

SALAFI PUBLICATIONS: A GRASSROOTS DA‘WAH

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In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Although the emergence of Salafism during the 1990s is mostly attributable to student activity in university Islamic societies across the UK,¹ it was not only upwardly mobile second-generation British South Asians who were attracted to this orthodox religious sect. The roots of Islamic *Da‘wah* activity by those who would later form Salafi Publications (SalafiPubs) can be traced as far back as the very early 1990s in the post-colonial and post-industrial city of Birmingham. The demography of its initial members indicates that orthodox Islam had a universal appeal for individuals from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, not just those from *Muslim-heritage* families, but also those from *non-Muslim heritage* families. No doubt there were myriad structural factors and personal reasons at play in its adherents’ decision to adopt the Salafi way. However, for most, it was Salafism’s overriding appeal as the unsullied truth, together with SalafiPubs’s new and dynamic approach as an overt and fearless group in defending its parameters, that made it such an attractive choice in the pluralistic ‘religious supermarket’ of a modern secular society.²

Of the earliest from a *non-Muslim heritage* background to adopt Salafiyyah were Abu Fudayl Abdur-Raqeeb, Abu Junaide Yusuf Bowers, and Abu Hakeem Bilal Davis, all young second-generation African-Caribbean (Jamaican) *Brummies* from Handsworth who converted to

¹ See author’s (2022) article, *The Emergence of Salafism in the UK* for a history of contemporary Salafism in the UK. Source: researchingsalafism.com.

² Rambo 1993:28.

Islam in 1991. Having spent their early teenage years in much the same way as most adolescents who ‘belonged’ to an otherwise disenfranchised community of post-colonial descendants, it was not until their late teens and early twenties that they took a different path and converted to Islam. No doubt, their African-Caribbean background and having been raised upon Christian ethics and morals was a significant factor which contributed to their appreciation of the pure monotheistic message of Islam and the Qur’an.³ Soon, these *non-Muslim heritage* converts would go on to strengthen the Salafi *Da’wah* in the city of Birmingham by calling others from backgrounds similar to their own to the prophetic and non-racist message of Islam.

Many of the early converts to Salafism recall how, for example, Abu Hakeem would stand on a milk crate outside Birmingham Central Library (and the Birmingham markets) weekly to call people to his newfound faith, and who by 1994 to 2004, went on to become a student at the Islamic University of Madinah (IUM) in the KSA. Shortly thereafter, the Salafi *Da’wah* scene in Birmingham, and around the UK, would also be greatly benefitted by *Muslim-heritage* Abu Idrees Muhammad Khan, an IUM graduate from Birmingham; by Abu Abdullāh Bilal Hussain—a student of Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Hādi Al-Wādi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), likewise from Birmingham; by Abu Yusuf Abdul-Ilāh Lahmāmi (of Moroccan descent)—a student of Shaykh ‘Ubayd Al-Jābiri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), Shaykh Muhammad Al-Bannah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), and Shaykh Rabee’ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) from London; by Hasan As-Somali who studied extensively under Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Hādi Al-Wādi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) originally from Cardiff; and likewise by

³ Abu Hakeem Bilal Davis Talks About his Conversion to Islam. (2005). Source: Salafitalk.net.

non-Muslim heritage Abu Abdur-Rahmān Uways Taweel (of Nigerian descent), also an IUM graduate from London.

In this early period SalafiPubs established a strong connection to the scholars of Saudi, Yemen and elsewhere, and particularly those from the Prophet's city of Madinah—a factor that would go on to play an important role in SalafiPubs's success as an agent of the global message of Salafism. However, crucial to the success of SalafiPubs as a grassroots revivalist *da'wah*, not just in Birmingham but around the UK, were the ongoing *da'wah* efforts of those on the ground—specifically *Muslim-heritage* Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid and Abu 'Iyād Amjad Rafiq (discussed further below). Headstrong in their mission to admonish and invite to the Salafi *Da'wah* those individuals who deemed themselves 'lost'—especially from amongst the youth—these *du'āt* travelled around the country often accompanied and aided by both *non-Muslim heritage* Abu Fudayl 'Abdur-Raqeeb Francis, who studied under Shaykh Muqbil ibn Hādi (رحمة الله), and Abu Junaide Yusuf Bowers, who studied at IUM.

During these circuits the *du'āt* aimed to offer regular *duroos* (lessons) and consistent guidance in the form of translated material and *fatāwa* (Islamic rulings/verdicts) of the Scholars, mainly courtesy of Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank in Birmingham, and Abu 'Iyād Amjad Rafiq in Stockton-on-Tees (North-east England). These efforts were further supplemented by Abu Hakeem during his visits home to the UK in the summer months by way of him imparting knowledge that he had learned as a student from some of the most respected scholars of orthodox Islam such as such Shaykh Rabe' Ibn Hādi al-Madkhali (رحمة الله), and Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jābiri (رحمة الله).

Conversely, of the earliest from a *Muslim heritage* background to adopt Salafiyyah in the early 1990s who would later go on to become a founder of SalafiPubs was Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid, also a 'Brummie' and a

second-generation British Asian of Pakistani-Kashmiri origin. Having accepted the basic principles of *Salafiyyah* (*Tawheed* and *Sunnah*) in 1988 during his first year at Bradford University, Abu Khadeejah started to practice his religion the year before he graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering from Bradford University in 1992. He swiftly grasped the importance of Shaykh Muhammad Nāsir Ad-Deen Al-Albanī's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) concept of *Tasfiyah wa Tarbiyah*—in other words, the revival of Islam through the 'Purification and Cultivation' of the Muslim Ummah—⁴ and thus, it was not long before Abu Khadeejah's own journey as a preacher onto the Salafi Da'wah scene began.

