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UK religious studies textbooks and the notion of Jihad:
An analysis using the works of Ibn Taymiyyah
Nouman Hussain

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Degree of PhD

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College of Social Sciences
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Abstract

This thesis explored the potential influence of Ibn Taymiyyah's educational methodology on radicalisation and/or de-radicalisation issues and how his literature could be used to educate youth on the dangers of misunderstanding *Jihad* and terrorism using the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Religious Education curriculum. In 2014, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an offshoot of al-Qaeda, introduced a new level of threat to society; hence, concern surrounding radicalisation through education within the Muslim community is rife. Governments and think tanks have failed to find a robust and long-term solution to the problem. Potential solutions, such as *Prevent*, do little to detect extremism and can even drive the Muslim community into further alienation.

Many academics have come to identify the medieval Muslim scholar, Ahmed Ibn Abdul Haleem Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328CE), as a principal source for the radical ideas that are embedded in ISIS's ideology, asserting that his educational literature promotes acts of terrorism. Others, however, refute the claim, arguing that he has been grossly misunderstood, if not intentionally misquoted, by some terrorist advocates and organisations. No one has attempted to critically deconstruct the educational philosophy of Ibn Taymiyyah, all the while comparing it to the propaganda literature of prominent Muslim terrorists, referred to herein as the *Khawarij*, in order to assess these claims. Research has also shown that terrorist propaganda often focusses on luring youth as they are impressionable and, in general, lack sufficient knowledge to withstand the propaganda. Hence, in this thesis, Ibn Taymiyyah's literature, especially directed at the topic of *Jihad* and related topics, was firstly explored using a theological and historical lens. It was then compared with the literature of pertinent Muslim terrorists in order to assess whether his literature is at the root of the problem of extremism and radicalisation.

This study established that Ibn Taymiyyah proffered a holistic view of *Jihad* that expounded on the different intentions, types and conditions which vastly contrasted with the *Khawarij* understanding of *Jihad*. It has also been made apparent that his works have been grossly misquoted and much of what he taught about the conditions and other important elements of *Jihad* have been ignored

when terrorists refer to his work. Further to this, the topic of *Jihad* in GCSE Religious Studies textbooks used in England was investigated using content analysis to ascertain what is being taught. This research concluded that content within the Religious Studies textbooks regarding the definition and objectives of *Jihad* is inadequate and in fact might even exacerbate problems related to a proper understanding of *Jihad*. Students could be left with an ambiguous concept of *Jihad* that not only fuels Islamophobia but, even more detrimentally, has potential to fuel radicalisation in students prone to such ideologies. It is recommended that each examination board needs to re-examine these textbooks and work to improve them in order to produce ones with accurate information based on theological and historical evidence. Authors need to reassess the way they approach the topic and the examination boards can use Ibn Taymiyyah's arguments, presented in his literature on *Jihad*, to provide a more accurate and holistic understanding of *Jihad*.

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Declaration

I, Nouman Hussain, certify that the thesis presented here for examination for a PhD degree of the University of Glasgow is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others and that the thesis has not been edited by a third party beyond what is permitted by the University's PGR Code of Practice.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it is permitted without full acknowledgement.

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I declare that this thesis has been produced in accordance with the University of Glasgow's Code of Good Practice in Research.

I acknowledge that if any issues are raised regarding good research practice based on review of the thesis, the examination may be postponed pending the outcome of any investigation of the issues.

Nouman Hussain

10/03/2023

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In this day and age, terrorism has no doubt become a global threat and the atrocities committed by terrorists have left a black mark on history. In 2014, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an offshoot of al-Qaeda, has introduced a new level of threat with a record of atrocities not only in the Middle-East but also in Europe, invariably in the name of Islamic *Jihad*. Some have claimed that ISIS constitutes the most dangerous ‘*Jihadist*’ group in the world at this time (Williams, 2016). Governments and think tanks around the world have tried to address this phenomenon in vain as future attacks taking place remain a high possibility, a frightening reality for people around the world. Issues of concern surrounding radicalisation through education within the Muslim community are rife and many have attempted to find the core reason as to why this occurs (Sjøen and Jore, 2019). Amongst the array of literature, many have come to identify Ahmed Ibn Abdul Haleem Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328) as a main cause for the radical ideas that are embedded in ISIS’s ideology (Sageman, 2011)

Ahmed ibn Abdil Haleem ibn Taymiyyah al Harrani, commonly known as Ibn Taymiyyah, was an Islamic scholar and reputable teacher in the 13th century, born in the city of Harran which currently lies in the Southeast of Turkey. He was born into a family of scholars from whom he learned (Arikewuyo, 2020)), becoming well versed in the majority of the Islamic sciences, including Islamic theology, jurisprudence, exegesis of the Qur’an and comparative religion. Abdul Haleem, the father of Ibn Taymiyyah, was a man known for his knowledge and was a judge in Harran (Sharif, 2011). Due to the invasion of the Mongols in 1268, the family had to move to Damascus where Abdul Haleem began to teach in Dar al Hadith Sukkariyah – this was the role that Ibn Taymiyyah took over after the death of his father. However, Ibn Taymiyyah’s ‘worldwide reputation as a teacher’ was realised at the Madrasah as Salaahiyah where he gained students from different corners of the world (Sharif, 2011). Ibn Taymiyyah has many famous written

works, clarifying what he believed was the correct Islamic position on Christianity and the philosophers. He positioned himself with the Salafi methodology and often referred to classical works of Islam. His position as scholar and educator in Islam has been recognised and applauded by many Muslims and non-Muslims alike. An example of this is McAullife (2006) who said, while discussing the education of Ibn Kathir (one of Ibn Taymiyyah's influential students), that 'certainly the most famous of Ibn Kathir's teachers, and perhaps the one who influenced him the most, was the Hanbali theologian and juriconsult Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Kathir was only twenty- eight when this great Faqih died' (McAullife, 2006; p. 72). Ibn Taymiyyah's influence as a prominent Islamic educator can be seen by his student's achievements such as Ibn al Qayyim, who is also a celebrated Islamic educator.

There are scholars and academics, both past and present, from the Muslim world and from the West, who have spent time and effort to try to unwrap the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah. There are those who have written in the form of biographies, informing us about Ibn Taymiyyah's life and how he used to teach and what he used to teach, like his student Ibn Abdil Haadi in a book he named *Al-'Uqud ad-Durriyyah min Manaqib Shaykh ul-Islam Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah and Adh Dhahabi in Siyar A'lam an Nubala*. Professor David Thomas examines Ibn Taymiyyah's literature on comparative religion and Dr Jon Hoover who has done extensive research on Ibn Taymiyyah and his literature as a whole. Other academics have specified Ibn Taymiyyah's role in armed struggle, White (2016), in his book, 'Terrorism and Homeland Security', classes Ibn Taymiyyah as one of the militant scholars of Islam which is reiterated by Perry and Negrin (2008) who state that he is an influential *Jihadist*.

1.2 Issues of concern

Many assert that Ibn Taymiyyah's educational literature promotes acts of terrorism (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004, p. 362, as cited in Mulcaire, 2013, p. 1) and many tend to side with the opinion that Ibn Taymiyyah was a radical whose influence has been detrimental to global security. Having said this, many have also concluded that the two ideologies do not match and thus refute the claim that Ibn Taymiyyah is the prime

cause for alleged Islamic based terrorism (Mulcaire, 2013). No one has attempted to critically deconstruct the Religious educational philosophy of Ibn Taymiyyah. Upon initial research, one finds that there is much variation and confusion regarding many important terms such as terrorism, extremism, *Jihad* and Salafism which ultimately will render the war against terror as fruitless as no problem can be solved unless understood. Scanning through the works of some of the Muslim terrorists of this era, such as Bin Laden, Az Zawahiri and Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi, it is apparent that they all seem to refer to the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah; I refer to these individuals and Muslim terrorists as opposed to Islamic terrorist as there is categorically no basis for terrorism in Islam, Muslim here represents the religious identity they hold and hence I will use this term throughout. However, there has not been an in-depth exploration of the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah from a theological and historical lens and more importantly there has been no comparison between the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and that of these Muslim terrorists to establish a clear similitude. Ibn Taymiyyah refers to those who have characters and actions like Bin Laden and Az-Zawahiri as *Khawarij*, a term used by the Prophet ﷺ to warn others that such people are doomed to Hell; if this is the case, then we must explore who these people are and how they differ from Ibn Taymiyyah himself. It is imperative to be critical within academic research, and therefore one finds that a lot of this literature does not extensively explore Ibn Taymiyyah's literature and especially taking into account the theological and historical backdrop of his work, particularly in regards *Jihad*, terrorism and non-combatants

The terms, terrorism, extremism, *Jihad* and Salafism need to be individually established in meaning away from conflation to then pave the way to find a robust and grounded solution to the radicalisation of the youth who go on to commit terrorist activities such as seen in the Manchester concert bombings. Research has shown terrorists lure the youth as they are impressionable and, in general, have a lack of knowledge (Idris, 2019; Oppetit et al., 2019). A vital question can be asked, *what role does education have in explaining the dangers of this extremist ideology?* After exploring some of the literature, as aforementioned, the terms terrorism, extremism and *Jihad* were found to be conflated. This is extremely worrying because if academics are struggling to grasp important Islamic concepts, then we can only wonder what understanding is presented to youth who will come

across such literature. This is particularly worrying for Muslim youth who will struggle to separate terms such as terrorism and *Jihad*. Knowledge is needed to defend them against these dangerous ideologies that they may be vulnerable to. This knowledge will be crucial in removing any possibility of radicalisation.

