REFORMATIVE IJTIHAD AND MUSLIMS LIVING IN NON-MUSLIM SOCIETIES: A TRADITIONAL MODEL IN A CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

Intellectual and scholarly endeavor has been the hallmark of Islamic civilization since its inception as the final religion revealed to the unlettered Prophet in the desert of 7th century Arabia. Islam is grounded in the perfect union of knowledge and action that obligates its followers to adhere not only to the letter of the law, but act in accordance with its spirit as well. Principled on the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslim scholars have driven the advancement of many different categories of science, medicine, mathematics, and the arts. The struggle to explore new discoveries of the natural world, and seek loftier levels of spiritual comprehension in the Divine has always been a pillar in the Islamic ethos. The Qur'an states that man was created for the sole purpose to worship the Creator. Ibn Abbas, the premier interpreter of the Qur'an, explained that worship here means to have profound spiritual knowledge and connectedness of and to the Divine. For man, to reach superior levels of worldly knowledge and heightened stations of spirituality is the peak of human endeavor.

The process of ijtihad, or legal reasoning, is the fulcrum of Islamic thought and philosophy, and has several different meanings, applications, and expressions. As an inter-disciplinary application, ijtihad allows the flexibility and intellectual expressive capacity for scholars to carry out the aims and objectives of the Sharia which, above all else, aims at connecting the intuitive spiritual nature of man to the Divine. It enables the scholar to exert his intellect into the type of decision making that will be aligned with the aims and objectives of the Sacred Law. Divine guidance and prophetic tutelage become the foundation for upward mobile progress and spiritual wayfaring.

Reformative Ijtihad, in summation, is the process of proper decision making, based on the primary sources of the Islamic tradition, and taking the proper action to change a particular situation or circumstance. It is the necessary process by which Muslims are able to rectify, or to renew, aspects of the environment and surroundings where they live. The renewal of thought structures and flow of ideas culminate in the establishment of new paradigms and outlooks for the present and future of Islamic society.

Muslims living in non-Muslim societies are facing situations where constant change and reform are necessary. The American Muslim community, especially, faces extraordinarily unique challenges. The reason why I highlight America, rather than other situations where the

oppression of Muslims is much more severe such as Myanmar, China, Palestine, or the Phillipines is because of the political/cultural influence and domination of America as a whole. The fact is that the America, good or bad, enjoys such a heavy influence on the sway of cultural views, political movements, and social trends throughout the world, which is incomparable to any other nation. This puts Muslims living in America in a vital and strategic position, given their ability to impact the political and cultural perception of Islam in the eyes of, not only the American government, but the American people at large. More specifically, this places tremendous pressure and responsibility on the American Muslim community to uphold its integrity as a collective religious group, while seeking a proper co-existence in the most powerful and influential nation on the planet.

Muslims living in the aforementioned countries where there is political strife and religious persecution, have a myriad of historical examples from which to draw inspiration and mimic historical precedence from the lives of Islam's great reformers in order to change their own condition. Implementing such social change and spiritual tajdid(renewal) have been championed by great reformers in Islamic history who have preserved and protected the religion from being dismantled. Muslims living in non-Muslim societies who exercise reformative ijtihad methodologies can directly pattern themselves after such historical illuminaries while, at the same time, initiating their own cultural imperatives and standards.

Many modern Muslim intellectuals and thinkers whom have reservations of taqlid, or what is characterized as blind following, most likely having the notion that the new modern era calls for new methodologies and ideas divorced from the traditional methodology. What this research presents is a methodology for the contemporary Muslim community to use that will enable it to engage the Islamic tradition in a way that will produce quantifiable benefit for the present time, and give value to the need of the Islamic tradition in the present context. This methodology of examining the way in which Muslim reformers utilized the traditional sources, in order to bring a new reality into existence for their own specific circumstances and place in history, will illuminate the perspective of contemporary leadership within the Muslim community.

What is the objective of Reformative Ijtihad? As should be understood, reformative ijtihad is a means to an end. It is an applied process that seeks to bring into existence a desired result which, as in all sacred sciences, is the attainment of a heightened spiritual station in order to have an intuitive knowledge and connection to the Divine. There is no other objective in mind for the mujtahid, legal or reformative. To bring into existence the type of reform that culminates in profound spiritual knowledge of the tawhidic vision of the Creator is the underlying cause in all reformist activity, which can, at times(not always), lead to physical fighting on the battlefield. This can be seen in all the tajdid movements in the Muslim world that have taken place throughout the ages. Jihad was never the goal, only a means. *Therefore, the reformative mujtahid must not only have a profound knowledge and understanding of the Sacred Law, he*

must also understand the current socio/political atmosphere and cultural context of application, as well as be a spiritual master capable of guiding and teaching the path of spiritual wayfaring which culminates in spiritual tajdid(renewal).

How is the Tawhidic vision or model understood within the framework of the process of reformative ijtihad? Tawhid, or the oneness of the Creator, is a basic concept in Islam that does not necessarily enjoy an encompassing common understanding. The reformative mujtahid, as mentioned, seeks the type of reform that produces a tawhidic vision as the blueprint for spiritual tajdid. This is the core concept that must be established at the outset of the reformative ijtihadi process. This will require much more clarification, which we will subsequently explore.