Hence, by 1995 whilst studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at the University of Manchester—an institute which also became a well-known destination for da'wah activity, Abu Khadeejah would invite (through speeches) the next generation of Muslims (local *Mancunians* and university students) away from 'heedlessness' to the establishment of *Tawheed* and *Sunnah* based upon a correct understanding and implementation of the Creed and Methodology as understood by the Pious Predecessors. Consequently, the most popular resource from Manchester University that many recall being in circulation among young people at the time were cassette recordings of lectures, mainly by Abu Khadeejah, Faisal Malik,

⁴ Shaykh Muhammad Nāsir Ad-Deen Al-Albanī's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) concept of *Tasfiyah wa Tarbiyah* was being propagated by some of the Jordanian students of knowledge such as 'Ali Hassan Al-Halabi and Saleem al-Hilālī who had benefitted from the Shaykh [Al-Albanī] and were visiting JIMAS in the UK around that time.

and Abu ‘Iyād, which carried the label *Qur’an and Sunnah Society Manchester University* from 1995-6.⁵

Abu Khadeejah recalls that by 1995 he and his companions Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank, Abu ‘Ubaydah Amar Basheer and Abdur-Razzāq As-San’āni (among others) were able to benefit from several shaykhs and scholars who had started visiting the UK. This included regular contact with Shaykh ‘Abdul Salaam Burjis Aali ‘Abdul-Kareem (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), a judge and scholar from Riyadh, who visited Birmingham on a few occasions. They also benefitted from others such as the Kuwaiti Shaykh, Hamad Al-‘Uthmān who made regular visits to Birmingham where he did his PhD up until the early 2000s. A student of Shaykh ‘Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), Hamad Al-‘Uthmān would relate the clarifications of Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Hādi and Shaykh Rabee’ Al-Madkhali when teaching them books of *‘aqeedah*, such as the *I’tiqād* of Abu Bakr Al-Isma’eeli—he also taught chapters from *Buloogh Al-Maraam*, *Riyādh As-Saliheen*, and delivered regular lessons on general issues.⁶

Apart from this, Abu Khadeejah (and his companions) were also in direct contact with some other Kuwaiti shaykhs such as Abu ‘Uthmān Muhammad Al-Anjari with whom he completed the study of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal’s *Usool As-Sunnah*. Later, he benefitted from the likes of Shaykh Ahmad As-Subay’i and others when he spent a year living and studying in Kuwait. Shaykh Falāh Isma’eel Al-Mundakar (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) was the most senior Kuwaiti scholar whose expertise in *fiqh* also contributed to

⁵ See author’s (2022) article: *The Emergence of Salafism in the UK* for a history of contemporary Salafism in the UK. Source: researchingsalafism.com.

⁶ *Where Did Abu Khadeejah Study?* By Abu Khadeejah. 2015. Source: soundcloud.com [and an interview with the author (myself), on Monday 20th February 2023].

the Salafi *Da'wah* in the UK around the same time.⁷ Maintaining contact with these (and other) scholars in a post-Gulf War context was invaluable, especially in clarification on the issue of the Iraqi invasion and the stationing of American and allied troops onto Saudi soil.

By the end of 1995 and into 1996, a *purification* of the Salafi *Da'wah* (that followed the increasing study of books of early Creed) in the UK caused its adherents to distance themselves from political activist groups and personalities calling to participation in democracy, parliamentary elections, revolutions and a new *Jihād* driven by ideas revolving around an innovated 'Fourth category of *Tawheed*' which the political activists (i.e., The *Surūri* and *Qutubi* branches of *Al-Ikhwān Al-Muslimeen* which had infiltrated some of the ranks of the Salafi youth) labelled *Al-Hākimiyyah*⁸ (i.e., that there should be an independent category of *Tawheed* that focuses on Judgement and rulership).

For the Salafi *Da'wah* in the UK, this included cutting links with JIMAS and other similar organisations—and consequently led to a large increase in *Da'wah* efforts.⁹ This was especially the case for Salafi *du'āt* in Birmingham such as Shaykh Abu Khadeejah and Shaykh Abu Talhah Dawood (رحمة الله) whose city had become a 'battleground' in the fight against the prevailing *Qutubist* corruption when Muhammad Surūr Zainul-‘Ābideen—who was from the foremost leaders of the modern-day politicised *Khawārij*—came to reside in Birmingham as an asylum seeker under the protection of the United Kingdom. Having used

⁷ Source: interview with the author (myself), on Monday 20th February 2023.

⁸ *The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Monotheism)-Part 7: It is not permitted to add to the categories of Tawheed*. 2018. Source: abukhadeejah.com/i-

⁹ *Ibid.*

Birmingham as a base for his organisation ‘*Dar Al-Arqam*’—which incidentally also served as the ideological inspiration for ‘*Al-Muntadah Al-Islāmi*’ in London [and his inflammatory revolutionary publication, *As-Sunnah*: a magazine heavily influenced by the ideas of extreme Muslim Brotherhood ideologues with clear Marxist-leaning] Muhammad Surūr made clear his disdain not only for the Salafi Scholars (such as Ibn Bāz, etc.) and the books of ‘*Aqeedah* of the Pious Predecessors, but also his belief that all the rulers of the Muslim lands were apostates, and that the Saudi government was a stooge of the West.¹⁰

In order to protect the Muslims in the UK and the West from the ideas of these extremist ideologues, Salafi *du’āt* continued to place a heavy emphasis on giving regular *da’wah* in places like Birmingham University, Aston University, and the University of Central England, along with other universities in the UK such as University of Central London, University East London, South Bank University, Bradford University, Manchester, Salford, UMIST, Sunderland, Teesside, and Liverpool etc., not to mention community halls such as Durning Hall in East London (Al-Athariyyah). In Birmingham specifically, the *du’āt* also gave regular lectures at Witton Road Mosque—a Green Lane Mosque (GLM) affiliate, the significance of which is to follow—and Norton Community Hall in Alum Rock. Although attendance at these events was low at first, ranging anywhere from 2–20 attendees, these numbers rose between 1996 and 1998 as others who shared the same zeal for learning about Islam joined the audience. Consequently, SalafiPubs went on to establish *da’wah* stalls on some of the busiest main roads in Birmingham such as Ladypool Road, Stratford Road, Alum Rock Road,

¹⁰ *Who is Zain Al-Aabideen? (Muhammad Surūr)*. 2003. Source: Salafitalk.net.

and Lozells Road, and had soon gathered a more substantial following, numbering around 70 or more.

Clearly, Salafism as a ‘new’ revivalist *jamā‘ah* had begun to provide a perfect juncture—a different type of *space* for the intersection of immigrants with ‘narratives of fluid, hybridized, and multiple identities’¹¹ from differing diasporic flows to generate public expressions of religious faith and activity. In doing so, the *postcolonial* and *postsecular* city of Birmingham served as an ideal site wherein a mix of Salafis from ethnic minority enclaves such as Sparkbrook, Small Heath, Alum Rock, Handsworth, Aston and Lozells were able to challenge and disrupt ‘colonial, modernist narratives based on static, stratified and essentialised hierarchies of value’.¹²

Da‘wah activity in Birmingham was in full swing by 1996 and as an emerging consciousness, Salafism was evidently proving to be more than just a matter of private practice and practical insignificance. Hence, before long, Salafism began the task of making space for itself in a modern urban setting that many 20th-century thinkers might have expected would be safely secularised.¹³ By this time, Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank had already joined forces with those who wanted to establish SalafiPubs. Both Shaykh Abu Khadeejah and Shaykh Abu Talhah (رحمتهما الله) took on the task to teach the growing community of Salafis classics such as Imām Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb’s *Kitāb At-Tawheed*, *Silsilatul-Ahādeeth As-Saheehah* of Shaykh Al-Albānī, *Sharhus-Sunnah* of Imām Al-Barbahāri, *Buloogh Al-Marām* of Al-Hāfidh Ibn Hajr as well as general topics of admonition. The religious knowledge imparted in these lessons was something nearly everyone listening found to be unique.