1.3 Objective of this research

The intent of the first part of the thesis is to establish clear definitions for the terms, terrorism, *Jihad*, *Jihad* ism and extremism, the term *Khawarij* will also be explored. I will then explore the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah from a theological and historical lens, all the while comparing it to the literature of pertinent Muslim terrorists. This will assist in understanding the problem of extremism and radicalisation. It should be noted here that the intent of this research is to specify the views of Ibn Taymiyyah and not open the discussion to explore Sunni – Shia views on *Jihad*. The main reason for this is that Ibn Taymiyyah has been labelled as a “godfather of terrorism”, therefore it is imperative to ascertain whether this claim is correct, and thus a thorough exploration of his literature is warranted. The second part of this thesis will explore *Jihad* taught in the National Curriculum of England. Thus, I will look at the chapter on *Jihad* in the GCSE Religious Studies textbooks in England and ascertain what is being taught and whether changes need to be made, using the knowledge gathered from the first part of this research. I will ultimately answer the following research question: what is the potential influence, if any, of Ibn Taymiyyah’s educational methodology on radicalisation and/or de-radicalisation issues and can his literature be used to educate the youth on the dangers of misunderstanding *Jihad* and terrorism using the GCSE Religious Education curriculum?

1.4 Significance of this research

This research is significant in providing a long term and robust method of preventing radicalisation of the Muslim youth who may be susceptible to dangerous extremist ideology. Education and knowledge are key in grounding young students in their understanding of what *Jihad* is and how it differs from terrorism, vital differences found in Ibn Taymiyyah’s understanding of *Jihad* and how the common day terrorists present it are significant to point out and

understand. If this knowledge is disseminated correctly and efficiently in schools, then there is a small possibility of radicalisation occurring as the student will be able to differentiate what is authentic from what has been politically derived. Current methods of deradicalization such as Prevent do not provide such outcomes but instead prove to alienate the community further thus fuelling the problem (O'Toole et al., 2015).

1.5 Limitations of this research

This thesis is limited by the scope of research; A-Level textbooks were not used in this study to assess its content of *Jihad*. Further to this, teacher knowledge was also not included in this study, perhaps researching how teachers deliver this content could shed light on how this information would be disseminated to the students, extra explanation to the textbook may perhaps indicate the efforts being made to differentiate between the different terms in *Jihad*, however each teacher possesses their own amount of content knowledge and thus researching this was beyond the scope of this research, for this reason this study focuses on textbooks only as these form the basis of the lesson.

1.6 Structure of this research

Chapter 1 will play an important role in clarifying the importance of this research, I will define all key terms and will also define terms that are ambiguous. I will endeavour to unwrap the different terms and concepts that are widely misunderstood and could be one of the main causes leading to misunderstanding Islamic literature, including that of Ibn Taymiyyah. Within this chapter, I will explore the literature surrounding Ibn Taymiyyah and his potential role in influencing so called 'Islamic terrorists'; I will look at the strengths and weaknesses of the literature.

In chapter 2, I will endeavour to explore the context within which Ibn Taymiyyah lived and wrote. It is of paramount importance to explore Ibn Taymiyyah's literature from a theological and historical lens in an era wherein the Mongols unleashed an unmerciful attack on the Abbasid Caliphate coupled with the multiple crusades organised by Pope Urban II. Additionally, there were many

sects within Islam that Ibn Taymiyyah believed were opposed to the orthodox understanding which he believed was obligatory. It was in this context that Ibn Taymiyyah authored much work elucidating on many important topics. Therefore, chapter two will give the reader a good idea about the context within Ibn Taymiyyah wrote these important works. Once the scene has been set, I will attempt a critical unravelling of the reality of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature and its links, or not, to extremism.

Chapter 3 will explore the literature of the so called 'Islamic terrorists' and extract major principles that they propagate. I maintain that it is fallacious to direct the blame onto Ibn Taymiyyah or anyone else until the literature of the terrorists is explored, and that this is a weakness of many current academic works. I hope to fill this gap within this thesis. Another weakness, seen in other academic research, is that the blame is directed at Ibn Taymiyyah and other Islamic scholars without an in-depth exploration of his primary literary sources and other important Islamic theologians, especially from a theological and historical context.

Chapter 4 and 5 will explore Ibn Taymiyyah's literature and address or verify if the claims that are directed against him are true or false. I will be exploring many important texts written by Ibn Taymiyyah to gain a holistic understanding of his stance on issues such as *Jihad*, suicide missions and non-combatants. Once again, I believe my research will show that most of the academic literature currently available does not holistically explore Ibn Taymiyyah's literature, and therefore does not paint a fair picture of his work. Once again, I would like to clarify that the intent of this research is not to delve into the Sunni – Shia views on Jihad; rather, it is to concentrate on Ibn Taymiyyah's literature as he has been dubbed as a "godfather of terrorism".

After I have gained a solid understanding of the reality of the ideologies of 'Islamic terrorists' and the reality of the link between the aforementioned ideologies and the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, I will turn my attention to an important issue of concern, which concerns what role education is playing in addressing these misunderstandings.

Chapters 6-8 will explore the sections on *Jihad* in the Religious Studies textbooks in England. The aim will be to analyse the content within the Religious Studies textbooks to verify the information and to see whether it is sufficiently robust to withstand that the uninformed views that terrorists might use to target youth.

Chapter 9 will be a general overview of this research and its importance.

2. Chapter 1: Terrorism, Jihad and Ibn Taymiyyah

2.1 Introduction

Academics and researchers have been exploring solutions to terrorist attacks for several decades (Schirch, 2018; Sedgwick, 2015). Nonetheless, in 2022, one sees that the solution is yet to be found. Terrorist activity in its various forms persists (Jones et al., 2020). This thesis focusses on the form broadly referred to as Islamist-inspired extremism or terrorism, often shorthanded to *Jihadism*.

Among the problems that researchers and governments face is the differing definitions of the key words, terrorism, extremism, *Jihadism*, and the notion of *Jihad* itself; the array of literature suggests that there is no consensus on the meaning of these terms, individually or when conflated (Afsaruddin, 2018; Silke & Schmidt- Peterson, 2017). Shanahan (2016) states: ‘yet, despite decades of efforts by scholars in diverse academic fields, defining “terrorism” to everyone’s satisfaction has so far proven elusive’ (p.103). This view is echoed by Silke (2004) who suggests that ‘the problem is a simple one: there is no widely agreed definition of terrorism’ (p.3). He alludes further to the words of Shafritz, Gibbons and Scott (1991): ‘it is unlikely that any definition will ever be generally agreed upon’ (p. 3).

Even the key term, *Jihad*, is subject to debate about exactly what it entails and means. One simply wonders whether a lack of agreement on the definition of the terms leads to solutions or policies that are ineffective in counter terrorism efforts. Lovat (2018) highlights a significant issue; he suggests that the main problem is not the disagreement in how to define the different terms, but it is ‘poor education about Islam’ (p. 4) and ‘poorly informed’ (p.4) academics that have led researchers to draw on assumptions that are incorrect.

This point is echoed by Schirch (2018) who states that one must understand extremism before looking for ways to address it. Hence, one asks whether a lack of clarity and consensus, coupled with poor information within literature, causes

confusion in the pursuit to find a suitable solution to the global predicament and dangers of political violence. It is therefore a stated objective of this thesis to clarify the meanings of the terms that are associated with this topic. Although these terms are difficult to comprehend in different contexts (Sedgwick, 2015), this has not prevented researchers from striving to understand and define them.