In the following pages, the first section will investigate the process of reformative ijtihad and its importance for modern day Muslims who find themselves as minorities in non-Muslim societies. This section will clarify exactly what the requirements are for one to be qualified to make ijtihad, at least in the reformative sense. We will identify examples of reformative ijtihad briefly in order to lay the foundation for the second section, in which we examine, in greater detail, historical models of reformative ijtihad and the role that it played in the tajdid process.

The third section will provide brief inquiry into reformative spiritual ijtihad, along with the process of spiritual tajdid and tawhid as a living tradition. We will present two scholars of the spiritual path and display their unique and different methodologies of reformative ijtihad that, to this day, are serving as catalyst for spiritual tajdid. These two scholars, Shaykh Muhammad al-Ansari al Huwari and Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud ash-Shanquitti, will be briefly examined as models for grassroots communities, particularly the African-American Muslim community.

The overall objective of this research is to illuminate a path toward real reform and renewal for the modern day Muslim community. At the same time, we want to quell the impulse of many modern thinkers who want to divorce the Muslim community from traditional thought and practice. The significance of adhering to traditional Islamic methodology is indispensable. Traditional learning and methodology are seen as something that is old, archaic, or outdated without any relevance to contemporary discourse. This is a grave mistake for those Muslim communities that wish to move forward toward reform and renewal. This research is critical in that it provides an inroad into a methodology for the contemporary Muslim community to move forward by adhering to the Islamic traditional methodology of reform. It also hopes to serve as a catalyst for more profound dialogue and research that will aid and support the Muslim community, as well as invigorate and revamp Islamic Studies programs toward proper analyses and assessments of the process of reform and renewal in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

I.

<u>REFORMATIVE IJTIHAD</u>

Ijtihad is a term coined from the legal usage of linguistic tools used to express an intellectual action on the part of the scholar, the mujtahid. Traditionally, in its legal sense, it is the intellectual exertion in seeking to know something by way of the legal rulings of the Shariah. Another definition could be the intellectual effort of the jurist to attain an opinion on a particular issue through a legal ruling.[1] It is usually translated as legal reasoning, and it comes in various forms. Qualifications for one to be able to implement ijtihad, or to be a mujtahid, require high levels of Islamic learning with a firm understanding of the Sacred Law. Reform, or إصلاح(islah), linguistically means نقيض الفساد, or to remove/negate corruption.[2] It is, essentially, the opposite of corruption, or فساد.

Reformative Ijtihad, الاجتهاد الاستصلاحي, is to implore the methodology of ijtihad in order to connect toward a divine injunction from the revealed text by applying the general maxims or precepts and their extraction from the Book and the Sunna with the purpose to bring about benefit and ward off corruption and evil[3]. It requires that the one who implements this type of decision making, the reformative mujtahid, be learned in the Islamic Sciences having a firmly grounded understanding of current events (fiqh al waaqi'a), and how to ascertain the effective causes(tahqiq al-manaat). The same principle for reformative ijtihad mimics the process of the jurist or the mufti. Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah says that a proper legal ruling cannot be given unless two types of understanding are fulfilled. He says:

أحدهما: فهم الواقع و الفقه فيه, و استنباط علم حقيقة ما وقع بالقرائن و الأمارات و العلامات حتى يحيط به علما.

"First of the two: Understanding current events and the legal rulings that pertain to them, and extracting knowledge of the reality of what takes place by its social reality/circumstance, signs, and effective causes until one has comprehensive knowledge of it."

والنوع الثاني: فهم الواجب في الواقع, و هو فهم حكم الله الذي حكم به في كتابه أو على لسان رسوله في هذا الواقع. ثم يطبق أحدهما على الآخر: فمن بذل جهده, و استفرغ وسعه في ذلك لم يعدم أجرين أو أجرا.

"The second type: Understanding what is obligatory to do in a particular social reality or circumstance. This means understanding the legal ruling of Allah which He legislates in His Book or on the tongue of His Messenger about that particular social reality/circumstance. Then one is applied over the other; whomsoever does his utmost(in that matter) that is his

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[1] Sano, Dr. Moustapha, <u>Concordance of Jurisprudence Fundamentals Terminology</u> (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2000) pg.27

[2] Ibn Mandhur, <u>Lisaan Al-Arab</u>, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Turath al-Arabi, 1999) vol. 5 pg. 214

[3] Sano. Dr. Moustapha, Concordance of Jurisprudence Fundamentals Terminology (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2000) pg. 29

struggle, and his seeking to make every effort to the extent of his ability does not negate his reward(either of them).[4]

Ascertaining the effective causes, or (tahqiq al-manaat), in summation is *to understand the context of a particular social reality or circumstance.* It can be defined as:

الاجتهاد في تحقق وجود الوصف في الفرع الذي يراد إلحاقه بالأصل, و ذللك بعد أن يتفق على أنّ هذا الوصف علّة للأصل بنصٍّ, أو إجماع, أو استنباط. و سمّي تحقيق مناط, لأنّه بعد العلم بالوصف المناسب أن يكون مناطا للحكم, بقي البحث في مدى وجود ذات الوصف, في الفرع المراد إلحاقه بالأصل.