¹¹ Beaumont, 2011:34.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Beaumont 2011: xii-xiv; Rambo 1993:28-29.

Moreover, similar activities were beginning to take place in other parts of the country, with other students of knowledge also touring their local regions, including Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq in the north from his base in Stockton-on-Tees and Abu ‘Ubaidah ‘Amar Bashir in London, and gradually religious place-making and a national network of Salafi communities and organisations began to emerge in the UK.

An unrelenting pursuit to spread the truth and revive authentic Islam far and wide soon resulted in SalafiPubs’s *du’āt* becoming lecturers of renowned national and international stature—even Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank, who preferred not to travel beyond his locality of Birmingham. Whilst the repertoire of countries visited by the likes of Abu Khadeejah, Abu Hakeem, and Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq to date is extensive, it is worth noting that one of Abu Khadeejah’s early visits was to the United States in 1997 and then again in 2001. The bond that was forged between the UK *du’āt* and their American counterparts at the time such as Abu Uwais ‘Abdullāh Ahmad ‘Ali and Abul-Hasan Mālik al-Akhdar only served to strengthen the Salafi *Da’wah* in the West and globally. SalafiPubs’s *du’āt* also made several visits to Canada; the Caribbean: Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana in South America; Sri-Lanka; Sweden several times, as well as US Military bases in Germany upon the invitation from some of its personnel who had converted to Islam. In later years they would also make several visits to the Maldives, informal visits to Dubai, as well as other parts of Africa.

Although by 1997-98 SalafiPubs had published its first books, namely, the *Creed of Imam al Bukhāri*; *Mountains of Knowledge*; and *Usoolus-Sunnah of Imam Ahmad*, Salafiyyah in the UK was still in its infancy and its callers were more focused on giving *da’wah* and had not given much consideration to owning their own mosque or centre—especially since they already had access to Green Lane Mosque (GLM), Hartopp Road

Mosque and Witton Road Mosque for their activities. This did not change once SalafiPubs was formed and GLM continued to allow their premises to be used as a place for SalafiPubs's regular *da'wah* activities, including winter conferences (summer conferences were held in other hired venues). This arrangement did not, however, last long, which illustrates the troubled relationship Salafism has had with other organisations and religious groups in Birmingham with its seemingly 'uncompromising' approach.

Thus, by 1997, GLM—better known back then as *Markaz Jam'iat Ahl-e-Hadith*, an offshoot of a South Asian movement—decided that they no longer wanted to host speakers from SalafiPubs, as they were starting to view the growing crowds of zealous students attracted to Abu Talhah's and Abu Khadeejah's weekly lessons and Salafi conferences as detracting from GLM's own activities.¹⁴ Most of all though, GLM disliked SalafiPubs's exposition on, and refutation of deviated sects taking place on their turf. Shortly thereafter, a heated argument took place in the mosque between one of GLM's members and a Salafi attendee; this gave GLM the excuse they needed to bar the SalafiPubs affiliated *du'āt* and their students from using the mosque for classes indefinitely. SalafiPubs strongly suspected that the ousting had been pre-planned and was a message that GLM was not interested in making any future

¹⁴ 'I (author) recall one afternoon whilst staying in the home of my parents-in-law a knock on their front door and being handed a letter to pass on to my husband, Abu Khadeejah, who was not at home at the time. I later learned that it contained a message from the committee members of Green Lane that they were no longer prepared to facilitate activities from these Salafi *du'āt* in their mosque because of an argument that had taken place between some of their mosque members and a Salafi attendee at the mosque' (Source: author's fieldwork diary).

concessions or allowances for those on the *Manhaj* of Al-Albāni, Muqbil, Rabee', et. al.

SalafiPubs's *Manhaj* was proving to be incompatible with that of GLM—as latter's ideas appeared to be heading towards a more political, parliamentary, and revolutionary (Mawdudi-Ikhwāni-Surūri) outlook. More than anything, GLM's organisers did not like the fact that their methodologies were being challenged, and they began to label SalafiPubs as 'extremists' for their back-to-basics outlook on returning to orthodox Islam in all their affairs: belief, methodology, politics and worship.¹⁵ The treatment that SalafiPubs and their congregation

¹⁵ Ironically, some years on, GLM's own increasingly anti-Western polemics reviling Christians and Jews and purported to 'subvert democracy' by preparing for *jihad*, were revealed in a 2007 Channel 4 documentary titled *Undercover Mosque*¹⁵ for the series *Dispatches*, which resulted in GLM and those secretly filmed in this documentary as part of a Saudi-funded 'Salafi' mosque in Birmingham. Salafi Publications until this day challenges the narrative that Saudi Arabia should be blamed for the misdeeds, blunders, and mistakes of GLM.

It is worth noting that in reviewing this documentary in his book *Young British and Muslim* (2007), even though Lewis does not explicitly mention the mosque by name, his descriptive of 'Salafi' could easily mislead the reader to conclude that he was referring to *The Salafi Mosque* on Wright Street of SalafiPubs. Lewis may not be entirely to blame for this blunder, since in-fighting among GLM's group members resulted in the mosque calling itself 'Salafi' instead of 'Ahl-e-Hadith' for a very short period. These days, they are better known as Green Lane Mosque and Community Centre (GLMCC) and have adopted a more congenial public image following the damage caused to them by *Undercover Mosque*.

Lewis's (2007) study of the challenges that young British Muslims face growing up in British society is like several other works (Gove 2006; Heffelfinger 2011; Khan 2016; Leiken 2012; Lewis and Hamid 2018; 2016; Maher 2016; Wood 2018) that present the grossly erroneous view that Salafism is an 'isolationist' group that propagates a message synonymous with 'Wahhabism'

received at the hands of GLM was a bitter blow since they were left with nowhere to use as a base for *da'wah* activities. However, in retrospect, it gave them the impetus to find a space of their own, and nearly a year later, in 1998, Abu Khadeejah signed the contract to rent a small building on Muntz Street in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. A dilapidated building, this new space which needed much structural repair took several months to complete before it was ready for use. With limited funds available to complete the work, many of the Salafi community's members contributed to the project with tasks such as building, plastering, and plumbing etc. This newly renovated building would become the first SalafiPubs bookstore, also known as *Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah*.