2.2 Definition of Terrorism

As noted above, many researchers and commentators have tried in vain to pen a definition of terrorism that is universally accepted (Shanahan, 2016). An example of this is seen in the definition of terrorism by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as ‘the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population in furtherance of political or social objectives’ (Silke, 2004, p.5). This definition is reiterated by Mickolus (2004): ‘International/ transnational terrorism is the use or threat of use, of anxiety inducing extranormal violence for political purposes by any individual or group, whether acting for or in opposition to established government authority’ (p.2). In a similar definition to that of the FBI, the British Government included violence as part of the term, as follows: ‘The use or threat is designed to influence the government [or an international governmental organisation] or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause’

Terrorism also involves the following:

- ‘serious violence against a person;
- serious damage to property;
- endangers a person’s life, other than that of the person committing the action;
- creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public; or
- is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.’ (UK Public General act, 2000)

Shanahan (2016), however, disagrees with the necessity of including violence within the definition of terrorism and, in proving the point, offers examples of terrorist plots that have not included violence. Furthermore, he is not alone in his critique of the definition by certain governments. Roach (2015) argues that the British have flaws in their definition, ones which are potentially harmful to their own security and the security of others, especially since the Australian and Canadian governments have implemented laws based on the British definition. Roach (2015) argues that the British definition is flawed from two angles, the first being that it includes ‘various forms of property damage and interference with electronic and other essential services’ (p.40). He believes that a definition that was more specific to the harming of civilians would be more accurate. While property damage and interference with electronics is a possible approach practised by a terrorist group, it is nonetheless not germane to the definition, as a particular terrorist act might well employ a different methodology. It is important to note that the FBI definition, as above, includes a focus on property. The second flaw suggested by Roach (2015) was that the British require ‘proof that a terrorist acted for a political or religious reason’ (p.40), which he believes is an over-specific focus. So long as the terrorist ‘is pursuing a purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or international organisations to act’ (p.41), this should be sufficient to deem someone a terrorist. Similarly, Shanahan (2015) offers a critique of the definitions of terrorism that include ‘political motivation and goals’ (p.118), by arguing that the reason for many terrorist attacks might well be politically motivated, but this is not always the case and therefore a more generalised definition would be more apposite. Thus, Shanahan (2015) proposes a provisional definition that allows for a broader set of motives, intentions and goals. Namely, terrorism is anything which ‘the perpetrators anticipate may be beneficial to the advancement of their agenda’ (p.110). However, it could be argued that this definition could be too general.

Weinberg et al. (2010) attempt to overcome some of the challenges that arise in defining the term terrorism. The methodology used by Weinberg et al. (2010) to form a consensus definition was to explore the research put forward by Schmid (2004) and compare it to articles in three leading professional journals: *Terrorism* (New York: Crane Russak & Company), from 1977 through 1991 and then (Minneapolis, MN: John Scherer), 1982–1983, 1986–1989; *Terrorism and*

Political Violence (London: Frank Cass) from 1990 through 2001; and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (London: Taylor and Francis) from 1992 through to 2001. Weinberg et al. (2010) sought to amalgamate the elements of the definition mentioned in each of the articles. The resulting definition that they applied was that ‘terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role’ (p.786). It is important also to note that Weinberg et al. (2010) uncovered twenty-two elements of the definition that reoccur in these articles, and religious aims are not among those mentioned.

This definition can be contrasted with Roach (2015) who proposes that in 2008, the British definition included ‘political, religious or ideological cause’ (p.18) as possible motives driving terrorism, a view reiterated by Jaishankar (2009). Therefore, we find that there are several academics who consider religious motives as being part and parcel of the definition of terrorism, although Roach (2015) clarifies that academics tend to differ on the inclusion of religious motives. This leads to an important question: should religious or political motives be included in the definition? Roach (2015) argues that these motives should be removed from the definition as this would necessitate that a bombing or killing of civilian targets without an explicit religious motive would be exempt from being labelled as a terrorist act.

On the contrary, Saul (2008), a contemporary of Roach, argues that religious motives are vital in the definition of terrorism so to differentiate between ‘private and public and to respond to the phenomena of terrorism’ (Roach, 2015, p.47). Roach (2015) disputes this position by arguing that one can distinguish between the ‘private and public’ without having to rely on certain motives being mentioned in the definition (p.7). Roach (2015) ends his essay with a very important point, namely, that the inclusion of religious and/or political motives ‘play(s) into dangerous ideas that the war against terrorism is a war against Islam’ (p.48). This could be a possible reason why many find it difficult to differentiate between terrorism and *Jihad* .

Suhaimi (2008), a professor at the Islamic University of Medinah, has had the important job of deradicalizing *Jihadists* in Saudi Arabia. He does this by

engaging in dialogue and debate so as to remove misunderstandings concerning *Jihad* fought in the wrong manner. After acknowledging that academics have differed regarding the definition of terrorism, he proffers the opinion of the former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz, who asserts that terrorists are those who kill and harm the general public and disrupt safety within the society, so causing problems for governments. This definition resembles that offered by Roach (2015).

Thus, to conclude, owing to Ibn Baz's, Roach's and Shanahan's holistic approach to the term terrorism, this research will define terrorism, or a terrorist, as they define it. To be precise, a terrorist is someone who aims to instil fear and cause harm to the general public in order to achieve their objectives; furthermore, this research will also consider a terrorist, as Roach (2015) puts it, as someone who 'compel(s) a government or international organisations to act' (p.41).

Conflation between the terms *Jihad* and terrorism is often present within the works of academics (Moniruzzaman, 2008). An example of this is seen in Voortman (2015), in a piece entitled '*Terrorism in Europe: Explaining the disparity in the number of foreign fighters between European countries*'. Voortman (2015) offers a very narrow understanding of the term ' ' and this is because *Jihad* , in the sense of warfare, might be misinterpreted as impelling authority to act; in reality, a deeper and more holistic understanding of *Jihad* is required to distinguish between the correct Islamic understanding of *Jihad* and those interpretations proffered as justification for acts of terrorism. In the next section, I will explore the definition of *Jihad* .

2.3 Definition of *Jihad*

Nilsen & Hara (2017) proffer that even though the term '*Jihad* ' has been the subject of much research, it is nonetheless a term not well understood by academics, a point reiterated by Heck (2004). Furthermore, Nilsen & Hara (2017) assert that the academic literature is 'inconsistent in its application of the term' (p. 292). This is largely due to misinformation portrayed by the media creating confusion among the masses (Dan et al, 2021)

Joseph Spoerl (2020), a professor of Philosophy, has written numerous articles exploring the notion of *Jihad*. In his article, entitled, *The aim of Warfare in Al Waqidi's kitab al-Maghazi*, Spoerl (2018) quotes the translated work of Faizer and Rippin who state as follows:

In classical Islamic law *Jihad* is missionary warfare. It is directed against infidels, who need not be guilty of any act of hostility against Muslims (their very existence is a cause of war), and its aim is to incorporate the infidels in the abode of Islam, preferably as converts, but alternatively as dhimmi's, until the whole world is subdued. (p.214)

Spoerl (2020) claims that there are many examples throughout the biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that show how *Jihad* can be used in an offensive form, and so force conversion to Islam. Nonetheless, Spoerl is either unaware of the context of many of the events he provides as evidence or else conveniently opts to disregard the full story behind the events being conveyed. Furthermore, Spoerl (2020) employs selective verses from the Qur'an regarding *Jihad* but fails to note other very important verses that offer a different account. This methodology, or the lack of it, is what often results in Islam and the Prophet ﷺ being portrayed in a highly aggressive manner. Similar to Spoerl (2020), Hughbank's¹ et al (2011) writing, entitled, *The Phenomenon Known as Terrorism*, makes sweeping generalisations not only about *Jihad* but about Islam as a whole (Jefferis, 2011), which are also found in Gregg (2014). It is extremely important to note that Hughbank (2011) holds no formal educational qualifications in the study of Islam. His assertions are not only generalised but can be said to be incorrect. As such, they inhibit efforts to find solutions to the problem of terrorism. As an example, Hughbank (2011) states that holy war is 'an effort to eliminate all infidels (non-believers)' (p.32). He goes on to say that *Jihad* has a long history in Islam, and its ultimate goal is to eliminate or enslave all non-Muslims. Further to this, Hughbank (2011) claims that all four Islamic Madhabs define *Jihad* as 'global takeover.' He goes on to make another sweeping statement by saying that 'the Islamic religion, as printed by the angel Gabriel from the words of Allah and

¹ Richard Hughbank is a former Major in the US army and a combat veteran in the War on Terror. He has a academic background, having completed two masters within the field of security and mental health, furthermore, he has a graduate certificate in Terrorism studies, he also has a long list of professional certificates related to terrorism and security. It is important to note Hughbank does not carry any educational certificates in the study of Islam.

prophesied by Muhammad, teaches all Muslims that infidels are less than humans' (p.39); he concludes by saying 'the Islamic religion preaches hatred' (p.43). An independent critical review made by Jefferis (2011) concludes that the arguments made by him in this particular book are 'uneven, anecdotal' and 'methodologically weak' (p.119) and that they lack 'data and analysis where the authors provide observation and opinion' (p.119). His conclusion is that it is a weak source for purposes of reference. While reading the works by Spoerl (2018) and Hughbank's (2011), it is hard to question Lovat's (2018) argument regarding the need for in depth understanding of Islam and *Jihad*, granted that having knowledge of Islam and valid understandings of *Jihad* is part of what might allow for effective methods of counter terrorism to emerge. Definitions resembling that of Hughbank's (2011) require deeper reviewing. To this end, this thesis will continue to explore relevant and valid definitions of *Jihad*

Contrary to Spoerl (2018) and Hughbank (2011), Professor Joel Hayward, the former head of Air Power Studies at King's College and the Dean of the Royal Air Force College in the UK, has written extensively about warfare within Islam. Hayward has authored articles entitled, *Qur'anic Concepts of the Ethics of Warfare: Challenging the Claims of Islamic Aggressiveness* (2010) and *War is Deceit: An Analysis of a Contentious Hadith on the Morality of Military Deception* (2017). He asserts that the methods employed by the Prophet represent normal tactics that are used in warfare, so they should not be read as representing anything beyond those norms. A recent book by Hayward (2021) entitled, *The Leadership of Muhammad – A Historical Reconstruction*, explores numerous leadership skills that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had, including his military and diplomatic leadership. Additionally, his work is strengthened by the fact that Hayward (2021) explores each leadership skill in its context. Therefore, the Prophet's military leadership skill is explored from a military context and not merely seen as vicious attacks being made by a man who wanted to subdue the world to his command.