> *"The ijtihad in determining what the effective cause is by using analogical deduction as it relates it to the original case. That is after the agreement that indeed this is the connecting reason to the original case through textual evidence, consensus, or extraction. It is termed tahqiq al-manaat because it succeeds knowledge of the necessary effective cause which is related to the legal ruling, leaving behind only inquiry in the existing expansion of the essence of the effective cause, and the deduction of its attachment to the original case.[5]*

Of the initial requirements for any mujtahid, whether in the legal or reformative sense, is to have a profound understanding of both fiqh al-waaq'ia and tahqiq al-manaat prior to any action on their part. This is critical in our analysis of the tajdid movements, which we will examine in the following pages. By using these foundational principles, we are adhering to the Islamic traditional methodology of the proper thought process and action according to the Sacred Law. It should be understood that reformative ijtihad *precedes* tajdid. In other words, reformative ijtihad is the initial process of any reform or tajdid movement. Many academic scholars who chronicle the detailed events of tajdid movements, fail to highlight or identify the ijtihad process of reform that sets the foundation and platform for tajdid, or renewal, to be fully realized. Such academic scholars are too enamored by the jihads(which they termed as holy wars), or perhaps, they are not learned enough in the Sacred Law to understand the relationship between it and the movements themselves.

The reformist tradition in Islam is predicated on knowledge and a high intellectual standard that is capable of moving Muslim communities forward, and establishing concrete and coherent results. This can be seen with the establishment of caliphate in the Sokoto movement of Uthman Dan Fodio, the Tijani reform movement of Al Hajj Umar al –Futi, and the establishments of the cities of Touba and Koalack by Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba and Ibrahim Niasse, respectively. These are cited as examples for three distinct reasons: *First*, they exemplify the true meaning of reform by establishing scholarship and education within the communities, and the creation of paradigm shifts within their respective times, which are two

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[4] Bin Bayyah, Abdullah, تنبيه المراجع على تأصيل فقه الواقع, (Abu Dhabi, UAE: Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, 2014) pg. 18-19

[5] Sano, Dr. Moustapha, <u>Concordance of Jurisprudence Fudamentals Terminology</u> (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2000) pg. 122

critical elements of concrete reform. All four individuals were highly effective in "changing the game", so to speak, and transform their respective communities into new realities that propelled them toward great success. They each were scholars in their own right, who produced their own genre of literature that served, and still serves, as stimuli for cultivating the minds of their followers.

Secondly, they each implemented diverse, and yet effective methodologies within their respective movements, which Muslims living in non-Muslim societies can benefit from. They each utilized the principles of fiqh al-waaqi' and tahqiq al-manaat, as previously discussed. This is significant for Muslims living in Non-Muslim societies, particularly for African-Americans who experience long term challenges that may be unique from other groups, since, for different reasons, they are the most important minority Muslim group in the America.[6]

Thirdly, each of these movements brought into existence a spiritual tajdid(renewal) in which culminated in the realization of the tawhidic vision and model. These movements were based on traditional books that codified the creed of the mainstream thread of the larger Muslim community,[7] and all adhered to a particular methodology in a Sufi brotherhood.[8] Many spiritual masters of the Islamic tradition have derived their own particular methodologies for spiritual wayfaring. The Islamic tradition is full of illuminating personalities that have made their own mark in annuls of the historical record of Islamic spiritual reform. What I want to highlight is the fact that all of the great spiritual reformers were scholars of the Sacred Law. In fact, their knowledge of the Sacred Law preceded their own paths of spiritual wayfaring. This is an indication of the type of educational reform that is needed in the Muslim communities across the globe, not just in non-Muslim societies.

It would be remiss if the role of the Sufi brotherhoods were not recognized as galvanizing forces that aided in the realization of the objectives of each reform movement. Sufi brotherhoods often built and extended cultural bridges that brought various tribes or clans together as one collective. This was an important feature in the West African model of spiritual reform. These same bridges can be built to establish cultural imperatives and connections for many Muslim communities, particularly of the African Diaspora.

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[6] The position of the African-American Muslim community is uniquely important because they make up the indigenous Muslim group in the West, which gives them a long historical record of experience with the dominant white American society. This allows them to be more of a force against unwanted social or even political norms outside the Islamic narrative, which can prove to be extremely important as cultural and societal changes take root on the American scene. Given America's dominance and influence in politics and culture over much of the Muslim world today, African-American Muslims play a key role in the navigation of the trajectory of plight of Muslims in general, not only in America but other parts of the world as well. The history of Islam within the African American Muslim community and the struggle for Civil rights allows other Muslim ethnic groups in America to enjoy many of the freedoms and respect they receive from the dominant society.

[7] Each of these reform movements and their followers were Ash'ari in creed, which continues to this day.

[8] Ahmadu Bamba was the founder of the Mourid brotherhood, Uthman Dan Fodio was of the Qadiriyya, while Umar al-Futi and Ibrahim Niasse were of the Tijaniyya, respectively.

