Women & Politics
From the Perspective of Islamic
Movements in Jordan

Hassan Abu Hanieh

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”المرأة
والسياسة“

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الْمَرْأَةُ وَالسِّيَاسَةُ

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Preface

Gender Equality and *Gender Mainstreaming* are cherished concepts in the international donor community. This does not come as a surprise, given the fact that under-development and poverty are – amongst other causes – widely attributed to social norms that deprive women of equal opportunities.

There is now consensus among observers in the globalized world economy that women's skills and talents can no longer be under-utilized. The widespread exclusion of up to 50 percent of their respective populations from equal rights and opportunities is not only indicative of an ongoing moral dilemma for many countries but also poses a significant strain on social and economic development prospects. For economists, the equation is simple: No development without women's participation.

Obviously, this reasoning is nothing new – neither for international human rights advocates, nor for decision-makers in Arab states. The most recent *Arab Human Development Report* of the *United Nations Development Programme* identified gender inequality as one of the main obstacles to development in the Arab Region. Built on the "wealth of Arab knowledge and insight", the report attempts to present "a vision of self-determined change based on a commitment to internal social reform and frank self-assessment". As such, the report by scholars from around the Arab world calls on Arab governments to facilitate nothing short of a "Rise of Women".

Does it come as a surprise that these calls have not passed unchallenged? In the end, it is salient that the role of women in any society is not merely an economic question, but first and foremost a highly sensitive *cultural* paradigm based on centuries of historical tradition.

Yet, when questions of women' participation in the Arab world are discussed, it seems that progressive ideas and international norms concerning the participation of women are today not primarily obstructed anymore by open criticism and outright rejection – even though this kind of opposition is still fairly common. Rather, they are often countered with silent persistence and a stern but *unarticulated* refusal to change – a behaviour which is, of course, only too familiar to agents of change in the West as well. How is this to be explained? How do decision makers argue their case? How are Western concepts of gender equality perceived in the context of Islamic movements?

These and other questions are discussed in the current volume of *Islamic Politics* which uses the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as a case study relevant to the region at large. The analysis by Hasan Abu Hanieh attempts to look into Islamic movement(s) in Jordan and endeavours to explore positions of decision-makers and sympathisers on the wide field of "women rights" alike.

However, the study does not only focus on positions but also analyses practice. Abu Hanieh examines not merely official statements and the internal Islamic discourse, but also focuses on the political reality on the ground. The present volume thus deals with political positions and programs of Islamic parties concerning women's issues, studies the role of women in Islamic parties (in Parliament, municipalities and party institutions) and also looks into the role of women in social institutions and charitable organisations run by Islamic Movements in the Hashemite Kingdom.

The present study constitutes the second volume of the series, *Islamic Politics*, published by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). We hope that the publication will provide a useful point of reference for the further study of Islamic movements in Jordan. FES, as a German political foundation based on the principles of social democracy and equality, encourages increased participation of women in Jordanian public life.

However, the study demonstrates that this is unlikely to happen without *external* support and a thorough *internal* debate, both inside and outside the Islamic movement(s) in Jordan. Obviously, any such

debate can only be constructive as long as discussions are based on a careful stock-taking of the status quo. To contribute to such an unbiased analysis is the objective of this book.

Amman, 20 July 2008
Michael Bröning

Content

Introduction

Those monitoring the numerous issues that affect women in Jordan will perhaps notice a considerable change in the vision and the position of Islamic movements towards women's rights and issues. Transformations that have affected the region, in general, and Jordan, in particular, have noticeably contributed to the reassessment of the nature of the role women play in society. By becoming increasingly involved in various Islamic movements, which for many years were the exclusive domain of men, the Muslim woman has begun to rid herself of the historic, cultural and societal chains that have, thus far, limited her activities, behavior and reactions. She began by establishing women's councils and committees through which she demanded a greater role in the hierarchical structure within these movements, and through which she began to overcome her tokenized presence. She has, instead, taken on an active and real role in the decision-making process and has become a factor in defining the narrative of Islamic movements.

However, despite Muslim women's increased activities within Islamic movements in Jordan, they have not proven that they are able to create their own narrative independent of the Muslim male vision. Women's issues and rights are still being negotiated and discussed under very strict and established structures in this narrative, such as the insistence on the unique status of the Muslim woman, and the differences between this status and those of prevailing Western women models. The objectives advocated by women Islamists have been, thus far, summarized in a call for developing women's rights organizations based on Islamic values and references, which far exceed those upon which the Western model is centered.

The effectiveness of the social and political activities of Islamic movements presents an alternative model to Orientalist and Western

interpretations of Islam, which see these (feminist Islamic) movements as being based on a fixed and strict religious doctrine, and which negate Islam's potential for evolution, change and progress. Till this day, the common Western view of women in the Muslim world is grounded in the belief that women are lower in status and are defeated in Muslim and Arab societies: It considers Islamic movements as an extension of a tradition founded in oppressing and repressing women, without any consideration to the complex narrative and practices of these movements, be they traditional, activist or revolutionary. This is not to deny that certain Western women's movements and others, which have focused on the 'third' world, have started to understand the special case of women in the Southern hemisphere and the Arab and Muslim worlds, and have started to work on changing the stereotypical and prevailing image bestowed upon these women.

Women Islamists are indeed engaging in internal and external struggles, within the various strata of Islamic movements, geared towards improving the status of women. Traditionally, we find that conventional Western feminist movements have found many allies within Arab societies – allies, who adopt their agendas and proposals, create doubts about the existence of Islamic women's movements that defend women's rights in a modern, educated and universal fashion – and who reject the special status of Muslim women and the relativity of cultural differences. Furthermore, an internal self-defining struggle within and between the Islamic and 'modernist' tradition exists, despite the fact that all these movements attempt to lift the impediments and barriers to effective social and political participation of women in society.

Towards this end, many Islamic movements in the Arab and Muslim worlds and specifically in Jordan have begun to give special attention to the importance of the participation of women in all avenues and arenas. These movements have also reconsidered the nature of the role that women play in society, within a vision calling for change that depends on new considerations and deliberations in their practical programs as well as political ideology. This vision of renewal, which is tightly connected to history and current realities, considers the Islamic woman activist as one of its most important players in building a future where women stand side by side with

men in liberating contemporary structures, based on the principles of integration, inclusion, collaboration and understanding that eliminate the plague of dispute and conflict.

It is apparent that this vision of the Islamic woman activist may seem idealistic, at the present time, and out of reach in the shadow of certain Islamic movements, which are still prisoners to an inherited static doctrine, and which view the West as an absolute evil and a menace to Islam that is seeking to destroy and ruin Islamic societies through their 'corruption' of the woman. These specific movements do stand in the way of developing and strengthening the presence of women; however, in contrast, other movements exist, in Jordan and elsewhere, which have declared their commitment to women's rights and issues to the extent that this intention has become a fixed component in their platforms and activities within a renewed Islamic intellect and (re-)organization of values.

The experience of the Islamic woman activist in Jordan is considered relatively nascent as it did not really become visible until the last decade of the 20th century. Even then, within a more symbolic rather than effective participation and activism in the charitable, social, medical and educational networks and services provided by Islamic movements. Indeed, from the 1950s to the 1970s, secular women activists with leftist, nationalist and liberal tendencies controlled and prevailed over the totality of female activism in Jordan. These women established women's unions and actively joined political parties. However, they faced criticism as they were perceived as having an elitist nature and were clearly limited to upper class women, which significantly limited the outreach of these movements to the women of the mass populace. In contrast, Islamic women activists, who have managed to infiltrate the base, have succeeded in reaching out to women in the more underprivileged and sometimes shattered classes in cities, villages and refugee camps. As evidence, the veil surfaced in the 1980s as a significant symbol of the rise of Islamic movements in Jordan as well as in the Arab and Muslim world.

In this study, we will examine women's political issues from the point of view of Islamic movements in Jordan and from their strategic position as goal-seeking activists. We will dissect their vision, which

challenges the notion that the domain of politics is a science limited to and defined by the state or the authority This vision attempts to overcome prevailing stagnant limitations and mediocrity by exploring the horizons of a political science that looks at society as a whole, and considers all that is 'societal' as being the domain of the political – indeed, a vision that is more consistent with the Islamic definition of politics as being "the condition of working towards that which will reform and ameliorate". This vision is free from the traditional association of politics to males only and from a traditional distribution of roles according to gender which, after colonization, overran the visions of newly born Arab states in general, and Jordan in particular.

In general and in common, Islamic movements have all declared through their discourse that their ultimate goal is the "resumption of an Islamic way of life", despite differences in their various ideologies and visions of 'change'. The movements we will study vary in their ideologies from reformatory to revolutionary and radical. However, they all meet, at some level, in their attempts at creating restorative or reformative movements – similar to that of the traditional 'Salafists' and '*Jamaa'at Tabligh'*[a] or missionary movements – in that they all seek the re-Islamization of society from its base, using tactics that will lead, in the end, to the rise of an Islamic state. For example, the reformist political movement of the Muslim Brotherhood and its associated political party, the Islamic Action Front, seek reform through political demands and confrontation. Meanwhile, the more radical parties such as the *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Islamic Liberation Party) seek to create alliances with the powers-that-be in attempt to enforce change from its 'roots' or at the head of the governing hierarchy. Revolutionary movements like the *Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh* seek, through violence and through the 'force' or power of *Jihad*, to overthrow government.

The positions of the Islamic movements differ in their means and ways, including in their attitudes towards the established state, which vary between opposition, appeasement, collaboration and even disregard – but in the end, all join in the agreement of the need to establish an Islamic state.

a Jamaa'ah or jamaa'at means 'groups' in Arabic, 'tabligh' and 'da'wa' are terms that both indicate the meaning behind a 'religious calling', 'missionary' or 'invocation' in Arabic

This study aims to shed light on the ever expanding and proliferating roles and positions of women in Jordanian Islamic movements. It will examine the ways in which various Islamic movements and parties seek to connect with the populace, and how they establish their presence. This study will, hopefully, explore the role that women play in the ranks of these movements. It looks at their struggle to affirm themselves through integrated Islamic movements; their struggle to preserve women's rights by developing an Islamic feminist vision that may help improve the status of women in society, in a clear departure from the horizons of onlookers to the horizons of participation.

This study has been divided into two parts (and a conclusion):

1. Part I

The first part of the study examines Islamic movements which oppose and are in confrontation with the modern 'democratic' model, and which branch out from several political ideologies, from reformist to radical *Jihadist* or revolutionary. These movements include:
  - *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Islamic Party of Liberation)
  - *Al-Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh* (Traditional Salafists)
  - *Al-Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh* (Jihadist Salafists)
  - *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh* (*Tablighi Jamaa'at*) (or missionary groups / groups of 'calling to', 'conveyance' or 'invocation' of God)

2. Part II

The second part of the study will explore parties and movements that believe in political participation within the state apparatus and from within the 'democratic' process, and which are reformists by nature. These parties include:
  - The Muslim Brotherhood
  - Islamic Action Front
  - Muslim Center Party *(Hizb al-Wasat,* with *wasat* meaning middle, or centrist)
  - *Hizb Dua'a (Arab Islamic Democratic Movement)*

3. Conclusion

Part I
Islam, Woman and Politics Outside the Democratic Framework

Introduction

It can be said that the majority of Islamic movements in Jordan does not believe in democracy as a method or process for governance and for managing public affairs. Their theoretical postures are rather based on the belief in the totality and wholeness of the Islamic religion. Even if differences in their theoretical positions and pragmatic political practices exist, they all share in their opposition to Western practices, which are viewed as a threat and as a source that seeks to eradicate the Muslim identity and to control and dominate the Arab Muslim world. These movements share this 'nationalist' (Islamic) or universal (Islamic) vision in relating to the world.

The majority of the Jordanian Islamic movements were initiated abroad, after the collapse of the Islamic Caliphate (Ottoman) State in 1924; establishing branches in Jordan only after the end of the colonial era that plagued the Arab Muslim world. They would become active during the state-building process that took place after colonization or mandate periods, meaning that Islamic movements did not have a real presence when the Trans-Jordan Emirate was established by King Abdullah I in 1921, under the shadow of the British mandate.

The mandate era witnessed the emergence of secular nationalist parties that operated from within Jordanian territory and whose interests lied in resisting the colonial occupation. During that time, there were no laws to govern political parties and thus parties were modeled according to organizational structures and institutional by-laws inherited from the Ottoman state. Around twenty political parties emerged with a secular, politically nationalist ideology that also served the interests of Prince (later King) Abdullah I; parties that were strictly males-only.

When Jordan gained its independence in 1946, Islamic movements began to form under the benevolent auspices of the founder of the country, who was tied by lineage to the Hashemite Prophet Mohammad. That same year, the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood was established in Jordan (this movement is one of the focuses of the second part of this study).

The year 1948 proved a very critical and determining stage in the modern history of Jordan and in the establishment of the Jordanian state. The creation of the state of Israel and the 1948 war resulted in the union of the two Jordan River banks in the years 1949-1950, hence creating new political and socio-economic realities, which, in turn, allowed certain political reforms to crystallize into a new constitution for Jordan in 1952. 1952 was also the year that *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (the Islamic Party of Liberation) was established. Many secular nationalist and leftist parties were also formed in the 1950s, although a majority did not receive licenses until the Party Law was enacted in 1955. This period also witnessed the emergence of women's organizations through the *Rabitat al-Yaqaza al-Nissa'iyyah* (Women's Awakening League) that called for women's suffrage, or the right to election and to vote.

These newly established political parties won a large majority in parliamentary elections in 1956, which led the late King Hussein to ask the largest of these political parties to form an opposition government under the leadership of Suleiman al-Nabulsi. This experiment did not last long as these parties presented opposing views to the state agenda, which eventually resulted in a royal decree to dissolve all political parties and to delegitimize any affiliation to a political party or activity in Jordan.

The 1967 war that resulted in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (of the Jordan River) imposed a new reality that affected all walks of life – political, social and economic. *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh wal Da'wa* was formed in Jordan amidst the emergence of Palestinian resistance factions that would soon clash with the Jordanian government in 1970 – clashes which resulted in forcing these factions to move from Jordan to Lebanon. The formation of the *Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh*[b] (or

b Taqlidiyeh means 'traditional' in Arabic

Traditional Salafists) and a resurgence of Islamic movements took place throughout the 1970s, in parallel to the decline of secular nationalist and leftist movements after the 1973 war with Israel, the economic boom attributed to the oil industry and the martial law imposed throughout most of the Arab world.

In 1988, Jordan faced stifling economic hardship that resulted in high unemployment and severe poverty. The country underwent structural reform under the auspices of the World Bank, measures which coincided with a decision to dissolve official administrative relations between Jordan and the West Bank, which, in turn, led to a new period of political openness in 1989. The enactment of the Party Law in 1992 eventually led to the creation of over thirty new political parties in the Jordanian political arena, as well as the rise of the *Salafiya-Jihadiyeh* (Salafist Jihadist) movement. During this period, the woman was totally absent from the realm of Islamic movements and instead, women of the secular, nationalist, leftists and liberal parties dominated the political scene.

In this part of the study, we will explore the reality of women in the narrative, organizational and operational apparatus of Islamic movements that work outside the democratic context or framework in Jordan. We will try to understand the extent of women's participation in the ranks of these groups, the mechanisms through which women operated and the means of their proliferation. We will also investigate the possibility of the creation of women's rights organizations within these movements, and the possibility of women to develop their own narrative and activities.

These movements[c] include:
- *Hizb ut-Tahrir* (Islamic Party of Liberation)
- *Al-Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh* (Traditional Salafists)
- *Al-Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh* (Jihadist Salafists)
- *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh* (*Tablighi Jamaa'at*) (or 'missionary' group)

c English names of certain organizations are often used in the text to facilitate the readability of the translation; however, readers should note that some of these organizations are mostly known or recognized by their Arabic names, even in English content and contexts.

Hizb ut-Tahrir
(Islamic Party of Liberation)

Hizb ut-Tahrir was founded by Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (1909-1977) in 1952. After deciding on some theoretical approaches and practical options concerning a more political Islam with some key people, he formed a bloc that resulted in the birth of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* or the Islamic Party of Liberation. Al-Nabhani proceeded to apply for a license for a political party[1], and in this application, he declared the party's headquarters to be in the city of Jerusalem. However, the license was rejected by the Jordanian government, based on the justification that the party's proposed program was contrary to the spirit and principles of the Jordanian constitution[2]. Following the government's refusal to grant the party a permit, the party went underground and began to operate under Sheikh Nabhani's guidance through what was termed a "Leadership Committee".

From the time the party was established, Sheikh Nabhani worked on producing a number of books that reflected upon the unique identity of the party, its goals and objectives, mechanisms and modes of operation. His book "The Islamic System" (*Nizam al-Islam*) is considered one of the most important books adopted by the party – a book, which, despite its relatively short text, new party members spent two years studying[3].

Al-Nabhani wrote a number of other books in the field of theoretical and practical applications of Islam such as "The Economic System in Islam", "The System of Government in Islam", "The Social Order in Islam", "The Islamic State", "The Foundations of the (Islamic) Renaissance" and "The Muslim Personality" in three parts. He also authored books concerned with practical implementations or mechanisms (Islamic systemic methodologies) called the "Starting

Point" and the "Bloc Party". All these books emerged in Jerusalem in the period between 1952 and 1953 as Islamic Party of Liberation publications. In the 1960s, he published a new book on the "The Caliphate" and, in 1973, he published his book "Reasoning". A year before his death in 1976, al-Nabhani published his final book "Wit".

Other Party of Liberation publications exist, but under the names of other members and sometimes penned anonymously to credit al-Nabhani. For example, books such as the "Party of Liberation Concepts", "The Political Concepts of the Party of Liberation", "An Impassioned Appeal to Muslims", "A Preamble to the Constitution" and "The File" were published, as well as hundreds of bulletins and declarations constantly issued by the party to respond to certain issues, or when the need arose or as political realities changed.[4]

The Party of Liberation is considered one of the earliest of the Islamic parties to have worked on building an integrated and comprehensive system of thought on the religion, the state and on society. Despite its inception on purely male, patriarchal foundations, the party addressed both men and women in its 'callings' for them to adhere to the divine laws. The party allocated much time and space particularly for women and the family in its discourse. It developed a theoretical philosophy towards these issues in the book "The Social System in Islam" and laid out the legal and political rights and obligations of women in the book "A Preamble to the Constitution".

The notion of the Islamic state has a very strong presence in the theoretical structure and philosophical underpinnings of the party. This concept is a prevalent theme in all its events, activities and pragmatic strategies, and is imprinted on the course of the formation of the party, its politics and methodologies.[5]

The Party of Liberation has been oriented to follow a radical political path. It identifies itself as a "political party, whose principles are in Islam; which operates politically amongst the *umma*[d] (or the '*nation*' of Islam, the people of Islam) and with it, the *umma* adopts Islam as its cause; in order to lead it back to the Caliphate and to governance

d The term *umma or nation (when italicized) refers to Islam/the Muslim peoples as one nation*

based on God's revelation to His beings". "The Party of Liberation is a political bloc, not a spiritual or scientific bloc, not an educational or charitable bloc. Islamic thought is the spirit of its body, its core and the secret of its lifeline."[6] The aim of the party is stated as the "resurgence of the Islamic *umma* from its sharp decline; to liberate it from the thoughts, systems and governance of the infidel; to free it from the control and influence of infidel countries in order to restore the Islamic Caliphate state; and thus returning to governance by the word and the revelations of God".[7]

Both man and woman would participate in the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate State, responding to the words of God Almighty: "Let there be in your *nation* those who call for good, demand kindness and forbid evil; those are the successful".

According to the party, "God addressed the human being and made the human being the subject of the rights of the 'word' and of the 'duty'; God has sent forth the human being and holds the human being accountable, as it is the human being who enters heaven and hell; so it is the human being, and not the man or the woman, who is the subject of the tasks and the laws."[8] This statement is in accordance to His God Almighty's words: [We have created you in the form of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you will know one other]… that God created the female and male human being with certain dispositions and constitutions, which differ and exceed those of animals; that women are human beings and men are human beings, and neither exceeds the other in their humanity.[9]

In spite of the emphasis of the party on the equality between men and women in their disposition and constitution, it has developed different roles for men and for women in society. Ultimately, the party believes that modern calls for the liberation of women are contrary to Islamic civilization and that Western colonialism and the nation-states that exist in the Islamic world today are responsible for the mutation of the woman's identity and of Islam itself. Therefore, the party is struggling on two fronts at the same time, internal and external. It believes that "Muslim society (the *nation*) is at ebb, a low point; in its entirety; it was colonized by Western countries and it is still colonized

despite what it manifests as self-determination and governance. This society is subject to the total control of the democratic, capitalist intellectual leadership – a leadership that forces (upon Muslims and the state) a democratic regime in its governance and politics; a capitalist system in its economy; foreign armaments, training and martial arts in its military, and a colonialist foreign policy in its external affairs. Therefore, we can say that Islamic countries are still colonized as they remain the focus of a colonialism that imposes military control and political, economic and cultural exploitation of these vulnerable peoples."[10]

The foundation of the Islamic Party of Liberation's analysis of the reasons for the underdevelopment of the Islamic world, in all fields and in general, and in the social status of women, in particular, lies in this colonialist assault and its attempts to distort the Islamic identity by spreading misconceptions – misconceptions that have restricted Islam from its *nation's* worship and morals. And thus, the objective of the party is to "interact with the *nation* in order to reach its goals, and in confronting colonialism in all its names and forms, to achieve the liberation of the *nation* from the colonialist intellectual leadership and to uproot this leadership's cultural, political, military and economic control from the soils of the Muslim palace (Islamic world)".[11]

According to the party, among the many misconceptions derived from the Western vision of women's rights is that, "some are of the view that in Western society the woman stands next to the man, without discrimination; and with an indifference to the subsequent consequences. They see that the Western woman has developed a civic form; and so they appear in civic form; they imitate or try hard to imitate 'her' without realizing that these forms are consistent with Western civilization and its ways of life, its vision for life; but are not consistent with Islamic civilization and its ways… That is why 'they' call for guaranteeing the personal freedom of the Muslim woman and for giving her the right to do whatever it is she pleases to do."[12]

It is in the absence of the proper understanding or concepts of the Caliphate state that the party sees the causes for the underdevelopment, the deterioration and the degradation of conditions in the Muslim

world. This symbolic and legal structure (the Caliphate state and structure) is what colonialism and the West worked to undermine and destroy when "England, the leader of the infidels and of the greatest enemies of Islam, assumed the task of all the countries of the West, and destroyed the real source of danger to the West embodied in the Caliphate state; and, subsequently, appropriated and took over the majority of the Islamic countries".[13] Therefore, to establish (or re-establish) the Islamic state "is the collective duty of all Muslims all over the world; to carry out this mission is an imperative, an obligation; it is neither a choice nor may one relent".[14]

In the Party of Liberation, addressing women's issues and their place in society is interpreted and dealt with under a vision of the Islamic political domain or sphere. The totality of economic, political, societal and cultural variations is not given weight, as democracy in itself is a system of apostasy according to the party. In addition, the system of the Caliphate Islamic state is in opposition to the ideologies of capitalism (and socialism) and its consequent political systems, such as democracy.[15]

The party adopts a softer stance in terms of socialism, which arose from communism, despite the party's assertion that socialism's goal remains "demolition and destruction".[16] The party also asserts that socialism has failed in the Islamic world, "and that its failure is natural as it encroaches on the instinct, or the natural disposition, of the human being and contradicts the doctrine of Islam".[17]

However, according to the party, the first enemy of Islam remains capitalism, a system of the infidel that is contrary to Islam. "Islam, in itself, is in contradiction to the capitalist system; there can be no conciliation or harmony between them. Therefore, every call for conciliation or harmony between Islam and capitalism is an invitation to abandoning Islam and adopting the system of the infidel."[18] A break with capitalism and its system of democracy that dominates the world is inevitable "as the modern world, in fact, means capitalism and democracy, with civil laws and the like, which are heresy in the eyes of Islam and must be fought and eliminated in order to establish the rule of Islam".[19]

Perhaps the most dangerous act of colonialism, according to the Party of Liberation, is that it has worked to change the system of the state and of the Islamic Caliphate, and brought with it a democratic capitalist system that it imposed legally, administratively and politically. Colonization applied capitalism to the economy, democracy to governance, and western laws to administration and to the judiciary.[20] This imposition would not have been possible if the Muslims had not adopted the misconceptions and the false views that democracy could be equal in governance to the Islamic *Shura*; nor would it have been possible had it not been for the prevalence of ideas that call for reconciliation between the two systems by claiming that Islam is actually a religion of democracy.[21]

Due to the seriousness of the issue of democracy and the confusion it has created in the Muslim community, the Party of Liberation issued a booklet entitled "Democracy is the system of the infidel. It is forbidden to adopt it, apply it or advocate it."[22] The party's position is summarized in its view of democracy as a system of the infidel, marketed by the West in Muslim lands, which contradicts Islam, both fully and in part, in its origin, faith, foundation, ideas and the systems that created it [capitalism]. The party asserts that capitalism is a system established by human beings and has nothing to do with divine inspiration or religion. Therefore, it gives sovereignty to human beings rather than to God. It gives human beings the right to legislate as the source of authority. In contrast, in Islam, sovereignty is in the (divine) law (the *Sharia*[e]) and not in the people or the *nation*, as God alone is the legislator, and (only) governance is for the *nation*. In addition, the authority in democratic systems is a collective whereas, in Islam, it is based on a singular authority. The idea of individual (civic) freedoms takes the human being (down) to the level of the brute; and, in any case, the (Muslim) human being is restricted to conducting himself/herself according to the laws of the *Sharia*. However, the party apparently sees no harm in participating in parliamentary elections, although they believe that democracy and the systems that regulate it in the Islamic world are pagan or apostasy. The rationale is that simple electoral processes at polling stations are not in itself democracy – rather, democracy is the comprehensive 'system' of secular foundations.[23]