Firestone (1999), unlike Hughbank, suggests that *Jihad* is generally understood as holy war that is 'divinely sanctioned' (p.3). Furthermore, Firestone (1999) alludes to the linguistic understanding of the term and emphasizes that there are different types of *Jihad* :

There are, therefore, many kinds of *Jihad* , and most have nothing to do with warfare. (p.17)

Firestone (1999) then unequivocally states:

Jihad thus cannot be equated semantically with holy war, for its meaning is much broader, includes many activities unrelated to warfare. (p.18)

Firestone (1999) attempts to take not a single strand regarding *Jihad* by saying ‘all of these approaches, whether polemical, apologetic, or revivalist, have distorted their representations by singling out only one trend’ (p.4). Additionally, Firestone (1999) explores the concept of warring in the pre-Islamic era; he asserts that the notion of fighting on behalf of God is something recognised in Judaism and Christianity, well before Islam’s origins. This point is echoed by Hashmi (2012).

Cook (2015) asserts that the definition of *Jihad* as holy war is rejected by many Muslims; he notes the definition in the Encyclopaedia of Islam which is as follows:

In law, according to general doctrine and in historical tradition, the *Jihad* consists of military action with the object of the expansion of Islam and, if need be, of its defence. (p.2)

Cook (2015) explores *Jihad* from a historical perspective, identifying some of the battles that took place in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, albeit skimming only the surface of significant periods of the lifetime. One may argue that his intention was not to spend too much time on the historical perspective. Nevertheless, he falls into the error of conflating different terms, namely through his usage of the terms Salafi, *Jihad* and naming certain extremist ideologues such as Bin Laden. For Cook (2015), the terms and names fall into one category, one that refers to *Jihad* as an outer struggle using warfare. I will discuss this troubling conflation of terms further below.

Notably, Rothman (2018) and Knapp (2003) agree with Cook (2015) in his definition of *Jihad*; they both assert that the term *Jihad* does not mean holy war but that the word *Jihad* denotes struggle or striving (in the way of God) or to work for a noble cause with determination. Knapp (2003), in similar vein to Cook,

attempts to investigate the term from an historical perspective, attempting to encapsulate over 1000 years in a few pages. This does not give the reader a solid idea of how *Jihad* was recognised throughout a very rich Islamic history. Knapp (2003) states that ‘most Islamic theologians and jurists in the classical period (the first three centuries) of Muslim history understood this obligation to be in a military sense (p.83). This could be seen as a generalised statement as it leads the reader to believe that most theologians do not recognise the other forms of *Jihad* and it seems that Knapp (2003) has glazed over the importance of holistic understanding of the term.

Opposingly, Afsaruddin (2017) deals with the term *Jihad* in a more holistic manner than her contemporaries in her essay entitled *Orientalists, Militants, and the Meanings of Jihad* and she effectively repels misunderstandings of *Jihad* by quoting verses from the Qur’an and Hadeeth². She begins by affirming that *Jihad* is a concept that is widely misunderstood and therefore misused; she mentions that whoever believes that *Jihad* is exclusively for the aggressive form of struggle has misunderstood the reality of ‘a core concept in Islam’ (Afsaruddin, 2017, p.1). Afsaruddin (2018) looks at the linguistic meaning of the word, arguing that ‘specific social and political circumstances’ have ‘mediated the meanings of this critical term’ (p.1). Thus, she makes an effort to provide a holistic understanding of the word *Jihad*. Suhaymi (2008) also asserts that the term *Jihad* connotes two understandings, one general and the other specific. The general understanding *Jihad* refers to the submitting to Allaah’s religion and striving to follow the laws set down by Allaah and his Messenger. Meanwhile, the specific *Jihad* refers to the spreading of the religion of Islam to non-believers. If they resist, they should pay a tax (Jizyah) and if they resist paying the tax, then they can be fought. It is clear from both Suhaymi (2010) and Afsaruddin (2017) that fighting non-believers is a last resort. Afsaruddin (2017) alludes to the fact that there are some academics, for example, Cook (2015), who promote the ideology that inner *Jihad*, the spiritual struggle to please Allaah, is a notion spoken about by Muslims and non-Muslims ‘to present Islam in the most innocuous manner possible’ (Cook, 2015; p.166).

² Prophetic narrations

Ibn Al Qayyim, a medieval Islamic theologian and the student of Ibn Taymiyyah, has written extensively about *Jihad*, states that the *Jihad* of the soul are of four types:

1. Striving to learn about guidance and the correct religion, there is no success nor happiness in this life and the hereafter except by it [learning about the religion].
2. Striving against the soul to act upon the knowledge sought after gaining it, verily knowledge without action, if it does not harm the person will not benefit him.
3. Striving against the soul in calling to it (correct religion) and teaching those who do not have knowledge...
4. Striving against it by having patience upon the difficulty of calling to it (correct religion) and persevere through the harm that he may come across while calling to it.

Similarly, Ibn Al Qayyim asserts ;

‘for this reason *Jihad* is of two types; *Jihad* that is fought by the hand and the sword, many participate in this type; and the second type is the *Jihad* by the way of proofs and clarifying, and this type of *Jihad* is specific for those who follow the Messengers, it is the *Jihad* of the Imaams, and it is [this type of *Jihad*] the better of the two types of *Jihad* because of the greatness of its benefit, the severity of its difficulty/distress, and the numerous amount of enemies. (Ibn Al Qayyim, 2010).

Ibn Al Qayyim states

‘striving [*Jihad*] against the disbelievers and the polytheists are of four types: by the heart, the tongue, money (financially), and body....

In conclusion, this section has shown that *Jihad* is a multi faceted term that cannot be taken out of context and needs to be understood holistically. However, to summarise, *Jihad* fall into two main sections, one outer and one inner, inner being the struggle against one’s desires, The outer *Jihad*, however, that is stressed and perhaps often misunderstood by so called *Jihadists* and some western academics, is the struggle against the disbelievers and polytheists as discussed by Ibn Al Qayyim (2010), Suyami (2008) and Afsaruddin (2017). Afsaruddin (2017) explains that striving for the sake of worshipping Allaah could be through using

wealth, or desires or, as more commonly understood, through military warfare. Thus, the word *Jihad* is to be understood in this multifaceted way as opposed to the monovalent term often found in the literature.

This section has ascertained that a lack of Islamic knowledge can result in a cloudy understanding of key terms associated with the topic of terrorism; it examined in particular the definition of *Jihad* and the narrow understanding presented by some literature. At the same time, more informed academics, including Ibn Al Qayyim (2009), Suhaymi (2010) and Asfaruddin (2017), have used primary sources such as the Quran and Hadeeth to build a holistic definition of the word *Jihad*. Consequently, this research will interpret *Jihad* by not just simply translating the word to denote struggle or striving in general but, rather, interpret it as a concept denoting struggling and striving for the sake of worshipping Allaah. Nonetheless, the word *Jihadist*, derived from misunderstandings of the word, *Jihad*, is understood differently in much literature. I will expound on this in the next section.

2.4 Islamism and its link to *Jihadism*

When the term '*Jihadism*' is used in the literature, what denotation is being proposed? As Sirgy, Estes and Rahtz (2018) explain, the word 'refers to a person who believes that an Islamic state governing the entire community of Muslims must be created and that this necessity justifies violent conflict with those who stand in its way' (p.48). Evidently, therefore, it refers to a person who strives to use military warfare as a means of worshipping Allaah. Such people are labelled as extremists by many academics, such as Habeck (2008) of Johns Hopkins University. She identifies *Jihadi* groups as centralising and concentrating on *Jihad* in the military sense as a main aim of their devotion to Islam. It seems clear that even within Islam, the subject of *Jihad* varies across each sect, some understanding it differently from others. I will expound on the role of different sects and their understandings below.

Denoeux (2002), a Professor in Middle Eastern policy, notes as follows:

Islamism, in short, is a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on reappropriated and reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition' (p.61).

This point is echoed by Ayoob (2004), a Professor of International Relations at Michigan State University, who asserts that Islamism is seen as a 'political ideology rather than a religious or theological (one)' (p.1). Additionally, Liow (2009) argues that Islamism 'is a decidedly political phenomenon' (p.6) that gives utmost emphasis to 'the establishment of an Islamic state' (p.6). The definitions proffered by Sirgy, Estes and Rahtz (2018) on *Jihadism* and, likewise, the definition of Islamism stated above, provide a possible link between the terms and Islamist. We find that both terms refer to either individuals or a group of Muslims who want to establish an Islamic State, on the one hand using violent conflict, and Islamist on the other hand in opting for the political route. Adraoui (2017) asserts that the *Jihadism*, those who would normally opt for violent conflict, have been 'compelled' (p.918) to resort to political solutions to achieve their aims. This would seem to necessitate that the so-called *Jihadists* should be labelled Islamists.

