 1932, 232-234.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

points out that the Qadyaniyya did not attract the Muslims ‘...in the civilized Arabic countries’ (*bilād al-‘arab al-mutaḥaddīra*), despite the fact that this religious group was making tremendous efforts to propagate its ideology worldwide. Al-Hilālī asserts that anyone who knew Arabic would never believe that both the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunna* show that Ghulām Aḥmad (d.1908) was both the *Mahdi* and a Messenger sent to all mankind.<sup>35</sup>

Al-Hilālī was greatly amazed by the nature of the this sect because, he claimed, they used different languages to spread their faith and that their predication in both the East and the West was supported by considerable financial means. Moreover, they were very highly organized, with many missionary centres in Asia, Europe, America and Africa.<sup>36</sup> He thought the centres equalled those of the Christians both in knowledge and in methods of proselytation. However, as far as success and influence in the Muslim world was concerned, he believed that there was no comparison between the two confessions. His argument was that the Qadyānis were more successful because they were extremely well informed about Islam and that they used this knowledge in spreading their innovations and heresies, whereas the knowledge of Christians in matters of the Islamic faith was very weak, and their superstitions were blatantly apparent to everyone, with the exception of animals, ‘cattle eating in the fields and fools’ (*al-Bulh allādhīnahum ka al-An‘ām al-Sā’ima*). Al-Hilālī believed that the laziness of Muslims had also contributed to the success of the Qadyanis.<sup>37</sup> He asked himself if Islam could benefit from the Qadyāniyya Movement. He was convinced that paradoxically the work of this religious community was both useful and harmful to Islam.<sup>38</sup> The harm came from the false theological principles it was propagating, but its usefulness sprang from the efforts this community was making to spread and defend Islam. Since America, Europe and many non-Muslims in the East did not know anything about Islam or the biography of the Prophet, any effort to repair this lack of information was useful.<sup>39</sup> Al-Hilālī noted that, with the exception of the Qadyaniyya disciples who were spending their energy and money to achieve that goal, nobody was defending Islam. He believed that, even if all the religious reformers were to shout themselves hoarse and write until their pens broke, they would never be able to accumulate the same amount of money or gather the same number of people in all the Islamic

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Al-Qādiyāniyyūn,” 1932, 232.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

countries as this small community, indeed not even the tenth of them. He thought that the evil of a Western soldier who was sent to an Islamic country, bearing in mind the false beliefs he had learnt from the books of the enemies of Islam, was greater than that of a soldier who was aware of the true nature of Islam and the biography of the Prophet.<sup>40</sup> Al-Hilālī explained that the former thought that he was relieving humanity by exterminating Islam and the Muslims, whereas the conscience of the latter would rebuke him for killing innocent Muslims.<sup>41</sup>

Al-Hilālī's opinion was that one should not claim to remain indifferent to whether an American or a European converted to the Qadyaniyya or remained a Christian, as long as he did not convert fully to Islam. The most important matter was to eradicate the false ideas about Islam which had become lodged in the minds of Europeans.<sup>42</sup> For this purpose, it did not matter much whether their Islam was correct or incorrect. Al-Hilālī concluded that Muslims should not ignore the Qadyaniyya Movement. On the contrary, they had to follow that group carefully, confirming the truth it might bring and nullifying any falsehood it might advocate. Nevertheless, he was not sure that Muslims could achieve this goal as they were still unable to support *al-Fath* and *al-Manār* and other Islamic journals financially, even though they firmly believed that these publications represented the essence of Islam. In his view, it was nothing less than the weakness of Muslims' faith and their ensuing feebleness which had landed them in this debased predicament.<sup>43</sup>

On 19 November 1932, Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥusayn (1876-1958), chairman of the Al-Hidāya al-Islamiyya Association and a lecturer in the faculty of *Usūl al-Dīn* at Al-Azhar wrote a reply to Al-Hilālī's article.<sup>44</sup> He began his riposte by providing a short history of the Aḥmadiyya and pointing out the fact that the community was divided into two groups.<sup>45</sup> He

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Khadīr (1932), 17.