II.

HISTORICAL MODELS OF REFORMATIVE IJTIHAD

We now set our attention toward the aforementioned models of what reformative ijtihad looks like on the ground, particularly from the West African tradition. We previously identified three core elements necessary for reform, namely, which are: educational reform along with a paradigm shift of ideas, adapting to the current events and functioning within the context, and spiritual tajdid and the culmination of the tawhidic vision/model as a living reality. The West African tradition is preferred here as displaying the best example of reformative ijtihad and tajdid because of the diversity in methodology and application within its various movements. This also highlights the richness of the intellectual and scholarly tradition of West African Muslims, and their engagement of the Islamic tradition. I want to briefly examine four models whose reform movements exemplify the diversity of reformative ijtihadi thought and structure.

The Shehu Usman Dan Fodio(1754-1817 C.E.)

The Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and his tajdid movement in Sokoto was probably the most prolific and influential of all the movements in West Africa. He set the tone and paved the way for other reformers who followed his example. His application of reformative ijtihad, and his engagement of the Islamic tradition, was astounding. Hausaland was a land with a strong Islamic heritage, however, it was plunged into an era where corruption un-Islamic practices began to be prevalent. Having been trained in the Islamic Sciences, and gained a reputation as one the most learned scholars in the land, Usman Dan Fodio set out to bring about tajdid(renewal) to Hausaland. Our concern here is his ijtihadi methodology and thought structure for reform. As Ibraheem Sulaiman tells us:

"The Shehu was well aware that he had to mould men and women who would subscribe to his ideas and share his aspirations to bring about an umma dedicated to Islam in order to transform society. As he knew he could not rely on other scholars to achieve his purposes, he established his own "school", trained his own students and created his own community of scholars, teachers, and saints. It was through these students, the Talaba,that he spread his message; it was from these students that he formed the inner core of the movement; and it is they who spearheaded the prosecution of the jihad and carried it to a successful end."[9]

Educational reform in Hausaland was the initial step in a long process of reform that culminated in victory. Sulaiman goes on to tell us that "the Shehu's methods of raising the generation that brought about the transformation of central Sudan encompasses the three areas: the intellectual, the spiritual, and the profound training in tasawwuf." This paradigm shift in education, action, and behavior was the foundation of his tajdid movement. This process of

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[9] Sulaiman, Ibraheem, <u>A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio</u> (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1986) pg. 19

reformative ijtihad in his methodology to rid his society of ignorance, and the return to righteous action was the key of success for the movement.

The Shehu authored hundreds of books dealing with the current events of the society, dealt with the core issues of the day, and extended advice and guidance for the people. With the help of his brother, Abdullahi Dan Fodio, and his son, Muhammad Bello, the Sokoto movement was a great success. The Shehu Usman Dan Fodio wrote his magnum opus, Ihya as-Sunna wal Ikhmad al-Bida'a(The Revival of the Sunna and Extinguishing of Innovations), in which he detailed the ways of the Prophet Muhammad and the innovations(brought on by unlearned people) in the categories of creed, jurisprudence, and spirituality. He taught his brother, Abdullahi, who authored many books of his own including a major exegetical work of the Quran entitled Diya at-Ta'wil, and then summarized it for people of the Sudan with another enigmatic tafsir entitled Kifayatu Du'afa' as-Sudan fi Bayan Tafsir al-Quran. This is significant in that it is probably the only exegetical work of the Quran authored solely for Black Africans.

One of the most significant elements of the reformative ijtihadi thought of the Shehu was his methodology and purpose of establishing the need for hijra, or emigration. His strict adherence to the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, which cannot be ignored, gave him the impetus to sanction the principle of migrating away from the lands of unbelief. He says in his treatise "Masail Muhimma":

"I say, and success is from Allah, that hijra from the land of unbelief or innovation or rebellion against Allah is obligatory by ijma. And there is no need for further explanation after the exposition given by Allah Himself. Says Allah, Most High: 'Behold, those whom the angels gather in death while they are still wronging themselves, (the angels) will ask, "What was wrong with you?" They will answer "We were too weak in earth." The angels will say, "Was, then, Allah's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil?" For such then, the goal is hell—and how evil a journey's end! But excepted shall be the truly helpless—be they or women or children."[10]

Muslims living on non-Muslim societies would benefit from the example of the way the Shehu legislated his situation in Hausaland, and the principles on which he sanctioned the principle of hijra. His work entitled "Bayan Wujub al-Hijra alal Ibaad," is arguably the most prolific authored text on the subject of jihad and emigration in Islamic literature. In this text, the Shehu declares that it is an obligation to emigrate from the lands where disbelief predominates and Islam is rarely found. He notes that the preservation of religion is the most important of the five objectives of the Shariah.[11] Because Islam would be in some danger of being changed or abrogated altogether, he considered hijra a definite obligation. There has been much debate

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[10] Sulaiman, Ibraheem, A Revolution in History: The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1986) pg. 110
[11] The other four being preservation of the soul, the intellect, lineage, and wealth.

about the relevancy of this fatwa for Muslims in non-Muslim societies. Certainly, Muslims living in places such as Miyanmar, China, Central African Republic, or the Philippines where persecution is much more severe, would be remised not to take this legislation into consideration. The Shehu's opinion of the obligation of Hijra, or emigration, was a big component of his reformative ijtihad. He based much of his ideas on the hadith of Prophet Muhammad narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari that says:

مادام في الدنيا دار الكفر فالهجرة منها واجبة, ...و الحكم يدور مع علته.