Raphaeli (2002) also contends that Zawahiri was heavily influenced by the works of Qutb. Sayyid Qutb was a 20th century secular intellectual- turned Islamic activist (Moaddel, 2014) and a former nationalist (Zimmerman, 2010). Zawahiri met Marc Schleifer, a Jewish news reporter, who had dipped his feet into Marxism before accepting Islam. Interestingly, when Zawahiri propagated his ideologies to Schleifer, who by now was a Muslim, he replied as follows:

Listen, Ayman, I'm an ex-Marxist, when you talk, I feel like I'm back in the party'. I don't feel as if I'm with a traditional Muslim. (p.264)

Furthermore, Zimmerman (2004) proposes that Bin Laden 'may have considered Al Qaeda the vanguard that Qutb called for' (p.240.) Evidently, an inclination towards Qutb's ideology is present within the political call that Zawahiri and Bin Laden propagated.

Hence, the terms *Jihadist* and *Islamist* are similarly mooted but it must be made clear which term this research will refer to so to remove any confusion. Ashour (2011), a Lecturer in Politics in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, provides a suitable definition for the term, *Islamist*, in his work that has made a study of Islamist movements; he distinguishes between the different types of Islamists, some who use *Jihad* for their political aims. He identifies two types of Islamist, one moderate and one radical. Ashour (2011) states that the radical Islamists ‘ideologically reject democracy’ whereas moderate Islamists allow ‘electoral democracy’ (p. 4); furthermore, he states the following:

Radical Islamist movements can use violent and non-violent methods to achieve their goals’ whereas, moderate Islamists ‘shun violent methods to achieve their goals’ (p.4), finally, he concludes by asserting that radical Islamists are also referred to as ‘revolutionaries, extremists or exclusivists’ (p.4)

The term violent radical Islamist is thus seen to depict extremists. Ashour (2011), in a later chapter, deliberates on the term within the context of Islamism. He clarifies that *Jihadism* is a ‘radical ideology within Islamism that stresses the use of violence’ as a ‘method of political and social change’ and is also characterised by the ‘rejection of democracy’ (p.8). These *Jihadists* have commonalities with the ideologies of Mussolini and Stalin. As Boverkerk (2011) argues:

Mussolini wanted corporations to deal with the economy, under his authority with no parliamentary control; fascism was violent from the start; like communism, national-socialism and islamism, fascism is a political ideology (p.13)

This point of view was shared by Hansen and Kainz (2007):

The first task should be to unmask the ideology of radical Islamism by showing that its true nature is not striving for a renaissance of Islamic values, but that it is a distortion of these values, inspired by the western ideologies like National Socialism and Communism. (p.72)

Hansen and Kainz (2007) go on to state that ‘radical Islamism is not simply an aggressive variant of Islamic belief, but an interpretation of the Qur'an in modern categories’ (p.71).

Interestingly, a number of academics have also noted the link between *Jihadism* and communism, Leninism, and even Marxism, such as found in the work of Qutb, a man branded as ‘the philosopher of Islamic terror’ (Falk, 2008, p.52). Wright (2007), whilst talking about the rise of ISIS, suggests that ‘Milestones’ (2006), a book written by Qutb while in prison, has a ‘ringing apocalyptic tone (that) may be compared with Rousseau’s *The social contract* and Lenin’s *What is to be done?* – with similar bloody consequences’ (p. 29). A similar point was proffered by Livingstone (2013), who said that ‘Qutb’s idea of a revolutionary vanguard of militant believers does not have an Islamic origin’ (p.387). Hama (2021) asserts in an article entitled ‘A comparison between Marxism and Islamic State’s Salafi Jihadism’ that there are numerous similarities between Marxism and Islamic State, however, falls into the classic mistake of conflating between many terms such as Salafism, Qutubism and *Jihadism*.

Caha (2003) was another advocate for this viewpoint; however, the merit of his essay becomes apparent when he explains the possible reason why Qutb would have rejected the Islamic perspective by saying:

When realizing that traditional interpretation of Islam fell short of enabling the deployment of adequate means by which to resolve existing problems, they began to borrow concepts and perspectives from Russian socialism, which was anticapitalist and antiliberalist in character, to develop an Islamic myth as an alternative. (p. 45)

Therefore, according to these academics, in Qutb’s eyes, there was no Islamic answer to the problems that the Muslims faced and therefore they turned to philosophies outside of Islam to fulfil their ideology but nonetheless employing Islamic terminology. Consequently, we can begin to understand that the ideologies of Qutb, albeit that it is Leninism in an Islamic thobe, have trickled through and formed the nucleus of the terrorist activities we suffer today (Ashour, 2011). An important point to note is that is it these finer nuances that differentiate between sects such as Qutubism and Salafism, such theological and historical differences are not understood by some academics such as Hama (2021) and Just (2015). I will discuss this in more detail further on in this chapter.

Alternatively, Al Muhaymeed (2015) proffers that those who have a radical ideology and stress the use of violence should be referred to as the *Khawarij* rather than as *Jihadists*. In his in-depth research about the history of the *Khawarij*, he determines that this ideology existed very early on in Islamic history and has continued through time. Al Muhaymeed strengthens this point by identifying over fifty similarities between the *Khawarij* of old and the *Khawarij* of the present day, including characters like Bin Laden and Zawahiri. Likewise, Sonn and Farrar (2008) state that the *Khawarij* were ‘the first identifiable sect in Islam’ (p.1) and that ‘The extreme Kharijite position was that Muslims who commit grave sins effectively reject their religion, entering the ranks of apostates, and therefore deserve capital punishment’ (p.1). They go on to mention that the *Khawarij* ‘launched periodic military attacks against mainstream Muslim centers’ (p.1). Therefore, according to Muhaymeed (2015) and Sonn and Farrar (2008), the correct term to label this radical sect of Islam would be *Khawarij*. While Muhaymeed (2015) concentrates on the similarities of the *Khawarij* of the past and present, Sonn and Farrar (2008) offer concise insight into the history of the *Khawarij*. Both pieces of research make good use of classical Islamic literature on the *Khawarij*.

Therefore, referring to the terrorists as Islamists or *Jihadists* may have some merits as aforementioned (Adraoui, 2017; Ashour 2011; Boverkerk, 2011), however this research study will not use these terms because they give the impression that terrorism has a link to Islam (Powell, 2018). As illustrated above, the term that depicts them more accurately is *Khawarij* and thus this will be the term that I will be using in my research. Although these groups have been identified as a reason for terrorist activity, it is pivotal to mention the group known as the *Salafis* that are often linked to the *Khawarij* ideology. I will now move to discuss this matter.

2.5 *Khawarij* (Kharajites) and Salafism

Salafism is a term that has been heavily linked with terrorism and extremism. Just (2015), while referring to Islam in Germany, states that ‘the Islamic sect of

“Salafiyyah” preaches together with restoration of “authentic Islam”, a radical anti- western strategy of violent *Jihad* ’ (p.49). He goes on to state that terrorism is a method seen by the Salafist as central to achieving their purposes. This point was echoed by Banloi (2009) who asserts that ‘Wahhabism and Salafism are systems of belief that are said to have vigorously informed the terrorist attacks of Osama bin Laden’ (p.195). Ashour (2011) states that the ‘*Jihadists* mostly use selective and literal Salafi interpretations of Islamic sources, hence the term “Salafi-.”’ (p. 8). Thus, as the association of terrorism and Salafism, similar to the above, is rife in the literature, I believe it is an imperative to define Salafism as accurately as possible.

Dr Muhammad Amaan Al Jaami (2008), a former lecturer at the Islamic University of Medinah, states that Salafiyyah [Salafism] is a term that is used to refer to those who follow the first generation [companions of the Messenger] and comprehend the religion according to their understanding. Bin Ali (2019) defined Salafism in the following way: ‘Salafis are those who follow in the footsteps of the Salaf [the pious predecessors] who, in turn, follow the book [Qur’an] and the Sunnah [Prophetic narrations] and act according to them’ (p.64). Inge (2016) suggests that Salafism ‘simply refers to an attachment to the pious forefathers of Islam’ (p.8). Meanwhile, Heffelfinger (2011) offers the following:

And the appeal and persuasive force of Salafi doctrine lies in the seeming simplicity of its message – the Qur’an and Sunna, the acts and sayings of the Prophet, along with the consensus of the pious predecessors, form the sole body of law by which mankind should be governed. (p.1)

From these definitions, it becomes clear that Salafism is an ideology that gives importance to the Qur’an and Hadeeth alongside the understanding of the companions. The simple understanding of Salafism refers to practising the religion in the way that pious predecessors practised it and thus refers back to the early generation of Islam as opposed to the new ideologies or interpretations surfacing within contemporary Islam.

As Ulph (2010) clearly identifies, there is an array of groups that associate themselves with the Salafi methodology and thus, as he states, there is a spectrum of Salafis. He notes in his analysis of the ‘*Jihadi*’ curriculum that it may be wise

to differentiate between the different Salafi sects so as to recognize the very sect that propagates extremist and terrorist ideology. Ulph (2010) states ‘that the use of the term “Salafism” is inadvisable since it gives the *Jihadist* the respectability of a label of a pious group of reformers’ (p.10). Therefore, he stays with the term *Jihad i*, as opposed to *Salafi-Jihadi*, that Ashour (2011) and other academics refer to.