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e   Sharia is Islamic law; when the term appears in italics [*Sharia*] in the text of this document, it always refers to Islamic Law

The party further stipulates that all those who engage in the electoral process have to declare that they do not believe in the democratic system, and that they have to work to uncover its corruption, to destroy it and replace it with an Islamic system. People participating in the electoral process should create programs that are compatible with this ultimate objective, without collaborating with those who support the system of democracy. Therefore, they may not act, participate or cooperate with secular candidates on any common agendas. One must not vote for those who do not follow these guidelines or rules, just as Muslims must not elect secular candidates as they contribute to maintaining the system of the non-faithful (infidels).[24]

According to the party, these laws apply equally to both women and men, as "women and men may become members of parliament, if they are explicitly clear in their electoral programs that their involvement is restricted to advocating Islam, to oversight of the government and to holding it accountable for not applying the word of God or for being linked to infidels or colonizers. The promotion of virtue and the prohibition of sin is the duty of both women and men. Similarly, expressing these opinions is a right of both women and men."[25]

Both men and women are allowed to participate in the electoral process subject to the condition that "the candidate is offering to advocate Islam and to oversee government. If a candidate intends on enacting laws (other than the *Sharia*) or participating in the work of governance in parliament, both men and women are not allowed to elect or vote for such a candidate."[26]

Party founder Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani's interest in the parliamentary process began at an early stage, prior to the founding of the Party of Liberation. He considered parliament as a valid platform for advocating Islam. In 1951, he ran for parliamentary office for the district of Jerusalem, but did not win. Upon founding the Party of Liberation, he was keen to participate in an Islamic bloc in the 1954 elections in which five candidates from the Party of Liberation participated. Only one of these candidates, Sheikh Ahmad al-Da'our, won. When the parliament was dissolved in 1956 and new elections were held, the party again participated, and again, all its candidates lost except for Sheikh al-Da'our, who won for the second time in the district of Tulkarem.[27]

In the period between December 3, 1957, and May 13, 1958, nine members of the House of Representatives were dismissed from parliament, among them Sheikh Ahmad al-Da'our, who was also sentenced to two years in prison. Following these events, the party did not participate in any subsequent elections.[28]

The Party of Liberation believes that "intrinsically, women are mothers and housewives; they are the honor that must be preserved."[29] It is also stipulated in the preamble of the party's constitution, in Article 101, that "in general, men and women are to be separated and are not to be joined except by a need mandated by the *Sharia*, such as in an act of commerce or where other unions are allowed, such as during the Hajj[f]".[30]

As for women's rights in assuming governance, the party stipulates in Article 104 of its constitution that "Women are not allowed to govern. The woman may not become a head of state, or a judge in the courts, or a governor or an employee of any work that is related to governance."[31]

The party also makes a clear distinction between parliament, or houses of representatives (or councils of deputies) in contemporary democracy and the (*Shura*) council of the Islamic *nation* in that "(Modern) parliaments oversee three main functions: (1) an oversight function – it monitors the government, (2) legislation – it legislates and (3) accountability and dismissal – i.e. it is able to hold the authority and its legislators accountable and dismiss them. The party does not consider accountability and oversight as 'governance' However, activities such as legislation and dismissing those in authority are considered as governance. In contrast, in the (*Shura*) council of the Islamic *nation*, a ruler is held accountable and is supervised, but no laws are enacted, and rulers are neither installed nor dismissed. Therefore, women are not allowed to become members of parliament as long as this institution involves the principles of the democratic, capitalist systems of governance, while women are allowed to participate in the (*Shura*) council of the Islamic *nation*, as it has no provisions for governance."[32]

According to this party view, and in terms of expressing its ideas

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f Pilgrimage to Mecca and one of the five pillars of Islam

with regard to women's rights, women are entitled to participate in it [the (*Shura*) council of the Islamic *nation*], but only according to strict provisions that are meant to prevent the unlawful contact or relations between the sexes outside the special cases where this contact or relations are allowed by Islam. The party stresses this ban, making chastity a duty and all methods and techniques of preserving morality a must. This code is considered essential for the (*Shura*) council and therefore, adhering to this code and maintaining it is a duty in itself.

The party has set many laws and provisions with regard to this matter that include:

1. Both men and women should cast down one's eyes to each other.
2. In public, women should appear in full cover, with only their face and hands showing.
3. It is forbidden for women to travel the distance of a day and a night unless accompanied by a legal chaperon.
4. It is forbidden for men and women to spend time together in private, unless the woman is accompanied by a legal chaperon.
5. Women are not allowed to leave their homes without the express permission of their husbands.
6. Women's gatherings should be separated from men's gatherings in private life.
7. Contact and relations between men and women should be limited to the implementation of general, public transactions.[33]

As for working, the Party of Liberation allows women to work under very precise conditions and clarifies these conditions as follows: "Although a woman's work is intrinsically that of a mother or housewife, she is not limited or forbidden from other work. What this really means is that God created women so that a man can live in peace and tranquility with her and to procreate with her. But God also created woman to work in public life as in private life, as He has given her the duty to advocate Islam and to seek education for what she requires in her working life. She is permitted to sell, rent and be an agent… She is allowed to engage in agriculture, industry and commerce, to handle contracts, ownership, to increase her assets, to take control of her own affairs, to be a partner or a leaser of

people, estates and other items, and to carry on all kinds of affairs... But she is not allowed to govern, so she cannot be a president or a vice president, a governor or an employee of the government... She may assume the position of a judge in a people's court, as these courts simply solve disputes among people; and, therefore, she will not be a ruler as such. But she cannot be an ombudsman (judge in government affairs)."[34]

The former text summarizes the party's 'liberation' vision on the collective rights and duties that women enjoy, a vision that has not changed since the founding of the party, thus far. However, the party considers the woman duly charged with the duty of advocating Islam and the creation of the Islamic State. According to the party, "Islam specifically delineates the legal duties of women and men, giving women rights and duties and similarly, giving men rights and duties... However, Islam allocates various provisions for men and others for women, as the reality of the female is different from that of the male... This allocation does not infer inequality; but rather, is the proper or right remedy for their special characteristics and conditions... The variations in rulings does not exempt the woman of her duty to advocate Islam (or missionary duty), to propagate an Islamic way of life, or from her responsibility to work to change dire social conditions or situations – the calling to these responsibilities is a general and common duty of both men and women."[35]

This specific vision of the Party of Liberation strives to include women within its ranks, according to its particular model and school of thought with regard to women's issues. However, women in Jordan have never reached leadership positions in the Party of Liberation, as the party's organizational structure is riddled with a hierarchy that reflects its secretive nature. Indeed, this secrecy is inherent to the party's adoption of a radical, revolutionary approach as well as its hostility to ruling regimes, which the Party of Liberation deems as infidel regimes that have abandoned Islam.

A national committee composed of several party members, called the "Governance (or State) Committee", oversees the workings of the party in every country where the party exists. There are also committees, referred to as "Local Committees", which oversee party

activity in specific cities or specific areas. Sometimes a single person, referred to as a "Representative", is assigned the responsibility of overseeing the party in a particular town or district.

Meanwhile, the "Leadership Committee" is considered the highest point in the party pyramid and is headed by the leader of the party. Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani led the party from its founding until his death in 1977, from Beirut, where he moved after being targeted by the (Jordanian) secret service. Upon al-Nabhani's death, Sheikh Abdel Kadim Zalloum took over the Party of Liberation's leadership until he died in 2003. The post was later assumed by Engineer Ata Abu al-Rashteh, who still commands the party from Beirut[36] as the Lebanese state has shown tolerance towards the party. As a note, all the party's leaders have been Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

Women's activities in the Party of Liberation [in Jordan] are carried out within a framework of secrecy because of its hard-line stance towards the regime and system of government. On the other hand, women's performance and activities in other countries where the party exists have evolved significantly. For example, the official spokesperson of the Party of Liberation in Bangladesh is a woman, Fahmida Khanom Muni.[37] In Palestine, women are active in various programs (targeting other women) that focus on education, organizing events and in advocacy websites.[38]

Instead, the party's curriculum for 'change' in Jordan has worked to reduce the woman's role due to risks that party members there are exposed to. The party's vision of 'change' is based on a singular reading of the 'way of the Prophet' or *Sunna[g]*, and it sees that one should follow this path and no other course. The party sees the laws of the *Sharia* as also indicating only one path; this path is the way the Prophet Mohammad took to advocate and to spread Islam and Islamic nation-building. Everyone who follows the Prophet must follow the same path, "One must not veer from this path, in its whole or in its parts, even at the length of a hair; and one can remain on this path without making any consideration for the evolution of time, and

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g   The term *Sunna*, in italics, signifies the way of the Prophet, or the biography or course and way of life of the Prophet Mohammad, which is used as one of the main sources of reference for most Muslims and Muslim scholars.

the changes that have come with it – since, what has changed (over time) are the means and the forms, but the essence (substance) and the meaning never changes, and will never change, no matter how times and eras, peoples and countries change with time."[39]

Sheikh al-Nabhani's reading of the way of the Prophet (*Sunna*) concludes that the path for change is based on secret advocacy (missionary) as a starting point, followed by a stage where the gathering of the faithful in *Sahaba* (companions of the Prophet) blocs takes place – after having spent time in smaller working blocs. The path then progresses to public advocacy, after the blocs of the faithful *Sahaba* have been strengthened and are able to face society as a whole. This process ultimately ends with the creation of the Islamic State in al-Medina.[40]

The Party of Liberation defines the three phases required for the creation of the Islamic state as:

First: The educational stage, or the stage where the party seeks out people who believe in the ideas of the party and its methods of forming party or *Sahaba* blocs.
Second: The stage of interaction with the *nation*; when the *nation* comes to adopt Islam until Islam becomes its cause, and until the *nation* makes Islam the reality of its life.
Third: This phase entails taking over governance, the complete and total application of Islam, and carrying its message to the entire world.[41]

The party's vision with regard to women's issues as well as other issues, in general, has a substantive and static character. It considers international agreements concerning women's rights to be nothing but strategies to control and dominate the Islamic world, and the alienation of the Islamic world. The party states: "Women's liberation, International Woman's Day... are among the many invitations coming from the Western lands to Muslims so that Muslims follow the infidel's perception of women, family and society."[42]

It reiterates the above by saying, "The Muslim women suffer a

vicious campaign by Western, capitalist, infidel countries that strive to take her out of her purity and the chastity of her relationships, to make her a commercial commodity and an object of desire… This campaign started from the onset of the West's general campaign against the *nation*, although its intensity has increased recently, and especially after 9/11."[43]

The sinuous march of the Islamic Party of Liberation has been full of volatility and fissures. The party has been imprinted with the personality and character of its founder Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani, specifically in opinions that he formed in the 1950s with regard to women. These opinions have remained, as is, – with no change, diligence or renewal – within the party's central intellectual or theoretical structure, which is also the basis for the party's discourse. This fact has limited the party, from the time of its inception, to an isolated, elitist framework or context, which has limited its connection with the mass populace of men and women. This relative isolation opened the way for other Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the *Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh* (Traditional Salafists), the *Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh* (Jihadist Salafists) and *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh* (or missionary groups).

The Islamic Party of Liberation, meanwhile, has remained captive to a static and rigid doctrine that does not reflect the overall change that has affected international systems in this era of globalization. The case of women and the role of the woman is considered one of the greatest challenges facing the party in the future, especially within the framework of the emergence and proliferation of other diligent Islamic views, which have proven capable of crystallizing an organized discourse and practice that guarantees women's rights and offers them a wider platform, under the auspices of modern, democratic political systems.

Al-Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh (Traditional Salafists)

Sheikh Mohammad Nasruddin al-Albani (1914-1999) is considered the original founder of the Traditional Salafist movement in Jordan. During his lifetime, he managed to formulate a new school of Salafist thought, which established him as one the most prominent symbols of the Salafist movement in the second half of the twentieth century, and which granted him an extensive reputation and acceptance in the Muslim world. His school of thought is marked by special characteristics that distinguish it from predecessor Salafist movements such as the Wahhabi[h] Salafist movement in al-Hijaz [today part of Saudi Arabia], the Reform Salafist movement in Egypt and the National Salafist movement in Morocco. However, it shares with all Salafist movements the call to the return to the Book (Quran), the way of the Prophet (*Sunna*) and the good path of the 'first three blessed generations' after the Prophet (*al-Salaf*) as reformist movements. The other major objective of these movements includes rising up from the decline in scientific output, the collapse of political systems and the colonial domination (of the Muslim world) by calling for a revival of the heritage of Islamic, working to restore the pure image of Islam and ridding it of the infidel and heretic practices that have become associated with it over the course of its history. These movements' goal includes setting and strengthening the authentic (pure) morals of Islam and its value system, as summarized by the fundamental principles of the original monotheistic calling of obedience and of righteousness.[44]

While in Syria, and after the 1967 war and defeat, Sheikh al-Albani began developing a new Salafist school of thought that became

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h A Muslim Salafist sect founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792), known for its strict observance of the Quran and flourishing mainly in Arabia.

connected with his name, and which did not exist in the Levant before him. It was an empirical (in the theological sense), revivalist missionary movement. Salafist thinker Sheikh Rashid Rida had a great influence on al-Albani's theoretical orientations. However, al-Albani's reading of Sheikh Rida's Salafist interpretations was partial rather than comprehensive; it focused on the more literal, scripted aspects of Rida's texts and not the intellectual, interpretive side. Al-Albani redressed his admiration for Sheikh Rida by saying that "Our appreciation of Sheikh Rida does not preclude us from acknowledging his deviations, as he was affected by the prevailing atmosphere in the contemporary Islamic world of materialism and of absence of faith in the Unknown, which is the true source of Islam and the first element of the true faith."[45]

Al-Albani's philosophy can be summarized in the slogan adopted by the movement, "Purification and Education", which is a practical, empirical interpretation of the Salafist tradition that al-Albani preached in his books and in lectures he gave in the various cities and districts in Syria. His movement came to Jordan in the 1970s by way of a series of lectures he was invited to give by the Muslim Brotherhood in the Zarqa division, where many 'brothers' such as Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, Deeb Anis, Dr. Ahmad Nawfal and professor Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra already had Salafist tendencies,.[46]

The concept of "purification and education" is, according to their belief, based on a revivalist vision, the main components of which are founded on the principle of a purification of belief and worship from the blemishes, heresies and deviations that have plagued Islamic practices over the course of time, and of educating individuals about these dangers. The core of this vision is encapsulated in the phrase often used (by al-Albani), "Following and Not Deviating", alluding directly to a strict reading of the *Hadith (*sayings attributed to the Prophet, or the Prophetic Tradition*)* that says, *"*The people (*umma*) of my generation are the best*,* then those who follow them, and then those who follow the latter*...*". The term "follow" indeed represents the essence of the (Salafist) theory of purification that is based on exposing heresy and purifying society from its dangers. On this al-Albani says "Ridding Islam of the heresy that has accumulated upon it has become a necessity that cannot be avoided, and that cannot be

carried out without setting people upon the righteous path... Heresy is deviation from the righteous path, and leads to hell; and, God does not accept anyone to enter the religion who is not of it (the righteous/ orthodox path); to work on that which is not the command of God is utterly rejected."[47]

He emphasizes the essence or nature of "following" the righteous path in the following statement: "It is imperative to alert Muslims to the heresies that have entered the religion. It is not sufficient, as some may advocate, to teach only *tawhid* (monotheism in faith or God's oneness) and *Sunna* (the way of the Prophet) and to be silent on the plagues of blasphemies and heresies; for, of the reasons that heresy exists in our religion is, indeed, weak and fabricated *Hadith*".[48]

Al-Albani sees Islam as self-sufficient, self-evident and clear; that it does not require interpretation or explanation, as it is totally different from other religions and civilizations. He summarizes the means for the rebirth and return to Islam in a purification process, or purifying the religion from interpretations latched onto Islam over time. To this, he says: "The only remedy is a return to the religion; but this religion, as we all know, and as religious scholars in particular know, is heavily disputed. Therefore, it is my view that the first reform that must be implemented by the missionaries of Islam and those who call for the establishment of an Islamic state, in complete honesty, is to return to themselves first, to understand themselves first, and then turn to making the *nation* understand the religion that the Prophet Mohammad brought forth to us... This can only be achieved through the study of the Quran and the *Sunna...* The ones, who shall teach, must educate a new generation of Muslims that which has been proven in the Book (*Quran*) and the *Sunna*... This education is what will produce a pure Muslim society, one that will lead to an Islamic state. Without these two preconditions – correct teaching, and correct education based on correct teaching – it will be impossible, in my opinion, to establish Islam, the rule of Islam or the Islamic state." [49]

The Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh (Traditional Salafists) crystallized intellectually and politically during the time al-Albani lived in Jordan since 1980. Many students would flock to him, forming a Salafist current with a very precise and explicit vision. Of the more notable

representatives of the Traditional Salafist movement in Jordan are Sheikh Mohammad Shaqra, al-Halabi, Salim Hilali, Mohammad Moussa Nasr and Mashhour al-Salman. These 'disciples' or students of al-Albani continued the mission of proliferating the Traditional Salafist school of thought through the publication of a magazine series entitled "al-*Assalah"* ('the pure' or the 'source'), and by establishing the Imam al-Albani Center for Empirical and Formal Studies on January 8, 2001.

The vision of the Traditional Salafists with regard to women's issues is based on a strict reading of Islam, which is considered holistic in its approach to all societal matters. According to al-Albani, "Islam is self-sufficient. It contains definitive answers to many problems and does not require anything external to complete it. The problem is in the Muslims and not in Islam, which was exposed to distortions and falsifications throughout history, tainting the pure image it had during the age of the faithful *Sahaba* (faithful companions of the Prophet) and the *Salaf* (our predecessors – those of the first three generations). Heresy and societal and political attributes worked to deform Islam; and, it is crucial to revert to the original source that the Prophet brought forth to us through the Book (Quran) and the *Sunna*. The return to religion is a return to the Book and the *Sunna*. This is religion, as agreed by all imams; and, this is the path that guards against deviation and straying from the righteous path. The Prophet says, 'I leave you two weighty things, if you maintain both you will never go astray after me: the Book (of God) and my Way (*Sunna*)'."[50]

According to al-Albani, simply returning to the Book and the correct *Sunna* will lead to the required reform in both state and society: "It is essential that women remain at home in accordance to God's words '*Remain (settle) in your houses*' [*your* implies to women by virtue of the usage of the verb] and in accordance to how the women of our *Salaf* behaved and lived, and who did not interfere in politics."[51]

The Wahhabi Salafists share with the al-Albani Salafists the stance of Sheikh Abdel Aziz Ben Baz, who says: "The calling for women to go to work in the arena of men, which leads to intermingling (between the sexes), with the pretext that this is what is required by this 'age' in civilization is a very dangerous matter with dangerous consequences,

bitter fruit and dire results. It contradicts the text of the *Sharia*, which orders women to remain at home, to carry out her duties at home… Removing the woman from her home, which is the dome of her queen-hood and her vital source in this life, is an abandonment of her instinct and the nature that God has bestowed upon her."[52]

Although the Traditional Salafist movement asserts that women and men are equal in creation and formation, it requires women to remain at home and not to demand equal rights to men. Sheikh al-Albani directs women to accept that fact and to adhere to it: "For instance, the woman does not ask her husband for all equal rights... To be specific, a woman must obey her husband as much as she can, as this is how God gave man preference through two of His *Suras*[i]: '*Men are the keepers or guardians of women*' and '*Men are one step ahead of women*', not to mention the many *Hadith* that confirm this interpretation."[53]

Although the Wahhabi and Traditional Salafists share the strong conviction that the woman's place is her home, the Traditional Salafists are far more tolerant in terms of women's attire. The Wahhabi Salafists cling to the adherence of covering all of a woman's body and face, and consider showing a woman's face as a display of her charms, or as Sheikh Ben Baz says: "You have likely witnessed all the disasters that afflicted the many countries where women display the charms that God forbade them from showing, and who are not veiled from men. This is no doubt a great evil and a manifest sin and of the greatest reasons for punishment and wrath – because the lack of this covering reveals obscenity, leads to crimes of indecency and the prevalence of immorality... Fear God, Muslims! And obstruct the foolish and your women from what God has forbidden. Keep them veiled and decent and beware of God's wrath and his vast punishment."[54]

Sheikh Abdel Aziz Ben Baz emphasized the necessity of wearing the veil and of remaining at home. He says: "God has ordered us in His good Book to veil women and to keep them at home. He warned of primping and grooming; and He directed them to succumb to man's words, which keeps women from corruption, and warns women

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i Any of the 114 chapters or sections of the Quran

against the origin of seduction and of chaos."[55]

Followers of the Wahhabi Salafist school of thought reference a multitude of books and essays that necessitate a woman to remain in her home; and in the case that necessity forces her to leave her home, that she must cover her face, especially before strangers. Sheikh Mohammad Ben Saleh al-A'athimin says, "Be aware, oh Muslim, that a woman veil herself and cover her face before foreign men is a duty and order; its obligation referenced in the Book of Almighty God and the *Sunna* of your Prophet Mohammad (MPBUH); it is the correct and proper way."[56]

On the other hand, the Traditional Salafists of the al-Albani tradition adopt a doctrine that is more tolerant with respect to a women's attire. Sheikh al-Albani delineated this doctrine in several books he wrote on the subject of women, among them "The Muslim Woman's Veil" in which he concludes that a woman's proper attire must satisfy the following seven conditions:

1. It must contain the whole body, except the face and the hands.
2. It must not be adorned.
3. It must not be transparent or translucent.
4. It must be loose and not too tight.
5. It must not be fragrant (or perfumed).
6. It must not resemble the attire of men.
7. It must not call forth attention in any way.[57]

Even though al-Albani appears strict enough on a woman's proper attire, he has been accused by the followers of the Wahhabi Salafist movement of being too soft, and of practically inviting the act of unveiling, primping and chaos (brought forth by seduction). This accusation drove al-Albani to author another book, in rebuttal, which he introduced as "The irrefutable response to those who oppose the theologians, and who cling to fanaticism and who enforce upon the woman the covering of her face and hands; and to those who are not convinced with their (the fanatics) claim that 'It is of the *Sunna*; and it is what is proper (and preferred by God)'".[58]

Al-Albani says apologetically and with remorse: "The truth of the

matter is that my heart is broken with despair and sorrow when I witness the lowly unveiling and shameful primping that appeals to the women of this generation, throwing themselves at it like butterflies to a fire. However, I will never be of the view that the solution to this problem is by forbidding them what God has allowed them in revealing their face and hands."[59]

Adopting and imitating the (ways of the) West is considered the greatest challenge and danger facing the Muslim world and has, thus, come to dominate Salafist intellectual thought almost in its entirety. The westernization of society and of women is viewed as a manifestation emanating from a need to imitate the infidels; and thus, al-Albani sternly warns against it, in all its forms and representations. He says, "It is forbidden for men and women to imitate infidels in their forms of worship, their feasts and celebrations or in the attire that is particular to them. This is a great tenet of Islamic *Sharia* that has been broken, unfortunately, by many Muslims; even by some who are involved in religious matters and in missionary work. It is out of ignorance of their own religion, or of following their own whims or of getting swept away with contemporary ways and the customs of pagan Europe till it has become of the main sources that humiliates and weakens Muslims, and allows foreigners to control and colonize them." [60]

As for political rights, both Traditional Salafists and Wahhabi Salafists do not see that these concern women. Furthermore, men themselves are not allowed to practice 'political rights'. Politics according to al-Albani, "is of religion, and is already dealt with and legislated in our *Sharia*". He emphasizes in one of his *fatwas*[j] that "It is political (to leave or) not to be involved in politics".[61]

In this fashion, the Salafists resemble other missionary movements like the *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh*, who also have no immediate interest in politics. This common stance is based on the shared belief that the results desired for society can be reaped through the politics of making society Islamic, and that accessing the large popular base of

j Islamic legal opinions usually issued on matters related to everyday life; an Islamic religious ruling, a scholarly opinion on a matter of Islamic law. A *fatwa* is issued by a recognized religious authority

society is the indispensable strategy of reform prior to delving into the issues of the state and the resumption of the Islamic way of life.