<sup>45</sup> According to Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥusayn, there were two groups within the Qadyāniyya: the 'Qadyan' Branch, whose leader was Maḥmūd Ibn Ghulām Aḥmad, and the 'Lahore' Branch whose leader was Mawlānā Muḥammad 'Alī, head of the Lahore Aḥmadiyya Movement, who translated the essence of the Qur'ān into English. In the case of the Qadyan Branch, the basis of its faith was the belief that Ghulam Ahmad was a messenger. The other branch did not seem to consider Ghulam Ahmad a prophet, but saw him simply as a religious reformer or re-newer (*mujaddid*). However, in its literature the Lahore Branch confirms a gross heresy

talked about the Lahore Branch and the fact that it denied that Jesus had been born without a physical father. Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥusayn hammered home the fact that the Qadyaniyya ideology must be fought,<sup>46</sup> and hence did not share Al-Hilālī's more lenient view of it. To refute al-Hilālī's arguments, he said:

Actually, those who are uninformed about the true nature of this religious community think that its preachers really do call people to Islam. They might even praise their efforts and rebuke anyone who writes books to warn Muslims about the falsehood they spread. The danger which this sect presents to Islam would be less if it restricted its proselytism to non-Muslims. We could then endeavour to fight enemies other than this sect, as among them atheists and heretical groups. However, they also hope to target the people who take their guidance from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna*, trying to convince them to believe in the message of Ghulam Ahmad and in all the falsehood to which this will lead. In fact, they have sent their preachers to Syria, Palestine, Jeddah, Iraq and some other Islamic countries. Even though the doctrine of this sect is based on nonsense, it has been accepted by many arrogant young people whose fathers did not educate them properly in Islamic teachings.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the fact he warned Muslims against the blasphemy of this religious community, Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥusayn did not openly consider them unbelievers or apostates.<sup>48</sup>

On the basis of the above-mentioned articles, a request was sent to all the 'Arab scholars in the East and the West' by Abū al-Makārim Muḥammad 'Abd As-Salām Al-Sālim, lecturer in the Arabic Faculty in the city of Karnoul, on 21 December 1932, requesting a legal opinion on the Qadyaniyya religious community. He wanted to know whether or not the Qadyānis were Muslims:<sup>49</sup>

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which led it to deny the fact that the Messiah was born without a [physical] father. The leader of this branch, Muhammad 'Ali, openly stated that the father of Jesus was Yūsuf al-Najā. See Al-Khadīr (1932), 18.

<sup>46</sup> According to Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥusayn, the Qadyaniyya Sect was very active in spreading its faith. Muḥammad Al-Khadīr Ḥussein mentions that he had written his current article to warn the Muslims of Egypt and those of other Islamic countries that they should fight the sedition of the Qadyāniyya Sect in the same way they fought the Bahā'ī Sect. See Al-Khadīr (1932), 18.

<sup>47</sup> See Al-Khadīr (1932), 17-18.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> As-Sālim (23 Sha'bān 1351/21 December 1932), 369.

Oh, Western and Eastern Arab Scholars! O Scholars of the two Holy Places! O *Shaykh* al-Azhar, the Mufti of Egypt ! O Shakīb Arslān , the great writer of the East ! Oh, Mr Muḥammad Taqī al-Dīn Al-Hilālī ! Do point out to us, may Allāh Grant you His Mercy, the ruling of Islamic Law on the Aḥmadiyya Sect and the Lahori Aḥmadiyya, who believe that Ghulam Aḥmad Al-Qādyāni is a prophet or, according to some of them, a religious reformer. Are or are not the Qadyānis Muslims? What do you think of the publishing houses which print books for them in your countries, and the magazines which make propaganda for them for the sake of a trifling amount of money? What do you think about any assistance the advocates of the faith of Ghulam Aḥmad al-Qadyāni might receive from Muslims in your countries? What do you think about concluding marriage contracts with them, maintaining social relations with them, doing business with them, living in their neighbourhood and greeting them? Do please show us the truth about all these matters, may Allāh reward you, Allāh willing.<sup>50</sup>

For the guidance of scholars in preparing their legal opinions, Abū al-Makārim provided many details about the beliefs of this group. He said that the Indian scholars thought that the belief held by the Aḥmadiyya that Ghulam Aḥmad Al-Qadyāni is a prophet was enough to disqualify them as Muslims.<sup>51</sup> They had even issued a legal opinion declaring a disbeliever was anyone who would hesitate to doubt the blasphemy of Ghulam Aḥmad or would show themselves hypocritical in their consideration of his case. Abū al-Makārim said that Indian scholars had already issued a legal opinion on the nullity of all marriage contracts which inattentive Muslim guardians might have concluded between a Muslim woman and one of the disciples of Ghulām Aḥmad al-Qādyān.<sup>52</sup> It did not matter whether these guardians believed that Ghulām was really a prophet, or just merely a religious reformer, or they only thought good of him, if they did not openly declare that he was a disbeliever.<sup>53</sup>

On 2 January 1933, the first reaction came from Shakīb Arsalān in Geneva, who stated that he was not in a position to issue a *fatwa*. However, because Abū al-Makārim insisted on

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 372.