> *"So long as a land of unbelief exists in the world, emigration from it is obligatory; for the law applies wherever the relevant circumstances exist."*

The Shehu goes on to illustrate his point saying:

و يدل على ذلك قوله عليه الصلاة و السلام: لا تنقطع الهجرة حتى تنقطع التوبة ولا تنقطع التوبة حتى تطلع الشمس من المغرب, رواه أبو داود عن معاوية. وفي ابن عبد السلام: الهجرة تجب في آخر الزمان كما تجب في أول الاسلام. انتهى.

فان قلت هل يصح اسلام من أسلم في نلد و لم يهاجر؟ قلت: جوابه كما قال النفراوى في الفواكه الدواني شرح الرسالة: لم يبين المصنف حكم من أسلم من الحربيين, هل يجوز لهم البقاء في دار الحرب أو يهاجرون منها إلى بلاد الاسلام؟ وبيّنه غيره بقوله: و لو أسلم قوم كفار فان كانوا حيث تنالهم أحكام الكفار وجب عليهم الارتحال منهم, فان لم يرتحلوا يكونون عاصين لله و رسوله و اسلامهم صحيح. انتهى.

> *"That is further proved by the Prophet's saying, 'Emigration will not cease until repentance ceases; and repentance will not cease until the sun rises in the west.' This is related by Abu Dawud on the authority of Mu'awiya. And according to Ibn Abd al-Salaam: 'Emigration will be obligatory at the end of time just as it was obligatory at the beginning of Islam.'*

> *If you were to ask if the profession of Islam of somebody who embraced it in the abode of unbelief but did not emigrate was valid, I would say that the answer is as given by al-Nafrawi in his Fawakih: 'The author [Ibn Abi Zayd] did not make clear the law concerning dwellers in the abode of war becoming Muslims; whether they are allowed to remain in the abode of war or whether they should emigrate to the land of Islam. But it has been made clear by someone else who said: "If unbelievers become Muslims they have to emigrate, they will be disobedient to Allah and His Messenger, although their Islam will still be valid."'*[12]

The Sokoto scholars were all dedicated followers of the Qadiri sufi brotherhood, in which groomed the spiritual training of its adherents to bring about righteousness and social order within Hausaland, which guided its adherents toward the tawhidic vision and model. This allegiance to the Qadiri tariqa still stands today.

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[12] Dan Fodio, Usman, <u>Bayan Wujub al-Hijra ala'l-Ibad</u> (Khartoum: Oxford University Press) pg. 54

Al Hajj Umar Tal(1794-1864 C.E.)

Al Hajj Umar Tal al-Futi came along after the Shehu, but was most definitely of the same class of reformers that made significant inroads in the development of the Islamic reformative tradition. Umar al-Futi was inspired by Usman Dan Fodio and adopted many ideas from him. But the impetus that drove Al Hajj Umar, as he was known, eventually became grounded in his push to establish the Tijani Sufi brotherhood in West Africa. After years of academic study, Al Hajj Umar became a great scholar of the Sacred Law. Soon after receiving the title of Caliph, or representative, of Ahmad Tijani in West Africa, Al Hajj Umar sought out to raise a community of students of his own. His tarbiyya involved moral and intellectual training that espoused the adherence to the practice and method of the tariqa. Al Hajj brought about extensive and fundamental changes to the Muslim educational system. He provided the necessary intellectual nourishment that created a paradigm shift toward moral responsibility, fundamental learning of the Islamic sciences, and strict adherence to the Tijani tariqa.[13]

The ideas and philosophy of Al Hajj Umar can be found in his magnum opus entitled, "Rimah Hizb al-Rahim ala Nuhur Hizb al-Rajim", which to this day is the most widely read book in West Africa. He authored several other books, however, none enjoy the status of the Rimah as the second most important text among the Tijaniyya, and whose defence of the Sufi brotherhood is second to none. The reformative ijtihad of Al Hajj Umar is very similar to that of Usman Dan Fodio, however, the ijtihad of Al Hajj Umar was more influenced by his spiritual status as the Caliph of the tariqa in West Africa. The result of his reform movement was a great success. In West Africa today, the Tijaniyya is the largest of all Sufi brotherhoods, in large part because of Al Umar al- Futi.