Consequently, a registered charity bookstore and Islamic centre was established and a pre-school for children up to the age of seven started in the converted classrooms upstairs. Not only was the bookstore a space from which to sell Islamic literature and clothing that aligned with the Salafi methodology, it also took over from the PO Box 6294—Abu Khadeejah's living room in his home in Alum Rock, Birmingham—and served as the new organisational base where all the administration associated with publishing would take place. Moreover, the bookstore created much-needed jobs for members of the local Salafi community, for men (in the bookstore and offices), and women (in the school). The newly acquired building also served as the new venue for the continuation of weekly classes that had previously been held at GLM. This included Abu Khadeejah's weekly circle for 'sisters' which had begun at a house in Woodwells Road, Ward End, but which quickly

which they argue is 'projected world-wide through massive Saudi funding' and is also largely responsible for influencing the ideology of groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir (Lewis 2007:138,139).

reached full capacity due to the growing numbers of women that were converting to the Salafi *da'wah* and eager to learn their newly found creed.

Before long, the bookstore became a focal point for the growing needs of a flourishing Salafi community in Birmingham, SalafiPubs continued to thrive and in the year 2000, and they had to rent five more offices on Coventry Road in Small Heath. Crucially, in 2001, SalafiPubs found themselves at the forefront in clarifying the Salafi stance towards terrorism in a post-9/11 context and produced approximately 30-40 leaflets on numerous subjects which were distributed in their millions (literally) across the English-speaking world from New Zealand, Australia, India to Canada, the Caribbean, and the US.

The ever-expanding scope of SalafiPubs's *da'wah* activities meant that by 2001 they needed yet more space so both Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid and Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank signed a twenty-year lease for a building on Coventry Road in Small Heath. Soon afterwards, this large complex, which backs onto Wright Street, would comprise the *Salafi Bookstore*—possibly the biggest bookstore offering authentic Islamic material in the English language in the West; the *Maktabah* (offices) and the *Salafi Independent School* (now *Greenfields Primary School*) which are all still in operation today (2023); each operates independently through their own committees and volunteers.

Whilst the new Salafi Bookstore on Coventry Road opened almost immediately, the Salafi Mosque would take nearly nine months to be ready for use. By 2001, the building adjacent to and connecting to the Salafi Mosque on Wright Street was also being prepared to take over as the main primary school from that currently operating in nearby Muntz Street and was expanded to cater for children up to the age of eleven years. The growing infrastructure that came about as a response

to the needs of Birmingham’s Salafi community was also increasing—and was reflected in the long waiting lists for children to enter the new faith-based school as people started to migrate from various parts of the country to take benefit for themselves and their families.

It was also 2001 onwards that a big influx of post-‘9/11’ migrants began to arrive in Birmingham from mainland Europe. Referred to as a *petit hijra* by those whose main intention was to escape the debilitating effects of rising Islamophobia after the West’s ‘War on Terror’, the migration was based upon a fatwa from *Al-‘Allāmah* Ash-Shaikh, ‘Ubaid Al-Jābiri (رحمة الله) who affirmed the permissibility of *hijra* to Birmingham. In specific, he advised those migrants who were unable to migrate to Muslim countries to seek out and stay close to *Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah*.¹⁶

About a year later, in 2002, Abu ‘A’ishah Sa’eed Alam—an ex-JIMAS member and the older brother of SalafiPubs pioneer Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid Alam founded a secondary school, *Redstone Educational Academy* on Langley Road, which was initially located near the Salafi Bookstore and would cater for the educational needs of second-generation Salafi children in the community. Like Abu ‘Iyād (another SalafiPubs pioneer)¹⁷ and myself, Abu ‘A’ishah Sa’eed was also an Essex University alumnus. He left Essex in 1990 and went on to complete his PhD at the University of Manchester soon after, which as mentioned

¹⁶ This migration is sometimes compared to the migration of the Companions from Makkah (where they were oppressed) to Abyssinia, where they could freely practise Islam.

¹⁷ See author’s (2022) article: *The Emergence of Salafism in the UK* for a history of contemporary Salafism in the UK. Source: researchingsalafism.com.

earlier, would also go on to become a site well-known on the university *da'wah* scene.

Significantly, it was Abu 'A'ishah who gave *da'wah* to his family once he finished his studies and returned home to Birmingham. He not only convinced his first-generation British-Pakistani migrant parents to abandon their *Sufi* (esoteric/devotional) brand of traditional folk Islam, but also directed the rest of his family towards a purer and more authentic version of the religion. Abu 'A'ishah's effect upon his family is an example of how an enthusiastic first-generation believer broadened the cohort of Salafis beyond young second-generation British Muslims to his parents (since passed away). This also shows how religious perspectives can shift over the course of a person's life.

Another of Abu 'A'ishah's Sa'eed's brothers, Abu 'Ammār 'Abdul-Hameed Alam, a PGCE science graduate became headteacher of the Salafi Independent School on Wright Street. In later years, Abu 'Ammār 'Abdul-Hameed would become the headteacher of Redstone Academy, which had by then moved to larger premises on Moseley Road. But Abu 'A'ishah's newfound understanding of Islam had made its most notable mark on his brother Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid whom Abu 'A'ishah encouraged to veer away from his lifestyle typical of most young university British Asians in the late 1980s, towards one more focused on his religious and Islamic identity.¹⁸

Alongside his brothers Abu 'A'ishah and Abu Ammār 'Abdul Hameed—and other members of the community such as Abu Fudayl Abdur-Raqeeb Francis, Abu Khadeejah would go on to aid in the development of a suitable Islamic Studies curriculum for both Salafi schools whilst

¹⁸ See author's (2022) article: *The Emergence of Salafism in the UK* for a history of contemporary Salafism in the UK. Source: researchingsalafism.com.

also serving as an Islamic teacher at *Redstone Educational Academy* periodically for several years.¹⁹ Later Shaykh Abu Idrees Muhammad Khan (an IUM graduate) and *Ustādh* Abu Tasneem Mushaf (student of Shaykh Muqbil ibn Hādi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) would also teach at the school and join the efforts in spreading the *da'wah* across the English-speaking world.

In time, Abu Talhah, Abu Khadeejah, Abu 'Iyād and Abu Hakeem and others would become among some of the most influential members of the Salafi *Da'wah* scene in the UK and globally, joined by other students of knowledge (also from Britain) such as Abu Yusuf Abdul-Ilāh Lahmāmi, Abu Abdur Rahmān Uways Taweel, Abu Idrees Muhammad Khan, Hasan As-Somāli and Abu Abdullāh Bilal Hussain from about 2001 onwards. Together, these individuals created a transnational network by forging links between the Salafis in the West and some of the Major Salafi scholars in Arab countries, such as Shaykh Rabe' Ibn Hādi Al-Madkhali, Shaykh 'Ubayd Al-Jābiri, Shaykh Ahmad An-Najmi, Shaykh Zayd Al-Madkhali, Shaykh 'Abdullāh Al-Ghudayān, Shaykh Al-Luhaydān, etc., each famous for their firm stances against *Ahlul-Bid'ah*.