And thus, Traditional Salafists of the al-Albani tradition deny that their movement is political. Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim Shaqra emphasizes that Salafist "is a word that, in itself, negates any indication of politics or a political movement."[62] For the theologians of the Salafist movement, politics, in its contemporary meaning and modern context, is not to be practiced as it contradicts what politics is, as defined by the *Sharia*. Sheikh Shaqra says: "We should not mingle with political currents as they stand now. There are no legal grounds to remove this restriction from the circle of that which is forbidden to us by the *Sharia*. Those that mingle in these circles, commit sin, and those that repent, God forgives them."[63]

Followers of the al-Albani Salafist tradition agree on this opinion. Sheikh Ali al-Halabi sees that "Politics, by definition of the *Sharia,* is in religion (practicing the religion in its pure form); whereas, in its modern definition, politics is rejected. The Salafist calling is not a political one; it is not a political movement; and it will not allow itself to be that."[64]

Often, the Salafist discourse is particularly aggressive with regard to politics. Sheikh Mohammad Moussa Nasr sees that "Politics for the Salafists is found in religion; but which politics? Is it the politics of newspapers, magazines and Zionist or Crusader news agencies? Or is it the politics of the Prophet and His *Sahaba* (faithful companions)? Is it the politics of the democrats, who regurgitate the terms used by the infidels, 'Rule of the people by the people for the people'?! Or the politics of Islam that says "The rule of God according to the Book of God and to the *Sunna* (way) of His Prophet, emanating in the principles of the *Shura* as decreed by Islam?! Or is it the politics of defining what is right by the number of fingers raised in parliaments, even if this 'vote' concerns acquiescing to a sin, an atrocity, polytheism, night clubs or a distillery? Or is it the politics of 'Indeed, decision, command and judgment are asserted as Allah's own, He ordained that you worship no one but Him. This is the right system of faith and worship but most people do not perceive this fact.'[k]"[65]

The Salafist discourse has a tendency to lean towards secrecy and

k   Sura 12, Yusuf [verse: 40]);   sourcehttp://www.islamic-council.com/qurane/yu-suf/40.asp

inconsistency, for politics in the Islamic sense is required by *Sharia*; but this politics *is* the politics of the *Sharia*. As for modern politics, it is seen (by the movement) as representing polytheism, hypocrisy, sin, deceit and cheating; for all systems not working to instate the word of God are breaking the laws of Islam (of the *Sharia*). Islam and Muslims, today, are living in severe alienation, according to Sheikh al-Albani: "We are surrounded by infidel countries that are strong in material possession. We are cursed by having leaders, most of who do not adhere to the laws of God, or do so only in certain cases."[66]

In the discourse of the al-Albani Salafists, the nature of politics is determined by qualitative principles – and it is a matter for men only. There is no space for any intervention by women according to their vision of the world, which is distinctly characterized by a Manichaean dualism and within a framework of clashing values between civilizations. They view the Muslim nature as distinguished by purity and absolute goodness, and the nature of contemporary modernists as that of ruin founded upon hypocrisy, corruption and deceit. Therefore, the discourse of al-Albani Salafists forbids involvement in the politics of the modern world, and adopts a political vision whose main concern is a religious ethos, an ethos that requires engaging in society and not the state. The individual members of society are the target of the al-Albani Salafist message, whereas the state and its modern institutions are to be avoided and not dealt with. They see that what is in the best interest of society and its reform will eventually necessitate the creation of the *Sharia* state, and will ultimately permit the resumption of Islamic life as a noble end, as the fruit of reform and the politics of Islamization. This ultimate objective is stressed in the fifth article of the movement's statement of goals which reads: "To urgently pursue a resumption of an Islamic way of life, mature in form and that follows the Prophet's way and course." Nevertheless, they understand that this resumption of a 'mature Islamic way of life' must go through stages of development, which cannot be avoided before an Islamic state can be created. This development requires a process of 'purification and education' of the members of society until the whole of society becomes 'of God' and thereby, capable of carrying out the task and duties entrusted to them by the coveted state. This process can only be accomplished through a long term Islamic political ethos, which strives to purify and clarify society of

the images of polytheism, heresy, sectarianism and moral dissolution and diversion as well as the creation of a Salafist identity that is pious and pure without any trace of the values of the West or of the infidel. The politics of Islamization of society is the only path for 'political' work and for the establishment of the state.

The al-Albani Traditional Salafist rhetoric contains a vision of the (modern) world, state and society as deviating from the Book, the *Sunna* and the path of the good *Salaf* (and *Sahaba*): "The poisons that have weakened the Muslims and have paralyzed their progress are not the swords of the infidels that gathered together in a plot against Islam, its people and its state; but rather, the malicious germs that have infiltrated the giant Muslim's body, albeit in slow doses, but incessantly and effectively."[67]

Salim al-Hilali sees that the fortress of the Muslim *nation* is being threatened from the inside, "In order to ensure that the Muslim *nation* does not awaken from the pricks of the poisonous needles filled with killer germs, and in order to keep it (the *nation*) in the dark about this condition, the imams of the infidels have created factories on the inside to dispatch these poisons internally... This is what the lords of the *farangi* (the Franks) and the Jews are constantly planning. These plans are executed by their slaves in our land... The troupes of darkness are still raising their voices and they are calling for hell – God forbid. Here, the advocates of democracy are shouting, and here, the Gods of socialism are braying and here, the lords of nationalism are barking, with the people behind them gasping, because they are not enlightened with the light of knowledge and they have not sought shelter in the stronghold."[68]

Sheikh al-Albani blames the backwardness of the Muslims on external factors related to the West, but he gives even greater importance to the impact of internal factors, saying, "The problem of the Muslims and the Muslim states being bound in their humiliation and slavery to the infidels or to the Jews is not necessarily in their ignorance of the reality of the situation, or that they do not stand up to the schemes and the conspiracies of the infidels, it is in their neglect of their own religion and in not applying the standards of the Book and of the *Sunna*."[69]

Al-Albani considers imitating the infidels and following their ways

to be of the greatest causes of the Islamic *nation*'s ignorance, immorality and heresy; and, he sees that all the forms of western political systems have no place in Islam: "What the Book and the *Sunna* brought us, and the life, the approach and the objectives of our *Salaf* (the good *Sahaba*) are sufficient for our *nation*. However, there are those who encourage approaches, or maybe I should say, allow themselves to imitate the West in the approach of achieving what they call – or claim – is democracy, social justice and other such terms not based in reality. Our God has provided us with our salvation and has enriched us with our *Sharia*. There is no need to be dependent, in any means or forms, on the infidels. If we take their paths, we will have veered from the path of the faithful and, indeed, followed the path of the infidels."[70]

Those who read the magazine "*al-Assalah,*" published in the name of the al-Albani Salafists, may be alarmed by the conspiratorial political discourse and undertone that has afflicted each of its volumes. One will find in one of their editorials, under the heading of "The State of the Muslim World", statements such as "The yellow people [white, Western] have shown their fangs; they fold the pages of deceit about democracy and have shown what is hidden in their hearts... They are the false propaganda and the lewd (immoral) billboards."[71]

For Traditional Salafists, there is no place for the presence of women in the political sphere; nor are they allowed to partake in any way or form in the political systems of modern democracies. These democracies, in their discourse, are an imported pagan system that contradicts Islamic *Sharia*. Al-Albani says: "Those who have instated democracy and who believe in its claim that it is the 'rule of people by the people' and that 'the people' are the source of law – both of these claims are in contradiction with our Islamic *Sharia* and our faith. Democracy is a system of idols and Islam instructs us to reject idols... Democracy and Islam is a contradiction that cannot be bridged... There is no means for those who try to incorporate it (democracy) into the Islamic *Shura*."[72]

Al-Albani is emphatic about elections being prohibited, and that participating in them is prohibited for both men and women: "With regard to political elections – they are part of the instruments of

democracy, which is forbidden and not permitted. Parliaments (representative councils) do not adhere to God's Book and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, and which, instead of adhering to the will of the majority, are councils of idolatry and thus, must not be recognized. The Muslim should not strive to establish them or cooperate in their existence as they wage war against God's *Sharia;* and, because they are a way of the West, produced by Jews and Christians that, by the laws of the *Sharia,* we are forbidden to imitate."[73]

The Traditional Salafists' perceptions about the reality of the political and social environments and about the nature of the Islamic religion have produced an inferior view of women. Nevertheless, the movement did work towards employing women in the context of their political ethos or theory, which strives to achieve the goal of mending the malfunctioning reality of the Muslim world, to resume an Islamic way of life and in the creation of the Caliphate state. Therefore, it established a women council at the Imam al-Albani Center[74] whose mission is to communicate with women in their homes and conducting lectures for women – a move that is in accordance with their overall strategy of outreach to society from the inside and not from the top of a pyramid. This strategy and its instruments, such as the women council, have assisted the movement's expansion in many of the poorest neighborhoods in major cities, and the spread of the movement widely among women in these areas.

It is evident that Traditional Salafists and other movements of the same tendency, such as the Wahhabi Salafists, present a major obstacle in the path of women's advancement in society and in her attainment of civil and political rights. This impediment is due to their pious nature and notions of purity, which oppose historical developments and progress. It is based on the deep conviction of the wholeness and the perfection of Islam that holds no consideration for changing times and circumstances. It insists on maintaining the role of women as limited to the private sphere of her home and her family, and to a strict view of male superiority. In a superficial reading and vision of Islam, these movements believe that the place of women in (their reading of) Islam guarantees her rights, by default. These strict conceptions are reinforced by their belief that their ways are perfect and the ways of others are evil and corrupt.

According to their vision, by simply reverting to the word of the

Book, the *Sunna* and the interpretations of the faithful *Salaf* (*Sahaba*), progress is self-evident and guaranteed. Furthermore, in their view, benefiting from other civilizations is a step backwards, heresy and abandonment of the religion. According to the renowned Salafist Sheikh Mashhour al-Salman, "Islamic libraries are full of studies on women, their rights, their duties; and they reveal the conspiracies that have been weaved against them (women) by westernization, and reveal the refutation of the falsehoods of our opponents and of secularist propaganda."[75] According to the Traditional Salafist vision, the reality of modern women is that "She has become a (spider's) web, or net, which collects money and young men; she has become a means of marketing immorality and perversion, and a mere ladder for attaining others' goals. All of this is due to abandoning the [Islamic] rules, which can provide joy and happiness to all humanity if followed."[76]

Sheikh Mohammad Moussa Nasr views women's rights organizations as nothing but a conspiracy against the Muslim woman, another means of westernization and the spread of immorality as he says, "We must take heed against the conspiracies of the enemies of Islam. The conferences they hold are really conspiracies where they regurgitate what the Jews, human devils and demons dictate to them... They want our societies to fall into the sludge or mud of vice; and they want our societies to run gasping after its sins. For the deterioration of morals is the predicate step to military occupation; therefore, the Muslim state must deteriorate morally and the Muslim woman must be corrupted for this occupation to take hold."[77]

The issue of women's rights and celebrating events such as International Women's Day is seen as "a celebration held by the enemies of Islam for the Muslim Arab woman; so that she emulates the Western woman, to wreak havoc in Islamic societies and to corrupt Muslim families; so that the Muslim Arab woman becomes like the Western, foreign woman, never rejecting the hand of those who want to touch her, with her husband's supremacy lost over her, and with the *qawama*[l] of her father or guardian lost over her."[78]

The conspiratorial vision of the Traditional Salafist movement is

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l 'The caretaking, protection, spending, responsibility and counsel', also referred to as 'custody', but which is translated by Western sources as: to a difference in 'power relations within a family'

reflected in their all-embracing view on the political rights of women. This unbending view is due to the movement's reclusive nature and lack of flexibility with regard to *ijtihad*[m], the movement's practice and its particular political imaginary with regard to the state and Islamic society, all of which is based on the model 'civil' state the Prophet established in al-Medina. In reference to all of the latter, Sheikh al-Albani bans women from all political rights and activity "based on the experience of the women of the good *Salaf* (*Sahaba*), where they did not interfere in politics".[79]

Perhaps the stated position of Salafists in Kuwait with regard to the issue of women's rights will elucidate the prejudice held against women in those movements. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Abdul Khaliq, considered the spiritual father of the Salafist movement in Kuwait, published a book entitled "On Women Partaking in Public Affairs and Participating in Parliaments as Representatives or as Voters" where he concludes that "To say that a woman has the right to be with men in the *Shura* (council) and in the state's authority; that she has the right to posts or office in the public sector, and that she should be equal to men in all rights and duties is sinful, insolent and disrespectful of the *Sharia* and deviance from the religion."[80]

m   In Islamic law, *ijtihad* is the analysis of problems not covered precisely in the Quran, the Hadith, or the scholarly consensus called the *ijma*'.

Al-Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh (Jihadist Salafists)

The contemporary Jihadist Salafist movement made a sharp break from the reform Islam that began to develop in the early 18th century and continued until the mid-20th century. The movement has become saturated with radical revolutionary thought, which sites *Jihad* at the heart of its priorities. For the Jihadist Salafists, *Jihad* is considered a revolutionary concept whose aim is to overthrow the whole of the Islamic reform movement and its approaches. Islamic reform movements demand the application of *Sharia* and the progressive formation of an Islamic state through peaceful processes. However, in response and in contrast, the Jihadist Salafist movement has busied itself with the concept of *Jihad* as a revolutionary ideology, whose objective is to overthrow contemporary systems and regimes that it considers to be examples of the *Jahiliya*[n]. Today, the Jihadist Salafist movement views modern Arab Muslim nation-states and regimes – that took form after the demise of the colonial era and adopted political agendas principled in nationalism, democracy, liberalism, socialism, the left or a combination of these ideologies – to be apostasies, ignorant and heretical.

The Jihadist Salafist movement emerged in several places in the Arab world in the 1970s, but did not become nascent in Jordan until the Second Gulf War in 1991. Sayyid Qutb is considered the principle founder of the contemporary Jihadist Salafist movement. His ideas are used as the principle reference for justifying their split from Islamic reformist thought. The movement's constitution and founding declaration is based on Qutb's book "Milestones" upon which the

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n   Apostasy; *Jahiliya* stems from the word ignorance. It is used to identify the pre-Islamic Arabian age of ignorance, marked by barbarism and unbelief. Islam came to end this age of ignorance, according to its view. *Reference: http://www.pwhce.org*

Jihadist Salafist movement has founded its propositions and overall vision of the world – that is, two major principles: "*Hakimiya*" (the absolute governance and sovereignty of God's law) and "*Jahiliya*".

In the 1980s, the Afghani struggle (considered a form of *Jihad*) against the Soviet occupation gave a great impetus to the Jihadist school of thought. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam[81], a Jordanian of Palestinian origin who is considered one of the most important Jihadist leaders and theorists, traveled to Afghanistan in 1984, where he actively participated in this struggle and formed, upon his arrival to Afghanistan, the "Office of Services." Sheikh Azzam was able to attract a large number of those who wished to participate in this *Jihad*, or struggle, in the Islamic world, including Jordan where the numbers of conscripts reached almost one thousand. This Jordanian contingency would later form the nucleus of the Jihadist Salafist movement in Jordan. Following the Second Gulf War, many members of the Gulf region's Jihadist Salafist movement came to Jordan, creating a vast surge in the number of Jihadist Salafists there.[82]

Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi[83] and the Palestinian Sheikh Abu Qatada[84] are considered two of the most important theorists of this movement. They crystallized and shaped the movement in Jordan, which had been hitherto disorganized, scattered with no clear ideological linkages or organization and regulations. Jordan witnessed the emergence of tens of Jihadist Salafist cells in the early 1990s, the most prominent of which were "Mohammad's Army" and the "Jordanian Afghans." However, the real birth of this current came with what is known as the movement of the "Allegiance to the Imam" in 1994, whose most notable members are Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi and Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi. Both men met in Pakistan in the early 1990s, and made plans to work together in Jordan upon their return. They agreed to begin a lecture circuit and distribute books and pamphlets authored by al-Makdissi, which call for the establishment of an Islamic state based on the principles of revolutionary *Jihad*, expose the heretical nature of prevailing regimes and systems, and call for preparing to change these systems through aggressive (violent) revolutionary *Jihad* (struggle). The Jihadist Salafist movement has, indeed, succeeded in attracting and recruiting a large number of members and enlisting them into the movement's ranks, which is

evident in the proliferation of this current in many Jordanian cities including Amman, Zarqa, al-Salt, Irbid and Ma'an.

The Jihadist Salafist movement is based on a universal approach of radical revolutionary ideology with regard to state, society and women. It considers the human being, man or woman, subject to the *Sharia,* and that the *Sharia* governs all human action and activity. Sayyid Qutb crystallizes these referential, basic concepts in the theory of *Hakimiya*, which is borrowed from the well-known Indian sub-continent Islamic thinker Abu al-A'ala al-Mawdoudi, and which is not considered *takfiri*º in nature, but rather "*tajhili*" – or a theory based on exposing "ignorance". According to Mawdoudi, Islamic societies are only so by name, not by practice. In his view, Muslim men and women, who commit acts contrary to the laws of the *Sharia,* are sinful, as is the society they belong to. He says: "They [societies] take off the yoke of Islam (like taking off a piece of clothing) and thus become non-Islamic societies."[85] He continues that no society can "claim itself Islamic when it does not practice an Islamic way of live."[86]

Although al-Mawdoudi never uses the logic of *takfir* directly, he nevertheless pushes the principles and mechanisms of *takfir* to the limits in his book "The Four Terms in the Quran" in which he summarizes the state of current Islamic societies. In his words, "They repeat the mantra (*al-shehada*) of the oneness of God (*tawhid*), 'There is no God but God', but they do not really understand the meaning and requirements imbued by this statement."[87]

Developing the concept of *Hakimiya* took further dimensions with Sayyid Qutb's book "Milestones", which is one of the documents on the basis of which he was convicted and then executed in Egypt, in 1966, during the regime of Jamal Abdel-Nasser. In summary, the concept of *Hakimiya* claims that legislation is the sole right of God, and only the *umma* has the authority to implement God's legislation.

Qutb utilizes the concept of *Jahiliya* – which he borrows from Sheikh Abu al-Hassan al-Nadawi, another Islamic thinker from the Indian sub-

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o Excommunication; declaring a person or group of people non-Muslim and non-believers.

continent – frequently and extensively in his theoretical discourse. *Jahiliya*, for Qutb, does not refer to a historical era, but he rather uses it to describe or refer to certain conditions or characteristics, which come about when the elements of these conditions are present. According to Qutb, any society or community that is not Muslim can be described as '*Jahil'* (ignorant); and, for Qutb, this term or description includes "every society on earth today, really – All these societies that claim to be Islamic… whose people are not really Muslim (do not behave as Muslims). The mission is to bring them back from their *Jahiliya* to Islam, making Muslims out of them anew."[88] *Jahiliya,* for Qutb, "comes about when God's sovereignty on earth is questioned, and his divine powers (or *Hakimiya)* are encroached upon... *Jahiliya* refers to when the ideas, values, laws, systems and social conditions of a society and its people are far from the path of God."[89] Based on this definition, he concludes that "We are, today, in an era of *Jahiliya*, like that witnessed before the birth of Islam."[90]

Women, according to the vision of Jihadist Salafist movements, are not exempt from this description; they are invited to be attentive and aware of the dangers that surround them. On the origin of equality between men and women, Qutb states, "As for the sexes, God granted women complete equality in terms of the sexes and human rights. He did not differentiate between them and men except in circumstances having to do with certain capacities, experience or liabilities. This does not affect the reality of the human condition for each of the sexes. If women and men have the same exact capacities, experience and liabilities, then the two are deemed equal; but when these qualities differ, obviously, differentiation follows accordingly."[91]

With regard to the place of women in Islam, Sayyid Qutb asserts, "Fourteen centuries ago, Islam granted women rights which Western civilizations have not given women to this day. He granted them – when necessary – the right to work and to earn a living; but He also reserved for them the right to take care of their family."[92] Sayyid Qutb sees that the woman's main role should be in nurturing the next generation, as he considers the family to be the breeding ground for establishing a system of morals, as well as the yardstick to measure how civilized or backward a society is. He says: "The family is the cornerstone of society. When a family is built on the principles of

specializing the roles and distributing the work between a married couple; and when the nurturing of the young and new generation is considered one of the most important functions of a family (…), that is a civilized society. (…) This way and by following the path of Islam, the family becomes the nurturing environment where human values and morals are set and developed in the young. These value systems and moral standards are impossible to establish in any unit in society other than the family."[93]

Qutb believes that "the path to human progress is in controlling our animal instincts and whims; and restricting sexual relations to the needs of the family, or the human duty of generating and preparing a generation that will inherit the civilization of their parents – a civilization characterized by its human values rather than its animal instincts that serve the sole purpose of pleasure."[94]

With regard to the concept of *qawama*, he says: "As for the concept of *qawama*, men are '*qawamoun* over women: or (Men are the tutelary guardians of women's interests and welfare by consequence of, the inherent constitutional qualities and attributes Allah has invested in one, above the other, and by virtue of the expenditure they incur.*)*[p]. This 'preference' of the man or his right to guardianship is set on the basis of the man's social abilities, experience and training. By virtue of not being bound by the requirements of motherhood, the man interacts with society over longer periods of time. He is, therefore, better equipped, intellectually, to handle matters that pertain to society. On the other hand, the woman is captive to her own requirements; not to mention that motherhood and the responsibility of motherhood creates an emotional, passionate and excitable side in women, while men nurture a more contemplative and rational side. The man was preferred in the right to *qawama* based on his social experience and his ability to carry out his duties and his responsibility in earning income. This financial factor has a strong connection to the differentiation made in the concept of *qawama* (or custodial rights or guardianship). It is a right gained by men in return for a different responsibility that results in a balance, or a balance in the equality, between rights and responsibilities in the arena of life and the roles of the two sexes. From an absolute humanitarian view, stripped of these

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p Sura 4, Al-Nissa [verse: 34], http://www.islamic-council.com/qurane/nisa/34.asp

kinds of practical responsibilities, the woman is given more rights to care for children than men. This right balances, or is the counterpart, to the man's right of *qawama*."[95]

Jihadist Salafist ideologues in Jordan agree with Sayyid Qutb's views with regard to women, society and state. They have even worked to expand on these views, according to an integrated system of thought that calls for exposing the *kufr* (or heresy) of other systems and states in the world – a heresy that exists in other religions and in capitalist, socialist, communist and nationalist systems; or the heresy of leaving Islam and the concepts of the oneness of God; or a heresy, which in their view exists in the Arab and Islamic worlds. This issue has occupied an extensive part of Jihadist Salafist thought. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam sees that "Governing by the Book and the *Sunna* is Islam indeed. All who accept to leave the word of God and accept the words of others, or give precedence to the words of humans over that of the Quran or the *Sunna*, will have no chance in Islam; and this, in itself, is heresy, precisely and without a doubt."[96]

Azzam emphasizes that idolatry is idolatry whether it is Arab, American, Afghan or Russian, and that this atheism is one sect; idolaters and atheists include all those who govern with other than what God has dictated, even if they pray, fast or are religiously observant. The laws that rule over matters of honor, blood [relations] and money are what determines and defines the identity of the ruler in terms of atheism or faith."[97]

Abu Qatada reasserts that the contemporary or modern Arab and Islamic regimes are regimes of heresy and apostasy. He bases this conclusion on traditional and contemporary doctrinal references by Islamic scholars and thinkers such as Ibn Taymima, al-Shatibi, al-Shanqiti, Mohammad Ben Abdel Wahhab, Mohammad Ben Ibrahim al-Sheikh, and Ahmad Shaqer, among others. He concludes that the duty of *Jihad* in the Islamic world is to reclaim the house of Islam and to reestablish the Caliphate. He views the spread of heresy and apostasy as a result of atheist democratic systems, which rely on texts other than the word of God to govern; systems that aim to replace the *Sharia* and fight Islam and the Muslims.[98] In the same vein, Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi dedicates an entire book to exposing

the heresy of democratic systems entitled "Democracy is Religion" in which he claims that "Democracy is a religion not that of God; it is a sect other than that of the oneness of God (*tawhid*). Its representative councils (parliaments) are nothing but barracks for heresy and atheism; and are edifices for idolatry that must be avoided in order to achieve the oneness of God (*tawhid*)... or God's right and total sovereignty over his worshippers, who should strive to destroy these systems [of democracy] and fight the leaders of democracy with all their hatred and their wars… It (the call for democracy) is not a matter of diligence (a form of *ijtihad*) as those who are spreading confusion would like to claim… It is clear and definitive polytheism, or just plain atheism. God has warned us against it by what He brought forth to us; and our Prophet, al-Mustafa[q], (MPBUH) fought against it."[99]

The heretical concept of human governance adopted by the Jihadist Salafists in the political context is defined by constitutions, modern political systems and governments, all political institutions represented in the form of parliaments, political parties, cabinets, the judiciary and state-established military institutions like the army and security forces in the Arab and Islamic world. These systems are all outside the concept of oneness with God (*tawhid*), which according to the Jihadist Salafist reading is "Singling out God as the only entity with the right to legislate and to rule". In accordance with this strict view of governance, it is therefore forbidden for both men and women, who are commanded to only follow the *Sharia*, to partake or be active in politics or in any political institutions, whether in the form of elections, legislation, city councils, executive posts, state security or military. It even considers those who go against this prohibition as committing blasphemy, as political participation provides legitimacy to these pagan and corrupt systems of ignorance (*Jahiliya*). Indeed, political participation is considered as abetting the oppressors and enemies of Muslims, not to mention that it helps support and prolong the life of these systems.