The conflict with Al Hajj Umar, like his predecessor, was initially with his own people, and then a campaign against French occupation and colonialism. What we want to examine here is the process that Al Hajj Umar used to guide his followers. He exhorted his followers to adhere closely to the spiritual leadership of Ahmad Tijani, the founder of the brotherhood. It was his proselytizing of the core beliefs of the Tijaniyya that Umar was able to galvanize his people and gain such momentum against his enemies. This is significant for Muslims living in non-Muslim societies today as they look for a platform of which to "move" and "inspire" the people at the grassroots levels. The methodology of a Sufi brotherhood, as mentioned and can be seen in Al Hajj Umar's example, can prove to be an excellent galvanizing force in a movement seeking to bring about reform.

All of Al Hajj Umar's teachings were based on the Book and the Sunna, and extended to the spiritual saints, or awliya, that were chronicled throughout the history of Islam. His books are replete with quotes and sections of books from some of the great spiritual masters of Islam. This enamored the people as Ibrahim Sulaiman says:

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[13] Sulaiman, Ibraheem, The Islamic State and the Challenge of History (London: Mansell Publishers, 1987) pg. 28

"...Muhammad Bello (the son of Usman Dan Fodio) extolled the qualities of Hajj Umar, saying, 'He appeared to us on the horizon of guidance—it is most surprising that dawn comes from the West. But in him was found our lost treasure. He has completely won our hearts and minds."[14]

We see from these two examples of the reformative ijtihad process that the most crucial element is that of education. Creating that paradigm shift in the minds and thought structure of people is an essential concept that Muslims in non-Muslim societies must understand. Without proper Islamic education, any move toward reform cannot be achieved.

Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke(1850-1926 C.E.) and Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse(1900-1975 C.E.)

Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse was still a young man at the time of the passing of Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba. However, they both had similar methodologies that produced very similar outcomes. First, both of them were inheritors of a long line of reform and traditional learning in West Africa. Being scholars in their own right, these illustrious shaykhs were able to adopt the reformative ijtihad methodology and make their respective marks on the reformist tradition Islam. Secondly, and what we want to highlight here, they both established cities that function as a "headquarters" for their many followers.

Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba was able to solidify Touba, in Senegal, as the city of his own followers, the Mouridiyya. As founder of the Mouride tariqa, Ahmadu Bamba was able to sustain the onslaught of French colonialism and occupation through an astounding methodology of resistance. He exhorted his followers not to physically take up arms against the French, but rather inwardly reject their cultural, intellectual, and ethical values. His political thought in this regard enabled his followers to survive what would have been a lopsided war, and his reformative ijtihad enabled them to work towards the establishment of Touba as their holy city.

Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse was known as the Fayda, or the Flood, to his followers of the Tijani tariqa, meaning that he was the opener of the floodgates of blessings for all those who followed him. He represented a surge in the adherents of members of Tijaniyya in West Africa and enjoyed a status among the Muslim worldwide community unmatched in the contemporary era. He was able to establish Kaolack, also in Senegal, as his city also known as Medina Baye.

This is important for two main reasons. First, Touba and Medina Baye respectively, serve as political, social, and economic centers for their followers. This is significant because it enables them to function as sovereign entities that function independently and are protected from any outside influences. This was a major element of the reformative ijtihad methodology of these two scholars. What it does, in essence, is allows for sustainability and a nourishing

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[14] Sulaiman, Ibrahim,The Islamic State and the Challenge of History (London: Mansell Publishers, 1987) pg. 29

environment for their respective communities. Today thousands of followers flock to each of these cities every year for spiritual rejuvenation and communion with their beloved co-religionists.

Muslims living in non-Muslim societies would benefit tremendously by further examining the making of these communities, and what factors play a vital role in their nourishment and sustainability. This is crucial because Muslim communities are under enormous pressure to change their traditional values and perspectives. Reformative Ijtihad is needed along with strategic planning that will protect and sustain these communities for the future. The models of reform exampled by Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba and Shaykh Ibrahim Niasse both contain the required elements we identified earlier, but as stated, our focus was on their reformative ijtihad in securing protection for their respective communities by establishing cities of their own. Perhaps, it would be feasible for Muslim communities in non-Muslim societies to carve out sections of communities that could function much like Touba or Medina Baye. Hijra does not necessarily mean to move out of the country of ones origin. However, it could mean to move to part of the country where a sustainable and viable Muslim community can be developed in order to preserve and protect the religion, and provide a nourishing Islamic environment for Muslim families. Sufi brotherhoods could be a definitive option for Muslims living as minorities as a means to galvanize the masses, and mend broken lines of social departure.

The spiritual tajdid movements in West Africa, along with its intellectual and cultural Islamic heritage, are distinguished models because of the patterns of development and political/social struggles that the region has endured throughout history. This diversity in experience provides a wealth of wisdom and guidance from which not only Muslims of the African diaspora can attach to, but Muslim communities worldwide would benefit from. The Muslim communities of the African Diaspora, especially, are beneficiaries of this heritage. The Sufi brotherhoods, the Maliki School of jurisprudence, and the surplus of scholarly Islamic literature in the various Islamic sciences provide identity and cultural markers for a community who lost these elements as a result of their recorded struggles during slavery in the Americas. The linking of these cultural and intellectual factors serve as tunnels by which members of the African Diaspora can "return" home and regain what was lost. The personalities we have examined represent reformative ijtihad in its various forms, and model the methodologies by which reform and renewal can become reality in the contemporary era.

