

Summary

This study is an examination of the religious profile of Taqī al-Dīn Al-Hilālī (1894-1987) as it evolved throughout the various periods of his life. It pays special attention to his writings which were directed to larger audiences, concentrating in particular on his *fatwas* which often took the form of public debates and polemics. Several of these smaller publications have gone through a series of reprints and enjoyed wide, international distribution, occasionally subsidized by rich friends or by the Saudi government.

The numerous printed writings from Al-Hilālī's hand have been the main primary sources of the research. The study of these primary sources and many other contemporary printed materials has occasionally been deepened by looking at unpublished documents in Al-Hilālī's private archive in Morocco, and by personal interviews with Al-Hilālī's grandson, 'Abd al-Ghāni Būzakrī, and with his most influential Moroccan students who are still alive, and now belong to the older generation.

The study commences with an introduction, beginning with a discussion of the *Origins of the Salafiyya in Morocco*, in order to enable the reader to understand and place Al-Hilālī and his conversion to Salafism in a chain of a longer historical tradition in Morocco, stretching back to the early nineteenth century.

In this study, 'Authentic' Islam, in Al-Hilālī's conception of it, is analysed. Al-Hilālī does not refer to the term *Salafiyya*, nor does he accept the use of the term *Wahhābīyya*. He rejected both these on the grounds that they were extrinsic words introduced by people hostile to Islam. The term 'Authentic' Islam is used by Al-Hilālī in his works when he wishes to refer to the 'genuine' essence of Islam which had come down from the early days of Islam and has not been affected by intrusive cultural aspects. (§1). This discussion is followed by a survey of *Previous Studies on Al-Hilālī's Life and Thought*. (§2). In the conclusion, the *Research Question, Focus and Sources* are presented. (§3). Besides this introductory chapter, the other nine chapters are divided as follows.

The *first chapter* offers a brief sketch of the formative period of Al-Hilālī's convictions and deals with the religious turning-point in his life. This chapter pays special attention to the debate which Al-Hilālī had with Muhammad ibn al-'Arabī al-'Alawī (d.1964). This was pivotal to his religious life. In fact, the latter convinced him that the doctrinal foundation of the Tijaniyya Order was nothing but a falsehood. Muḥammad ibn al-

‘Arabī al-‘Alawī challenged Al-Hilālī’ to defend the fact that Aḥmad al-Tijānī, the founder of the Order, had really met the Prophet. In his book, *Al-Hadiyya al-Hādiya ilā al-Ṭā’ifa al-Tijāniyya* (The Guiding Gift to the Tijaniyya Order), Al-Hilālī’ also bases his decision to turn his back on Sufism on a vision of the Prophet whom, he claimed, he had seen twice in his dreams. In Al-Hilālī’s eyes, seeing the Prophet was the central theme both in his acceptance of Salafism and his repudiation of Sufism. Therefore, on the evidence of his own words, it is possible to claim that the way Al-Hilālī had interpreted these dreams was very subjective and not well founded

In the *second chapter*, Al-Hilālī’s attitudes are examined in the light of his early missionary work in Egypt and elsewhere. This chapter is dedicated to the debates he had with ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Kāzimi (1871-1935) and Al-Mahdī al-Qazwīnī (1855-1939). Al-Hilālī later incorporated his answers to Al-Qazwīnī in the form of a booklet entitled *Al-Qāḍī al-‘adl fī ḥukm al-bina’ ‘ala al-qubūr*, which was published in Cairo in 1927 at the behest of Rashīd Riḍā. In Arabia, Al-Hilālī re-edited his booklet of the same title on the 25 August 1927. This chapter discusses the differences between the first version, published in Egypt, and this second, published in Arabia. For instance, in Al-Hilālī’s own words he used a moderate (*layyina*) language in the first version, whereas in the version published in Arabia he had no hesitation in adopting more uncompromising language (*khashina*) because, as he said, in Arabia there was no need to worry about how the Shi’a in Iraq would react. The King ordered Chief Judge Shaykh ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥasan to print and distribute a thousand copies immediately. In Saudi Arabia, during the period between 1927 and 1930, among other the offices he held, Al-Hilālī acted as an expert advisor for the Wahhabis in matters concerning Shiism and mysticism, as well as in scientific matters, namely: the issue of whether the Earth was round or flat. In the 1920s, the differences in religious points of views between the ‘*ulama*’ of the Najd, who followed the *madhhab* of Imam Ibn Ḥanbal, and Al-Hilālī who saw himself as an independent scholar were already clearly in evidence.