For the Jihadist Salafists, strategies for change are based on a revolutionary ideology built on the power of *Jihad*. Al-Makdissi reflects on this strategy: "The question of changing our current realities – even

q Al Mustafa means the "Chosen" and is used as another nomenclature for the Prophet Mohammad

if this is our only hope and that which worries us most – must not be rushed. Comprehensive, total change requires preparation and capacity, and must be a concerted effort by everyone, everywhere. These efforts need to be consolidated at the right place and at the right time... What many communities and groups affiliated with the Jihadist Salafist movement are carrying out, here and there, is *Jihad*; even if it appears that these efforts are just to spite the enemies of God; and that they will not change current realities. On the long run, these efforts will prepare the men who will bring about change, and will lay the groundwork for the real and complete change to take place. We believe that competent men, who will lead this *umma*, will not emerge from behind comfortable desks, or through elections and ballot boxes; rather, we will find them in the battle trenches and only *Jihad* will differentiate between who is a man and who is not a man. In order for us to possess the capacities required for total change, we must work on spreading the ideas of the complete oneness of God (*tawhid*) and to fight all the different criticisms of *tawhid*. We must strive to change the false beliefs, the immoral thoughts and the many conflicting allegiances of Muslims in our country; we must call on them to realize oneness with God in order to exonerate themselves from this polytheism and these denunciations of Islam. This type of change is of the most important kind; without it, there can be no real change… However, we do not insist that we hold the reigns of change; it is not a necessary condition; nor do we require that change begins in our own country. Instead, we are soldiers among the many soldiers of this movement; and, if we see our brothers trying to create change anywhere on this earth, we stand by them, and take their side, first and foremost. A home for Muslims has to be found. We will immigrate there and make it stronger. That is when God will open the doors for Muslims and facilitate what has yet been impossible to change."[100]

Supporters of the Jihadist Salafist movement do not see any other strategy for change except through violence and the force of *Jihad* – with the ultimate goal of change being to establish an Islamic state. In terms of achieving this goal, the Jihadist Salafists give priority to fighting the establishment and its systems in the Arab Muslim world first. They consider these regimes and systems as pagan and apostate; and, according to their religious diligence, doctrine and

vision, that means giving first priority to fighting the enemy closest to Islam. In his book "The Absent Duty", engineer Abdul Salam Farraj – Emir of the Jihadist Salafist movement in Egypt – asserts that *Jihad* is a duty of every Muslim against the leaders (of modern Arab and Muslim regimes and systems). He says: "The enemy resides in the lands of the Islamic countries; moreover, the enemy has taken over control; and among these enemies are the leaders who displaced the Muslims' leaders; fighting them is an obligation, an unequivocal duty."[101]

In the same context, Abu Qatada offers a doctrinal view for the necessity of *Jihad* in the Arab and Muslim world, where he concludes that "These rulers are corrupting this earth due to their hatred for this *umma* and because they rule with Satan's laws. God has ordered the Faithful to carry out *Jihad* against these corrupters. They have fought God and His Prophet by opposing Islam's *Sharia*, by abandoning their obedience to the laws of the Book and the *Sunna*. Duty calls on the *umma* of Islam to do everything required to cleanse them from this earth."[102]

However, this strategy began to change in light of international and regional shifts in the mid-1990s. At this time, the conviction was born in some of the sectors of the Jihadist Salafist movement that the "closest enemy" – as represented in Arab Muslim leaders, regimes and systems – did not function on its own, but with the help of others; and that those others were represented by the United States of America and her Israeli allies. This conviction concluded with the crystallization of a new strategic approach developed by Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri that resulted in the birth of "The World Islamic Front for Fighting Jews, Crusaders and Americans"[103] in 1998. Al-Zawahiri commenced theorizing on this new strategic objective of the new Salafist tendency in a book entitled "Knights under the Standard of the Prophet" in which he reaches the conclusion that "The Islamic movement and, above all, its *Jihadist* front, indeed the entire Islamic *umma* has to enter into war against the greatest of criminals: the United States of America, Russia and Israel. We have to make the land of the enemy our battleground and burn the hands of those who set fire to our lands."[104]

This strategy led a number of Jihadist Salafists in Jordan to enroll

in al-Qaeda, which came to represent the world Jihadist Salafist movement. For example, Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi, who took over leadership of al-Qaeda in Iraq, was the most prominent symbol of the Jihadist Salafist movement in Jordan. Sheikh Abu Younis al-Shami, another Jordanian Salafist, joined al-Zarqawi. This particular branch, led by Jordanians, is considered as the bloodiest and most violent of the Jihadist Salafist branches of al-Qaeda, and in the history of the Jihadist Salafist movements. It increased the level of suicide attacks and recruited women through the "Female Martyr Battalion."[105]

The Jihadist Salafists allowed women to enter into the ranks of their *Jihad*, leading to the phenomenon of the "female martyr" as a model for the Muslim woman fighter. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam is of the opinion that a woman is allowed to enter into *Jihad* without the permission of her husband or guardian if the *umma* is under attack or the lands of Muslims are under occupation. "We have discussed these rulings and deliberations with regard to *Jihad* at length in Afghanistan, Palestine and other Muslim lands that have been raped. We confirm what our *Salaf* (ancestors, the good *Sahaba*/Companions of the Prophet) and other predecessors – scholars in interpretation, theologians and other fundamentalists – have decreed; and that is: If one inch of Muslim lands comes under attack, *Jihad* becomes a obligatory duty of the peoples of that land. Women may leave for this *Jihad* without the permission of her husband or guardian".[106]

Sheik Azzam, however, is of the view that if a woman chooses to enter into *Jihad*, she still requires a chaperon: "Arab women are not allowed to join the *Jihad* without a chaperon; and even in *Jihad*, their work must be limited to teaching, nursing or rescuing. Arab women are prohibited from fighting as Afghani woman were in the past."[107]

However, it seems that Sheikh Azzam's *fatwa* was overturned after his death, as women did, indeed, enter the battlefield in many areas. After the international developments that took place after 9/11, the model of the woman fighter (the female Jihadist) began to overwhelm Salafist literature pertaining to women. Sheikh Yousef al-A'ayiri authored the book "The Role of Women in Fighting the Enemy: Salafist Models of the Woman Fighter (Jihadist)". Al-A'ayiri is considered as one of the most important theorists for the Jihadist Salafists. He is the First Emir

of al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia. When relaying the narratives of several female *Sahaba*, who fought in battles and fought in *Jihad*, he says, inciting women in this age, "This, my Muslim sisters, is only a part of the history of the women of our *Salaf*, whose *Jihad* we have shared with you; and there are many more examples of their *Jihad*. What prevents us from giving more examples is that it would take too long. We are aware that we have shown you only one aspect of the female *Sahaba*'s history. What if we told you about their worship and their fear of God, their work, their honesty and the rest of their righteous work? Then, we would be talking for a long time. Nonetheless, we hope we have provided you with enough, God willing".[108]

Al-A'ayiri stresses the role of women in *Jihad* by saying to them, "During the era when Islam flourished, Islam could not have been victorious against the Infidels and the countries of the Infidels, who had more soldiers and more resources, if it were not for the Muslim woman. The woman is the one that raises her children in the doctrine of *Jihad*. She is the embodiment of serenity and persistence and instills this serenity and persistence in her offspring and in her husband in order that they may endure and remain on the righteous path. As people have always said: 'Behind every great man is a great woman' and this statement perfectly suits the Muslim woman of those times. And, thus, we say: 'Behind every Jihadist is a great woman'. The enemy of the *umma* is keen on 'liberating' women because they are aware that women are the backbone of society; if she is corrupted, her productivity is corrupted, all those around her are corrupted... The woman is crucial to our struggle today; and, she needs to be present in this struggle, with all that she possesses in ability and emotion. Her presence is not to complement the work required for our struggle... No! Her presence is one of the cornerstones of the success of our struggle and of our ability to remain on the righteous path... To prove to you the importance of your role in this intense struggle today between the way of the infidel and that of Islam, not to mention the new Crusade being battled by the world, under the command of the Americans, against Islam and Muslims, we must remind you of the various aspects of your role in our struggle, as reflected to us by the image of the Jihadist women in the Golden age of Islam."[109]

Contemporary Jihadist Salafist rhetoric frequently encourages

women to fight by citing historical role models of women fighters in Islam. Sheikh Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi dedicated a chapter on women's rights in his book "The Great Middle East Project" that he introduces with the following text: "Women's rights are yet another string being strummed by the enemies of Islam. And, their tails (followers) in Muslim lands dance to the enemy's treacherous tunes. They claim that the woman is oppressed... oppressed not in the land of Muslims, who have renounced God's *Sharia*, but rather by Islam itself... defeated, subjugated with the *hijab* (veil), besieged by restrictions of purity and of chastity, wronged by polygamy, her inheritance half that of a man... not 'free' to marry outside her religion; and thus, they demand to 'free' her. Her rejection of what they call archaic customs and traditions are all big, arrogant words spewing from their mouths. They establish women's organizations with all these different titles and disperse them throughout the Muslim world... And they supported them, morally and financially. They publicly incite women to announce their heresy, encouraging corruption, prostitution, adultery and fornication under the pretext of freedom, under the auspices of democracy... They forget their Western culture so dark in its history with regard to their women. They close their eyes to her humiliation, oppression and disgrace in so many of their countries that export the 'call to liberate women and to make them equal to men' to our lands."[110]

Al-Makdissi continues to discuss the place of the woman, her rights and her duties in Islam, concluding that the status of the Muslim woman in Islam is exalted, her role in bearing the standard of Islam and in defending her *umma* very significant, "Anyone who reflects upon Islamic history will see the active role of women in the triumph of the religion and in bearing the standard of Islam from the very dawn of Islam. The first to believe in the Prophet (MPBUH) was a woman; women were active in the conversion of 'Aqaba', and in the story of *al-Hijra* (the migration to Mecca); she was an aid and a shield. In the many battles in the name of Islam, women clearly participated in providing advice and in assisting the fighters in a multitude of ways, including fighting."[111]

Al-Makdissi writes at great length about the inferiority of women in both the religious and secular Western culture. He references a wide range of statistics that indicate the erosion of women's rights in the West, and on the violence against women. He stresses upon images of the treatment of women in Iraq and in Afghanistan by American administrations and the American military, and in other areas subjected to American occupation.

He affirms that the West seeks to corrupt the identity of Islam, which emerged after the Islamic Awakening that challenged the pagan West: "It is obvious to all that they did not and will not accept anything but a modern Islam, a Westernized, and Americanized Islam. Thus, they wage war on this piece of cloth, the 'veil', not to mention the war they are waging on chastity, purity and virtue. In truth, it is a war on this great religion, which has commanded these virtues and which requires the veil..."

He continues: "The reality of the veil – as our enemies see it – is that it is a blatant declaration of our refusal to subjugate and to submit ourselves to the uncouth, vulgar culture of the West and its fallen, pagan globalization. The veil represents the Muslim woman's identity, of which she is proud; it is the symbol of her dignity, pride in Islam and freedom from the slavery of the tyrannical, impure civilization of the West... But, as long as the Muslim woman's veil represents this reality, the enemies of Islam cannot tolerate seeing it upon the heads of Muslim women; they will not permit it or accept it, until it is denigrated as a white flag announcing our defeat, our decline and our surrender to the hegemony of Western globalization and culture…"

Makdissi further stipulates that "The veil is a sign of the Revival, the awakening of the *umma* from its stupor, and a sign of our refusal to subjugate ourselves to the corrupt civilization of the West; that we will not walk with them... The veil symbolizes the new challenge to the pagan West, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the newfound hegemony of the United States across the globe. Islam and Muslims represent the sole challenge to the West's prostitution and infidelity. All those who fight the veil, both Westerners and their local tails (followers), are aware, and comprehend and understand the real significance of the veil. This is why you will find them fighting Islam,

and all the laws and rulings that come forth from Islam, which include the veil... Otherwise, those who are not aware of these facts [of the real reasons the veil is under attack], would be completely astounded by the vehement war against the veil, and should wonder how those attacking the veil, sing out the praise of 'freedom of expression', but cannot find in their secularism a place for the right or freedom to wear this piece of cloth!" [112]

The Jihadist Salafist movement stresses that it not only affords women their rights, but affords them a very prominent position that no other, previous or contemporary, civilizations have afforded their women. The movement affirms the equality between men and women in creation and composition. It sees that what is proper for the woman is to remain at home in order that she may care for and nurture an exceptional generation, raised on the Quran and in the ways of the Quran, and that this vision is in harmony with the highest ideals and values in Islam, because according to the Jihadist Salafists, the family is the proverbial spring and the ultimate source for setting the moral standards of a society.

Progress or backwardness is measured or determined by the extent to which a society commits to its moral obligations, and not through its technology and industry. Jihadist Salafist women and men are addressed as equals in the Quran and in the *Sunna...* However, since the Muslim world has, according to Jihadist Salafist view, entered into an era of *Jahiliya*, by virtue of its deviation from the *Sharia*, and since contemporary political systems have taken on the nature of the infidel by importing Western values, such as democracy, it is the duty of the woman to work alongside the man to change society and the state, through a revolutionary ideology springing forth from the concept of *Jihad* – as it is understood in Islam, and that this revolutionary path is the only path that will work to overthrow the prevailing systems and replace them with the Caliphate.

Therefore, the model of the 'Jihadist' woman has come to dominate the literature of the Jihadist Salafist movement, which has sought to fully integrate women into its project as one of the cornerstones of its revolutionary strategies. Furthermore, it considers the veil as one of the symbols of resistance and of rejection of Western hegemony. As

a result, women have actively joined in the movement's ranks through the "Female Martyrs Brigade" as well as by assisting the men in their 'mission', by working on the movement's media and, particularly, the internet.

It seems that the future of women in the global Jihadist Salafist movement has begun to grow in many areas around the world, including Jordan. And, indeed, Jihadist Salafist women are becoming increasingly successful in their outreach and in enlisting other women into the ranks of the movement.

Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh wal Da'wa (Missionary, Advocacy and Calling or Invocation (to God) Group)

Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh is considered as an ideal example of the kind of missionary and revival movements that have evolved within the scope of contemporary Islamic movements. They do not seek to establish an Islamic state in the context of their ideology or in their activities and pragmatic programs, though they do not deny that their ultimate goal is actually the reinstatement of the Islamic Caliphate, and a return to Islam in governing the Muslim world. The movement reconciles this apparent dichotomy by claiming that their missionary strategy, or strategy for 'conveying' (the message), or calling others to God, will indirectly lead to all Muslims desiring and working towards the ultimate goal of establishing the *Sharia* state; making it a final outcome for the Muslim world. This missionary group or movement is also characterized by being global as well as local, with its advocacy strategy and missionary work not limited to any specific geographic area.

In spite of its missionary or revivalist approach, the group has become an incubator for a great number of its members, who later became actively involved within the ranks of other political Islamic and Jihadist movements.

Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh was established in 1945 by Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas Ben Isma'il al-Kandahlawi, who was born in the village of Kandahla in the Indian region of Sharanford[113]. His family had amassed riches, *Sharia* knowledge and knowledge in the Chishti order of mystic Sufism, which was prevalent in the Indian subcontinent at that time.[114] He later traveled to Deoband in India and studied in the

Hanafi[r] schools, attending lessons held by Sheikh Mahmoud Hassan, who was, at that time, considered being one of the most prominent sheikhs in India.[115]

Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas emerged in the midst of an environment that is described by the renowned religious advocate Abu Hassan al-Nadawi as "times when apostasy movements were active and the return to ancestral, pagan religions based on idolatry was rampant. The largest centers for the promotion of these movements and practices were areas in which Muslims lived. Claims were being made that the Muslims once belonged to families of the ancient Hindu tradition, prior to their conversion by successive Islamic governments. It was high time, according to the British government, that any individual or group take the right and have the freedom to adopt any religion they wanted, or return to their ancestral heritage – basically, encouraging any movement that would weaken the Muslims, who had been stripped of their authority and from the government they had once led. This push to relinquish Islam was prevalent in areas where the Muslim population was uneducated and where they adhered to many traditions of the Hindu civilization; so, many tribes, who were descendant of Hinduism, did commit blasphemy and left Islam to 'return' to the religion of their forefathers, with whom they shared many customs and beliefs, in any case."[116]

The dire reality of this situation pushed Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas to seek ways to help people return to their religion. He settled in al-Medina (Saudi Arabia) for several years, until he was enlightened by a vision that came to him in a dream, based on a verse from the Quran that says, "You Muslims have been the best people that have evolved from mankind for mankind. You enjoin equity and you recourse to general principles of justice. You forbid all that is wrongful and obscene and you conform your will to Allah's blessed will".[s] It was then that Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas saw that 'enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong' could only be achieved through the means of grassroots missionary work, for the sake of God; through working

r The *Hanafi* School is the first of the four orthodox Sunni schools of law.

s Sura 3, Al 'Imran [verse: 110]) http://www.islamic-council.com/qurane/imran/110.asp

with people in their homes and at their places of work, in a pace that suited people's everyday life, and calling for them to return to and abide by the ways of Islam. Indeed, Sheikh Ilyas saw this approach as being parallel to the way that the Prophet (MPBUH) brought people to the faith – and not by sitting idle in mosques and religious schools. The duty of the true missionary and advocate of Islam required that he go out and 'convey or communicate the message' (*tabligh*) and 'call others forth to Islam' (*al-Da'wa*); to go to the people, wherever they may be."[117]

Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas began his activism in *al-Da'wa* (the call to Islam) in 1927.[118] In this initial period, he did not target women directly. His missionary work and calling was limited to men, to whom he conveyed the message to return to God, to renew one's faith in Islam, and doing so by returning to the laws of the *Sharia.* And Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas did so using a methodology in *al-Da'wa* unique to him.

The form of *al-Da'wa* that he established was in response to the prohibitions and repression by the British colonialists. He made it clear that to sustain their missionary work, he and his advocates should not get engaged or sidelined from their missionary work by clashing or conflicting with other Islamic movements. Thus, he developed a platform based on two major pillars: "Honoring all Muslims" and "Not Engaging in Differences".[119]

Upon the death of Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas, and after he had laid the foundations for this form of al-*Da'wa* and *tabligh*, his son Sheikh Mohammad Yusuf would lead the group. Under Sheikh Mohammad Yusuf's guidance, the group expanded to many Arab and Islamic countries. Upon his death in 1965 the movement continued under Sheikh Mohammad Ina'am al-Hassan. However, after the death of the latter, an expanded form of a *Shura* council without a specific Emir or leader would lead the group and its work.[120]

Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh came to Jordan in 1964 through a group of missionaries that came from Pakistan. This group succeeded in convincing a number of sheikhs to join them on their tours of 'calling and conveyance'. The sheiks accompanying the Pakistani

missionaries became convinced of the methods and the ways of the group and continued on their own after the Pakistani missionaries returned to Pakistan. An Emir (general leader), Sheikh Abu Mustafa al-Rafati, was elected. Through the newly adopted form of 'calling and conveyance', the group soon spread all over the kingdom.[121]

Indeed, the group proliferated on a vast scale during the 1970s. It established headquarters in the city of Marka, south of the capital Amman, which was visited by thousands of followers, in addition to other centers in other cities. There is no published literature available that clearly expounds on their vision or their methodology of *al-Da'wa* (calling) and *tabligh* (conveying 'the message') as Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas did not leave any books behind. He saw that to write a book, an author must remain seated, and for a reader to read a book, he/she must be relaxed and in a comfortable position. Thus, the joy dissipates and everything read is forgotten as soon as the reader returns to the reality of his daily life. Instead, Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas stressed, "Our methods of education are the same as the methods used during the time of the Prophet (MPBUH), when they had neither books nor publications."[122]

For the most part, the group relies on an oral tradition that is transferred from one member of the group to another. However, one book particular to the group does exist and is referred to as the book of "The Life of the *Sahaba*", which was authored by Sheikh Mohammad Yusuf. It is considered a primary source of study for the group and was published during his term as Emir. This book consists of stories of the way of the Prophet and stories of the way the *Sahaba* addressed issues such as education and communication. Another book, entitled "The Meadows of the Good", written by Imam Nawawi, is also used by the group and is considered a small narrative encyclopedia that simplifies and explains, in laymen's terms, many legislative aspects of the Islamic *Sharia*.

In its approach and in its teachings, the group calls for Muslims to return to the ways of Islam, the laws of Islam and the ways of the Prophet as they were practiced during the time of the Prophet. The fundamental intellectual foundation for *al-Da'wa* and *tabligh*, followed by the group is based on bringing into one's life six major principles

delineated by Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas, which are referred to by the group as "The Six Characteristics":

1. *Firm Belief in and Realization of the Word:* "An article of faith in which one accepts the *Shehadeh* (testimony of faith) 'That there is no God but God and the Prophet Mohammad is His messenger', which is accomplished through worshiping God alone, and by what the Prophet (MPBUH) brought forth through prayer and acts of worship. And that God can do each and every thing without the help of creation, and creation cannot do anything without the help of God. The only way to succeed in this world and in the next (life after death) is to walk on the path shown by the Prophet Mohammad".

2. *Prayer with Reverence and Submission:* "The five daily prayers are essential to spiritual elevation, piety and a life free from the ills of the material world. Carrying out prayers, with all their parts and duties performed, with an emphasis on reverence – as reverence is the essence of prayer, without which there is no fruition of what has been forbidden in immorality and evil. That is how one builds a connection with God, the Almighty, and how one learns to gain from His unlimited treasures".

3. *Knowledge (Ilim) and Remembrance (Thikr)*: "The thirst for knowledge and remembrance of God conducted in sessions in which every individual contributes whatever knowledge one can with regard to performing prayers, reciting the Quran and reading *Hadith*; Learning by action, in other words, learn what is necessary of knowledge; but by actively applying what one learns is *Thikr* (remembrance of God), and learning without action is forgetfulness and reluctance without any reverence – as reverence is the essence without which there are no results in terms of forbidding evil and immorality".

4. *Honoring the Muslim*: "To treat fellow humans with honor and deference, to love the young and to respect elders; and to have respect for the scholars of Islam".

5. *Reforming Intentions*: "Reforming one's life in supplication to God by performing every (good) human action for the sake of God and towards the goal of self-transformation".

6. *Calling and Conveyance* (*al-Da'wa wal Tabligh*): "Sparing time

to live a life based on faith and learning its virtues, following in the footsteps of the Prophet, and taking His message from mosque to mosque, neighborhood to neighborhood, country to country, to reform ourselves and to reform others, for the sake of the faith, by advising, by changing conditions and the environment by learning how to apply and adhere to the laws of Islam and the way of the Prophet. Since the Prophet of God (MPBUH) was the last and final prophet, it is our duty to now carry on the work of the prophets, and call others towards good and prevent evil".[123]

One can say that, in the subject of worship and faith, the Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh and al-Da'wa follow the ways and methods of the Deobondi Matridi sect that is very wide-spread in the Indian sub-continent, and which embraces many aspects of mystic Indian Sufism, especially that of the Chishti, Nakshabandiya, Qadireyah and al-Sahrawardiya Sufi movements.[124] Allegiance to the Emir is pledged in a form of *al-Bay'ah* (pledging allegiance) that is traditional to the ways of these four Sufi movements. However, with the spread of the group in the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, it has became influenced by the Salafist school of thought; and in Jordan, the Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh are closer in mentality and ideology to Salafists than to Sufis.[125]

In terms of the political domain, the Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh prohibits its members from getting involved in politics in all its forms. In the view of the Jamaa'ah[t], politics separates brothers and incites envy and hatred among Muslims. Furthermore, involvement in politics may distract from, hinder or even obstruct the work of *al-Da'wa*. For these reasons, establishing Islamic governance is not one of the movement's direct goals; nor do the members of the group participate in elections, as either candidates or voters; nor do they lend their support to the government in any country; nor do they oppose any government; nor do they study or teach about the state or politics in their lessons; nor do they speak about the state or politics when they preach.[126]

The Jamaa'ah considers malfunctions in Muslim public life as being caused by deviation from the true faith and from strictly following Islamic Law. Malfunctions in public as well as private life can be resolved and will eventually disappear altogether when and

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t Short form of the name of the group, which means, literally 'The Group'

if all Muslims return to truly practicing their religion; not through political or military solutions or approaches. This rationale explains their position with regard to the Palestinian cause and their lack of participation in the Jihadist struggle in Afghanistan that many other Islamic movements and organizations were enthusiastic to join.[127]

In terms of their view towards modern Western culture, they consider it "a pair of shoes that a Muslim puts on to get to where he needs to go; and once the Muslim has achieved this goal, he takes them off, gets rid of them. The Muslim may be in need of that which Western cultures have produced in terms of tools and means to help reaching a goal; however, their theories, arts and traditions are heresies that may be necessary for the infidel; as this life is his paradise and this life is where he needs to be entertained on the level of intellect, aesthetics and fantasy. But for the Muslim, this life is his small prison; his concern is escaping this life for that of God's vast heavens in the afterlife... The theories of modern civilization, its arts and its traditions cannot assist the Muslim in achieving that."[128]

The missionary model used by the Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh is to call on Muslims to re-position and transform their lifestyles by adhering to the ways and laws of Islam. The Jamaa'ah considers the mosque as the focal point for their missionary work and advocacy; and it is by means of the mosque that it carries out multiple tasks, namely: Education, *Thikr* or remembrance of God, prayer and preparing for missionary and advocacy tours in surrounding areas.

According to Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas, there can be no real return to Islam unless the mosque regains and re-establishes its functionality and is re-injected with life.[129] The Jamaa'ah work on reviving the role of the mosque by holding weekly meetings at mosques in order to discuss and to review missionary work and advocacy (*al-Da'wa*) being conducted in that area. These weekly meetings begin after evening (*a'sir*) prayers and continue until sunrise the next day.

After performing the evening prayer at the mosque, a member of the Jamaa'ah invites all those present in the mosque to hear the reports of the missionaries, narrative accounts of the virtues of conducting their missionary and advocacy rounds and of reaching

out to the people in the name of God. The purpose of inviting all those present in the mosque is to inspire them to join that particular, local group of missionaries or Jamaa'ah. Once the purpose of the meeting has been introduced to all those present at the mosque, the Jamaa'ah's *Shura* council then convenes with the members of the group in that area. In this group meeting more members are chosen to do further missionary and advocacy rounds, with an Emir instated to head the next tour. Other members are then chosen to conduct a *tashkili* or "logistical" tour. One of the members gives a talk and selects another member, who is assigned the responsibility of *tashkil* (logistics), a term coined by Sheikh Mohammad Ilyas on all matters concerning the organization and logistical arrangements related to their field work. A third member is then appointed to discuss any special instructions required for travel. At this point, any remaining work required for sending off the *tashkili* groups is finalized and they set off on their missions. Remaining members split into groups, some of whom join together in circles of *Thikr* (remembrance of God) and *al-Da'wa* (conveyance), while others join in the circle of "education" or learning.

After sunset (*maghreb*) prayers in the mosque, announcements pertaining to the group's activities are made. *Tashkil*, which also means constituent or formation, is the term used to refer to an activity where one of the Jamaa'ah members gets up and tries to convince others praying in that particular mosque to join the Jamaa'ah or at least support it.

Teaching or 'educating" in the principles of *al-Da'wa* to members of the group and anyone else interested, takes place after dinner (*isha'a*) prayers at the mosque. These lessons include reviewing the Jamaa'ah's rules of conduct in mosques, discussing the virtues of *Thikr* (remembrance), reading and reviewing parts of the Quran[130], as well as reviewing the code of conduct of the Jamaa'ah while on missionary and advocacy tours, a code which includes many rules, the principle ones of which are summarized as follows:

First: To commit to *four (principles)*: Obeying the Emir; actively

sharing in the burden of collective work; to show patience and endurance; and maintaining the cleanliness of the mosque.

Second: To work on *four* (principles): *Al-Da'wa* (conveying 'the message'); worship; education (in the word); and (community) service.

Third: To reduce *three*: Eating; sleeping; and talking.

Fourth: To avoid *four*: Waste and excess; overbearing attitudes and judging of others' work; questioning; and using the property and possessions of others.