It is thus unsurprising that those who fought alongside Shaykh Al-'Allāmah Rabe' in defence of the Sunnah and Islam to repel false understandings, innovations and false principles would also become the object of enmity and hatred,²⁰ earning the pejorative label *Madākhilah*²¹ (largely an updated synonym for Saudi-Wahhabism and

¹⁹ Both schools are registered with DofE.

²⁰ *The Historical Development of the Methodologies of al-Ikhwaan al-Muslimeen and Their Effect Upon the Contemporary Salafee Da'wa h*, Salafi Publications, April 2003: page 4. Source: Spubs.com.

²¹ *Shaykh Sālih al-Fawzan on Using the Labels of "Jāmiyyah" and "Madākhilah"*, 4th March 2012., [and see: *An Adequate Response to the Scorn, Lies, Deceit of Daniel Haqiqatjou Against Ahlus-Sunnah-wal-Jamaah*. 2023. Source: abukhadeejah.com]

intended to make people believe that the Salafis blindly follow Shaykh Dr Rabee' Ibn Hādi Al-Madkhali). Consequently, SalafiPubs's affiliation with Shaykh Rabee' would go on to become, at best, a criterion by which a person's Salafiyyah would be validated, and at worst, negated due to their intense dislike of Shaykh Rabee'.²² This kind of reflexive activity was 'transformative of social relations' and changed the face of Salafism in the UK. It also serves as an excellent example of the 'intensification of worldwide relations ... through the interaction of the local and the global'.²³ Moreover, the emergence of Salafism as a revivalist religious group in the West that is based upon the relationship between the Salafi *du'āt* in the UK and the senior Salafi scholars in the Arab lands also strongly demonstrates how the global field involves the relationship between the international and local 'conducted through new trust-generating abstract systems'.²⁴

In reflecting upon the significance of SalafiPubs's role for in clarifying the Salafi *Da'wah* in the UK over the past two decades, a period which he also refers to as an 'era of the Scholars', Shaykh Abu Khadeejah notes:

In no way [were] Salafi Publications, or the brothers who subsequently set up Salafi Publications, alone in this battle against Qutubist domination—indeed there were others involved in this task of protecting the Salafi methodology. However, it must be said without doubt

²² Ibid: page 6., [also see: *From the-affairs used to establish the Salafiyyah of a person-Shaykh Ubaid people are tested by their stance towards Shaykh-Rabee'*. 2016. Source: abukhadeejah.com].

²³ Eade 1992:20.

²⁴ Ibid.

that in the West, Salafi Publications spearheaded the campaign against the Qutubist-Jihadist ideology.²⁵

Henceforth, what began in earnest during the late 1980s through to the mid-1990s as student activity within Islamic societies on various UK campuses and street *da'wah*, became an organisation of Muslims who gained the respect of the most senior Salafi scholars in the Muslim lands. These scholars gave their full-fledged endorsement to SalafiPubs as a legitimate and reliable hub for the Salafi *Da'wah* in the West. Indeed, over the years the noble Shaykh Rabee' Al-Madkhali has said regarding Abu Khadeejah and SalafiPubs:

By Allah, we have seen over the years many of the youth (in the West) who wanted to give *da'wah* and had with them zeal and great effort but sadly, we found that when they broke away from their brothers (in the Maktaba) they were misguided and began to misguide others. For we have never seen anybody who broke away from them except that this was what he was upon. So be with them and cooperate with your brothers. And that which is difficult for you seek their advice in and return your affairs back to them.²⁶

Despite their success, opposers of the Salafi *Da'wah* have, however, taken aim at some of SalafiPubs's pioneers such as Abu 'Iyād Amjad Rafiq and Abu Khadeejah 'Abdul-Wāhid with attempts to discredit them

²⁵ Abdul-Wāhid 2013.

²⁶ This statement is narrated by Abu 'Ukkāshah 'Abdul-Hakeem when he heard Shaykh Rabee' speak regarding Abu Khadeejah and SalafiPubs in Ramadan of 1438 (2016/2017 CE). 2023. Source: 'Abdul-Wahid., Abdullah., <https://t.me/abukhadeejahsp/>.

for failing to validate their *da'wah* credentials with formal certification from an Islamic institution such as IUM, or the likes. At times the onslaught has been insidious and emanated from graduates who have inflated the value of certificates or degrees in a bid to compete with the elders in the UK and raise themselves in their stead.²⁷ The elder *du'āt*, however, remain unphased by such assaults knowing that it is only ignorance, delusions of self-worth and arrogance that would cause such an individual to desire worldly status by way of the religion as well as the corruption of their intention which has prevented knowledge from being truly established in their heart and mind.²⁸

Consequently, SalafiPubs's defenders are keen to remind others not to fall into the trap of being amazed with oneself to the point that it leads them to deviation as was the case with the likes of Suhaib Hasan, Bilal Philips, Abu Usāmah, Abu Muslimah, Shadeded Muhammad, Muhammad Munir and others, all of whom gained their degrees at institutions and taught in their own centres but fell out of league with SalafiPubs and those affiliated with them:

The majority of local fitan [were] 'ignited by those who studied at institutions, raised the [S]cholars, transmitted their books and [who also] patronised the elder UK students ... [may Allah guide them] – [they were from] those whose certificates did not prevent them from deviation.²⁹

²⁷ *Those Who Inflate Certificates and Indirectly Seek to Patronize Bona fide Elder Students in the UK.* 2022. Source: Salaficentre.com

²⁸ *Doctorate or Degree in Sharee'ah Does Not Automatically Give You Understanding Superior to That of Other People Recognized as Students of Knowledge by Scholars.* 2022. Source: Salaficentre.com

²⁹ *Ibid.*

They reiterate the statements of the Major Salafi Scholars such as Shaykh Sālih Al-Fawzan and Shaykh Muhammad Sālih Al-Uthaymeen in this regard: that not everyone who holds a certificate for a degree or PhD possesses knowledge or becomes a scholar.³⁰ This is because like the Scholars they know full well that there are present amongst them good students of knowledge who do not possess degrees or doctorates, yet they are from the best of people since Allah has blessed them with knowledge and understanding (*fiqh*) of the Religion of Allah, which is the uppermost pre-requisite for teaching the people the affairs of the Religion:

Did Shaykh Ibn Bāz have a certificate with him? Did Shaykh Ibn Humayd? ... and they were the leading Imāms of this time. Hence, the speech (revolves) around the presence of knowledge in a person, and (the presence) of understanding in a person! ... And reality will uncover a person when an issue comes along or a calamity arises, then the (true) scholar will become clear from the pseudo-scholar and the ignoramus.³¹

Further, in refutation of attacks upon SalafiPubs and its founders, their defenders have also been keen to highlight the *tazkiyāt* (validations) that *Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah* have received for their trustworthiness and firmness upon the Salafi *Manhaj* from some of the Major Salafi Scholars in the Arab lands over the years:³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² *Shaikh Hasan Al-Banna on Witnessing Salafi Publications*. 2022. Source: Salaficentre.com.