Chapter Three deals with the first steps in Al-Hilālī’s international preaching. In 1932, at the request of Mr Sulayman al-Nadawī (d.1953), Al-Hilālī established an Arabic journal named *Al-Diyā’* in Luknow in India. *Al-Diyā’* became a channel through which he could preach his views on Islam. Incidentally, the foundation of this journal allowed him to put into practice some of the religious convictions to which he had adhered to before his conversion to ‘Authentic’ Islam. For instance, he openly stated that shaving the beard was not a sin, and that the covering of a woman’s face was not compulsory. His radical views resulted in his

temporary dismissal from the *Nadwat al-'Ulamā'* in Luknow. During the time he spent in India, he also learned English from a Christian missionary, as he had realized that learning a foreign language was of great importance to being in a position to defend his faith. In this chapter in India, Al-Hilālī's evolving ideas about the Qadyāniyya sect and its growing success will also be discussed. He published three articles on the Qadyāniyya. Interestingly, his views on this religious community were not consistent as these three articles bear witness. In the first article, he sought to give reasons for the existence of the Qadyāniyya, praising its members for bringing Islam into focus in the West. Nevertheless, in his second article, he openly stated that the Qadyāniyya disciples were unbelievers, basing his opinion on the article by Abū al-Makārim in the magazine *Al-Fatḥ*. In his third article, Al-Hilālī was trying to understand why many people could so easily accept the heresies of the Al-Qadyāniyya sect. He reached the conclusion that the major reason for its unquestioning acceptance was people's ignorance of Arabic. Special attention will be paid to his *fatwa* entitled *Al-Isfār 'an al-ḥaqq fī mas'alat al-sufūr wa-l-ḥijāb* (Uncovering the truth about covering and uncovering the hands and the face) which dealt with a crucial issue at that time.

Chapter Four discusses Al-Hilālī's activities during the time he spent in Germany. Al-Hilālī himself says that the reason he travelled to Europe, even though he had reached the age of forty, was to obtain a university degree so as to be able to find a job at an Asian or African university. There is a strong possibility that Al-Hilālī was recruited by Shakīb Arslān to work for the Nazi regime in exchange for a postgraduate position in Germany. This chapter focuses on the *fatwas* he issued during his time in Germany. Special attention will be devoted to the approximately thirty-five talks (in Arabic), Al-Hilālī gave on Radio Berlin in the period 1939 to 1941. His main aim was to illustrate the crimes committed by the French, British and Jewish colonial powers and to preach *jihād* against them.

Chapter Five begins with a discussion of the reason for Al-Hilālī's departure from Germany in 1942 and his vicissitudes thereafter in Spanish Morocco. The most probable reason that he left Germany can be found in his private archive. Once Germany had defeated France and began collaborating with the Vichy government, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs forbade Al-Hilālī to write anything hostile about French colonialism in Morocco. Al-Hilālī replied that he would never again write another new talk for Radio Berlin and resigned forthwith. Al-Hilālī claims that after his resignation, he never received the 12,000 Marks which Radio Berlin was supposed to pay him as his annual salary. There are solid grounds for thinking that when Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī (1893-1974) noticed that Al-Hilālī was in distress in

Nazi Germany and decided to leave the country, he asked Al-Hilālī to accomplish a mission for him in Morocco. The purpose was to deliver an ‘oral message’ (*risāla shafawiyya*) to ‘Abd al-Khāliq al-Ṭurrays (d.1970), the leader of the *Hizb al-Islāh al-Waṭanī* (the Party for National Reform). Besides the confrontation Al-Hilālī had with Spain, this chapter discusses his conflicts with many Moroccan scholars, among them Aḥmad Ibn al-Ṣiddīq (1902-1962). These disputes arose from three main issues: his open rejection of the Malīkī School, his sharp criticism of Sufism and the *fatwa* he issued on the permissibility of shaving the beard. Aḥmad Ibn al-Ṣiddīq wondered how Al-Hilālī could pretend to implement the *Sunna* when he believed that shaving the beard was not compulsory. Consequently, a large part of this chapter will be devoted to Al-Hilālī’s *fatwa* on the ruling of Islām about shaving the beard. In it, he does not consider a Muslim’s refusal to grow a beard to represent a major sin.