<sup>51</sup> As-Sālim (23 Sha‘bān 1351/21 December 1932), 369.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

mentioning his name on the list of the Arab scholars whom he had asked about the Qadyāni Sect, he would answer his enquiry briefly. He based his answer on the information given by Abū Al-Makārim, who had provided texts and evidence against them derived from their own literature. Shakīb Arsalān pointed out that any one argument from among these was enough to declare anyone who adhered to that religious community a disbeliever, despite the fact that it is always extremely difficult to declare a Muslim as unbeliever.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Shakīb Arsalān invited the Qadyāniyya scholars to make their position on these beliefs clear. He added that, if the attribution of these beliefs to Ghulam Aḥmad proved to be true, this would harm not only the Qadyāni Sect, but also the Lahori Aḥmadiyya community. Nevertheless, Shakīb Arsalān praised the efforts that the Lahore religious community were making to propagate and defend Islam. He reported that he had twice visited the mosque of the Aḥmadiya in Berlin, where he had been warmly welcomed by *Imam* al-Mawlā Ṣadr al-Dīn (1881-1981)<sup>55</sup>, a trained missionary of the Ahmadiyya Lahore and first editor of the mission journal *Moslemische Revue*, and Imam M.S Abdullah, his successor in Berlin who was behind the conversion to Islam of nearly fifty aristocratic Germans. The latter told him that, in the eyes of the Lahori Aḥmadiya group, Ghulam Aḥmad was merely a religious reformer. Shakīb Arsalān stated that such a belief did not make them disbelievers, and he did not see any harm in it. As far as the Lahori Aḥmadiyya community was concerned, it was making tremendous efforts to propagate Islam. Shakīb Arsalān added that he was fascinated by their writings, as well as by their magazines published in Europe. He wished that all Muslims displayed the same resolution in spreading Islam as the Aḥmadiyya group. In his answer, Shakīb Arslān did not openly declare the Qadyāniyya followers infidels or unbelievers; nonetheless, he adjured them to repent if they truly adhered to the beliefs mentioned by Abū AL-Makārim.<sup>56</sup>

On 7 January 1933, Al-Hilālī wrote his second answer, entitled *Jawāb Musta‘jal ‘an al-Qādyānī* (‘An Urgent Reply about al- Qādyānī’). He commenced his answer with an implicit reference to the question put by Abū Al-Makārim who had drawn his attention to the many heresies of Ghulām Aḥmad. Al-Hilālī stated that he would never have been bold enough to issue a *fatwa* if his name had not been mentioned in the journal, because there were many

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<sup>54</sup> Arslān (1933), 439.

<sup>55</sup> About him and others see, Jonker, Gerdien. “A Laboratory of Modernity – The Ahmadiyya Mission in Interwar Europe,” *Journal of Muslims in Europe* (2014) and Jonker, Gerdien. “The Dynamics of Adaptive Globalization: Muslim Missionaries in Weimar Berlin,” *Entangled Religions* (2014).

<sup>56</sup> Arslān (1933), 439.

scholars who were far better qualified than he to answer this question.<sup>57</sup> Al-Hilālī mentioned that, during his first period in India in 1924, he had come across some books<sup>58</sup> about Ghulām Aḥmad.<sup>59</sup> After reading them, he came to the conclusion that this man was one of the great impostors who did not even believe his own blasphemous claims. Al-Hilālī added that Ghulam Aḥmad was hungry for power and aspiring to leadership which was indeed the cornerstone of all evils. Consequently, Al-Hilālī openly declared anyone who adhered to the teachings of Ghulam Aḥmad an unbeliever. However, he sounded a note of caution saying that he had based his *fatwa* principally on the information Abū Al-Makārim had mentioned in his enquiry.<sup>60</sup>