They seek to indirectly [belittle] the elder students in their private conversations – those well known to Al-‘Allāmah Muqbil Bin Hādi, who recognised their efforts and steadfastness, and well known to Al-‘Allāmah Rabe’e’ and Al-‘Allāmah ‘Ubaid Bin ‘Abdillāh Al-Jābiri for nearly three decades due to their continuous firmness upon the Sunnah, aiding its scholars and Marākiz- and indirectly insinuating that their reality would have been unveiled if compared to those who attained such and such certificates at such and such institution. So, when you come across a graduate who speaks in this manner, then remind him of the statements of Imām Muhammad Bin Sālih Al-Uthaymeen [may Allāh have mercy upon him].³³

SalafiPubs’s defenders also point out that the opus of the *du‘āt* to-date speaks for itself. As mentioned in a previous article,³⁴ it was Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq’s [and Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank’s] translations of refutations (*rudūd*) of hybridised and hyphenated versions of Salafiyyah—refutations which were written by some senior Salafi scholars of the time, such as Shaykh Muqbil (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), Shaykh al-Albānī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) and Shaykh Rabe’e’, which were the lynchpin in giving English-speaking Salafis in the UK and globally the clarification they needed to discern true Salafiyyah from hybridised versions ascribed to it. Further, it was also Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq’s ability to harness digital spaces in

³³ *Doctorate or Degree In Sharee’ah Does Not Automatically Give You Understanding Superior to That of Other People Recognized as Students of Knowledge By Scholars*. 2022. Source: Salaficentre.com.

³⁴ See author’s (2023) article: *The Emergence of Salafism* for a history of contemporary Salafism in the UK. Source: researchingSalafism.com.

the emerging internet revolution which gave strength to Salafism as a global English-language Islamic revivalist group.

Hence, today—in 2023, Shaykh Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq is the webmaster of approximately 40 Salafi websites which he created over the years and are accessible via the SalafiPublications.com and Salaf.com portal.³⁵

Recently, however, these sites have been superseded by his more up-to-date website Abuiyaad.com³⁶ which offers benefits in both the Religion and worldly affairs backed by the statements of the Scholars (past and present) on a range of contemporary issues. Apart from this, not only is he a renowned lecturer within Salafi circles locally and globally, but Shaykh Amjad Rafiq has also authored of dozens of books on matters related to Creed, Islam for non-Muslims, in defense of the Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)—especially in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, and books on Islam’s perspective on Atheism. Shaykh Abu ‘Iyād has also utilised his expertise in the field of biological

³⁵ Abu Iyād Amjad Rafiq is webmaster of sites such as: TheNobleQuran.com; SahihalBukhari.com; SahihMuslim.com; Nawawis40Hadith.com; Aqidah.com; TawhidFirst.com; AboveTheThrone.com; ProphetMuhammad.name; IslamMoses.com; IslamJesus.ws; Manhaj.com; Salafis.com; Takfiris.com; Ikhwanis.com; Ikhwanis.com; IslamAgainstExtremism.com; TheMadkhalis.com; AboutAtheism.net; FiqhOnline.com; Dajjal.com; IbnTaymiyyah.com; Shariah.ws; Islam4Kids.com; PiousMuslim.com; AlHajuri.com; Madinah.org; Sunnah.TV; SalafiEbooks.com; Bidah.com; Kharjites.com; Asharis.com; Mutazilah.com; Shia.BS; Barelwis.com; SayyidQutb.com; Nabhani.com; BinBaz.co.uk; Albani.co.uk; BinUthaymin.co.uk; Rabee’.co.uk; Fawzan.co.uk; Muqbil.co.uk; Ubayd.co.uk.

³⁶ www.abuiyaad.com

science³⁷ and has written many articles on issues related to health, Islam, and Prophetic medicine.³⁸

As for Shaykh Abu Khadeejah, although he too did not formally attend an Islamic university such as UIM in Madinah—mainly because of family commitments and because he had passed the strict age limit to make a valid application—this did not deter him from seeking knowledge by way of some visiting scholars and by visiting others in their lands, alongside the fact that he had also studied closely with Abu Talhah in the early years. Furthermore, since he had already entered the arena of *da'wah*, by the mid-1990s, Abu Khadeejah proceeded to acquaint himself with the works of some of the Major Salafi scholars of the era such as Imām ‘Abdul-‘Aziz Ibn Bāz, Al-‘Allāmah Ibn Uthaymeen, the great *Hadeeth* Scholar of Yemen, Muqbil Ibn Hādi and the Imām of Hadeeth of the era, Al-Albani (رحمته الله), all of whom were alive at that time but passed away towards the late 1990s and early 2000s.

During the same period (1997-) Abu Khadeejah also made annual visits to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—sometimes up to three times a year, to meet with the Scholars in person providing him with the opportunity to seek counsel from the likes of the esteemed Scholar, Shaykh Rabee’ Ibn Hādi Al-Madkhali on important issues pertaining to living as Muslim minorities in the West. He (and others) also established a strong connection with ‘Allāmah ‘Ubayd Al-Jābiri from the great scholars of Madinah—in these gatherings Shaykh Abu Khadeejah completed again *Usoolus-Sunnah* of Imām Ahmad, *Aslus-Sunnah* of Imāms Abu Hātim and

³⁷ Rafiq completed his PhD entitled: *A Study of Some Proteases from the Camel Pancreas* at the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Essex in September 1997.

³⁸ See Abu Iyād Amjad Rafiq’s website: healthymuslim.com

Zur'ah ar-Rāziyyain, *Usooluth-Thalāthah*, *Qawā'id Al-Arba'a*, chapters from *'Aqeedatus-Salaf* of As-Sābooni, chapters from *'Umdatul-Ahkām*, chapters from *Saheeh Al-Bukhāri*, chapters from *Buloogh al-Marām* and so on.