Fifth: Not to engage in *four*: *Fiqh* (issues of Islamic jurisprudence), in order to avoid instigating disputes; politics, in order to avoid obstacles to or any pretext to ban the work of al-*Da'wa*; interfering in the state of affairs of the Jamaa'ah or any other Islamic groups and movements; and arguing and debate, in order to avoid disagreement.[131]

The period designated for field work by a regular member of the Jamaa'ah (travel on advocacy or missionary tours) is initially a minimum of three days; however, a member assigned the position of *Da'i* (the 'conveyor') should perform this duty at least once a month, then for 40 consecutive days once a year, then for four consecutive months in one's lifetime. If the *Da'i* can do more than these requirements, the better; and finally, if one completely devotes one's life to *al-Da'wa*, this is perceived as achieving perfection in the group's rank.

Women in Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh wal Da'wa do not perform field work or tours like the men do; instead, they focus on attending classes held by theologians in the mosques. Women can also be 'educated' in a more convenient and suitable space, such as one of the women's homes, as long as they respect the requirements of the *hijab* (veil) and do not mix with men. Women that belong to the Jamaa'ah can convey to their female relatives what they have learned about *al-Da'wa*, about the virtues they have acquired through their own community work and about education seminars they have attended.

Al-Jamaa'ah do not object to certain sisters, who are properly

educated, to visit other women in their homes to encourage them to commit to the laws of the religion and way of the female *Sahaba*, or teach those laws and ways to them, in restricted meetings in certain homes, under strict precautions that meet the needs of the special case and conditions of proper Muslim women.[132]

Within the organizational structure of the Jamaa'ah, a General Emir is chosen by the Jamaa'ah's *Shura* council. Women commit to obeying this General Emir through a special pledge of allegiance. And, in every country in the world, a Country Emir is chosen by the Shura council of the Jamaa'ah; then for every province, region or district within a country, as well as for every neighborhood in a city, and for every missionary and advocacy group traveling in the name of God, an Emir is chosen.[133]

The Emir of Jordan today is Sheikh Omar al-Khatib. Sheikh al-Khatib took over governing the Jordanian branch after the death of its former Emir, Sheikh Abu Mustafa al-Rafati. During the 1990s, women in Jordan began to actively participate in the missionary and advocacy work of the Jamaa'ah. They began to travel and tour within and outside the kingdom with their husbands, sons or guardians in order to perform their share of the work in *al-Da'wa* and *tabligh* process. These 'missionary' or *tablighi* women are chosen when they have accumulated sufficient experience in missionary and advocacy work in the homes of other women, especially in poor and marginalized neighborhoods. Today, the number of women who have partaken in *da'wa* and *tablighi* tours of 40 consecutive days has reached more than 60, and hundreds of other women have partaken in tours of 3 to 7 days in duration.[134]

It is evident that the Jamaa'ah have greatly benefited from experimenting with women advocates and missionaries. They have realized the importance of the role of women in the work of the Jamaa'ah's headquarters in Pakistan, where *tablighi* women and women working in advocacy and missionary work were introduced at a much earlier stage. This helped quicken the pace of the group's expansion, efficacy as well as helped open thousands of schools (*madrasas*) affiliated with mosques. However, the Jordanian Jamaa'ah did not follow suit until a relatively later stage, in the 1990s, when

they began setting up private schools where the Quran and theology are taught to girls.

Tablighi women have proven greatly successful in attracting women to join the ranks and ways of the Jamaa'ah. It may be that the peaceful approach used by the Jamaa'ah, the group's total abstinence from politics, the simplicity and decentralization of its structure and its tolerance for others has earned the group the confidence and respect of broad sectors of society, and in particular, women. All of these factors have been greatly assisted by the culture of fear from political activity that has prevailed in the collective consciousness of the Jamaa'ah, especially the Jamaa'ah in Jordan, where, for decades, political activity was legally prohibited to both men and women.

And, despite the emergence and increased prominence of Islamic movements of a more political nature in Jordan, none have been able to reduce the size and efficacy of the missionary and advocacy work of the Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh wal Da'wa.

Part II
Islam, Women and Politics in the Framework of Democracy

Introduction

Historically, one can clearly trace the rise and emergence of Islamic women activists in public life in Jordan along with the democratic transformation, which followed the severe economic crisis in Jordan in 1989, and which also coincided with the third wave of democratization that swept across several areas of the world previously subject to totalitarian regimes. The 'culture of fear' connected to political activism had been prevalent among women for decades; in fact, from the time the Jordanian state was established, despite intermittent periods of relative respite (in particular in the mid-1950s). Indeed, the Jordanian woman was caught in the cycle of marginalization and of 'fear' and was virtually hemmed in by the religion, the state and the tribe.

The state itself was established on patriarchic or male-dominated foundations, and reinforced these foundations with political, legal and military limitations and restrictions. Furthermore, the state buttressed its policies and political structure during an extended period of martial law, when civil society and, particularly, political parties and political activities were prohibited.

The tribe, by nature, is patriarchic; the predominantly tribal structure of Jordanian society has contributed to restricting the scope of the woman's participation outside the context of the family and the home, due to the concept of honor that governs tribal social structures, and which establishes the rank and value of an individual in society. The extensive debate that has embroiled Jordanians recently with regard to 'crimes of honor' may very well reveal the importance and rank of 'honor' in the moral and value systems of Jordanian society.

In terms of religion, in a state in which Sunni Muslims constitute 90% of the inhabitants, and where official religious and popular institutions

have come to adopt a conservative Salafist view – echoed in the conditions and social laws specific to women –, rigid and conservative religious jurisprudence and strict religious interpretations have all worked to reinforce the marginalization of women.

This alliance of conservatism between the state, religion and the tribal structure has contributed to a historical absence of women from the public sphere, especially in the political domain in Jordan – not to mention that there was a total absence of Islamic women role models, such as those that existed in other Arab and Muslim societies and countries. Indeed, it was nationalist, leftist and liberal women activists who monopolized the field of Jordanian woman activism. However, this activism was limited to the upper classes and was elitist in nature and, thus, never succeeded in reaching out to women from other classes and wider segments of society. The combination of all these factors resulted in an increased isolation of liberal ideologies – ideologies, which, in themselves, lie in stark contrast with the social and cultural realities and specificities of the average Jordanian woman.

The 1990s witnessed a characteristic change in the way society looked at the woman as traditional alliances began to crumble due to national, regional and international developments. The state began to take initiatives to integrate women into its national strategies; Islamic parties began forming women's committees; and society began to move towards a more sensitive consideration and understanding of women's rights. Thus, a new era began to emerge in the history of Jordanian women.

In this part of the study, we will address the status of women in recently formed Islamic political parties and in the discourse of these parties. This section will particularly focus on parties that were formed after the enactment of the Party Law (Article 32) in 1992. Three political parties, which adopted Islam as the basis for their ideology and for developing their strategic and practical programmatic platforms, were legally registered under this law. These parties further fortified their legal status when the new Party Law (Article 19) was enacted in 2007.

These parties are:

- The Muslim Brotherhood, as represented by the Islamic Action Front party;
- The Muslim Center Party (*Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami)*;
- *Hizb Dua'a*

The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood emerged in Jordan as a natural offshoot and product of the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood's mother organization in Egypt, which considers itself to be a global, transnational movement. The mother organization of the Brotherhood was founded in al-Ismailia in Egypt in 1928 by Sheikh Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949). The Palestinian cause created an entry point for establishing branches of the movement throughout the Arab world and Jordan, with the mother organization in Egypt sending cadres from its leadership to other countries in the region. Establishing the movement in Jordan is credited to Sheikh Abdel-Latif Abu Koura, who had a very good relationship with the founder of the Egyptian movement. Sheikh Abu Koura was actually a member of the founding committee of the original movement in Egypt, whose members came from many Arab countries and included Sheikh Mohammad Mahmoud al-Sawwaf, the founder and head of the Brotherhood in Iraq and Sheikh Mustafa al-Seba'ai, founder and head of the Brotherhood in Syria.[135]

Sheikh Abu Koura began his efforts on licensing the movement in Jordan in late 1945, and received approval in early 1946. The opening ceremony of the movement's headquarters in the Jabal Amman area of Amman was under the patronage of Jordan's King Abdullah Bin al-Hussein[136]. In its first years, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan prospered under the leadership of Abu Koura and the movement enjoyed the candid support and backing of the Jordanian authorities. The Brotherhood commenced with a commitment to implement its program within the scope of the overall objectives and structure of the Jordanian political system; it held its meetings openly, and many were attended by official representatives of the state, government and the military, as well as distinguished religious leaders.[137]

The Brotherhood's first years (from 1946-1953) in Jordan were marked by a solid and close relationship between the authorities and the Brotherhood. It was a healthy coexistence nurtured by feelings of mutual respect. The regime considered the Brotherhood a dependable ally and different from other groups and parties that worked to undermine the fledgling country's stability and security.[138]

The 1948 war with Israel presented a major turning point for the Jordanian Brotherhood. From that point forth, the movement would become more and more involved in politics; members of the Brotherhood even volunteered to fight against the Jewish forces, forming a brigade based out of the town of Ein Karem, south of Jerusalem, under the command of Hajj[u] Abdel-Latif Abu Koura.[139]

The movement entered into another phase of its evolution in 1953 – an era characterized by a sweeping proliferation of nationalist and leftist movements in the Arab world after the 1952 July Revolution in Egypt. Indeed, under suspicious conditions and circumstances, Mohammad Abdel-Rahman Khalifa was appointed Secretary General of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

After Khalifa took over the leadership of the Jordanian Brotherhood, efforts began to restructure the organization of the movement, following the example of the mother organization in Egypt. Khalifa worked on enacting a focused mission for the movement: It was an organization born of a comprehensive Islamic platform and doctrine; and, thus, it should operate on a comprehensive front and in all matters of life – political, economic, social and cultural. Based on this new definition, the movement applied to the authorities to register as a General Islamic Assembly and not simply a charitable organization. The government approved this request.[140]

Based on structural changes and its new orientation, the movement in Jordan entered a new phase marked by more active involvement in the field of politics than in previous periods. It remained allied to the authorities, though, particularly during the events of April 1957, when a confrontation took place between the regime and the Nabulsi coalition government.[141] After being content with simply supporting

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u Title given to a man who has performed the rite of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

members or allies in the 1951 and 1954 parliamentary elections, in 1956, the Brotherhood ran in parliamentary elections for the first time as a movement, and won four seats.

Despite the friendly relations that existed between the Brotherhood and the regime during that period, the Brotherhood, in reality, did constitute a threat to the state: On the one hand its ideology was diametrically opposed to the West, on the other hand the movement considered the Islamic *Sharia* as the only legitimate legislative foundation for the state.

Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood did criticize the government (the state) from time to time, especially when it felt that the state was deviating from the Islamic value system and moral standards. The movement was also strongly critical of the special relationship that successive Jordanian governments harbored with Great Britain. They condemned the Baghdad Alliance of 1955 and any attempt to bring Jordan into the alliance, as they opposed the Eisenhower project, which aimed to fill the vacuum left by Great Britain in the region with the United States.[142]

Despite the ebb and tide experienced in the relationship between the state and the Brotherhood at times, the mutual interests of both parties and the legacy of coexistence between the two remained strong, especially as the Brotherhood stood by the regime in its darkest times and in the more severe crises of the 1950s and 1960s. In return, the regime became a safe haven for the Brotherhood at a time when other Arab regimes were tightening the noose around Islamists and other Muslim Brotherhood movements, as was particularly the case in Egypt.[143]

A point worth mentioning about this particular period is that the Muslim Brotherhood did not attempt to reap any gains from being free of restrictions suffered by other parties. They did not use privileges and facilities they were privy to in order to make any political gains. Instead, they consolidated their position in the public sphere through their work and activities as a charitable organization.

After the war and defeat in June 1967, the Muslim Brotherhood

witnessed a substantial shift with respect to its organization and in terms of its proliferation. The movement began to attract younger cadres as retracting nationalist and leftist movements began to face severe restrictions across the region. Within the movement itself, a new current began to emerge, which opposed the reformist platform and demanded that the movement pave the way for active *Jihad*. Soon after, the Brotherhood established Jihadist bases, known as the "Sheikhs Brigades", which launched successful operations against Israeli military targets. The Brotherhood's military cells operated under the umbrella of the Fatah Movement[v], which supplied them with money, military gear and weapons.[144]

The movement's experience with *Jihad* ended with the departure of the Palestinian resistance forces from Jordan in 1970, after the events of September. During this period, the Muslim Brotherhood took a neutral stand, beseeching both sides to practice restraint, not to shed blood between each other and preserve national unity. After this milestone in Jordanian history, the movement became actively involved in student unions; it set up the Islamic Hospital and the Islamic Center Society, established many Islamic schools in all the major cities in the kingdom, and bolstered its presence in the mosques, trade and professional unions and student organizations throughout the country.[145]

The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government entered a new phase in 1989. In April of that year, Jordan witnessed dangerous developments and unrest after the Jordanian currency (Dinar) collapsed and the rate of unemployment increased, in juxtaposition with a sudden rise in inflation and higher interest rates. The economic crisis led to a massive wave of anger, violence and street protests. The late King Hussein was able to contain this crisis, and announced the start of a new era by restoring parliamentary life and civic freedoms.[146]

Although the Muslim Brotherhood did not partake in the April unrest,

v Fatah, literally means *opening*, and is a reverse acronym from the Arabic name Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini or literally: the "Palestinian National Liberation Movement". Fatah is a major Palestinian political party and the largest organization in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

they were the first to benefit from these events as they managed to give their political agenda a greatly needed push on the street and among the masses.

In the same period, the first Palestinian Intifada began in 1987 and with it the rise of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which emerged as the military wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine.

As mentioned previously, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan relies on the ideological foundations and organizational structures of the mother organization in Egypt. Uniformity exists between the organizations in the resources they have adopted for their references – resources and references that were instituted by the founder Sheikh Hassan al-Banna, which were expanded upon and put into action by the influential Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb. Indeed, al-Banna played a central role in the movement's proliferation and in building its organizational structure; he defined the platform, the objectives and the methodology of the movement. Abdel-Qader Odeh contributed to bringing the ideological and theoretical foundations of the movement back to its religious 'origins' by rebuilding and reconnecting the movement to the Book (Quran) and the *Sunna*. Sayyid Qutb introduced a number of amendments and changes, which played a major role in redefining the course of the movement and of others working within the framework of the so-called "Islamic *Nahda* (Awakening)", as well as other Islamic political movements and militant groups.

However, a violent controversy and debate ensued in the mother organization around the vision of the movement and about the way the Brotherhood should operate, which resulted in the rise of two major currents: The Reformists, who would stay the course defined by al-Banna; and the Radicals, who adopted Qutb's propositions. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was affected by the controversy within the mother organization in Egypt, to the extent that the movement in Jordan became polarized and its members began to take sides, despite the relatively unique experience that the Brotherhood enjoyed in Jordan.

The way the issue of the woman was dealt with can be considered

as one of the main points that distinguish the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan from the mother organization in Egypt, because Imam Hassan al-Banna bestowed upon the woman a specials status, importance and priority in his discourse and practice. Al-Banna was of the firm conviction of the need for the woman to actively participate in the grassroots work of the movement and saw her as one of the important agents of change and a means with which the reform program of the Muslim Brotherhood could be achieved – as stated in the internal charter of the principal organization of the Muslim Sisterhood.

With this conviction in mind and from the moment he initiated the movement in 1928, Imam al-Banna established a school in one of the first Brotherhood mosques, which he called the school of the "Mothers of the Faithful". The school's curriculum combined theology and social studies. He then established a section in the movement for the wives, daughters and other female relatives of Brotherhood members, which he would later call "The (Team of the) Muslim Sisterhood". Al-Banna went to put forth a plan to organize the work of the Sisterhood. He defined its objectives, its methodology and its internal charter and structure. The aim of creating this 'team' was to strengthen and to fortify adherence to Islamic morality, to propagate virtue and to expose the harm caused by the prevailing deviance of Muslim women. Al-Banna himself headed this group, or 'team'.

A Muslim Sisterhood Committee was established in Cairo in 1932 when the Brotherhood's administration transferred there. Labiba Ahmad was the first leader of this committee. Labiba Ahmad had been an active participant in the national revolution that erupted in Egypt in 1919. Her efforts, along with Huda Sha'arawi and Nabawiya Moussa, led to a massive demonstration by women, who protested against the crimes of the British against Egyptian nationalists and the revolution. This demonstration brought the Egyptian woman to the world's attention. Soon after, Labiba Ahmad clashed with Huda Sha'arawi on how the women's movement in Egypt would proceed; Ahmad saw that the path to liberation began with a return to Islam, and she established the magazine "Women's *Nahda* (Awakening)" to counter the idea of westernization. She then went on to found an association for "The *Nahda* (Awakening) of Egyptian Women".

From its inception as a movement and a *da'wa* (mission), the Muslim

Brotherhood dedicated much attention to women and women's issues. In 1933, the first women's committee was established in Ismailia, Egypt. Afterwards, the Guidance Office of the Muslim Brotherhood worked to engage this group with every part of the local community. After the second meeting of the movement's *Shura* Council, the Guidance Office decided to create a (General) Muslim Sisterhood's Committee that would, from that point forth, operate under the auspices of the Brotherhood's Head Office, to oversee all Sisterhood committees throughout Egypt. Imam Hassan al-Banna chose Labiba Ahmad to head this committee. She was unable, though, to continue due to her many other commitments. She passed away in 1955.[147]

The Muslim Sisterhood committees continued to grow in number until they reached fifty by the year 1948, which was also the same year that the Muslim Brotherhood (and all its activities and committees) was disbanded (by the authorities). Until that year, the Secretary General of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, supervised these women committees himself.[148]

Al-Hajja[w] Zeinab al-Ghazali is considered as one of the most important Muslim Sisters. She pledged her allegiance to Imam Hassan al-Banna in 1948, and continued to work tirelessly in the field of advocating Islam for more than half a century. She played a large role in the political struggle (of the movement), and was subsequently imprisoned by Jamal Abdel-Nasser's regime; in prison, she recorded her experience in a book entitled "Days from My Life".[149]

Many women rose to distinction among the ranks of the movement in addition to Labiba Ahmad and Zeinab al-Ghazali, including Amina Qutb and Hamida Qutb, both of whom shared the experience of incarceration with al-Ghazali.[150]

The experience of the Muslim Sisterhood in Egypt did not echo in Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood. Perhaps, differences in the social structure and fabric, such as tribalism in Jordanian society, did not allow for similar activism on the part of Muslim women there. Furthermore, the conservative interpretation on Islamic jurisprudence

w The title given to a woman who has performed the rite of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca)

prevalent in the Jordanian movement did not allow for the import of matters of jurisprudence from the Egyptian Brothers, even if they shared the same theological resources and references; and, although they both accepted the theoretical propositions of Sheikh Hassan al-Banna with regard to women, in application and in practice, these theories were not applied in the same way.

Al-Banna's theological discourse with regard to the woman begins with the premise that Islam empowered the woman, and made her an equal partner to the man in rights and responsibilities. He says: "This is very clear. Islam exalted the status of women, valued her more and considered her the sister of man, the partner in his life; she is of him and he is of her (*as God says: 'You are of each other'*). Islam gave the woman her full private, civil and political rights. It treated her as a human being who is of a complete humanity, who has duties and rights... The Quran and the *Hadith* are full of texts that emphasize and clarify this."[151]

He further emphasizes that any differentiation between men and women, in terms of their rights, arises solely from the natural differences of each, and the differences of the missions and responsibilities of each; but, at the same time, in keeping with the rights given to both. He adds that between the man and the woman is a strong innate attraction that is the basis for their relationship; and, that the purpose of this attraction, before pleasure and such, is to combine the two in preserving human kind, and to assist each other in managing the burdens of life. With regard to education, al-Banna finds that, morally, a woman should learn that which is essential in terms of reading and writing. However, he goes on to ask that women not be taught that which does not concern them.[152] He advises Muslims by saying, "Educate the woman with that which she requires to fulfill the mission and duty that God created her for: To take care of her home and her children."[153]

He insists on the need for separating man and woman, and insists that the two not be allowed to mix. He makes this appeal based on the logic that "Islam considers mixing between men and women a definite danger… Therefore, we declare that Islamic society is not a plural (mixed) society, but a set of single societies, with men having one society and women having another, their own. Islam has

allowed women to be eye witnesses, to have group attendance, even to fight in battle when absolutely needed. But, it stops there and places many conditions on the woman: That she avoid all forms of adornment and make-up; that she covers her body and surrounds it with appropriate attire that is neither transparent or tight; and, that she never be alone with a foreigner [a male who is not family], no matter what the circumstances"[154]

With regard to work and the work place, al-Banna prohibits women from working based on the logic that Islam prohibits the private presence of a woman with a 'foreigner', the mixing of sexes, and requires women to cover their bodies and faces; and, that it is preferred (by God) that women pray at home. He concludes that the latter are just some of the restrictions, so "after all that has been said and done, can it be that Islam does not stipulate that women are prohibited from working in a public place?!"[155]

As for the political participation of women, Imam al-Banna had a unique opinion, which he did not declare in the form of Islamic jurisprudence, but rather theorized upon, based on the prevailing circumstances of Egyptian society, and the reality of the occupation Egypt was suffering. He understood that there was a need for her participation in such circumstances. For him, the most important reasons for her participation were to allow for the transformation of society and to reestablish its religious values and moral standards.

In 1944, the question of whether women could practice law and their right to vote was submitted to the House of Representatives in Egypt. She was granted the right to practice law, but not the right to vote – a decision justified by the claim that society suffered from cultural, intellectual and religious illiteracy. Al-Banna comments on this issue as follows: "We hold a reasonable, moderate view on this issue, which we put forth to all those interested; and, we should all be interested in this issue as it is an issue that affects morals, family and civil society. Nothing was, or will be, to the detriment of people more than misunderstanding the conditions which exist and within which we live today; this rule of immorality and of acting in contradiction to creation – indeed, whatever one tries, one will not find an alternative to God's way."[156]

It appears that the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan adopted the

theoretical doctrine of Sheikh Hassan al-Banna, without giving much attention to more pragmatic realities, particularly with regard to advocacy. The movement in Jordan upheld al-Banna's theoretical vision, but translated it in the public realm by not establishing sections in the movement for Muslim women, despite the experience of the Egyptian movement. Despite the evolution in the worldwide movement's discourse with regard to the rights of women by Sheikh Mohammad al-Ghazali, Youssef al-Qardawi, Hassan al-Turabi, Rashid al-Ghanoushi and others, this evolution did not translate in any practical form or dimension in Jordan until the democratization process started to take hold in the country after 1989. Indeed, it was only in 1992, when the movement established the Islamic Action Front party, that they created a special place in the party for women.

Of the eighty seats in the 11th House of Representatives in Jordan up for parliamentary elections in 1989, the Muslim Brotherhood won 22 seats; but, indeed, the movement did not nominate a single woman. It was willing, though to take significant advantage of women's work to garner women's votes for them.

Islamic Action Front

After a period of discussion inside the Muslim Brotherhood, and between the Brotherhood and several prominent Islamic independents, a decision was made to establish the Islamic Action Front (IAF) (political) party. The party was founded on October 8, 1992 under Party Law No. 32, which was legislated that same year. After receiving its license, the party held its first conference to elect a *Shura* council. However, most of the members who considered themselves 'independents', withdrew from the party, accusing the Brotherhood of hegemonizing and monopolizing the party's leadership and describing the party as simply being a political façade for the Muslim Brotherhood.[157] This description became proof when the Muslim Brotherhood finally succeeded in completely dominating the Islamic Action Front.

The IAF's political platform was launched based on a set of basic principles, the most important of which are listed as: The resumption of an Islamic way of life in society; contributing to building the *umma* in the struggle (*jihad*) against the Zionists; to serve the Palestinian cause; to seek the unity of the *umma* and its liberation; to consolidate national unity; to consolidate the *Shura* and democratic model of governance; to defend the dignity, rights and freedoms of human beings; to tend to people's daily life issues; and to achieve the comprehensive development of society from an Islamic perspective.

The party's objectives are summarized by the party as follows: Realizing the principles of freedom; establishing governance by *Shura*; guaranteeing pluralism; protecting human rights; encouraging dialogue and defending the citizen's security, stability and prosperity; guaranteeing freedom of opinion and speech; strengthening national unity; supporting the armed forces and security services; combating political, administrative and financial corruption; respecting women

and their legal rights; ensuring that youths receive the special attention and care they deserve; working to achieve pan-Arab unity; disseminating the culture of Islam; and supporting religious institutions.

The methodology of the party's political program is summarized in: Organizing public activities; giving lectures; holding seminars, conferences and festivals; publishing books, pamphlets, newspapers and magazines; establishing the institutions and cadres required to implement these activities; establishing centers for scientific research, attending to the needs of youth clubs, cultural centers, sports activities, unions and syndicates; organizing and developing legislation for amending fiscal laws through democratic channels; and involving the party in all aspects of public life through active participation in union and syndicate elections as well as municipal and parliamentary elections.