III.

SPIRITUAL REFORMATIVE IJTIHAD

Spiritual Reformative Ijtihad is a type of deductive reasoning that follows the same process of using the Book and the Sunna as its foundation, however, the primary objective here is codification of a methodology that cultivates the rectification of the inward, and prepares the soul for the station of Ma'rifah(gnosis). This type of reformative ijtihad dictates that the spiritual

reformer systematize a path by which adherents to the faith are able to implement in order to purify the soul, thereby achieving ma'rifah and bringing one closer to the tawhidic vision. As a point of departure, spiritual reformative ijtihad is not based on currents events or context, as we have seen in our previous examples. Rather, Islamic spirituality is a constant that stands in any time or era.

Spiritual Reformative Ijtihad can come in two different methodologies. The first methodology is through the vehicle of a sufi tariqa, or brotherhood, as witnessed in our previous examples. This method is usually the best, if not the easiest, way to connect a people with a path that will lead to heightened spiritual stations. In many Muslim cultures, the tariqa is tradition that is passed on through generations. However, for Muslims who convert, or live in non-Muslim societies, sufi brotherhoods are oftentimes foreign and strange to the majority group. A spiritual reformer often introduces a group of people to a tariqa in hopes to spread the overall methodology and message of the brotherhood itself. A contemporary example of this would the late great Shaykh Hassan Cisse of Senegal. He came to America in 1988 and established the Tijani sufi brotherhood among many African-Americans. Shaykh Hassan Cisse established the Institute of African-American Islamic Studies with the headquarters in Senegal. His actions exemplified his thought in establishing those bridges, along with cultural imperatives and connections previously discussed. Many African-American families traveled to Senegal and enrolled their children to study the Qur'an and other subjects, a relationship that still stands today. This method of spiritual reform follows the injunctions given in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna of calling to worship toward the tawhid, or Oneness, of Allah.

The second method of spiritual reformative tajdid is without the vehicle of a sufi brotherhood. This methodology requires that the spiritual reformative mujtahid implement his independent methodology of spiritual wayfaring. This path, because it is independent, would be required to be detailed and a step by step method because no seeker seeking spiritual wayfaring is able to truly achieve ma'rifah on his/her own. Ma'rifah, is the end result of the spiritual tajdid process. It is, in essence, the last stage in achieving the objective of the tawhidic vision. Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq says:

"حقيقة المعرفة هي سريان العلم بجلال الحق أو جماله أو هما في كلية العبد حتى لا يبقى له من نفسه بقية فيشهد كل شيء منه و به و له فلا يبقى لوجود شيء نسبة عنده دونه. نقله ابن حمدون."

"The reality of ma'rifah is the diffusion of knowledge of the majesty of Allah or His beauty or both in its entirety until nothing remains to him from his own self. So he witnesses everything from Him (Allah) and by Him and to Him. Therefore, nothing in existence has any relation to him (the servant) without Him (Allah). Related by Ibn Hamdoun"[15]

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[15] Khadim, Shaykh Muhammad Hassan, نخبة المطلوب من شرح مطهرة القلوب (Casablanca, Morocco, 1996) pg. 282

Ibn Ata'Allah says:

"الكون كله ظلمة و إنما أناره ظهور الحق فيه. فمن رأى الكون و لم يشهده فيه أو عنده أو قبله أو بعده فقد أعوزه وجود الأنوار و حجبت عنه شموس المعارف بسححب الآثار"

"Created things in essence are darkness, only illuminated by the manifestation of Allah in them. So, whoever sees created things and sees Him not in them, or with them, or before them, or after them, is in need of light and the suns of divine knowledge are screened from him by the clouds of physical reality."[16]

Shaykh Abu Isma'il Abdullah al-Ansari al Huwari(1006-1089 C.E.)

There are two methodologies toward spiritual tajdid that exemplify the spiritual reformative ijtihadi process without the vehicle of a Sufi brotherhood that we will briefly illustrate. Abu Isma'il Abdullah al-Ansari al Huwari was a scholar from the Hanbali tradition that hailed from the land of Hewar (Afghanistan). He was a Hanbali scholar of the Sacred Sciences, and was known for his mastery of the science of Sufism. His most significant work, and the one that best exemplifies his spiritual reformative thought, is entitled "Manaazil as-Saa'ireen", or Stations of the Wayfarer. It is considered one of the masterpieces of the path of Islamic spiritual wayfaring, and certainly, deserves the attention of Muslims in the contemporary era.

Shaykh Al-Huwari systematized this text in a very diligent and deliberate fashion in order to allow the spiritual seeker to gradually ascend from the initial stage of spiritual awaking to the end stage of the tawhidic vision and model. In a beautiful, rhythmic, and sometimes abstruse style, Shaykh Huwari details each of the 100 stations of the path in three categories: the laymen, the elite, and the elite of the elite. Each of the 100 stations is essential in order to achieve ma'rifah, or gnosis, and the tawhidic vision.