In February 1933, a third answer, entitled *Jawāb al-Istiftā’ ‘an Al-Qādyāniyya al-Muwajjah ilā ‘Ulamā’ al-Islām* (Answer to the Request for a Legal Opinion about the Qadyaniyya Addressed to Scholars of Islam) came from *Shaykh* Muṣṭafā Abū Yūsuf Al-Ḥamāmī (d.1949), an al-Azhar scholar. He openly declared those who adhered to the teachings of Ghulam Aḥmad unbelievers and apostates, even extending this disapprobation to those who might disagree with this legal opinion. His judgement was both should be killed.<sup>61</sup> He thought that the Aḥmadiyya leaders and preachers did not speak explicitly about their beliefs, thereby misleading their disciples who knew no better than to think that this religious community did not deviate from true Islam. Al-Ḥamāmī also based his judgement on the article in *al-Fath* by Abū al-Makārim<sup>62</sup> and, of course, on the information the latter had gathered. All the same, the author of the third *fatwa* substantiated his opinion which was that

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<sup>57</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Jawāb Musta’jal ani Al-Qādyānī,” 1933, 440.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Hilālī was referring to the magazine *The Review of Religion*. It was published in English in Qadyān. Al-Hilālī said that this magazine was full of articles related to different branches of science, but the majority were about religion and spoke of the virtues of Islam, the miracles of the Prophet and his sublime merit. The Aḥmadiyya magazine had devoted one column to the issuing legal opinions, such as polygyny, *fatwas* about Jesus according to which this prophet had a physical father, as well as the claim that Ghulam Aḥmad was a prophet. See <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/> accessed 22-01-2014. [Polygamy just means mean marriages. Polygyny means many wives and polyandry means many husbands and there are societies where this is the case].

<sup>59</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Jawāb Musta’jal ani Al-Qādyānī,” 1933, 440.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Hamāmī (1933), 453.

<sup>62</sup> As-Sālim (23 Sha‘bān 1351/21 December 1932) , 369-372.

Ghulam Aḥmad was insane by pointing out that he spoke evil of both Islam and Christianity.<sup>63</sup>

On 15 September 1933, Al-Hilālī wrote another article on the Qadyaniyya, which was also published in *al-Fath*. In this article, he argued that this movement could have only come into existence and thereafter continued to be successful because of the appalling ignorance of Arabic among Indian Muslims. Al-Hilālī averred that people who were well versed in Arabic would realize that neither the *Qur'ān* nor the *ḥadith* validate the Aḥmadi interpretation of Islam.<sup>64</sup> He could quite understand that those who were ignorant of this had been willing to accept innovations and had joined heretical movements like the Qadyaniyya.<sup>65</sup> Al-Hilālī mentioned his unbounded amazement that, even though the disciples of this sect had attained a distinguished level in science which no other religious community had ever before acquired, they had been so easily misled by the falsehoods Ghulam Aḥmad al-Qadyānī had fabricated.<sup>66</sup>

Scholars in Egypt, Syria and Iraq had committed themselves to answering the claims of the Aḥmadiyya sect. Interestingly, Al-Hilālī's views on the Aḥmadiyya religious community, published in *al-Fath*, indicate that his ideas about them evolved between 1924 and 1934 from a nuanced image to a violent anti-Aḥmadiyya attacks in the mid-1930s. In the beginning, Al-Hilālī mentioned that, during his first period in India in 1924 he had come across some books and some articles of the Aḥmadiyya papers which enlightened him more about this community. In his article, of 23 October 1932, he praised the Qadyāniyya, members for bringing Islam into focus in the West. Al-Hilālī also noticed that the efforts which this small sect was making to spread its faith were very impressive, even to the extent that the Qadyaniyya had succeeded in achieving what millions of educators had failed to achieve.<sup>67</sup> He even considered their defence of Islam in the West as "real jihād" that should please every Muslim.<sup>68</sup>

Nevertheless, On 7 January, 1933, in his article entitled *Jawāb Musta'jal 'an al-Qādyānī* (An Urgent Reply about al-Qādyānī) published in *al-Fath* Al-Hilālī openly stated

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Hilālī (1933), 5.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Hilālī, "Sabb al-Qadiyāniyyūn li-l Islām," 1933, 13-17.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Hilālī, "Al-Qādyāniyyūn," 1932, 232-234.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Hilālī, "Fi Tarjamat al-Qur'ān," *al-Fath*, 6/293, April, 6, 1932, 4-7.

that the Qadyāniyya disciples were unbelievers.<sup>69</sup> In his third article, which was published in *al-Fath*, on 15 September 1933, Al-Hilālī reached the conclusion that the major reason for the Aḥmadiyya unquestioning acceptance was people’s ignorance of Arabic. Al-Hilālī also stated that he had changed his mind about the Qadyāniyya because he believed that the presence of this religious community in many Muslim countries had caused great disruption.<sup>70</sup>