Wiktorowicz (2005), in his article, *A Genealogy of Radical Islam*, identifies four major points of contention among those who associate themselves with Salafism: (1) whether Muslims can call leaders apostates and wage *Jihad* against them; (2) the nature of a “defensive” and global *Jihad* ; (3) the permissibility of targeting civilians; and (4) the legitimacy of suicide bombings. Interestingly, a well-known sect in Islam, known as the *Khawarij*, advocate these beliefs. Importantly, the *Khawarij* opposed the fourth Caliph of Islam, Ali Ibn Abi Talib.

If we were to compare the ideology of Salafism and the *Khawarij*, we would detect a slight problem, especially when we have to differentiate between terrorism and *Jihad* , as aforementioned; as Roach (2015) asserts, the definition of terrorism includes the ‘murder and maiming of civilians’ (p.97), whereas the Salafi creed does not allow the harming of civilians; this point is alluded to by Wagemakers (2016), who notes that the Salafis of Jordan ‘greatly distance themselves from the *Khawarij*’ (p. 197). Similarly, the *Khawarij* allow for rebelling against rulers while the Salafi doctrine condemns it (Bakareem, 2008). This gives rise to the notion that Salafists believe *Jihad* to be an important part of the religion but, at the same time, do not condone terrorist activities, and thus are not terrorists by definition.

Therefore, to state that *Jihadists*, or the *Khawarij*, are holistically Salafi would be linguistically, historically and theologically incorrect, a stance taken by Al Fawzan (2007) and, similarly, Ibn Ali (2019), who asserts that ‘*Jihad i*-Salafi used to describe violent IS fighters is misleading and needs to be corrected’ (bin Ali, 2019; p.2). This is further supported by Ulph (2010) who states that it is inadvisable to connect the term Salafi with the term *Jihadist*. Thus, this research will accept the argument that *Jihadis* are not Salafis and a more correct sect with which to identify them would be the *Khawarij*. This term is important to note

because this research on Ibn Taymiyyah, a prominent figure to *Jihadists*, will consider his views on this sect of the *Khawarij*. Before moving to this, it is important to discuss the term *Khawarij* in greater detail.

2.5.1 Definition and History of *Khawarij*

As noted above, the *Khawarij* have a long history and are considered to be one of the earliest sects in Islam (Al Muhaymeed, 2015; Sonn & Farrar, 2008). Islamic theologians past and present have endeavoured to define the term *Khawarij*. Abu Al Hasan Ash'ari, a medieval Islamic theologian, asserts that 'the reason why they are referred to as the *Khawarij*, [was because of] their rebellion against Ali Ibn Abi Talib' (1990, vol 1, p. 207). Shihristani (2014), a medieval Islamic theologian, also wrote extensively regarding the different sects in Islam. Sonn and Farrar (2008) state that Shihristani (2014) 'generally relies on earlier sources' (p.1), however, it should be noted that there are important differences within his work. Shihristani (2014) defines the *Khawarij* by suggesting the following:

Whoever rebels against the leader that the Muslims agree upon is referred to as *Khaaraji*, whether [this rebellion] took place in the time of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or against any leader after them [the companions]' (2014, vol 1, page 84).

Shihristani (2014) asserts that this group excommunicated the Fourth Caliph, Ali, for leaving off the ruling of Allaah and prescribing his own judgement to resolve an issue between two sets of people. Intriguingly, he states that Ali, the fourth Caliph, fought this rebellious group in the infamous battle of Nahrawan, and many of them were killed. Bakareem (2008) goes on to identify some of the main characteristics of the *Khawarij* which have a worryingly chilling similarity with the *Khawarij* of today. Bakareem (2008) states that among their ideologies, one is to excommunicate any person who errs and falls into major sin. Furthermore, among their ideologies *Khawarij* is one that says any person who falls into major sin will enter the fire forever. This point was also proffered by Sonn and Farrar (2008).

2.5.2 Hadeeth on *Khawarij*

Reference towards the *Khawarij* is made by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and in numerous narrations he clearly warned against them. The following are examples of such cases:

The first hadeeth is a narration collected by Al Imam Al Bukhari³ in the chapter ‘signs of Prophet hood’ where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated “there will be a group of people who will come towards of time, they will be young in age, deficient in intellect, their speech will resemble the best of speeches, they will read the Qur’an and it will not go past their throats, they will leave the religion like the arrow leaves the game, if you meet them, then fight them for verily in the fighting of them is a great reward with Allaah on the day of resurrection.”

Another narration of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Abu Ghalib stated that when Abu Ummamah⁴ saw the Azariqah⁵ he shed tears, and said “dogs of the fire[three times], they are the worst of those under the sky that are killed and the ones who killed by them are the best of those under the sky, so I [Abu Ghalib] said “so why do you shed tears” and he replied “out of mercy for them, they used to be Muslim” so we said “are you talking out of conjecture, or is it something you heard the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ say, he replied “something I heard the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ saying not once, twice or thrice but many times” (At Tabarani, 2008, vol 1, hadeeth no. 42).

Interestingly, Al Muhaymeed (2015) gathers sixty-eight similarities between the *Khawarij* of the past and what is deemed by the west as the *Jihadist*. I believe it will be good to state a number of similarities. Muhaymeed (2015) states that the *Khawarij* of old and the present depend heavily on the principle that whoever rules by other than the rule of Allaah then they are deemed to be non-Muslims. He goes on to state that this was the very principle used to excommunicate the fourth Caliph, Ali Ibn Abi Talib and likewise the *Khawarij* of today; Abu Qatadah, Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi and others use the same principal centuries later⁶.

Furthermore, he states that the *Khawarij* of the past and present seem to not give any importance to seeking Islamic Knowledge nor do they give any importance to

³ Sahih Al Bukhari, hadith no. 6930

⁴ A companion of the Prophet Muhammad

⁵ An off shoot of the *Khawarij*

⁶ I will discuss this in chapter 2 in more detail

scholars of Islam. If one was to explore Islamic literature, they would find a story of when Ibn Abbas, a companion of the Messenger, requested permission from Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who was the fourth Caliph at that time, to go and debate the *Khawarij* who had split off from the main Muslim congregation. Ibn Abbas comments noting that there was not a single companion of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ siding with the *Khawarij* although the companions were the most knowledgeable of the religion as they were the students of the Messenger. The *Khawarij* of today, for example, Abu Qatadah was unashamed of stating the mujahideen of today were in no need of the scholars of Islam. His reasoning was that the fighters had more experience in *Jihad* and have more right in giving Islamic verdicts. However, suicide missions, stealing and allowing the killing of innocent civilians is something Islam as a religion has not allowed whether in the context of *Jihad* or not. We find that those *Khawarij* of today are devoid of any background in Islamic knowledge. Bin Laden and Zawahiri and those of their ilk are clear examples of this, as they lack any formal Islamic education.

Another example of a similarity is that the two agree that it is permitted to spill the blood of the Dhimmi⁷. The literature on The Azariqah, an offshoot of the *Khawarij*, states that it is permissible to spill the blood of the Dhimmi (Al Muhaymeed, 2015). As for the *Khawarij* of our time, they follow the same understanding. Abu Baseer, one of the *Khawarij* in our time, wrote a short treatise entitled '*Irshad alhayara fi ibaha dimaa An Nasara fi Jazeerat al 'Arab*'⁸. The very title makes apparent his ideology, the objective of the treatise is to persuade its audience about the permissibility to kill non-Muslims who are in a contract or pact with Muslims and how spilling their blood is permitted in Islam. He substantiates this by stating that the non-Muslim did not pay tax so therefore his pact is null and void. Similarly, he states that the visa was given by a non-Muslim which also nullifies the pact. It is clear that this person has no knowledge of the rulings pertaining to the Dhimmi and has chosen to neglect very important phases in Islamic history.

Notably, the *Khawarij* of the past and present seem to pinpoint their monetary rights. In the time of the Messenger, a man known as Dhu Khuwaysara became

⁷ A Jew or a Christian living under a Muslim ruler or have a contract/pact with Muslims

⁸ Refer to Al Muhaymeed (2015)

angry with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for not getting what he believed was his monetary right. Some scholars state that he was the first of the *Khawarij*. At Tawhidi (1988) mentions a story of a man who came to Hasan Al Basri, one of the great Islamic scholars of the past, and asked him about the *Khawarij* so he replied that he only saw them as people pursuing worldly affairs, when Al Hasan Basri was asked why he believed that the *Khawarij* were only chasing the worldly affairs he stated that the rulers have not prevented us from worshipping Allah so therefore it must that the *Khawarij* were prevented from their monetary rights that has led them to rebel against the rulers. If we were to compare this to the *Khawarij* of today, then one will find that they also gave lot of precedence to monetary issues. An example is Faris Az Zahrani who states that the leaders are enjoying themselves in luxury palaces and overseas bank balances and looting from the Muslim population and he uses this as an excuse to attack, excommunicate and fight against them.