The Manaazil emphasizes the witnessing of the Oneness of Allah as the primary focus in each station that is explored. He highlights the importance of losing one's self in the only reality that is Allah and nothing else. This is his method throughout the text. He begins with the first station, Spiritual Awakening, and concludes the spiritual path with the station of Tawhid, in which he says:

و التوحيد على ثلاثة وجوه:

الوجه الأول توحيد العمة الذي يصح بالشواهد

و الوجه الثاني توحيد الخاصة و هو الذي يثبت بالحقائق

و الوجه الثالث توحيد قائم بالقدم و هو يوحيد خاصة الخاصة.

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[16] Ibn Ata'Allah, <u>Hikam no. 14</u> (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub Ilmiyya, 2002)

"Tawhid is on three different types: The first type is the tawhid of the layman which is sound by his testimony (that there is no worthy of worship except Allah). The second type is the tawhid of the elite and it established by the (knowing) the realities. The third type is the tawhid that transcends time and it is the tawhid of the elite of the elite."

This is the focal point of Shaykh Huwari throughout the book. He establishes this concept of tawhid as the foremost objective of the spiritual wayfarer along every station of the spiritual path. This forms the basis of his spiritual reformative thought, and provides the seeker with a consistent theme in which to adhere throughout the path.

Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud Ibn Ahmad Fal ash-Shanquitti(1254-1323 AH)

The spiritual reformative ijtihad of Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud was similar in purpose and perspective, however, differed in methodology. He was a prolific author whose books spanned the genre of the Islamic Sciences. His Matharat al-Qulub, or Purification of the Hearts, represents his thought and methodology of spiritual reform. The Matharat al-Qulub is written poetry form called rajaz which facilitates memorization for the student.

Given the great surplus of Sufi literature that saturated the market, Muhammad Mauluud sought to develop a path that the spiritual wayfarer could easily travel toward tawhid. He compiled the Matharat al-Qulub from various major Sufi texts, such as Ghazali's famous "Ihya Ulum ad-Din." Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud extracted the core of what is required to know from the Ihya, along with the texts, and devised a text written in poetic form(rajaz) listing each disease of the heart, its etymology, and its cure; all in alphabetical order. Muhammad Mauluud takes the seeker along this path that illuminates the hearts toward ma'rifah. Shaykh Mauluud says:

معرفة الله قيام معنى * توحيد بالنفس حتّى تغنى

به فلا تجد أنسا إلاّ * به و لا تغفل عنه جلّا

فمن تحلّى قلبه بذكره * بعد التخلّي أوّلا عن غيره

"فهو حرّ عارف و لو أحبّ * شيئا سواه لاسترقّه المحب

"Divine knowledge of Allah stands on the meaning of Tawhid with the self until it is free of wanting anything except Him; so it doesn't find anyone except Him; and is not heedless about He who is the Majestic; So whomever raises his heart for His remembrance after first emptying it from anyone or anything else; For he is a free knower (of Allah); and if someone loves something equal to Allah, then he is a slave of what he loves"[17]

Muslims living in non-Muslim societies, especially those on oppressive situations, can benefit from the spiritual reform method of Shaykh Huwari and Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud in three distinct ways. First, this path will enable those in oppressive situations to be spiritually

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[17] Mauluud, Shaykh Muhammad, <u>Matharat al-Qulub</u> (Casablanca, Morocco, 1996)

free. Realizing the realities of tawhid, and attaining ma'rifah, will allow for an internal form of resistance, very much like we witnessed in the movement of Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba. This would facilitate ease in any outward struggle on the part of the oppressed. Secondly, this path dispels notions of any self-inferiority complexes and eradicates the effects of racism. When the tawhidic vision is realized, the spiritual education of the individual is reformed into witnessing reality as truth, which is crucial because the effects of racism and self-inferiority loom large over many oppressed Muslim communities. The spiritual paths exampled by Shaykh Huwari and Shaykh Muhammad Mauluud would rectify those ills. Thirdly, the path of spiritual tajdid would raise the rank and spiritual station of the Muslim community, thereby facilitating the objective and purpose toward the tawhidic vision and model.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The importance of the methodology of Reformative Ijtihad warrants that it become a centerpiece in the discussion of the way forward for Muslims living as minorities in non-Muslim societies. The examination of the intellectual and reformative tradition in Islam requires that the process of proper Islamic thought be understood in order to establish the tawhidic world view as a living tradition and practical reality; also that university programs in Islamic Studies rethink their approach in their analysis of the Islamic intellectual tradition and place in contemporary Muslim society. This would force teachers and students to re-examine the Islamic reformative tradition in light of the aims and objectives of the Shariah.

It is the encumbering task of Islamic leadership to marshal in a new era and reality for the contemporary Muslim community, which, given the political and social atmosphere created in the world by its global conflicts and various changing ideologies, is a daunting responsibility for anyone to bear. This burden of responsibility is a sufferable one if carried by the proper individuals as a collective group. At all cost, the religion must be protected, and the tradition preserved. Challenging the modern perspective of the Islamic tradition as outdated or irrelevant must be disputed. This study of Reformative Ijtihad quells the advancement of such erroneous thinking, and revitalizes the relevancy of the Islamic traditional model in the contemporary context.

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