The party's organizational structure is composed of a founding committee, a general assembly, a public symposium, the *Shura* council and the executive office. The Shura council consists of 120 members, who represent all the districts and areas in the country and who are elected by proportional representation; the executive office consists of 17 members, including the party's secretary general. Meanwhile, the party's general assembly is open to every male and female Jordanian citizen over 18 years of age.[158]

Women and women's issues in the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF are still in a stage that can best be described as under debate and negotiation. Efforts are underway to redefine the role of the woman in the context of the movement and the party – with this issue considered the one most open to debate and most open to experimentation and examination, according to social researcher Lisa Taraki.[159]

However, there is a vast disparity between this discourse and reality due to the existence of a very conservative current (hawks), which has placed strict restrictions on the participation of women in the party (and in the movement). Dr. Hammam Said (the IAF General Guide) and Mohammad Abu Fares (IAF hawk and member) have taken very

conservative postures, explained by Dr. Abu Fares as follows: "Since the *Sharia* does not permit the woman to be the guardian of even herself in marriage, and gave this guardianship to the man, then, it is a fortiori that she cannot be permitted to hold public guardianship over Muslims, their blood, money and honor."[160]

Thus, Abu Fares prohibits women from assuming any post in the public authority, in the judiciary, in cases of jurisdiction or as ombudsman, in ministries, in resolving disputes and contracts. He uses as evidence the saying of the Prophet, "*That nation will never prosper which puts a woman in command of its affairs*."[x]

He continues: "What is inferred grammatically by the words of this Prophetic saying, in Arabic, is a conjugation indicating the plural, which indicates '*its' affairs*, or *all the nation's affairs,* public and private. Meanwhile, the guardianship (of a woman) over private affairs has been extricated from this interpretation of 'all affairs' (public and private) in other (religious) texts; for example, the guardianship of a woman over her own money is exempt by a verse of God Almighty that says: 'And give the women, whom you join in wedlock, their dower with good will. But if they – the women – willingly remit a part thereof of their own accord, then you may eat it into your hearts and enjoy it; may it give you pleasure; may it do you good!'[y] Furthermore, women are allowed to be custodians or guardians over other private affairs, as stipulated in other (religious) texts; thus, 'affairs' in the Prophet's verse (above) signifies all *public* affairs, and public refers to all judicial matters as well as matters of jurisdiction, the resolution of disputes, or those ministerial or contractual in nature."[161]

However, and in contrast, Dr. Ruheil al-Gharaibeh concludes from his own research that "We are in favor of the opinion that the woman has the right to enjoy all political rights, on an equal footing with the man, with the exception of the highest post in authority; and this

x Sahih al Bukhari, Kitabal Fitn, quoted in "The Struggle of Muslim Women", by Dr Kaukab Siddique, published by American Society for Education & Religion, 1986, pg. 55

y Sura 4, Al Nissaa [verse: 4], "Translation of the meanings of the Quran," by Rashid Said Kassab, Kilani and Skur publishing, Amman, 1994 and http://www.sacred-texts.com/isl/quran).

opinion corresponds with the absolute law of the *Sharia* that declares the equality of man and woman in legal duties and obligations, taking into account any exception that has been cited in authenticated texts and is supported by consensus (*ijma'z*)".[162]

Creating a negative uproar against him, Sheikh Mohammad al-Ghazali went even further than al-Gharaibeh when he declared, in a religious ruling or decision in Islamic jurisprudence (*ijtihad*), that it was permissible for a woman to assume any public post, and at the fore, the post of head of state.[163]

It seems that the movement's discourse tends towards generalizations to a large degree, since the movement's electoral platform in 1989 was replete with slogans emphasizing the equal rights of men and women, as well as other issues that are the right of all.[164]

The Muslim Brotherhood expresses its position on women's issues and particularly the issue of women's political participation in a study entitled "The Muslim Woman in Muslim Society". Their position with regard to the woman in the political domain is explained in the context of their belief that: Men and women are equal in the origin of their creation, and in the dignity of their humanity; that they are equal in terms of responsibilities, albeit with some exceptions; that they are equal in reward, punishment and sin; that the *Sharia* determined that men and women should cooperate on issues that require this cooperation; that they should both be faithful to God; and that men and women are equal in their rights and duties.[165]

The study also focuses on (religious) texts that view the woman's body in its entirety as temptation; thus, it is forbidden that a woman reveal any part of her body, other than her face and her two hands, to anyone other than those forbidden to her in marriage (or what is called a '*muharam*', for example a father, son or brother). It is also forbidden for a woman to sit in private with anyone other than those forbidden to her in marriage (*muharam*); and that it is necessary that when exercising her freedom and her rights that the woman be in a

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z When Ulama'a (scholars of religion consulted on matters both personal and political) reach a consensus on an issue, it is interpreted as *Ijma*'

frame of circumstances that preserves her honor, dignity, modesty and sanctity.

This study also considers the proper place for the woman to be in her home, to ensure the stability of the family, as the family is the fundamental pillar in society – the fundamental core that maintains society's cohesiveness, solidity and goodness. Furthermore, one must not disregard the *Sharia*-given right of the husband to permit (or not to permit) his wife to leave her home or to work. Indeed, the movement considers this latter right, as stipulated by the *Sharia,* as one that maintains order and organizes the relationship between husband and wife – a relationship that can neither be organized by the law nor interfered with by the authorities except in very specific, rare cases.

The movement believes that there is no provision in Islamic law that prohibits the participation of women in parliamentary elections; indeed, they believe it is the duty of women to participate in order to assist in the election of proper persons (persons versed in the *Sharia*). In some circumstances, this participation may even be an essential duty or obligation. And, as many Islamic states today have electoral laws, which dictate that the woman should exercise her right to vote, any attempt to reduce the Muslim woman's participation in an election may actually weaken the chances for victory of Islamic (movements' / groups') candidates. The movement is also of the view that there are no provisions in any of the texts of the *Sharia* that prohibit women from becoming members of parliaments or of any other representative council or assembly.

With regard to women assuming public posts – with the exception of the post of head imam or of head of state – and specifically when it comes to posts in the judiciary, and given the dispute among scholars and the fact that it is still an ongoing subject of jurisprudence, it has been agreed that the obvious recourse in deciding what post a woman can or cannot take, is to return to the precedence of the *Sharia* first; then to consider what is best for the well-being and the interests of Muslims, while taking into consideration legal liabilities and prevailing conditions of the society in which they live. All these factors must be reflected in any decision with regard to the subject (a

woman assuming a public post, and particularly in the judiciary).

In terms of other positions and other types of work – as long as the woman works in a domain that is considered *halal[aa]* and where no religious texts exist, which prohibit that particular position or type of work, and as long as her employment in the public realm is that type of work – there is no reason not to allow her from assuming that post or taking that job. For example, women are permitted (by the movement) to work as doctors, teachers, nurses and in other types of professions required by her and her community.[166]

One of the objectives of the IAF's internal charter is stated as: Respecting the woman, her legitimate rights and her role in the progress and development of society, within the framework of Islamic virtue and values; and providing her with the opportunity to participate in public life and the opportunity for the leaders among them to emerge in the political arena.[167]

Dr. Isahak (Issac) al-Farhan, a prominent member and leader in the party, is considered to be among the leading cadres in the IAF that encourages women's participation. He is of the firm opinion that the distorted image of the woman and the diminution of her rights is the sole product of society and not of Islam. He makes it clear that what is meant by "women's political rights" is to perform all the tasks that make an impact on a society's politics and culture, which includes the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice, participation in political organizations with the purpose of serving the public, or advocating a political principle, influencing political policies, to elect and be elected, and pledging allegiance to the head of the state.

In terms of the right (of women) to run as candidates in parliamentary elections, Al-Farhan puts forward the following opinion: He believes that there are two tasks required of a parliament: 1) to legislate and 2) to monitor the state. In his opinion, the task of legislation requires work and requires knowledge of the needs of society; and, in Islam, the right to knowledge is a right equal to men and women. The task of monitoring the administration of the state and executive authorities is considered, by al-Farhan, as falling under the umbrella of propagating

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aa In accordance with or permitted under the *Sharia*

virtue and preventing vice; a task in which, again, men and women are equals in the eyes of Islam. As for what is meant by God Almighty's verse, "*That men are qawamoun (custodians/guardians) over women*" is that the man has been charged with acting as head of the household and of carrying its burden, and has nothing to do with the subject of women carrying out the task of either legislating or monitoring the state on behalf of the *umma*.

According to al-Farhan, the only requirement for exercising this political right is a commitment to Islamic ethics.

Furthermore, the woman has the right to public posts and to public office. With regard to references made to the Prophet's saying (or *Hadith*) "*That nation will never prosper which puts a woman in command of its affairs*", al-Farhan explains that the context in which this *Hadith* emerged must be taken into consideration when it is interpreted. The *Hadith* came at a time when the Prophet declared that Islam's enemy, the Persians, handed over the governance of the state to one of Kisra's (Khosrau II) daughters after his death.

Al-Farhan also maintains that governance, in its categorical meaning, is not forbidden to women in Islamic jurisprudence; and, that this Islamic ruling was determined by consensus (*ijma'*). Abu Hanifa, al-Tabari and Ibn Hazm [Imams who are considered credible references for the oral tradition of the Prophet] permitted women to assume judicial roles (i.e. hold the position of a judge) in certain cases – noting that the post of a judge is a public mandate –, in addition to permitting women to confer *fatwas* [a usually non-binding opinion on Islamic law issued by an Islamic scholar that is in line with the *Sharia*].

Finally, al-Farhan summarizes the experience of Islam in this subject as follows: The Muslim woman has always worked in the public domain to help build society, in all its sectors... in employing others, in the economy, in charitable work and in social work. The Muslim woman has carried out her duties by working to advocate Islam and to educate; she has worked to propagate virtue and prevent vice. Allowing the woman her political rights includes recognizing her political right to join political organizations, opening the door to her

membership in the IAF party and preserving her right to vote for and be elected to all levels of the party's leadership; and furthermore, Dr. Abdel-Latif Arabiyat[168] concurs with this approach.

It appears that progress has been made on the level of establishing and streamlining the theoretical approach of the Brotherhood and the IAF. In 2005, the Islamic movement published a reform document entitled "The Vision of the Islamic Movement for Reform in Jordan" that reaffirmed the equality of men and women in that they are both honored in God's eyes, as they are considered brother and sister in creation, and as the masculine and the feminine in Islam are not factors to be used to discriminate and differentiate; rather, the criteria for differentiation in Islam is in piety and in good work. They are both given the same duties and missions and are judged in equal terms of accountability, reward and punishment. They are partners in both shouldering responsibility and carrying out the duties of the nation, in cooperating and empowering each other in fulfilling the requirements of the religion (Islam), and in strengthening Islam's presence on this earth.

Of the most important of these universal statements of principles (according to the movement and the party) concerning women are:

1. Women enjoy a complete character and persona; they possess, from the perspective of the *Sharia*, an independent inviolability in social status, legal position; and, they are totally capable in terms of their abilities and in performing their duties.

2. Women have the right to own land and possessions, make a profit, be employed and employ, to disburse finances, to seek this earth, to think and to contemplate this universe and enjoy all good things.

3. Women have the right to choose their spouses and build a family without coercion or by force.

4. Women have the right to education and to learn, to gain knowledge and understanding of the religion, to specialize in the sciences and arts, to receive training, to improve and to develop their skills and to

master any trade or profession.

5. Women enjoy full political rights as represented in the right to vote and to run for election, to hold office, to join political parties and in the right to freedom of expression in all aspects of life without exception.

6. Women have the right to enjoy that which is legislated in terms of nationality, employment, retirement, and in forming charitable societies, women's committees and organizations and leading these organizations and working through them.

With regard to all of the above, the movement and party state in the reform document that: The role of the woman, in juxtaposition with the man, is characterized by partnership, by cooperation, by complementing and by distributing roles and duties, according to measures of ability and capacity, in a framework of morality, decency, parity in treatment and mutual respect, which exist within the parameters specified by the *Sharia,* and which are far from petty contradictions, competition and superficial conflict. Furthermore, it should be noted that the fruits of human life are nobler and more precious than any material commodity; and, that these fruits deserve a true motherhood to care for it and raise it, contented and comforted. And the mother will continue – with her message of humanity and in her raising and rearing of generations – to occupy the position of highest honor and the position of greatest importance in society.[169]

This reform document reveals significant progress in the vision of the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF pertaining to women's issues; indeed, they reconcile their theoretical options in far clearer terms than in previous eras.

This conclusion is confirmed by Arwa al-Kilani, the head of the women's sector in the IAF, who sees that the past dominance of a strict, conservative vision with regard to the woman has begun to yield and to balance its posture with regard to many issues that affect women inside the Islamic movement – despite certain incidents, such as the party's conference of the General Assembly in December 2001, which included a word from the women's sector. The speech

faced some opposition from members, who rejected the idea of a woman speaking before a public gathering of men, and some of those members withdrew from the hall led by Dr. Abu Fares.[170]

Despite the difficulties Islamic women activists encountered in the IAF during the party's fledgling stages, they have maintained their presence in the party's *Shura* council and in the General Assembly in which, today, women represent 10% of the membership.

Women active in the Islamic Action Front maintain that the success of women breaking into the ranks of the party's *Shura* council has improved, beginning with one woman, then two and reaching six. Indeed, in the last *Shura* council elections, nine women gained seats in the 120 member council.

Arwa Kilani sees this representation in the council as reflecting the 10% representation (of women) in the party's General Assembly. On the other hand, she attributes the absence of women in the party's Executive Office to the special circumstances of women, and not to any particular ban by the men in the party. Indeed, she asserts that the party encourages women to aim for the highest ranks in the party's hierarchy.[171]

Islamic woman activists have slowly, but steadily, begun to make progress in the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front. They have managed, in a very short period of time, to establish an active women's movement that has penetrated all sectors of the political arena and Jordanian civil society. Despite their delay in entering the public realm, they have proved they possess great awareness and are more than capable of their responsibilities in the entire range of women's issues. Indeed, it is common knowledge that Islamist women did not enter, in any direct manner, the political arena until the 1990s; and that, up until then, the participation of Jordanian women was monopolized by the nationalist, leftist and liberal movements or the elite and upper classes of society, who are closely allied to the state. Moreover, laws, state policy, the tribal social structure and the conservative, religious attitude of Salafists have all contributed to curbing and limiting the involvement of women in political life. Indeed, between 1950 and 1957, the focus

of women's activism was limited to general issues of nationalism and the Palestinian cause; even in terms of these issues, women's participation in political parties was confined to campaigning for the party, attending rallies, distributing pamphlets and organizing demonstrations.[172]

Equality with men in terms of political rights was not part of these women's program; however, steady appeals and demands finally succeeded in getting women the right to vote. The Arab Women's Union, established in 1954, submitted a draft proposal to amend the electoral law, which was later approved by the cabinet in 1955. The law gave the right to vote to women who had a minimum of a primary school education; thereby denying illiterate women but not illiterate men that right.[173]

This law was a flagrant discrimination against women and a clear derogation of her rights, which deepened the gap between what was stipulated in the constitution and what was legislated by the legislature and governments. The text of the Jordanian constitution of 1952 clearly stipulates that men and women are equal in their rights and duties. Furthermore, the first item of Article 22 states that every Jordanian has the right to hold any public office, according to conditions stated in the law and in state regulations.[174]

Women in Jordan would wait until 1974 to receive their full constitutional rights. This was a time when international pressure with regard to giving women all their rights existed all over the world. The international climate was further supported by a UN decision declaring the year 1975 as the International Year of the Woman, under the banner of "Equality, Development and Peace". A royal decree was issued in Jordan that ordered the electoral law be amended to give all women the right to vote and to be elected, without any constraints; In reality, however, the law was not practically enforced until 1989.[175]

Indeed, it was not until the parliamentary elections of 1989 that women were really able to exercise that right. Twelve women were nominated out of 146 candidates competing for 80 seats. This number of women was actually set by an electoral regulation that set a quota for women's participation to 2% of the nominees. The 12 women

entered the electoral battle as independents; their campaigns were not endorsed by any party, organization or even women's groups; and none of them won.

The Muslim Brotherhood, and other Islamic movements, for that matter, did not nominate any women candidates for the 1989 elections. However, this election took place prior to the IAF being established, before the women's committees began to appear within the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood, and at a time when a strict, religious doctrinal ideology against women's participation still existed in Islamic movements.

Again, during the 1993 elections, which took place after the enactment of the 1992 Party Law, and in which the IAF participated, only three women were nominated out of 550 candidates. These nominations also took place under a new electoral law that adopted the system of "one person, one vote", which replaced the law of proportional representation and representation by district. In these elections, the IAF did not nominate any women.

During these elections, Toujan Faisal won and became the first woman in the history of Jordan to become a member of the Jordanian parliament. However, this victory was not achieved based on the principle of competition (between her and other men and women); she won due to the votes of the Chechens and Circassians in the 3rd district in Amman [Toujan Faisal being of Circassian origin, and the 3rd district having a high proportion of Chechen and Circassian residents].[176]

In the 1997 elections, 17 women were nominated out of 561 candidates. However, none would win despite women's committees organizing and coordinating with each other in the electoral effort, under the umbrella of the Jordanian Coordination Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations, whose objective was to bring women into the legislature. Their efforts were not successful.

However, in March 2001, in interim elections to fill a vacant seat after the death of one of the members of the 13th parliament, a woman was

elected by the members of parliament; that is, not through a popular election for that seat.[177]

It should be noted that the IAF and the Muslim Brotherhood boycotted the 1997 elections in protest of the new electoral law ('one man, one vote'), which the group saw as unfairly targeting them, as well as in protest of Jordan's peace initiative with Israel in 1994.

In 2003, elections took place after parliamentary life had been suspended for a period of two years; these were also the first elections to be held under the newly instated King Abdullah II, and in which the number of parliamentary seats were increased from 80 to 110 seats. This election resulted in a victory for the IAF, who won 17 seats in parliament.

Parliamentary elections had been suspended due to the prevailing internal and external conditions at that time, which included the onset of the second Palestinian Uprising (Intifada), the threat of war on Iraq after the events of September 11 and the U.S. declaration of war on terror. In the context of these conditions and due to domestic political changes, the government launched a national campaign under the slogan "Jordan First". During this campaign, the government formed a series of national committees delegated to strengthening political participation in the country.

One of the most important of these committees was the Women's Committee, whose main goal was to support pragmatic measures designed to promote and strengthen women's political participation. This committee's work resulted in the legislation of yet another electoral law, which not only amended the number of seats in parliament but did so according to a quota system that allocated six parliamentary seats for women.

The 2003 elections were held in the context of over 200 temporary laws that were issued during the period of more than two years of suspended parliamentary life. Among these 'temporary' laws were amendments made to laws pertaining to women, retirement, civic laws and citizenship. With regard to improving the rights and legal status of women, amendments made to the Personal Status Law

made *khale'* (the woman's right to terminate a marriage, or a woman's right to divorce) legal, and raised the legal age for marriage from 15 years of age to 18 for females.

760 candidates ran in these elections, among them 54 women. Hayat al-Mesami, an IAF candidate from the Zarqa municipality, won, ranking 4th among 90 candidates in that area. Luck did not go her way, though, as she did not win competitively in her precinct (but rather on the basis of the quota); and the difference between her and the other winning candidate was only 51 votes.[178]

These elections did not result in any victories for female candidates outside the framework of the established quota. And, although the IAF had originally objected to the quota system, their only female candidate who won would not have succeeded if it were not for the quota.

In the meantime, also during this period, the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF, on the one hand, and the government, on the other, was undergoing major developments, which led to a deterioration in the relationship between the two sides. Tensions had been escalating between the two sides since the 1990s – a period that included the Jordanian economic crisis of 1989, structural changes in international relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the emergence of a uni-polar world led by the United States. The tensions were intensified by an inflamed and unstable climate in the region that culminated in the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, the intervention by the United States that led to the Second Gulf War (sometimes called the Persian Gulf War or First Gulf War) in 1991, and the start of a third wave of democratization, which swept across many countries in the region and in the world.

With the Muslim Brotherhood winning 22 seats in the 1989 parliamentary elections, the movement began to emerge as a significant opposition group. Indeed, the Muslim Brotherhood partook in the 1991 coalition government of Mudar Badran with five ministerial (cabinet) posts – a participation that would later lead to a tragic shift in the relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood; this government was formed in a context where the Jordanian regime

was suffering from isolation in the region after the Second Gulf War (1991), and where the Madrid peace negotiations represented a way out for Jordan from its isolation.

This major shift in the Jordanian regime's foreign policy coincided with another substantive shift in domestic politics –a shift that particularly concerned the relationship between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood –, which was epitomized by the movement's singularly unique popularity after founding the Islamic Action Front in 1992.

Conflicts began to erupt between the regime and the Brotherhood with the beginning of peace negotiations (with Israel) in 1991. The gap further intensified with the passing of the "one man, one vote" electoral law, which the Brotherhood saw as a law that was designed to limit and reduce their parliamentary representation – a measure they felt was intended to curb their ability to block the ratification of the pending peace treaty, which was signed and became a reality between Jordan and Israel in 1994. The peace treaty was ratified by the 12th parliament, whose members were elected in 1993 under the new electoral law.

The new official policy towards the Brotherhood was not limited to the electoral law, but rather extended to obstructing the movement's activities and involvement in universities and in official state institutions. This was followed by a series of laws, which many analysts and observers considered as confirmation that the democratic process in Jordan was on the retreat and civil freedoms were regressing.

All these circumstances combined led the Muslim Brotherhood to boycott the 1997 parliamentary elections. A statement published by the movement, entitled "Why We Boycotted", included protestations against the reversal in the democratic process and the deliberate targeting of the movement's role in political and public life.

These tensions had a major impact on both the IAF and the Brotherhood and on all their members, male and female alike in so far as the 1997 parliamentary elections took place without the participation of the Brotherhood and the IAF, as well as several other

opposition parties in the country, which also boycotted the elections. The schism and conflict between the state and the Brotherhood continued until the death of King Hussein in 1999 and King Abdullah II took over the throne.

With the arrival of King Abdullah II, a new page was turned in the relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood. The channels of political dialogue between the two sides remained to prevent tensions from reaching embarrassingly awkward levels. In return, the Brotherhood restrained its members from participating in subsequent confrontations with the state's security apparatus, such as the protests of 1996 in the south and in several universities against the economic restructuring policy, which, at that time, led to a sudden increase in the price of basic staples and goods. The Brotherhood limited itself to an absolute minimum participation in the protests, contrary to leftist and nationalist camps, who participated in full force. Indeed, several factors would play a major role in redrawing the terms of the relationship between the new King Abdullah II and the Muslim Brotherhood.

This period of transition (in power) created a sort of political vacuum that allowed the country's security services to take on a more definitive and powerful role in the micromanagement of internal affairs. One of the results of this new condition led to a strategic transformation in the relationship between the regime and the movement, which culminated in the expulsion of the leadership of the Hamas movement from Jordan in 1999. This was a clear message about the shifting terms in the strained relationship. From this point forth, tensions would oscillate between escalation and retreat.

Hamas' landslide victory in the Palestinian elections in early 2006 added to the already tense situation, and represented an additional factor that exasperated the already strained relationship between the Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime. The tensions escalated to unprecedented levels and the state of affairs between the two sides threatened to lead to a proverbial divorce.

Finally, the choice of a man considered a close ally of Hamas, Zaki Ben Rashid, as Secretary General of the IAF in March of 2006, was

perceived as an open threat by the regime. The crisis between the two sides further escalated when the government struck at the Muslim Brotherhood's "Islamic Charity Center" on the pretext that there was financial and managerial corruption in the charitable association. The political motive for this move by the government was too obvious to hide as the intervention was obviously connected to the state's conviction that the center was a major source of funding for the Brotherhood, a recruitment beehive and a major base for increasing the movement's popular support.[179]

The Brotherhood nominated 26 candidates in the 2007 elections, including two women. However, only six of the Brotherhood's candidate won; and neither of their female candidates made it to parliament. Furthermore, this loss took place in the midst of a climate of suspicion about the election results and open accusations of fraud and foul-play.[180]

Municipal elections were held in the same year – to note, women were granted the right to vote and to be elected in municipal and village councils in 1982. Since then and until 1995, women participated in municipal elections as voters, but not as candidates.

By tradition, municipalities and village councils have always been an exclusively male domain. However, 1994 proved an important turning point for women, in terms of their participation at the municipal level. The cabinet agreed to appoint 99 women to the municipal committees that organized and supervised municipal elections and the election of mayors. In 1995, the "Network of Jordanian Women's Committees" was established to supervise and to implement the cabinet decision (to encourage women's participation at the municipal level). Consequently, 20 women were nominated for the 1995 municipal elections – which represented a turning point in the history of municipal elections in Jordan. One woman candidate was actually elected mayor of her municipality and nine women won seats in municipal councils. Later, 23 women were appointed to other municipal councils.

In the municipal elections of 1999, 43 women were nominated as candidates, eight won and 25 were appointed later. The IAF did not put

forward any female candidates in the 1999 elections. In the meantime, the IAF and other opposition groups actually boycotted the elections of 2003 in protest of an amendment to the municipality law that granted the government the right to appoint 50% of municipal council members. During these elections (2003), 46 women participated as candidates in 35 municipalities covering 12 provinces; five women won and 94 women were appointed (making up 27% of the total council members appointed by the state).[181]

In the most recent municipal elections in 2007, the IAF nominated two women as candidates. However, these elections presented a more than awkward moment between the state and the Brotherhood and the IAF. The latter withdrew their candidates just hours after balloting began in protest of electoral fraud that, in their view, exceeded any acceptable limits.[182]

The firm conviction among Islamic women activists, which paralleled that of the males, that there was a deliberate plan by the government to restrict and limit the expansion of the Brotherhood's participation (whether male or female) in the political and public domain, was born out of these bitter experiences

Despite the fact that Arwa Kilani acknowledges the importance of women's involvement in the political arena, she stresses that advocating Islam and social work through civil society and civil institutions was more productive in light of the prevailing authoritarian political mentality, which operates according to the principle of marginalization rather than participation. She further states that this political environment is one of the most important reasons why women have been precluded from participating in political and partisan life, as fear is another obstacle to political efficacy. She adds that harassment is systematic and not limited to the political domain, but rather also extends to civil society and civic activities.[183]

The Muslim Brotherhood and IAF have a clear stand on two controversial issues pertaining to women that have been widely debated in Jordan: 'Honor crimes' and amendments in legislation concerning honor crimes, and "legalized *khale'*"(the woman's right to divorce). An intense debate has taken place with regard to 'honor

crimes' and the amendments in the legislation concerning honor crimes between conflicting parties; those who support or oppose (both sides vehemently) Law No. 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which allows for mitigated acquittals or reduced sentences for a *muharam* (man forbidden to a woman in marriage) who has killed, harmed or maimed his wife, sister or mother caught in the act of fornication or adultery (or sins dealing with sexual relations related thereof to the 'honor' of the family).