Over the next two decades or so, Shaykh Abu Khadeejah (alongside Shaykh Abu Hakeem and Abu Maryam Tāriq) made annual visits as a teacher and 'Umrah guide for *Five Pillars 'Umrah Tours* and later *Premier Hajj and 'Umrah Tours* and arranged conferences which provided the pilgrims with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to seek knowledge directly from the Major scholars of Islam. Eventually similar hajj and umrah pilgrimage packages that were managed by Salafis would collaborate from different cities from all over the world such as, TROID from Toronto, Canada; Sunnah Publishing, and Masjid Bayān, USA; Salafis from Singapore, UAE, Sri Lanka, and the Caribbean. Salafis from around the world would all come together in the holy city of Madinah for these seminar programs to benefit themselves from the knowledge of the scholars. Those who could not attend had the option of tuning into live steamed lectures over the internet (via Paltalk) or by way of recorded lectures uploaded onto sites such as salafisounds.com.

These *dawrāt* (conferences) which took place annually (until the COVID pandemic was declared) were joined by people coming with their groups from all over the world—they studied the books of the great scholars: Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb, Ibn Hajar, etc., and learned rulings related to Prayer, Fasting, Zakah and Hajj. Apart from sitting in some of the classes of the scholars such as Shaykh Abdullāh Al-Bukhāri, Abu Khadeejah and the mosque attendees also had the privilege of studying *Kitāb At-Tawheed* with the renowned noble scholars, Shaykh 'Abdullāh Al-Ghudayān (رحمته الله)—a member of the Permanent Committee of Scholars based in Riyadh, a relationship which was maintained via personal communications that lasted for a

decade until the Shaykh passed away in 2010 (may Allah have mercy upon him).

By the time SalafiPubs (2005/2006) had translated and published about 40 books, Shaykh Abu Khadeejah also began translating classical Arabic texts to English which fellow teachers, Shaykh Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank, and Shaykh Abu ‘Iyād Amjad Rafiq had been doing for nearly 15 years. Since then, Abu Khadeejah has translated 20 or more books—mostly short treatises and has also written countless leaflets propagating the Salafi *Da‘wah*—millions of which have been printed and distributed through universities, CCDawah stalls, community centres, social gatherings, and schools and colleges across the globe. Additionally, he has authored thousands of articles, most of which—including the leaflets, can be found on www.AbuKhadeejah.com, a website he set up in 2009 which has become a very popular portal for sourcing authentic Islamic knowledge. His site is regularly cited by ‘Western’ academics in their bid to understand the phenomenon of Salafism in the West (see Bowen 2014; Inge 2017; Shavit 2015).

In the quote below Dawud’s (2021) PhD research acknowledges Shaykh Abu Khadeejah as a main architect behind the establishment of the Salafi infrastructure in Small Heath, Birmingham, as well as a key figure on the ground for Salafis in other parts of the country:

Indeed, it would be hard to deny the centralized nature of the SP network that began to develop in the 2000s. While other SP mosques have developed around the country, Birmingham, remains the centre of this network. Likewise, while SP has several leaders, Abu Khadeejah has continued to be the main personality behind SP. His leadership has also been key to the success of SP. He is a hands-on leader, who though based in

Birmingham, continues to have quite a strong hold over the London movement through regular visits to SP affiliated mosques during the weekends and regular communication with SP members in London. He is also regarded as a highly intelligent and learned individual. Even critics of SP will often concede that Abu Khadeejah is a charismatic, well-spoken, and intelligent individual. For example, one of my participants who went to university with Abu Khadeejah, though critical of SP, argued: “[Abu Khadeejah] was brilliant even when I was at university, he taught himself Arabic, he was very, very intelligent”.³⁹

Through the years Shaykh Abu Khadeejah has received *tazkiyāt* (commendations) from Senior Salafi scholars in the Muslim lands such as Shaykh ‘Ubayd Al-Jābiri, Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al Ghudayān, Shaykh Hasan Ibn ‘Abdul-Wahhāb Al-Banna as well as from the illustrious Imām Muqbil Ibn Hādi Al-Wādī’ee of Yemen. And whilst Abu Khadeejah never had the opportunity to study directly under Shaykh Muqbil,⁴⁰ the Shaykh issued his original *tazkiyah* for Abu Khadeejah, Abu Talhah and SalafiPubs in 1998— recommendations issued because of their efforts in spreading the Salafi Da‘wah in the West.⁴¹ It is reported that even the eminent Imām of this era, Shaykh Al-‘Allāmah Rabee’ Al-Madkhali has,

³⁹ Dawud, Iman 2021:118.

⁴⁰ Abu Khadeejah, Abu Talhah and other students of knowledge were, however, blessed to have met with the noble scholar Shaykh Muqbil (V) in Makkah before his death in 2001 (may Allah have mercy on him). Source: Abu Khadeejah.

⁴¹ *Where Did Abu Khadeejah Study?* By Abu Khadeejah. 2015. Source: [soundcloud.com](https://www.soundcloud.com).

on occasion, advised people in the UK to refer matters related to Muslim life in the West to Abu Khadeejah. In citing him as a suitable person to approach for such ‘foreign’ issues, the Shaykh is referring to the suitability of Abu Khadeejah’s *fiqh* (good understanding) in relation to the lived experience of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim lands:

[In response to the question] He (Shaykh Rabe’e) then said to us all: ‘Ask Abu Khadeejah, he is more knowledgeable of your affairs and situation in the West than me; perhaps he will be able to answer and benefit you. As for me, I can’t speak on such an issue’.⁴²

To date (2023), Abu Khadeejah continues to hold a senior role in the management of SalafiPubs. Apart from being at the helm of what many Salafis consider to be the ‘headquarters’ of the Salafi *Da‘wah* in Birmingham, Shaykh Abu Khadeejah has also begun to focus his *da‘wah* efforts in the country of his parents’ heritage—Pakistan. In coordination with Salafi brothers in Islamabad, under the banner of *Markaz Ad-Dārimi*, Abu Khadeejah aims to assist the small but burgeoning community of Salafis to establish a Salafi Mosque in the capital city. Recently, Abu Khadeejah has also established his own educational website which offers Islamic Studies courses at varying levels to students all over the world.