Chapter Six discusses Al-Hilālī time in Iraq, where he had settled from 1947 to 1959. Al-Hilālī studied Western works and exploited them in his writings. His motivation in using such studies was also to fulfil his aim of pursuing *Da‘wa* (Islamic Mission) and to use them as a tool in a ‘counter attack’ against non-Muslims. For instance, some Moroccan students from the University of Granada in Spain, complained to him about the offensive attack launched by Christian professors against Islam and Moroccans and requested Al-Hilālī to provide them with arguments to repudiate these slights. Consequently, Al-Hilālī translated and commented on the booklet by the American polymath and atheist Joseph McCabe (1867- 1955), *The Moorish Civilization in Spain*, a rather superficial pamphlet containing many sweeping statements praising the Arab civilization in Spain and refuting Christianity. His Arabic version of the booklet was published in Iraq in December 1949 with the help of a friend. It is the main subject of this chapter. For a further critical evaluation of Al-Hilālī’s work, we can refer to the work of Shakīb Arslān Shakīb Arslān, *Al-Hulal al-Sundusiyya fī al-Akhhbār al-Andalusiyya*, published in the year 1936, and his work entitled *The New Islamic World* published in 1921. In comparison with this scholarly undertaking, the value of Al-Hilālī’s work is very limited.

Chapter Seven shows how Al-Hilālī was able to lead an active intellectual and religious life in Morocco after Independence. This chapter also reveals how Al-Hilālī turned his back on Sufism, the Malikite School and Ash‘arism and all other elements of the most popular and widespread manifestations of Moroccan Islam. Often, the religious activities he undertook, especially those in Meknes, turned out to be controversial. Actually, he found himself in trouble with ordinary Muslims because he of his vehement attacks on the Sufi

orders. He was also in hot water with the local authorities, as he was untiring in challenging the official jurisprudential and theological schools of thought, namely the Maliki School and the Asharite Creed. During this period, Al-Hilālī became involved in a discussion about the affair of the Baha'īs in Morocco. His ensuing *fatwa*, *Ḥukm al-murtadd fī al-Islām* (The Ruling on the Apostate in Islam) is discussed in detail within the wider context of contemporary Moroccan history. The legal opinion handed down by Al-Hilālī shows some distinctive features that can be summarized as follows: firstly, in giving his *fatwa*, he limited himself to religious texts, and hence pays no attention to either Moroccan or international law; secondly, he dismissed the tribunal which handed down the sentence against the Baha'īs for not being an Islamic court.

In *Chapter Eight*, the extent to which Al-Hilālī's religious profile was affected by his time in Saudi Arabia is examined and assessed. In this chapter his difference in views with the Saudi religious establishment is discussed. As will be shown, Al-Hilālī did not accept the more stringent Wahhabi opinion which obliges women to cover their face and hands. His view on the necessity for a woman to cover her face is a pertinent example illustrating the conflict in which he was embroiled with the Saudi scholars. Nevertheless, Al-Hilālī's collaboration with Muḥsin Khān on the translation of the *Meanings of the Noble Qur'an* in English shows that he was eager not to contradict the Saudi authorities, even though he had provided many arguments from the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunna* to substantiate the view according to which a Muslim woman may disclose her hands and her face. This is also a very good example of the way in which Al-Hilālī took into account the individual differences between people and places when he was issuing his legal opinion. This chapter also discusses Al-Hilālī's very successful *fatwa* entitled *Al-Barāhīn al-Injīliyya* (The Evangelical Proofs that Jesus Is a Human Being and Has No Share in Divinity). Al-Hilālī was interested in providing irrefutable arguments to challenge Christians, showing that they were wrong and therefore must be recognized as infidels because they attribute a divine status to a prophet. In 1975, Al-Hilālī became blind and decided to return to Morocco.