Having spent three years in India, in 1933, Al-Hilālī travelled to Afghanistan. To enter Afghanistan, he had to ask the permission of the French Embassy.<sup>71</sup> However, the nearest French Embassy to Peshawar was in Bombay and the distance between Peshawar and Bombay involved a thirty-five-hour train ride. The expense and the fatigue such a trip would have entailed were enormous. Al-Hilālī said that the last country noted in his French Moroccan passport was Persia (*Fāris*) so he decided to add the word Afghanistan to his passport. He says that he was aware that this was taking an enormous risk, especially in the city of Peshawar which lay on the border of the British colony, a place where the secret and the ordinary police would exert a very strict control on every movement of travellers.<sup>72</sup> Despite his misgivings, the security agents did not pay any attention to his passport and allowed him to leave India.<sup>73</sup>

In Afghanistan Al-Hilālī wrote an article which he sent to Riḍā, in which he describes the situation of Islam there.<sup>74</sup> He wanted to consult him about publishing it in *al-Manār*. *Shaykh* Rashīd Riḍā later said that Al-Hilālī was hesitant about publishing his comments on the situation in which Afghans found themselves in the newspapers. Rashīd Riḍā asked Al-Hilālī to send it to him so that it could be revised before publication. After this, Riḍā wrote the following letter to Al-Hilālī on 1 September 1933:

During the summer holidays our friend Mr Mohammed Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī travelled from India to Afghanistan to monitor the state of Islam and the situation of Muslims in that country. He came back much saddened: he had discovered that the government of Nadir Khan (King of Afghanistan, d. 1933) had neither religion nor faith. On the

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<sup>69</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Jawāb Musta‘jal ‘an Al-Qādyānī,” 1933, 440.

<sup>70</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Sabb al-Qadiyāniyūn li-l Islām,” 1933, 13-17.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Hilālī had to ask for French permission because Morocco was still a French protectorate.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 232.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

contrary, the officials nurtured a strong admiration for Muṣṭafā Kamāl (Atatürk, d.1938), and were not open to any criticism. Furthermore, the local religious scholars were both ignorant and lazy, and the leaders of the Sufi orders were superstitious; Furthermore, this government more than any other thought ill of the Wahhābīyya, whom they openly regarded as disbelievers, and [therefore] considered despising Wahhābīs to be a sign of piety. Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī hesitated about publishing his comments on the situation of the Afghans in the newspapers; so he consulted me about his quandary. I advised him, if he felt he could no longer bear to keep his findings secret, either to be patient or to write a neutral article rather than a sharp criticism and open condemnation. I also asked him to send me his article so that it could be revised before being published.<sup>75</sup>

Al-Hilālī reported that, taking a leaf out of Atatürk’s book, the new king (1892-1960) had forced women to unveil and to wear clothes which do not cover their ‘*awra* (the private parts of the woman’s body which should be covered up). In Al-Hilālī’s opinion, the ‘*awra* of a woman was all her body with the exception of her face and hands. Al-Hilālī reported that the previous king had also forced men, even the Chief Justice of Kabūl who was eighty years old, to wear tight-fitting European cloths, and used to encourage girls to attend concerts scantily clad. When King Nadir Shah overthrew him, women began wearing the veil once again. The king forbade them to go out except when absolutely necessary and then only provided that they cover up completely.<sup>76</sup> Al-Hilālī was amazed by the fact that the Afghans were intransigent in their adherence to the Ḥanafī school of Jurisprudence, and shocked by the widespread influence of Sufism.<sup>77</sup> Incidentally, he criticized the fact that they would delay observing the afternoon prayer until the sun had become almost yellow, and the fact that they were not even prepared to accept Muslims might adhere to a non-Ḥanafī School of Jurisprudence. When he was travelling from Peshawar to Kabūl the car stopped at noon. Al-Hilālī alighted to make the partial ablutions. Some of the passengers also made these ablutions and came to pray with him. When they noticed that he raised his hands while still kneeling, they interrupted their prayers and thereafter each performed his prayer alone.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 232.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Hilālī (2005a), 188.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