Another similarity is seen in the acceptance of killing women and children. The books of history and likewise theology⁹ narrate many stories of how the *Khawarij* spilt the blood of woman and children. Aforementioned are quotes from Ayman Zawahiri, Abu Qatadah and others who permitted the slaughtering of women and children. This is evident in an article written for the paper Ash Shurooq¹⁰. Within this article, some of the *Khawarij* who surrendered themselves to the Algerian government stated that the reasons why they surrendered themselves included that their butchering of women and children was made permissible by Abu Qatadah.

Sonn and Farrar (2009) assert that among the ideologies of the *Khawarij* is one that suggests whoever falls into a grave sin is considered to be out of the religion and hence it is permissible to launch attacks against them. This point is echoed by Kadivar (2020)

Therefore, there are several ideologies that have been extracted from the works of the *Khawarij*. The literature which has been made available on the internet to a very large audience is worrying. The ease with which the *Khawarij* are able to spill the blood of innocent civilians and excommunicate Muslims is clear. The

⁹ Al Farq bayna Firaq of Ibn Hazm Al Andalus

¹⁰ Paper no.1120, p.3

anarchy which has prevailed is a direct result of what these *Khawarij* desired when authoring these pieces of literature. Their use of Ibn Taymiyyah and his literature strengthens the position of the *Jihadists* and gives the layperson an understanding that terrorist activities plotted by these *Jihadists* are in fact Islamic. Significantly, we found that this mentality does not represent a new set of ideologies being proposed by the likes of Zawahiri, Bin Laden and others but, in fact, it represents a deep-seated history rooted in Islam's foundations.

Consequently, it is incumbent to explore thoroughly the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and especially his *fatawa* used by the *Khawarij* to gain a better picture of the ideologies that Ibn Taymiyyah had. Therefore, the next chapter will consist of an in-depth exploration of the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah.

One last definition which contributes to this important discussion of *Jihadist* and *Jihadism* is that of extremism.

2.6 Definition of Extremism

Eatwell and Goodwin (2010) state that extremism has become a nebulous term that has many different interpretations. This point was reiterated by Saada (2022). Perhaps this may be due to the fact that such a word is subjective. One person's extremism may in fact be a normality to another. Thus, it is important that the context of the definition be identified (Kilp, 2011).

As this research is primarily based in the UK, to define the context, a good place to start would be by looking at the definition of extremism by the British Government. Scarcella et al. (2016), in an article exploring the methodologies used to report the soundness of the instrument developed to identify risk factors of extremism and terrorism, mention the definition of the British Government by saying that extremism is 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs' (p.2) However, Scarcella et al. (2016) seem to have accepted the definition of the British Government without scrutinizing different definitions before delving into possible risk factors. For this reason, Shepherd (2017) identifies some flaws in the definition by Scarcella et al.

(2016). She mentions that the term “fundamental values” is problematic as it is ‘depending on who is articulating the phrase, where and when (p.69),’ and concludes, troublingly, that there is no agreed definition of extremism. Shepherd (2017) investigates several important issues. First, the link between extremism and freedom of speech; she concludes that the term extremism is subjective and therefore one person’s right of freedom of speech may impinge on another person’s definition of extremism; trying to understand the reality of freedom of speech as a fundamental right of any person in society is the right to express themselves and thus defining extremism must seek to avoid this conflict. Second, she addresses the link between extremism and terrorism and argues that many conflate the two terms, whereas, she suggests that while extremism might be one of the roots of terrorism, it is only a partial contributor. She alludes to other possible factors, such as social, economic and psychological reasons.

Van der Weert and Eijkman (2018) attempt to investigate the difficulties that youth workers face in trying to detect extremism among youth. They agree with Shepherd (2017) that there is no consensus on the definitions of extremism and that there is a differentiation between extremism and terrorism. However, Van der Weert and Eijkman (2018) quote Bartlett and Miller who suggest that ‘extremism, conventionally, refers to deviations from a norm’ (Van der Weert and Eijkman, 2018, p.192). This would depend on who was ‘articulating’ the term and where. One would have to define ‘norm’ in order to fathom how a person could deviate from it; Van der Weert and Eijkman’s (2018) findings suggested that youth workers were not able to discern actions that transgress the norm due to the broad definitions of extremism. They state that ‘it is this lack of definitional clarity which leaves practitioners unsure of how exactly to perceive the potential violent or risky behaviour we want to be forethoughtful of (p.3).’ For this reason, it is vital to have an agreement, or come to some conclusion, on what extremism and other related terms mean so as to assess strategies in combatting terrorism.

Botticher (2017), in her essay entitled ‘*Towards Academic Consensus Definitions of Radicalism and Extremism*’, notes several differences between radicalism and extremism in an effort to formulate a definition of these ambiguous terms. She mentions that ‘extremism is, by its very nature, anti-democratic; it seeks to abolish constitutional democracy and the rule of law (p.75).’ She also asserts that it is

being ‘extreme in both its goals and the choice of means to reach them’ (p.75), and that it is ‘linked to an irrational, usually religious and fanatical belief system, that claims a monopoly of truth on the basis of which it seeks to transform society according to its retrograde vision’ (p.76). However, the very basis of the points made by Botticher (2017), along with the aforementioned definitions, reveals a significant flaw highlighted by Kilp (2011). Namely, the definition of extremism and radicalisation are to a large extent subjective as they ‘vary cross-culturally and are subject to change’ and thus depend on ‘culture, time and context’ (p.12); this is the very point that is echoed by Shepherd (2017). Consequently, when exploring the definition of extremism, it is necessary that we look at the context which we are exploring. This research seeks to specify extremism within Islam as it is for this reason that some sects in Islam use *Jihad* as a means of violence and terror around the world. Thus, it is vital that we specify the term extremism within this context.

Al Luwayhiq (2006) explores the concept of extremism within Islam in his in-depth three volume PhD dissertation. He initiates the discussion by defining the term linguistically in the Arabic language as ‘*ghulu*,’ he states that extremism means to transgress the bounds. He then specifies it further by exploring the Islamic perspective on extremism. He states that extremism in the religion is to transgress the bounds set within the Qur’an and Hadeeth. He asserts that there are two types of extremism within Islam, the first type is an ideological transgression, and the other is a transgression in one’s actions and worship.

When explicating ideological transgression, Al Luwayhiq (2006) asserts that it is ‘extremism in the comprehensive principles of the Shariah¹¹,’ (p.24). He proffers examples of this type of transgression, including the excommunication¹² of Muslims, an issue that is infamously known to be misunderstood by the *Khawarij* and which leads them to commit atrocities against innocent civilians which undoubtedly is a transgression of bounds set within the Qur’an. He further states that the prohibition of extremism is an issue that is clearly stated in the Qur’an

¹¹ Shariah: Islamic legislation

¹² The Islamic term being Takfeer, which is to proclaim that someone is no longer Muslim.

and Hadeeth thus according to him the *Khawarij* ideologically oppose the core of the creed of the salaf (pious predecessors).

Similarly, Dr. Burjis (2004) indicates that extremism falls into two categories, the same ones that were identified by Al-Luwayhiq (2006). Burjis (2004) further expounds on the first category being the more severe one, and that the clearest example of it is seen in the actions of the *Khawarij*. Their extremism has led them to three dangerous actions, the first being excommunicating Muslim leaders and then rebelling against them, second being excommunicating the general Muslim population and the third being spilling the blood of Muslims.

Al-Luwayhiq (2006) quotes Ibn Taymiyyah when expounding on extremism in ideology. He states that the ‘people of innovation fall into ignorance and innovation and they innovate into the religion which opposes the Quran and Hadeeth and the consensus of the companions, and they excommunicate those who oppose them.’(p. 26)

Thus, it is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah has criticized extremism, excommunication of Muslims and transgressing the bounds with regard to non-Muslims. Moreover, it is also clear from the literature that Ibn Taymiyyah is often held responsible for the extremist ideologies that are held by *Khawarij*. Therefore, there needs to be further research done in contradicting their beliefs and practices. Thus, I will discuss Ibn Taymiyyah’s work in later chapters.

In concluding this section, I clarify that the definition of extremism is highly subjective, necessitating a context that is often neglected. My own research study therefore focusses on extremism in the context of Islam where we find some Islamic sects employing the notion of *Jihad* as inspiring and impelling violence and terror around the world. My assertion is that by doing this, they fall into extremism and, rather than being inspired by Islamic law, they have actually transgressed its legitimate boundaries.

2.7 The Role of Ibn Taymiyyah

Amongst the array of literature that is circulated in the context described above, many have come to identify Ahmed Ibn Abdul Haleem Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328CE), a medieval Islamic scholar, as a main cause for the radical ideas that are embedded in Islamic State's (ISIS, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) ideology and similarly Al Qaeda and Boko Haram (Ahmedzai, 2021; Sageman, 2011; Sambo & Sule, 2021). They assert that Ibn Taymiyyah's educational literature promotes acts of terrorism (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004) (Mulcaire, 2013, p. 362). Ahmedzai (2021) states as follows:

This medieval-era controversial Islamic theologian wrote extensively on the legal and moral aspects of *Jihad* -related issues, including its obligatory rather than optional status, killing oneself, civilian casualties, and executing traitors. (p. 23)

However, Ahmedzai (2021) fails to quote Ibn Taymiyyah at all in his article, merely pointing to volumes 10, 20 & 28 of the compilation of his fatawa¹³.