Similarly, Shaykh Abu Hakeem Bilal Davis and Shaykh Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank (رحمته الله) have also been snubbed for not having fully completed their studies at IUM. However, the very fact that some of the most senior Salafi scholars have acknowledged and praised their achievements and efforts in the revival of Islam and Salafism in the

⁴² *Abū Makkah & Muhammad Abdur-Razzāq: Watery Manhaj & Flaccid Constitutions* 2023. Source: ‘Abdul-Wahid., Abdullah. t.me/abukhadeejahsp

West, speaks for itself. No doubt, both shaykhs were not only staunch defenders of the Salafi *Da'wah* during the 1990s/2000s onwards, but they were key figures who maintained a strong connection to the scholars through times of adversity whilst also striving hard to teach others the importance of the role of the Scholars as guardians of the faith. Indeed, it has been said of Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank that he had been 'blessed by skills of translation' that have not been 'equaled (by anyone) in the West'.⁴³ And whilst Salafis do not say of him that he reached the level of a great Scholar, they do argue that there is not a 'Salafi in the West who could doubt his worth and importance, (for) he left behind a legacy of calling others to the correct Creed...and that those who really knew him, know that he was a source of *khair* (goodness) for the Muslims of the West generally, and the people of the Sunnah specifically'.⁴⁴

Tragically, Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) passed away with his wife whilst on their way to perform the Hajj pilgrimage in November of 2011. News of their sudden death whilst both were in a state of *ihrām* was received with shock and an outpouring of grief from Salafis globally. The wave of sadness which reverberated across the world with the tremendous loss of a man whom even the Scholars such as Shaykh Rabe'e, Shaykh Muqbil (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) and Shaykh 'Ubayd (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) loved and praised was evident from the eulogies written immediately by those who knew them personally, not to mention the outpouring of financial assistance offered to their eight children. Indeed, for those in the field of *da'wah* such as Abu Khadeejah, Abu Hakeem, Abu Iyād, Hasan As-Somāli, Kashiff Khan, Anwar Wright, Abul-Hasan Mālik, Abu Junaide Yusuf

⁴³ *Abu-Talhah-Dawud-Burbank-and-his-Wife-have-Died*, 1st January, 2001. Source: Source: SalafiTalk.net.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*: p3,4.

Bowers, Abu Fudayl Abdur-Raqeeb, and the community served by *Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah*—all acknowledged that Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank was ‘from the founders of the *Maktabah* and a pillar of its early success’.⁴⁵

Shaykh Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) was also the first person to translate into the English language the *rudood* (refutations) of some the great Salafi Scholars of the time, such as Shaykh Muqbil, Shaykh Al-Albāni, and Shaykh Rabe’e against the *Jam’iyyah Ihyā Turāth al-Islamiyy*. Certainly, Abu Talhah’s translations of Shaykh Al-Albani, Shaykh Ibn Bāz and Shaykh ‘Uthaymeen made clear the deceptions of political agitators who had resorted to using the vague statements of these Major Scholars devoid of context to confuse the masses for their own ends; in doing so he stemmed, almost cutting off their innovations not only in the UK,⁴⁶ but also other parts of the English-speaking world.

Abu Talhah Dawūd Burbank would go on to translate scores of other books from the Scholars including *At-Tawassul* of Shaykh Al-Albani, *Methodology of the Prophets* of Shaykh Rabe’e thereby clarifying the belief of *Ahlus-Sunnah* (The People of Sunnah) in opposition to the grave worshippers, Sufis⁴⁷ and others. Further, there is no doubt that because of Shaykh Abu Talhah’s (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) dedication to translating the classical Arabic works of the Scholars of the past (and present) into the English language as well his own personal adherence to the Salafi da’wah he had ‘become a symbol and sign of Salafiyyah in the West’.⁴⁸ Renowned

⁴⁵ *Abu Talhah Dawud Burbank and his Wife have Died*, 1st January, 2001. Source: Source: SalafiTalk.net.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

amongst both his students, friends, and the Scholars, for his ‘shyness’, ‘humbleness’, and ‘excellent manners’, not to mention his generally quiet and private disposition, one of his close companions Shaykh Abu Khadeejah ‘Abdul-Wāhid narrates that he did ‘not know of anyone in the West who was more meticulous in acting upon the Sunnah than Abu Talhah [who knew] the fine details of how the Messenger Muhammad walked, talked, ate, and behaved and would follow him in that precisely...he had the least concern for the world and its glitter’.⁴⁹

Umm Talhah (may Allah’s mercy be upon her) too is remembered as ‘a caring and careful mother—a joyful character who loved her children and cared immensely for the Sunnah and its implementation in the home’.⁵⁰ Their *Janāzah* was prayed at the Haram Masjid in Makkah after Fajr on 6th Dhul-Hijjah 1432H [Tuesday 1st November 2011],⁵¹ and despite the sorrow felt by the Salafi community for such a tremendous loss to the da‘wah, the signs of them having met with a good end was a solace to all, as summed up Abu ‘Iyād’s eulogy of them below:

May Allah the Exalted grant Abu Talhah and his wife mercy, forgiveness, and the loftiest place in Paradise ... [they] were travelling to Hajj, were in *ihrām*, were making *talbiyah*, and were both caught up in fire, being killed by it. Their funeral prayer was in Haram of Makah, after Fajr prayer, with at least hundreds of thousands of people praying over them. What greater signs could there be of a good end than this?⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid: p3.

⁵⁰ Ibid: p3.

⁵¹ Ibid: p1.

⁵² Ibid: p2.

Over the years the success of Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah's (SalafiPubs) grassroots *da'wah* has made it a beacon for those in search of authentic Islam based upon the methodology of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) in the West—and globally, so much so that it has even gone on to earn its *du'āt* the accolade of *Shaykhs* from the likes of Al-'Allāmah Hasan Al-Banna (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ). Without inflating their status beyond that which they deserve, Shaykh Hasan Ibn 'Abdul-Wahhāb Al-Banna (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) commended these callers and teachers not only for their knowledge but also for their firm discipline and steadfastness as well as their cooperation and love for the sake of Allah, hailing them for being from the best he had seen from all the different centres in the UK.⁵³

Whilst these *du'āt* do not demand the title of 'Shaykh' for themselves, there is a general agreement amongst some of the Senior Scholars that they are deserved of it based upon what has been witnessed of them.⁵⁴ Indeed, such has been their contribution on the Salafi Da'wah scene in reviving authentic Islam in the West that Major Salafi Scholar, the late Shaykh 'Ubayd Al-Jābiri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) addressed those at SalafiPubs—Abu Khadeejah, Abu Hakeem, and Abu 'Iyād as his 'sons and students',⁵⁵ and thanked them for making *Al-Maktabah As-Salafiyyah* a 'gateway' for scholars in Arab countries to reach not only those living in the West, but likewise those of their [English-speaking] 'children' in the East.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Shaykh – An Old Man, a Righteous Man or a Man Recognised by Scholar as One with Islamic Knowledge [Part 1]*. April 30th, 2022. Source: Salaficentre.com.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ See: footnote 44.

⁵⁶ *Shaykh 'Ubayd al-Jabiri about Salafi Publications*, The Salafi Centre of Manchester, April 11th 2016. Source: Salaficentre.com.

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