In Afghanistan, when the editor of the *Reform Newspaper* (*Ṣahīfat Islāh*) interviewed Al-Hilālī about the condition of Muslims in Morocco, he informed him about all the atrocities which the French slave-masters were committing in Morocco, a catalogue of killing, imprisonment, forcing citizens into exile, torture and stripping people of their property.<sup>79</sup> Al-Hilālī also reported that as his passport was about to expire, he decided to go back to India before the expiry date because he had no doubt that the French Embassy in Kabūl had read the articles he had published in another magazine whose name he could no longer recall.<sup>80</sup> Despite this niggling worry, Al-Hilālī actually remained there until his passport expired, and then overwhelmed with dread, headed to the French Embassy. When he handed the secretary his passport, the latter extended its validity. Then he told Al-Hilālī that the price for extending the validity of a passport was 15 Rupees, but that he exempted him from paying on account of his perfect knowledge of Arabic.<sup>81</sup>

### 3.2. The Hijāb

Al-Hilālī noted that he was pleased to see that Afghan women were wearing the *hijab*.<sup>82</sup> As he was about to leave Kabūl, he wrote a booklet entitled *Al-Isfār ‘an al-ḥaqq fī mas’alat al-sufūr wa-l-hijāb* (Uncovering the Truth about the Issue of the Uncovering and Covering the Hands and the Face).<sup>83</sup> The booklet was written in the form of a *fatwa*. It was composed at the request of a certain Mun‘im al-Zawāwī, the brother of one of his students from Oman, who was living in the city of Karachi then still in India. He visited him and his wife, as his host was sitting on a chair in his garden reading the newspaper. Al-Hilālī described Al-Zawāwī's wife as ‘virtually naked’ (*makshūfat al-ṣadr wa al-‘unuq wa al-ra’s wa al-thirā‘ayn wa al-sāqayn*). She became angry when he refused to shake hands with her, telling her that he was a radical Muslim (*mutashaddid*). He informed her that his intolerance would force him to have to wrap his hands in a handkerchief. Al-Hilālī explained his behaviour by saying that in doing so he was adhering to the ethics of Islam, as the whole body of a woman was out of bounds to be touched by any man who could lawfully marry her. After a discussion with Al-Hilālī, Al-

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Hilālī, “Al-‘Isfār,” 1933.

Zawāwī promised that his wife would henceforth adhere to the rulings of Islam and would put on the veil. However, he requested Al-Hilālī issue a *fatwa* on the veil which she could use.<sup>84</sup>

Al-Hilālī left Afghanistan for Iraq where he remained between 1933 and 1936. It was while he was in Zubair in Iraq that Al-Zawāwī reminded him about issuing the *fatwa* on the veil. Al-Hilālī checked with his mentor, Al-Shanqīṭī, about the ruling and the content of the legal opinions on the subject. After this preliminary investigation he wrote a booklet in a fortnight, using different sources in the library of his mentor. When the *fatwa* was ready, Al-Shanqīṭī warned Al-Hilālī that most scholars would not accept his opinion. Undeterred by this warning, Al-Hilālī sent it to Al-Zawāwī, who published it without his permission. It was published in India<sup>85</sup> for the first time in 1933. Two years later, copies of the *fatwa* reached Basra where it was republished in 1935.<sup>86</sup>

In this *fatwa* Al-Hilālī uses twenty-three arguments from the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadiths* and the pronouncements of the four *Madhhabs* on the ruling of the veil, to support his contention that the complete body of a woman, except her face and hands, was '*awra*'.<sup>87</sup> Al-Hilālī said that this book aroused enmity against him. He claimed that its publication brought him no benefit, with the exception of his hope of being rewarded by Allāh. Nevertheless, this *fatwa* was the subject of many contemporary Friday sermons in which most '*ulama*' attacked Al-Hilālī, so much so that he wrote an abrasive poem on May 5, 1935 in which he condemned the *imam* of a mosque.<sup>88</sup> In one of his unpublished manuscripts written in 1974, Al-Hilālī maintains the same position, asserting that a woman need not cover up her face and her hands. A sign that he had not changed his mind on this issue. A special study will be devoted to this subject in Chapter 9.

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<sup>84</sup> Al-Hilālī, "Al-'Isfār," 1933, 1-3.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Hilālī, "Al-'Isfār," 1933, 1-38.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Hilālī *al-'Isfār 'an al-ḥaqq fī mas'alat al-sufūr wa-l-ḥijāb* (al-Basra: Maṭba' Times Press, 1935)

<sup>87</sup> Al-Hilālī (1933), 1-25.

<sup>88</sup> For more details about the poem see Al-Hilālī, (2010b), 532-533.