Indeed, with regard to these two issues, members of parliament (MPs), and among them 17 Islamist MPs, rejected Personal Status (Code) Law No. 82 of 2001 because it included provisions for setting the legal age of marriage and the women's right to divorce (*khale'*). In addition, they also rejected the Penal Code Law No. 86 of 2001, which stipulated amendments to Law No. 340 of the Penal Code dealing with honor crimes. These MPs consider these laws as contradicting Islamic *Sharia,* as well as the customs and traditions of Jordanian society. They see these amendments as detrimental to Jordan's social fabric and to social relations between individuals and family. Some MPs even consider these laws as causing more damage than not, especially as they have already stirred up so much controversy among the masses and in society. And subsequently, through an alliance between the Islamic and conservative MPs, a majority was created in parliament to overturn these two laws, which the government had endorsed during the parliament's period of absence.

The Personal Status (Code) Law (82) on *khale'* gave the woman the right to divorce, while Penal Code Law (86) cancelled the law that allowed those who committed 'honor crimes' to benefit from reduced sentences. Islamists justified their position on the *khale'* law by claiming that it destroys families and promotes the breakdown of society.[184]

IAF activist Umayma al-Akhras points out that these ideas and issues come to Jordanian society by way of a western agenda built on western feminist philosophies, which do not respect the cultural specificities of other societies, not to mention that Jordanian society has customs and traditions that differ from other societies. In

addition, she states that although these problems do occur and do have a presence in Muslim society, it is Islamic *Sharia* that should be used to judge and to litigate when it comes to issues of values and morality. The *Sharia,* in itself, provides the space for legislation and precedence, which evaluates on the basis of what is for the greater good of society and protects society from evil.[185]

Another matter that the IAF takes issue with is the quota system (for example, quotas on seats in parliament). They claim that such systems are a discriminatory practice with regard to women. The only reason they agreed to the quota was because it was placed as a temporary measure and not established as law.[186]

Young women who are Islamic activists also participate in student movements in Jordan's universities. Indeed, the role of the Muslim Brotherhood's student activities in academic settings experienced major changes in the mid-1970s, after several Muslim Brothers (students) won a majority in Jordan University's Student Council elections in the last semester of 1975. The victory was capped by a student member of the Brotherhood winning the post of Student Council President. Since that time, the Muslim Brotherhood has participated in student council elections in universities throughout the kingdom. Furthermore, and also since the 1970s, they have managed to dominate all the student councils and associations in the colleges of *Sharia* in all the country's universities. Indeed, since the mid-1980s, their presence has spread to all the student councils and organizations that were once monopolized by leftist movements.

In fact, leadership of Jordanian student movements has been in the hands of Muslim Brotherhood students since the late 1980s, with the movement seizing control of almost all the student associations in the country, and even led the Coordination Committee of Student Associations at Jordan University from 1987 to 1989.

Moreover, since 1990, the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood has increased among the general student body in Jordan in an unprecedented way. In 1990, students of the Muslim Brotherhood won the majority of seats in the Administrative Committee for the General Union of Students in Jordan. Later, it gained control of

the Executive Committee of the General Union, which drafted the union's constitution. In 1992, this Executive Committee came to an agreement with the university's administration to establish unions in all the separate departments, in which, again, they won control by winning over 80% of the seats of the smaller unions. Furthermore, it was students of the Muslim Brotherhood who proposed establishing an Alumnae Board for the General Union. By 1998, the government stepped in to restrict the control of the Brotherhood over all these unions, committees and associations by requiring the university's administration to change the way elections were held at universities to correspond to the 'one person, one vote' principle, as well. This period was replete with waves of arrests of student members of the Brotherhood during political activities, protests and any other form of overt opposition activity. Female students from the movement strongly contributed to the control the Brotherhood successfully gained in the student unions and associations in academic environments.[187]

Female presence is also quite significant in professional associations, with the number of women in professional associations reaching 21,259 out of a total of 98,353 members, or 21.6% of total membership.

The main professional associations of Jordan were established in the 1950s when Jordan's lawyers, dentists, journalists, doctors, pharmacists and engineers all formed their own professional associations. By the late 1960s and early 1970s agricultural engineers, veterinarians, geologists, nurses, midwives and contractors had also formed their own professional associations.

As was the case with student unions and associations, the Muslim Brotherhood began to penetrate the historical monopoly of Jordan's professional associations by secular nationalists and leftist movements in the 1980s.[188]

The participation of Islamist women in many of these unions today is considered exceptional and very effective, especially in the Union of Engineers and in the Agriculture Association. For example, Islamist women in the committee of Female Engineers' Affairs in the Jordan Engineers Association organize many activities for women,

and coordinate with several civil society organizations that are close to the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the *Charitable Association of Virtue*, for example, with which the committee recently organized a public launch for the book "The Family Charter in Islam".[189]

Furthermore, women enjoy a large presence in a number of non-profit associations and organizations close to the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the aforementioned *Charitable Association of Virtue*, which was established in 1992. Through this association, Islamist women are intensely active in organizing lectures, seminars, conferences and the publication of books and pamphlets, which educate women about their rights as stipulated by Islamic law. In June of 2008, they organized a conference entitled the "Conference on Family: The Fortress of Values and Identity", which, according to Dr. Isahac (Isaac) al-Farhan, was impeded and postponed more than once due to governmental interference, similar to that which affects other activities of the Brotherhood and those closely allied to it.[190]

Indeed, Islamic women activists participate in a variety of charitable and civil organizations. The Association for the Preservation of the Holy Quran, established in 1992, is considered as one of the most important examples of their organizations. In the city of Amman alone there are 60 of these women's centers. Other branches exist in all of the other major cities and provinces in Jordan, totaling almost 400 in number.[191]

Islamist women are also very active in working on developing the model of the Islamic Action Front's (Islamic) framework for the liberation of women – that, in their opinion, goes further than Western feminist liberation ideology by focusing on a moral dimension within a framework of a 'collective' Islamic philosophy. This philosophy gives paramount importance to the community and the *umma* rather than the individual, which in turn, is the core of Western feminist philosophy. Indeed, at the core of the Islamic feminist liberation philosophy is the concept of the family as the center of production for society's values and as the fortress of Islamic identity.

According to this vision, the West strengthens its hegemony and control over the Muslim world by targeting its core, or the Muslim

family, by corrupting it and changing its role in society. Dr. Abdel-Latif Arabiyat elaborates on this view by saying: "The West has consistently worked at strengthening its presence in and control over the Arab and Muslim world by using all means at their disposal... military, economic and political. In its mission, it [the West] has focused special attention on the mentality and social fabric of society and, in particular, on women, the family and youth, which has had a profound influence on the family. The West implements its mission through its studies and large conferences, and by allocating a tremendous amount of resources and money to manipulate targeted communities towards its (the West's) own objectives and interests; objectives that aim to tighten the noose of colonization over the region and other parts of the world. By manipulating these communities to adopt its civilization and its value system, it consolidates the foundation of its totalitarian presence. It has also created all these international organizations and institutions to help it achieve these objectives, with many international conferences being held all over the world that focus on the issue of the family – the notion, structure and role of the family –, which is nothing but another means of cultural domination, hegemony, and a manipulation of the values of the Muslim Arab family."[192]

Dr. Abdel-Latif underlines the necessity of being acutely aware and wary of Western feminist notions such as "gender", and warns of their dangers and their ambiguity. He warns of "these fierce attacks targeting the institution of the family; these attempts to dislodge it from its place at the core of our civil society; and, these efforts to replace it with other social norms… One of the methods used in these attacks is adopting (and trying to convince us to adopt) new ambiguous concepts and terms introduced by numerous international conferences – terms that were previously unknown and which are maliciously chosen to facilitate their use and their being passed on to us –; and one of these terms is the term 'gender'."[193]

Within the context of these 'international conferences targeting women's issues', which are so regularly convened, Dr. Mohammad Abu Fares comments on the Beijing Conference: "The commanders of corruption and of corrupting, so specialized in corrupting women, have established committees for women in countries and nations all over the world, that march to a deliberate and calculated policy,

claiming that the woman is unjustly treated and oppressed, her freedoms restricted; and thus, she must be liberated of all moral values and virtues, to live in a swamp of stagnation to facilitate her corruption and, thus, the corruption of the next generations... The International Conference on Women in Beijing is just one example of the many faces of these activities taking place on the international level… with its number of sessions for writing the lines of this fabled history reaching 51!"[194]

However, this view on the nature of international conferences, movements, conventions and agreements on women, which the movement believes harbor radical feminist agendas and may well be connected with political agendas of hegemony and domination, does not mean that they are an absolute evil. Arwa al-Kilani and Umayma al-Akhras, two of the leading women members of the IAF, find that some of the issues and cases highlighted in international forums are proper and positive, and need to be addressed or supported; meanwhile, they maintain the right to ensure that they are free to denounce negative outcomes. The two women point to the fact that while there are some universal values shared by the world, at the same time, there are cultural specificities that must be respected.

It can be said that Islamic women activists in the IAF, and in other civil society organizations close to the party, have begun to perform a very important role and function within the party framework. The party and these organizations, and the work of women activists in them, have expanded in their functions beyond simply establishing branches specialized for women. Consequently, women have begun to demand a larger role within the party – according to their own comprehensive and complete vision, which opposes, at its core, Western feminist ideologies and establishes an Islamic ideological framework for women's rights, consistent with Islamic values. In addition, it contributes to serving the cause of Islam, in general. The women of the IAF have even begun the groundwork for a comprehensive project that will encompass a team of women, who will coordinate with other Islamic women activists who are not members of the IAF. This project is entitled "Liberated Women" and tries to define an Islamic feminist philosophy and methodology, the core mission of which is to educate and to raise awareness of women

on their legitimate rights under Islamic Law, or the *Sharia*.[195]

From interviews conducted for this study, it has emerged that, in general, Islamic women activists have begun to initiate new models for political activism within the framework of Islam, and within their own definition of feminism. These Islamic women activists produce an image diametrically opposed to the stereotype that Western Orientalists and radical feminists have branded them with. Islamist women are totally confident in their ability to renew the modes of thought and deliberation within the Islamic experience and exchange of experience; they are more than confident that they will be agents of change that will make a significant impact and difference in their society, due to their ability to communicate with and reach the masses and wide segments of women in society – ranks of women that the secular feminists, with their elitist nuances and their association with Western agendas, have failed to penetrate all these decades.

It is evident that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front have begun to significantly review and reconsider their position with regard to women, their rights and their participation. After decades of resistance to change, women have become an integral part of the movement's ideological vision and a significant factor in terms of their pragmatic work and practical programs. Perhaps their engagement in the democratic process and their need for women's votes in elections and their faith in women's ability to mobilize, organize, recruit and make a difference have contributed to this considerable reconsideration of the role of women. To attest to this fact, Arwa al-Kilani notes that the IAF got 70% of the women's vote in the 2003 parliamentary elections.

Nevertheless, Islamic women activists affirm that progress in the course of achieving their equality and their rights as women is the mission of women, themselves, first and foremost. Despite the infancy of the experience of Islamist woman's participation in Jordan, she is making great strides that point to profound changes and transformations in the future of political Islam and in the future of Islamic movements.

The Muslim Center Party

The Muslim Center Party is considered as a relatively nascent party as it was only established in 2001. The rationale for setting up the party was developed within the framework of an attempt to construct a parallel line of political Islam to that of the Muslim Brotherhood. The reasoning that led to establishing the party was born of certain objections to and reservations about the way the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front (IAF) work. It was also an attempt to build a moderate or center political party in Jordan that practices a political Islam but does not conduct missionary work or advocacy at the grassroots level.

The people who originally developed the idea did not see the party as an attempt to compete with the Brotherhood or act as an alternative to the Brotherhood. However, it was founded at a time that coincided with a period of internal dispute within the Brotherhood and the IAF on the issue of boycotting the 1997 parliamentary elections. Indeed, the basic rationale of the Muslim Center Party was to create a wider front and space for independent Islamists and other diverse personalities, and to compensate for the Muslim Brotherhood's hegemony over the IAF and the unilateralism in its decision-making process.

The party was successful in its earlier stages but later would suffer a series of setbacks that resulted in a great number of the party's founders leaving. The pretext for these disenchanted members was that the party was diverting from its original course of acting as a constitutionally-based and Islamic political party that believed in Jordanian national principles, and of practicing politics within the official state framework, but not of becoming associated or allied with the government.[196]

Nawal al-Faouri explains that the party was established based on the need for the existence of a party that combined ideology with pragmatic curricula and programs, which is what was missing in the Brotherhood and in the Islamic Action Front. She says: "The Muslim Center Party was not established because of a disagreement or conflict, but rather because of the conviction of the founders that there is a societal need for a party that combines ideological references with practical application in its programs. This kind of platform cannot materialize except through a political, partisan institution with a legal structure and legitimate presence that permits it to implement its program, in all its forms, and to remain attuned to the pulse of the street and be sensitive to the needs of the people. Furthermore, the party was established to contribute to the popular espousal of democratic processes and values, so that the conviction is born in the public of the pragmatism of the party's programs and its compatibility with popular opinion."[197]

Indeed, the accusation that the party was linked to the government required members to make a major effort to clarify to others what exactly was the nature of the relationship between the two. What was it? An opposition party or an ally of the government?

Dr. Hayel Abdel Hafez, who previously occupied the post of Vice President of the party's Political Bureau, underlines that, "We are a Jordanian political party that is based on an Islamic school of thought and such classifications (of being or not being allied to the government) do not govern us. What governs us is a pragmatic vision based on the *Sharia* and on what we believe is best for Jordan. In certain issues, we may be in opposition to the government; in others, we have no problem supporting the government."[198]

The party philosophy is based on a set of pillars founded in the principles that: It is a party referenced in Islam, which situates itself in the political center; is orthodox in its Islamic theology; is characterized by its respect for the uniqueness of Islam; believes that the political center is an intellectual approach to politics that gives rise to moderation and to behaving fairly towards oneself and others, without chauvinism and without extremism.

In their view, the political center is created: By establishing a balance between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the state; by renewing discourse and modernizing reality by returning to the authentic references of the *Hadith*; by modernizing what is proper in intellect and practice; by keeping an open mind and getting to know others on the basis of respecting the diversity and plurality of humankind; by using dialogue and debate to solve differences; by considering citizenship as the cornerstone for healthy social relations within Islamic societies and with non-Muslims; and, by creating a vibrant, healthy public life by making political work part of understanding Islam – as Islam is the official religion of the state. The duty of the party is seen as: Cleansing the country of laws that contradict Islamic morality and ethics; strengthening the mechanisms needed for achieving transparency, accountability, freedom, responsibility, justice and economic development; resolving imbalances; and, adopting *Sharia* as the definitive reference, which is not just a spiritual censor, a custodian of conscience and a religious belief, but rather a value system, a reference and a set of criteria that serves as a guide for people to lead a good and righteous life.[199]

The Muslim Center Party's intellectual and political orientation rises out of a set of principles that are summarized in the statement "Islam is faith and a way of life", by transforming this basic principle into plans and programs, and by participating in all efforts that are channeled toward the nation's best interests. Moreover, the party also believes that: All citizens have the same rights and, thus, have the same responsibilities; a strong Jordan is the brick for building the nation; the Palestinian cause is the central political issue and priority for all (Arabs and Muslims); and that the Zionist threat is a menace to all (Arabs and Muslims), in general, and Jordan, in particular.

The party seeks to partake in both the legislative and executive authority, and rejects the use of violence as an instrument of change. It emphasizes the role of the woman and the importance of her participation in all spheres of life. It also places emphasis on the role of youth and the importance of their effective participation. The party also believes in the importance of Arab and Islamic cooperation and that Arabs and Muslims are complementary and interdependent. Finally, the party believes in the importance of securing a dignified,

decent life for the citizen. It emphasizes that all political reform should proceed from a framework referenced in the country's fundamental religious and historical roots and cultural specificity. It works to attain the goal of the Islamic *Sharia:* To safeguard the human being, his religion, his mind, his honor, his dignity and his possessions. The party works to support freedom, as it is a basic tenet of Islam and a prerequisite for humanitarianism. In addition, it considers the peaceful transfer of power by means of ballot as being proper and ideal. Finally, the party works on developing the human being and attends to his reform – as the human being is the key to change and the cornerstone of change.[200]

The organizational structure of the party is composed of: the party leadership; the Political Bureau, which consists of 11 members elected by the party's *Shura* council for a two-year term; the *Shura* Council, which consists of 50 members elected by the General Assembly for a four-year term; and the General Assembly, which includes all the members of the party; as well as all the party branches, committees, the cabinet of experts, the party central court and court of appeal.[201]

The party has 750 members, including 12 women. The 50-member Shura Council has five women. But no woman has yet been elected to the party's Political Bureau, the last elections of which took place on July 14, 2008, with Dr. Malek Mohammad al-Momani elected President of the bureau.[202]

The party's view on women's issues and women's rights is derived from a comprehensive outlook on the Jordanian family and of improving the situation of the Jordanian family, in general, by striving for and reinforcing social justice as a principle. But the party warns of being drawn towards the ways of the West and asks, instead, that lessons are learned from what has happened to it (the family) there (in Western society). Indeed, the party's vision of social reform is explained as follows: "Our party's vision (on social reform) stems from improving the conditions of the Jordanian family, based on the principle of social justice and a comprehensive outlook with regard to the family. It is a vision rooted in strengthening the family, ensuring its cohesion and creating and maintaining a balance between its components and its functions. For this purpose, we insist that lessons

are learned from what happened to the institution of the family in the West, the relationships of which were built between individuals on a basis of conflict and division; where rights took on the nature of independence of individuals from one another, or are perceived in the context of restricting one another."[203]

The party sees that the culture and reality of this age of decline, ignorance and backwardness has weighed on the ability of Islamic societies to understand the wisdom and progressive nature of the *Sharia*, which brought about a great revolution in terms of women's rights. Indeed, for the party the principle that "*Women are but the full sisters of men"* is at the heart of the *Sharia*. Thus, the party emphasizes the need for genuine *ijtihad* (due diligence and deliberation in Islamic jurisprudence) and for constant innovation, while taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural transformations and developments that have stricken Islamic societies, and among them the Jordanian society.

The party's view is that the woman has borne a historic injustice; that she has suffered most from the epidemic of ignorance, illiteracy, oppression, injustice and abuse; and from being deprived of the rights given to her under the *Sharia*; and of being denied of her rights under the law and in society; and that she has been exploited socially and economically. Subsequently, the party insists on the principle of standing by the woman, in a positive and constructive manner, to overcome this historic breach of justice. It believes in the principle of equal opportunity between the two sexes and that both deserve to be rewarded based on their effort and merit, and according to their unique (human) natures, using as a reference the tenets of Islam and its humanitarian principles.[204]

The party recognizes and commends the positive gains secured for the woman in the West – and sees that these gains have evolved into a series of international conventions and agreements that aim to eradicate the wide range of manifestations of discrimination against the woman. However, the party makes it clear that this recognition does not preclude the party from expressing its reservations about certain philosophical and ideological dimensions, which may contradict or conflict with the provisions of the Islamic *Sharia,* or with the centrality

of the family institution in the *Sharia*; or that may contradict or conflict with the cultural and social specificities of (Jordanian) society.[205]

The party's reform model, with regard to women's rights and women's issues, stipulates the need for *ijtihad* (due diligence and deliberation in Islamic jurisprudence) within the Islamic system in order to develop a national project pertaining to women, instead of following other examples, turning to Western models or to Westernization.

The party's reform program (with regard to women) is based on three central tenets: The active, effective woman; a cohesive, strong family; and, a safe, secure childhood; and thereby, the party makes a demand that the following actions and measures be taken:

1. To eradicate any remnants of illiteracy among Jordanian women, and to adopt special programs to accomplish this goal in Bedouin and rural areas; to work on correcting the prevailing culture and negative perceptions about the role of the woman in society.

2. To empower the woman with all her rights under the law (*Sharia);* to reform all legislation pertaining to the woman, using Islamic law as the main resource of reference and precedence.

3. To ensure the woman's legitimate right to work; to facilitate performing her role in developing the society in Jordan; to encourage cooperative production by women, through the provision of financial support and legal facilities.

4. To activate the mechanisms for implementing and executing decisions taken by the civil and *Sharia* courts regarding issues concerning women, particularly in cases of divorce submitted by women in self-defense and against harm inflicted upon her, such as cases of separation, irreconcilable differences, absence of the spouse, financial negligence on the part of the spouse, desertion and the like. [206]

Nawal al-Faouri is considered to be one of the most prominent and active women in the party, and was appointed to the Jordanian Senate in 2005. She was the first woman to be elected to the Islamic

Action Front's *Shura* council, and she contributed to establishing the Muslim Center Party. She was a member of the Muslim Center Party's Political Bureau and is very active in the domain of women's rights. She is a member of the General Union of Jordanian Women; and, despite her affiliation with the Center Party; her position on women's rights exceeds that proposed by the party, although she says that she does share their overall vision.

According to al-Faouri, the process of reform is global (especially in the context of globalization), that one must recognize this fact in order to consolidate the course of democracy, and that freedom of expression and the full participation of all segments of civil society – of both women and men – are fundamental rights of the Arab citizen. She argues that one cannot but benefit from the global experience, and that one of the most important steps required to achieve genuine political development and reform is to push for a radical transformation of the perception of women in Arab societies; a perception, which has, thus far, prevented the woman from exercising her civil rights, as stipulated in the constitution and as been fully and meticulously detailed in the Islamic *Sharia*.[207]

Al-Faouri calls for amending laws that prevent women from practicing their rights to fully participate in developing the country politically, socially and economically – noting that the active participation of women in society is a part of the country's and the *umma*'s heritage and history, and particularly a part of the Holy Quran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet.

She perceives women practicing political and social activism as a basic and fundamental principle found in the tenets of Islamic *Sharia*; she views this activism as exemplified in an effective participation in choosing the methods and institutions of governance; in an effective participation in selecting the representatives of the people in legislative assemblies, and in monitoring the way these assemblies perform; in an effective participation in the spectrum of activities of civil society institutions such as political parties, labor unions, charitable associations among others; and, last but not least, in an effective participation in public life, which includes women running as candidates for municipal councils and legislative assemblies, and

in women participating in the decision-making process and in the administration of the state through its institutions.[208]

With regard to gender issues, al-Faouri maintains that the debate on defining the roles of the man and the woman in society has been an ongoing one, and has been a controversial issue throughout human history. Indeed, history has witnessed the most painful examples of the injustice to women until the rise of Islam, which set the principle of equality between man and woman. Muslim women were active participants and contributed greatly to the rise and spread of Islam; however, and unfortunately, with the passage of time and as a consequence of the way circumstances have evolved in the Muslim and Arab world, dangerous digressions have taken place; and, Arab and Muslim societies returned to much of what prevailed prior to Islam (the era of *Jahiliya*). In the meantime, other nations advanced and gave the required attention to the issues of gender, taking it upon themselves, as nations, and as international organizations to defend the rights of women and defend her cause in ways that were appropriate for them and in ways that served their interests.

She claims that with advancements in technology and in the means of communications, and supported by money and power, these (Western) concepts have spread. Adding to that, the hegemony of Western societies has been further backed by the force of arms... Gender issues and the relationship of these issues to equality is obvious. However, al-Faouri insists that the equality between men and women cannot be absolute as this would be a contradiction of the nature of things; and, Islamic *Sharia* has made provisions and taken into account the natural differences between men and women... Thus, equality can only be equality in terms of their humanity, which signifies equality and interdependence between men and women in their social roles and responsibilities, in order to achieve happiness for each and for society – which is in the interest of humankind, as a whole.[209]

With respect to laws related to the family institution, which have been the cause for extensive debate in Jordan, such as those related to the women's right to divorce or *khale'* (a divorce initiated by a woman), 'honor crimes' and raising the legal age of marriage to 18

years, the party is of the following view: That increasing the legal age of marriage does not contradict Islamic *Sharia* and is in line with the social and economic developments that have occurred over time – as the theologians of the *Sharia* have all agreed that "laws change with the change of times" As for the issue of women initiating divorce, the party confirms that a divorce initiated by a woman is a right clearly stipulated in the *Sharia*. However, the issue becomes more complicated when it comes to application, with certain problems arising, such as arbitrary grounds (i.e. when the grounds for divorce are ambiguous and may be unfair to the man). In such cases, argues the party, the special conditions of a given society must be taken into account and an effort must be made to place safeguards that ensure there is no injustice done to the man. In terms of the law dealing with 'honor crimes', the party sees that social realities and customs impose their own balance of sorts. Therefore, the party does believe that a more equitable means to legislate in the cases of 'honor crimes' is needed, but the party opposes the passing of the proposed law on overturning reduced sentencing in the current form in order to avoid (moral and social) chaos, and in order to protect and preserve the customs and norms of society.[210]

With regard to international organizations that advocate women's rights, the party takes the view that these organizations do have their own agendas, and that these agendas are linked to a Western cultural perspective; therefore, it is imperative that international agreements (on women's issues and rights) take into account cultural specificities that must concur with Islamic values. But despite these differences in cultural perspectives, the party believes in investing an effort to work (with such organizations) on issues of common concern and supporting common issues, which does not preclude rejecting those issues that contradict the Islamic value system.[211]

Although the Muslim Center Party openly encourages engaging the participation of women and activating their role, female members of the Muslim Center Party suffer much of the same problems as other women in other political parties. They all find difficulty in actively participating and engaging effectively in politics due to social and cultural reasons and restraints.