Chapter Nine offers a brief sketch of the final phase in Al-Hilālī's life and his religious profile based on the unpublished collection of *fatwas* entitled *al-'Uyūn al-Ẓilāliyya fī Al-Fatāwā al-Hilāliyya* 'The Albuminous Water Sources of the Hilalian Fatwas' which he had begun in 1960 and finished in September 1976. In this concluding chapter, the scope of this work will be discussed on the basis of: (1) the kind of people who were asking the questions; (2) Al-Hilālī's methodology; (3). In this chapter, I have selected one *fatwa* of special

historical interest for a somewhat detailed discussion. This *fatwa* is related to the question whether Muslims are permitted to live in the non-Muslim world; (4) This is an issue Al-Hilālī addressed at various intervals during his long and fruitful life, for the first time in 1938, from Germany (see Chapter 4). He allowed Muslims to live in Europe, but prohibited them to apply for citizenship of non-Muslim countries, as they would have to declare their loyalty to a non-Muslim country and abide by its (non-Islamic) laws. Al-Hilālī's views are compared to the convictions of two prominent Saudi *muftis* on the same issue. One of the matters which most clearly characterized Al-Hilālī and distinguished his doctrine from that of most other Salafis was his conception of monotheism and this is also discussed in this chapter. He developed a new typology of monotheism consisting of four parts, instead of the classical Salafī tripartite sub-division: *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyya* (the Oneness of Lordship), *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyya* also known as *Tawḥīd al-'ubudiyya* (the Oneness of Worship), and *Tawḥīd al-Ṣifāt* (the Oneness of Attributes). To these three, Al-Hilālī added *Tawḥīd al-ittibā'* (Oneness of Observance).

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to identify the religious profile of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī [1894-1987], despite the fact that Al-Hilālī is known as a Salafī scholar there are many features which make him unique to some extent. (Compare my Conclusions at the end of this thesis).

(1) Al-Hilālī's interest in engaging in debates and polemics with his opponents both Muslims and non-Muslims. He had debates with Sufis, Shiites, and Christians.

(2) Al-Hilālī's admitted pragmatism and opportunism were always circumscribed by some boundaries which he never transgresses.

(3) Al-Hilālī's disagreement with mainstream Salafism as he certainly did not always have the same opinions as those Salafī scholars hold. In many cases, his opinions were not in accordance with mainstream Salafism.

(4) On some occasions, the position which Al-Hilālī took could be fraught with ambivalence and contradiction.

(5) Al-Hilālī considered learning foreign languages an Islamic commandment.

(6) Al-Hilālī was a Salafī scholar who combined preaching with academic ambitions. His academic life was linked to his proselytism. He believed that by holding a degree from Europe he could be able to command authority in the Islamic world and to spread 'Authentic' Islam.

(7) One of the features which makes Al-Hilālī a 'global' Salafī scholar was his far-reaching travels and his activities in each of the countries in which he sojourned temporarily.

(8) The religious life of Al-Hilālī and his continuous involvement in preaching did not prevent him from having an interesting literary life. In fact, Al-Hilālī can be counted both a poet and a writer.

(9) One of the matters which most clearly characterized Al-Hilālī and distinguished his doctrine from that of most other Salafis was his conception of monotheism. He developed a new typology of monotheism consisting of four parts, instead of the classical Salafī tripartite sub-division: *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyya* (the Oneness of Lordship), *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyya* also known as *Tawḥīd al-'ubudiyya* (the Oneness of Worship), and *Tawḥīd al-Ṣifāt* (the Oneness of Attributes). To these three, Al-Hilālī added *Tawḥīd al-ittibā'* (Oneness of Observance).

Finally, the ultimate goal of this study has been reached, namely to deepen the understanding of the personal religious profile of this remarkable twentieth-century preacher of 'Authentic' Islam within the wider spectrum of the prevailing currents of Salafism and Wahhabism in the same period.

I believe that Salafism is an interesting area for research which continues to fascinate historians. The information provided in this study will help them to understand certain behavioural aspects of Salafists and those who champion 'Authentic' Islam. Finally, I hope that this study will also be an incentive for specialists in the field of Islamic studies to conduct more research into Salafism in the West in the twenty-first century.