The participation of women in the party, thus far, has been most effective in the "Forum for Moderate Islamic Thought and Culture", which was established in 2001, and is considered to be affiliated to the party as its cultural and educational branch. Within this forum, women are active in round-table discussions, entitled "The Moderate Woman", that seek to highlight the role that women can play in effecting change and reform, through a moderate way of thinking and understanding of Islam as a religion and as a civilization. The purpose of these round-table forums is to draw attention to the civilized role Islam played with regard to the woman and in improving her legal and social status; to encourage young women to contribute to serving the public; to support and encourage women's participation in political life; to prepare and develop women leaders; to strengthen the notion and understanding of citizenship; and to improve and develop strong relations with other women's organizations, which are active in civil societies in the local, Arab and international arena.[212]

Given that the Muslim Center Party is still a relatively new party, its activities in trade unions and student unions is still limited. In the last elections, the party nominated three women as candidates and one male candidate, but none succeeded in winning a seat. However, the party claims that seven members of parliament, who did win, did so with the endorsement and support of the party.[213]

The Dua'a Party

The Dua'a party was established in 1993 under the name "The Arab Islamic Democratic Movement", which was changed to Dua'a Party after it was registered under Party Law No. 19 of the year 2007. According to party members, the name was changed due to the confusion the original name stirred in the public with regard to the identity of the party, as the name alluded to the notions of nationalism, Islam and democracy all at the same time. However, despite the amendment to the name of the party, its identity still seems ambiguous as the party uses a sort of *ijtihad* (due diligence and deliberation in Islamic jurisprudence), whose origins are vague and cannot be attributed to any of the known or usual sources of reference. Finally it proposes an Islamic vision that is paradoxically founded on a leftist, (Arab) nationalist ideology.

The party was established on a set of founding principles that reflect its intellectual and ideological construct, which is: Faith in God, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, His judgment and will, Judgment Day, and the full surrender to the knowledge that God is the one and only maker in this universe.

The Quran and the *Sunna* are considered as the main sources for the party's ideological platform and orientation. The party believes in the power of the Quran to identify and diagnose all that occurs in reality; and thus, it also believes in the power of the Quran to provide solutions to all that may occur. For the members of the Dua'a the human mind is a tool to understand the text, to communicate it and to activate it. The party also believes in the necessity of purifying these (pure) texts from the guardians of its interpretations (those who have monopolized and left stagnant its interpretation), because every age has its problems and, therefore, its own solutions. The party believes that Islam is a universal religion, a religion of dialogue

and one open to all other religions and faiths in the world, and that the Arab Islamic civilization is an organic part of the construct of human civilization. Finally, the party believes in a modern Arab and Islamic discourse, enlightened by the dialectics of Arabism and Islam, under the umbrella of an Islamic form of democracy or dialectics of governance by democracy and *Shura*.[214]

The organizational structure of the party is composed of a Supreme Council, Board of Trustees and an Advisory Board, along with several specialized committees for media and information, cultural and intellectual affairs, external affairs, public relations, internal affairs and administration, legal affairs and regional affairs.

The number of members registered in the party is 850, 350 of which are women. The Board of Trustees has the highest authority in the party and is composed of 20 members, seven of which are women[215], which is the highest percentage of women in a leadership council in all of the licensed political parties (in Jordan).

The party's vision on women's rights and women's issues stems from the dialectics of the Islamic text: Where society – male and female – is the domain of Divine providence and care, where special precedence is given to building a society cleansed and purified of all forms of filth and psychological and moral deviance. It emphasizes the need for a contextualized, dialectic reading of the Quran, which requires that verses are not taken out of context, or that they are understood within the background of the times in which they were given.

The party's reading of the 'texts' is used to emphasize that the man and the woman in the Holy Book of God are considered one subject, and that subject, in itself, is the human condition (the human and his/her worldly concerns). The case of the 'one subject' that the 'pure texts' speak of, first and foremost, emphasizes the principle of equality and parity between the sexes. Equality, in this case, refers to equality in creation, as the origin of both is one – earth (or clay). Men and women are created from the same earth (clay); and the story of creating Eve out of Adam's rib is considered a fable, as the text of the Quran clearly equated between them in the form of their creation. For

example, the message of the 'pure texts' is always a message in the plural form, addressing Adam and his wife together, at once. Their origin is of one clay; their responsibility is in heaven as it is on earth.

The party places great emphasis on the principle of parity. It considers itself an enlightened Arab and Islamic movement, whose mission is to wage a battle for achieving equality between the sexes and apply this principle to all aspects of religious life – a principle derived from the basic knowledge that the ultimate priority is the human being and the human condition, rather than it being simply an issue of women and women's rights. It is the opinion of the party that the human being has misunderstood the 'pure texts'; and, whether this misunderstanding has been deliberate or out of ignorance, the human has fallen in the trap of discord between the sexes, instead of realizing the harmony between them.

The party considers that a proper, productive family is built on the free will of two mature and sane adults, where neither is under the 'control' or guardianship of the other, and where coercion is not used in the relationship. These two (adults of free and mature) wills are free to decide when it comes to selecting the other partner – with the aim of building a family, whose preservation, care and growth is the shared and equal responsibility of both partners, according to his and her capacity.

The party sees the woman as the greatest victim of ignorance, backwardness and injustice in society. However, it is her responsibility, as it is the responsibility of the man, to free women from this dark reality – a reality which makes it imperative that women take the initiative to penetrate the ranks of and engage in the public domain, whether this engagement is in production, in the economy, in cultural, social or political work. This is not only a woman's right but her duty, which she should not neglect due to immoral coercion or societal pressure, society's negligence or ignorance. Attaining this goal requires a serious effort to safeguard the woman's basic rights and to put them into action, beginning with her right to an education up to any level she can achieve and ending with the right to being the leader of a society – and all the other rights that rest between these two, such as the right to choose her spouse and to work, among others – because

"*Women are but the full sisters of men*"; and the standard or criteria for any preference (between the sexes) is solely in their piety.[216]

However, it appears that the party has had to revisit and reconsider much of its theoretical principles and practical strategies with the admission of new members. Interviews with many of the party members – men and women – have shown that an extensive debate is taking place in the party with regard to political issues that pertain to the woman.

Without a doubt, the rise in the party ranks of Nabila Adib Sayyid Ahmad as Chairperson of the party's Women's Committee has made a major difference, with her over fifteen years of experience in the public domain as president of an organization working in rural development [Umm al-Qura (The Mother of Villages) for Social Development], and as a member of the board of directors of the Union of Jordanian Women for two consecutive terms. Indeed, Nabila Ahmad has been able to attract a large number of women to join the party and has founded, and currently presides over, the Dua'a Association for Social Development.[217]

Nabila Ahmad emphasizes that one of the major reasons why women are reluctant to delve into politics is actually fear. Indeed, in her view, the notion of being involved in a political party and political activism is associated with security (surveillance and the security services), as a result of the many years of the absence of democratic life and the long period of martial law in the country, in addition to the security mentality associated with a whole range of political issues and activities. Furthermore, if a healthy political life is to be built – one that includes the active participation of women – then great efforts must be made to build trust and confidence in political parties and in the relationship between political parties and the government.[218]

The party and the Association for Social Development organize lectures and lessons in educating women on their rights. They also work to communicate these rights by meeting with women in their homes. Nabila Ahmad and the Deputy Secretary General of Women's Affairs to the Secretary General, Umm Khalid, point out that one of the most important entry points to political life, when living under a culture of fear, is charitable work.[219]

Umm Khalid emphasizes the fact that women's rights are guaranteed by Islamic *Sharia;* and, thus, women are not required to commit to international agreements on women's rights. She says: "The point of departure for our orientation is our Jordanian environment and social context, and we do not look outside for solutions, although we learn and benefit from the experiences of others. However, we do have our own distinct characteristics as a society; therefore, what may be proper here may not be proper outside, and vice versa."[220]

With regard to the subject of the *hijab* (veil), Nabila Ahmad confirms that the veil is a matter of God and an expression of one's self and one's Islamic identity. Furthermore, the veil offers women more freedom of movement and reinforces her self-confidence. She considers the abandonment of the veil as the logical consequence of the Muslim's woman loss of self-confidence.[221]

Dr. Mohammad Abu Bakr, the Secretary General of the Dua'a Party, explains that the party has not nominated women candidates for parliamentary elections due to their lack of faith and confidence in the 'one person, one vote' electoral law. He considers this law as an obstacle to party candidates getting elected to parliament, that is, in addition to the many other obstacles that exist, and which apply to men and women equally. He believes that Jordanian society still rejects the idea of political parties and partisan work and remains fearful of joining political parties. In addition to this non-conducive environment, women are – in his view – still prisoners of their homes and hostages of their husbands, with still very few and weak opportunities for women to partake in public life.[222]

With regard to the quota law (that allocates a certain number of seats in public assemblies for women), the party considers it to be the worst case scenario and has made demands that it be annulled or retracted. The main rationale for this outright rejection is that it discriminates between the sexes. Furthermore, the mechanism for applying this quota is riddled with many problems. In the party's opinion, what is really required is an electoral law based on proportional representation, where women are given a proportional percentage of the electoral lists, so that she wins seats based on her own efforts and merit, and on the efforts and merits of the party with which she is affiliated.[223]

With regard to the set of laws and legislation pertaining to the woman, and which, as stated previously, have led to great conflict and extensive debate inside Jordanian society – especially the laws that gave the woman the right to divorce, raised the legal age of marriage, and dealt with 'honor crimes' –, the party has not yet formulated an opinion or specific vision due to the inner conflict and debate among party members with regard to these particular issues.[224]

Finally, with regard to Western feminist ideologies, their particular agendas in terms of women's rights and their abstract and theoretical concepts, such as "gender", Nabila Ahmad speaks for the party when she says that these philosophies do not apply and are not in harmony with the value system of Islam, not withstanding that they point to an obvious political agenda. Furthermore, in her and her party's opinion, official and civil international organizations offer very generous financing to secular (women's) movements and institutions in Jordan, while these movements and institutions are insular in nature and their work is limited to and within a particular class of women, which has little to do with the real worries and conditions of disadvantaged women in society. She further emphasizes that women in Arab and Islamic countries are demanding rights that are neither extraordinary nor unrealistic. In the meantime, under the prevailing local social conditions, they should be demanding what is already theirs (in terms of rights) under the *Sharia*, which sets a ceiling that is already higher than the capacity and practical abilities of Jordanian women, and which gives women even more than what they aspire today. She concludes that, if we want to develop an effective practice of women's rights, the point of departure must be the Islamic *Sharia* and its value system. The next step would be to activate and use due diligence and deliberation in Islamic jurisprudence (*ijtihad*) to construct and to create an authentic, proper Islamic feminism.[225]

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned and to benefit from, in the context of the Islamic woman activist's experience in Jordan, is to avoid a sum of singular and simplistic interpretations, which rely on rudimentary or fundamentalist visions of Islam and woman in Islam. Indeed, Islamic movements and parties in Jordan have proven that they offer, to a great extent, diversity, complexity and differences in visions, approaches and practices, or modi operandi. At the same time, there is a sharp distinction between movements that operate outside the democratic context and those working within that framework with regard to the sum of issues pertaining to women, due to the extensive variations in due diligence and deliberation in Islamic jurisprudence, or *ijtihad*, from one group to the other, which follow a diverse range of ideological structures, schools of thoughts and pragmatic or practical strategies of application.

Movements and groups that operate outside the democratic framework, whether they are missionary, activist or revolutionary, have begun to modify their pragmatic approaches with regard to issues pertaining to the woman. They have allowed women into their ranks as missionaries, advocates of Islam or as social workers and as activists. These women have begun to play an important role inside these movements and groups through their active women committees and branches, which have proven very efficient and capable in their outreach to the masses and the grassroots, popular base of women. However, despite these movements' and groups' variances in theoretical and practical approaches, they all have visions of self, of heritage and of 'Us' and the 'Other' that are characterized by rigidity and tradition. Their discourse is born of a strict faith in the 'wholeness' of the historical experience of Islam, the authority of Islam, and the comprehensive nature and ability of Islam to deal with all issues and questions that may emerge in society. For

these movements and groups, the nation-state of al-Medina during the time of the Prophet Mohammad serves as the role model, or archetype guide for providing a rights-based paradigm for women, which, in their opinion, far exceeds any other offered by previous and successive civilizations. Finally, these movements view Western civilization as an enemy, which is working incessantly to eradicate and to eliminate Islam, and which is seeking to completely dominate and control the Arab and Islamic world's resources and wealth through the incitement of women's rights and issues in the Arab and Islamic world. They view the corruption of the woman and the family institution as the point of entry (of the West's hegemonic strategy), as the woman and the family is central to Islamic morality and its value system. By corrupting the woman and the family, the West is, thereby, preparing the grounds for corrupting society as a whole, and creating the breeding ground in which they can enforce their total domination – politically, economically and culturally.

Despite the differences in methodology and in discourse among the Islamic movements operating outside the democratic context about the mechanism of change – from reform to revolution –, they all share a literal (and not a contextual or interpretative) reading of the Book (the Quran) and the *Sunna* as their fundamental resource and source of reference. All share the ultimate objectives of establishing a Caliphate state, of applying Islamic *Sharia* and of resuming an Islamic way of life. They also share in stressing that, in Islam, the woman is equal to the man in responsibility, in creation and in natural instinct; but that the home is the principle domain of the woman. Thus, the woman leaving her home is the exception and not the rule. Subsequently, all these movements and groups place strict conditions on the woman working and on her presence in public life or in the public sector, not to mention prohibiting her from any political participation and any leadership posts, particularly in the public sector, in the political arena and the judiciary.

Despite all of the above restrictions, these movements have made great efforts in employing and recruiting women into their ranks, with the goal of reinforcing their presence in the public, socio-economic and socio-political arena. Women have subsequently emerged in these movements and groups as effective activists in their missionary

and advocacy work in the homes of other women, as well as in civil society institutions and charitable organizations. Finally, active, Islamist women have succeeded in becoming a role model and in providing guidance for other Muslim women, according to their own vision of (Islamic feminist) thought and ideology.

As an example, Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Islamic Party of Liberation) has built the model or paradigm of the "radical, political woman", who contributes to political and social change, starting with the head of the political pyramid of the (modern) state. The more missionary and advocacy-oriented movements and groups, such as the *Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh* (Traditional Salafists) and *Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh wal Da'wa* (missionary groups or groups of calling), have adopted a model of the "missionary woman", who works on penetrating the social fabric and changing society from its base (from the masses or bottom of the pyramid). Meanwhile, movements that believe in revolution as the main instrument of change, such as the *Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh* (Jihadist Salafists), introduced and established the concept of the "*Jihadist*, fighting woman" as the model for bringing about the total change required in society, through the use of violence and through the force of *Jihad*.

These missionary, activist and *Jihadist* (revolutionary) movements have all witnessed a major penetration of women into their ranks, where they have proven themselves as effective agents of change. Indeed, political, economic and social developments have worked, albeit extremely slow, in changing the image of the woman and her role within these movements, in particular, and within society, in general. Moreover, this change has remained limited and weak given the severity of the religious ideology that governs theoretical and organizational structures. Therefore, it will likely be difficult to talk about the evolution of women's rights models and paradigms anytime soon within the framework of these movements, which not only operate outside the democratic context, but, moreover, don't believe in it.

If the image of the woman appears static and does not bode well for the future in the framework of movements that operate outside the democratic framework, it appears totally different within movements

that operate within the democratic context. These movements and parties have, indeed, worked to develop a vision for the religion, the state and for society based on a reading of Islamic heritage and of modernity, using a traditional, discursive context based on the mechanisms of *ijtihad*, and with a renewal of the discourse in the field of Islamic deliberation. Terms such as reform, democracy, governance by *Shura*, pluralism and others have become rooted in these movements' semantics; women's rights models have become part of their theoretical and pragmatic constants. The practice and pragmatic needs of these parties have proven the importance of the role that women can play in the process of reform and in comprehensive development; indeed, the importance of their political participation, their integration into party frameworks and in establishing branches and activities targeting women have also been made quite evident.

Although Islamic political movements in Jordan have amended their vision and way of thinking with regard to the many issues pertaining to women, their stances and positions still require renewal and even more diligence (or *ijtihad*). Indeed, many obstacles and barriers still remain, which stand in the way of progress in terms of the condition of women. These hindrances can be attributed to the prevalence of strict views within these movements, and in orientations that still have not determined their theoretical and pragmatic options.

Perhaps the most prominent phenomena in all this deliberation is the Islamist woman herself, as she emerges more aware of herself and of the role she can play. After many decades of displaying a reluctance to enter the public sphere, she has charged forth, in defiance of the religious and the traditional tribal structures that have worked so long to marginalize her in the framework of a post-colonial patriarchal state.

Islamic women activists have enrolled in the ranks of these movements with demands for a greater role in their hierarchical structures, which far exceeds a mere token presence in isolation within the branches and committees for women. This dynamic has created effective political participation within an ongoing engagement in dialogue and debate, which calls for establishing a rights-based model in the framework of the Islamic value system, which differentiates itself from

Western feminist rights-based models – models, which they perceive as being based in conflict and contradiction. In contrast, Islamic feminist models claim they are based on religious, moral principles that are characterized by inclusion and integration; and, that Islamic feminist models are based on the right to differ in opinion with Western models, according to the principles of dialogue in the Islamic tradition – a tradition that builds on a creative synergy of discourse rooted in the principles of diligence and renewal, and that dispels the stereotypical and alleged claims perpetrated by the West with regard to the Muslim woman –, which considers her oppressed and marginalized by political Islam; and which claims that political Islam works to establish or maintain laws that discriminate against women – all of which are claims that reverberate an Orientalist perspective and culture, built on fundamental allegations that view Islam as a discriminatory, oppressive and violent religion.

As for Islamic women activists, they view these Western claims in the context of imperial strategies of hegemony, domination and control under the guise of human rights organizations offering a globalized, universal culture that aims to eliminate all other cultural specificities, values and civilizations.

The issues of the veil and the family institution are obviously of the most contentious and nebulous issues. However, Islamist women insist that the veil is legitimate and is a religious responsibility, and one not imposed by the man; rather, these women view it as an expression of their Islamic identity and a symbol of resistance and of rejecting Western domination and hegemony. Indeed, for them it is a symbol of liberation that allows women to operate more freely in the public domain.

In terms of the family and the family institution, the family is considered as the fortress that protects morality and values. The family is the cornerstone for building a pure, egalitarian society free of decadence and deviant behavior. For Islamic women activists there is no contradiction between the woman being a wife, mother and daughter and her assuming a political and social role; as there are inherent, natural yet complementary and interdependent differences between men and women. They believe their role in society is built

on a philosophy derived from the plural form of interdependence, cooperation and coexistence, and not of individuality built on selfishness and conflict.

The growing phenomenon of the Islamist Jordanian woman's presence in the public domain is still relatively new, as is her political participation and partisan work, which only began in the 1990s. Yet, despite this short history, she has been able to prove her qualifications and her ability to play a vital role in communicating and connecting with women across wide sectors of society, which secular women's movement were never able to access, despite their existence for many decades. Indeed, the secular women's movements remained elitist in nature and limited to upper class women. In contrast, Islamic women activists have been able to penetrate all segments of society and social classes with their lectures, seminars and lessons, which strive to clarify for women their legal rights as stipulated in Islam. Islam, according to the Islamist woman, gives women rights taken away from them and denied them by tradition and outdated cultural and social norms.

Finally, in the view of Islamist women, the culture of fear remains one of the most important obstacles and considerations that impede the woman's intervention in the political domain and her joining of political parties. Indeed, most of these women, despite their recognition of the importance of politics and political intervention, still prefer to work in civil society and within charitable organizations and networks. They attribute their exclusion to decades of oppression and marginalization, and to the prevalence of reactionary, authoritarian mentalities controlling the destiny of reform and the progress of men and women.

Endnotes

1. The party included Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani as president of the party, Daoud Hamdan as vice president and secretary, Ghanem Abdo as treasurer, Dr. Adel al-Nabulsi as member and Munir Shoqair as member;
See also: Ihsan Samara: "The Concept of Social Justice in Islamic Thought", Dar al-Nahda al-Islamiyeh (Islamic Renaissance [Publishing] House), Beirut, Second Edition, 1991, pg. 141;
Dr. Mahmoud Salem Obeida: "The Effect of Islamic Groups Field Work in the 20th Century", Dar al-Fikr, Amman, pg. 230
Dr. Musa Zaid al-Kilani: "Islamic Movements in Jordan", Dar al-Bashir, Amman, First Edition, 1990, pg. 87

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See: Ihsan Samara (see (1) above): "Concept of Social Justice in the Islamic Thought", Dar al-Nahda al-Islamiyeh, Beirut, Second Edition, 1991, pg. 147

3. Ahmad Al-Baghdadi: "Hizb ut-Tahrir: A Study in the Concept of the Islamic State", Dar Cortas, Kuwait, 1994, pg. 12

4. See: Abdel-Halim al-Ramahi: "Islamic Media", unpublished dissertation, Islamic University, Pakistan, 1986, pgs. 29-30;
There are many books published by the members of the party like: "Exemplary Political Economy," "Marxist Socialism Criticism", "How the Caliphate was Destroyed", "Rules of Evidence", "Penal System", "Laws of Prayer", "Islamic Thought"

5. See: Fahmi Jada'an: "State Theories in Contemporary Arabic Islamic Thought", in "The Theory of Heritage and other Arab and Islamic Studies", Dar al-Shurouq, Amman, First Edition, 1985, pg. 61'
Dr. Hammam Said: "Hizb ut-Tahrir: A Study and Critique", in the Seminar Proceedings of: "Directions in Contemporary Islamic Thought", Office of the Arab Education for Gulf Countries, Bahrain, 1985, pg. 618;
Dr. Abdullah Fahd al-Nafisi: "Schools of Thought for Islamic Movements",

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See also: Abdel-Kadim Zalloum: "How the Caliphate was Destroyed," Dar al-Umma, Beirut, Third Edition, 1990

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15. Mohammad Zahed Joul: "Hizb ut-Tahrir: Paths to Forming Radical Islam", unpublished research report, pg. 22

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Edition, 1994, pg. 174

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37. See: A Hizb ut-Tahrir press release, Bangladesh, inviting Hamida Hussein and her followers to a debate defending her Secular Faith, April 20, 2008, see www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org

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81. Abdullah Azzam was born in a village in the Jenin area in Palestine in 1941. He became a refugee in Jordan after the 1948 war. He studied at the Sharia College in the University of Damascus where he got his Bachelor degree. He later worked as a high school teacher in Amman. He was a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood. After the 1967 war, he joined what was referred to as the "Sheikhs Brigade", which was established by the Muslim Brotherhood. He later received a Masters degree in the Origins of Fiqh (Theological Jurisprudence; a term used to designate the processes of exposition, analysis, and argument which constitute human effort to express God's law, reference http://www.iranica.com/articles/v9f5/v9f537.html in 1969, after which he became a lecturer in the Sharia College in the University of Jordan between 1973 and 1980. In 1980, he was fired from the university and later lectured at the King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah in

Saudi Arabia in 1981. In 1984, he decided to go to Pakistan and dedicated himself to work as a consultant in educating for the Afghani Jihad; in Pakistan, he established the Office of Services (Maktab al-Khadamat) and remained there until he was assassinated in November 1989 by a car bomb. He left a large legacy in jurisprudence in issues of Jihad. His work was collected into a 5-part series that was edited, printed and published by The Martyr Azzam Media Center in Peshawar, Pakistan.

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83. Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi was born in 1958. His real name is Issam Mohammad Taher al-Barqawi, but known as al-Makdissi. He comes from the village of Burqa outside of Nablus. He left with his family to Kuwait where he finished his high school education. He later studied General Sciences at the University of Mosul in Iraq. Later, he studied Sharia Theology in Saudi Arabia, where he delved deeply into the literature of the Wahhabi movement and the work of the Da'wa (Calling) theologians of the Salafiya movement in Najd (Saudi Arabia). He later traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan. He finally settled in Jordan in 1992, where he began publishing and disseminating his thoughts and ideas until he was arrested in 1994 due to his alleged involvement in the case referred to as "Pledging Allegiance to the Imam". He was released from prison in 1999 through a royal pardon. Later, he would get arrested several times for organizing for the al-Salafiya al-Jihadiyeh (the Jihadist Salafist). He authored many books on the teachings of the Jihadist Salafist movement. For more details, see the document on Abu Mohammad al-Makdissi on the website "Manbar al-Tawhid wal Jihad" at www.tawhed. ws.

84. Abu Qatada al-Falastini (the Palestinian) was born in 1961; his real name is Omar Mahmoud Othman Abu Omar. He is a Jordanian of Palestinian origin from the village of Deir al-Sheikh outside Jerusalem. He studied Sharia at the University of Jordan. Originally, he belonged to Jamaa'ah at-Tabligh but later switched to the Salafiya al-Taqlidiyeh (Traditional Salafist movement). In fact, he helped found the movement at the end of the 1980s. In 1993, he left for Pakistan and Afghanistan where his affiliation and belonging to the Traditional Salafist movement crystallized. He moved to Great Britain in 1994, where he began to publish his newsletter "al-Ansar" which supported armed Islamic groups in Algeria. He later published the Traditional Salafist magazine "al-Minhaj." He was considered the spiritual leader of al-Qaeda in Europe and North Africa. He was arrested in Great Britain but was recently

released. Among his published works, "Jihad and Diligence" is considered to be one of the most important books on the rhetoric of the Salafist Jihadist philosophy.

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87. Abu al-A'laa al-Mawdoudi: "The Four Terms of the Holy Quran" ("*Al-Mustalahat Al-Arba'a fi Al-Qoran Al-Kareem"*), al-Dar al-Kuwaitiyeh, translated by Mohammad Kathem Sabiq, First Edition, 1969, pg. 8

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See also: Abu Abada al-Ansari: "The Concept of Authority in the Martyr Abdullah Azzam's Thought" ("*Mafhoum al-Hakimeya fi Fikr al-Shahid Abdullah Azzam*"), Martyr Abdullah Azzam Media Center, Peshawar, Pakistan

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