Sageman (2011) suggests that Sayyid Qutb legitimized the revolt against the Egyptian ruler of his day, using the works of Ibn Abd Al Wahhab, an eighteenth century scholar from the Arabian Peninsula. Ibn Abd Al Wahhab was, in turn, influenced by the works of Ibn Taymiyyah. Sageman (2011) speaks of the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah against the Mongols; this fatwa, according to Sageman (2011), was taken out of context by Qutb, although Sageman fails to expand on this idea. He then proceeds to note the link between Bin Laden and Sayyid Qutb, once again noting that Bin Laden quotes Ibn Taymiyyah. Therefore, Sageman (2011), in his writing, '*Understanding Terror Networks*', clearly states that both Qutb and Bin Laden have taken the work of Ibn Taymiyyah as a basis for their actions.

Atwan (2013a) states that Ibn Taymiyyah was admired by both Bin Laden and Zawahiri and they, like others, consider 'him a role model' (p.71). He goes on to mention once again the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah against the Mongols, declaring them to be infidels for failing to 'adopt the shariah, holding instead to the Yasa codes of law brought to them by Gengis Khan' (p. 91). Furthermore, Atwan

¹³ Fatawa is the plural of fatwa (Islamic verdict)

(2013a) notes how Bin Laden referred to Ibn Taymiyyah in 1996 when he declared *Jihad* against the Americans. Therefore, Atwan (2013) proffers the view that Ibn Taymiyyah's educational literature propagates extremist actions. However, Atwan (2013a) goes on to mention that Ibn Taymiyyah 'was probably the first Salafi' (p.71), which demonstrates a lack of knowledge of Islamic history and theology. Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Al Hussain, also known as Al Ajurry, a 9th century Islamic scholar, mentions the term 'Salaf' in his book *kitab ash Shariah* (1999). He lived 3 centuries before Ibn Taymiyyah; he also mentions a narration of a 7th century Imam, Al Awzai, who stated: 'Upon you is the way of those who preceded you [Salaf] even if the people reject you' (Ajurry, 1999, v.1 p.445). If Atwan (2013) meant that Ibn Taymiyyah was the first to follow such an ideology then that is, as demonstrated chronologically above, historically incorrect. If he meant that Ibn Taymiyyah was the first to use the term 'Salafi', this is once again incorrect; therefore, it seems that Atwan (2013) misunderstands the concept of the word Salafi and what it entails, so raising doubts about his understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature.

Ingram (2013) alludes to a similar position as that of Atwan (2013), by noting that Ibn Taymiyyah was Bin Laden's 'most frequently cited ideologue' (p.194). Ingram (2013) also mentions that 'Bin Laden's charismatic narrative draws heavily upon Ibn Taymiyyah' (p.194). However, in Ingram's (2013) writing, the reader will notice several errors which highlight a weakness in Islamic knowledge. An example of this is when Ingram (2013) suggests 'Bin Laden's distinction between the major and minor kafir...' (p. 196). Kafir refers to a person who has left the fold of Islam; Islamic scholars refer to an action as either major kufr or minor, but not to a person. It is this type of confusion and conflating of terms that leads to misunderstandings.

Another to proffer that Sayyid Qutb was affected by Ibn Taymiyyah's work was DeLong-Bas (2008) by saying 'Bin Laden has given the most prominence to Ibn Taymiyyah in his writings on *Jihad*' (p.273). Bin Laden believed that Ibn Taymiyyah was the 'original inspiration of *Jihad* against a corrupt regime' (p.273). In addition to this, DeLong-Bas (2008) notes that the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah is visible in the works of Bin Laden. Westphal (2017) adds 'this is also true for ISIS, whose ideological concepts have their roots in the writings of

Islamic ideologues such as Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328)' (pp. 19-34). This quote clarifies that it was not only Bin Laden who quoted Ibn Taymiyyah but,, close to two decades on, we find extremists, such as Al Baghdadi, and extremist organisations, such as ISIS, quoting from the works of Ibn Taymiyyah also. This point is echoed by Barkindo (2013), who mentions Ibn Taymiyyah's views on the very important issue of *takfir* (excommunication) and states that ISIS quotes him extensively.

Contrary to this position, a number of academics free Ibn Taymiyyah from these claims. Kaminski (2017) argues as follows:

(Although) Ibn Taymiyyah is often identified as a foundational figure in contemporary Islamic extremist movements...if one looks carefully at the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, it is highly questionable as to whether these extremists are appropriately using Ibn Taymiyyah's words. (p.58)

This statement alludes to an interesting point of research but it would have been more beneficial if Kaminski (2017) had cited from Ibn Taymiyyah's primary sources to substantiate such points.

As it stands, Kaminski's statement could be based on mere conjecture. Similarly, Wood (2016) states that the anti-Mongol fatwa, which is widely used by Bin Laden and other extremists as an example, was taken out of context. Wood (2016), who authored the writing, *The Way of the Strangers*, seems to rush through events that occurred during the lifetime of Ibn Taymiyyah, events that would enable us to understand the context in which he gave his fatwa. If Ibn Taymiyyah's rulings against the Mongols is taken out of context, we should explore this context in depth in order to understand this fatwa.

Mulcaire (2013) was another who suggested that many academics have misunderstood Ibn Taymiyyah's work. She asserts 'there is little reason to suggest that the root of al-Qaeda's terrorism lies in the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya' (p.5). She further notes: 'by seeking to 'Mongolize' the governments of certain Muslim countries, al-Qaeda have disregarded the unique socio-historical context within which Ibn Taymiyya wrote' (p.5). Mulcaire (2013) suggests that there are several discrepancies between the works of Ibn Taymiyyah's and the

stance taken by Al-Qaeda but she does not expand on these points. Therefore, her article has highlighted various important points but its length prohibits her from developing her argument. In such an important topic, an in-depth study is required to really understand, as claimed, the differences between Ibn Taymiyyah's views and those of the terrorists.

Hassan (2016), similarly, attempts to delve into the philosophies propagated by Ibn Taymiyyah on the Caliphate. Whilst analysing these philosophies, Hassan (2016) explores the possibility of a link between Ibn Taymiyyah's literature and extremism, once again concluding that certain Islamists have marshalled some of his works to pave a way for their actions.

An academic who has spent a great deal of time exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah is Dr John Hoover in his essay, *Reconciling Ibn Taymiyya's Legitimation of Violence with His Vision of Universal Salvation*; Hoover (2012, 2019) brings forth interesting theories. Hoover (2012) suggests that the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah lends itself to diverse uses, therefore, according to Hoover (2012), this literature can be utilized in different ways, explaining how it can lend itself to the cause of the *Jihadist*. Hoover (2016) expounds on the context in which Ibn Taymiyyah gave his fatwa to wage *Jihad* against the Mongols. He clarifies that he had reason to believe that the Mongols in the 14th century were apostates and thus this provided sufficient reason for waging war against them. Nonetheless, Hoover (2012) does not mention a number of important rulings found in Ibn Taymiyyah's other works regarding non-combatants and the like in this particular work, something which the extremists also decide to overlook; by exploring these views of Ibn Taymiyyah, we may find a solution to the issue being raised in this thesis. There is academic literature that pinpoints Ibn Taymiyyah's literature as a source for terrorism and extremism. I stress the importance of delving into such research.

Having said this, Michot (2011) has spent a great deal of time exploring the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and concludes that many extremists have misunderstood him and taken his work out of context. In fact, Michot (2011) states that Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa against the Mongols was misused by the extremists, specifically by Abd As Salaam Faraj and Abdullah Azzam. Michot (2011) presents

the fatwa in relation to six modern readings; this is a very important step to analysing how certain extremists comprehended Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa, however, Michot (2011) does not scrutinise the words of the extremists and how, if any, differences can be found between their stance and the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah.

It is clear that the literature and academics are divided in their understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah, however, it seems that the stronger and more conclusive opinion lies with those who claim that Ibn Taymiyyah's literature is used improperly or rather has been manipulated to suit the creed of the extremists; as the historical context is lacking within these works, I believe it is imperative to explore the actual works of Ibn Taymiyyah to come to a conclusion on exactly what his views were on *Jihad* and his views on non-combatants, as this is what the *Jihadists* quote as a justification for violent extremism. Furthermore, understanding his work could possibly be used as a tool for counter terrorism. As it is clear that there are misunderstandings in the way *Jihadists* have used Ibn Taymiyyah's work, it might be beneficial to elucidate these misunderstandings, especially to those who may incline to such beliefs. *Khawarij* propaganda often uses the statements of Ibn Taymiyyah and if these possible misunderstandings are explained with a holistic grounding, it may help to refute such ideologies. The most susceptible to such ideologies are youth and thus the education sector could be a highly significant sector to quell such doubts, more specifically within Religious Education or Personal, Social, and Health Education. I will explore this in the next section.

2.8 The Role of Education

As noted above, terror attacks have sadly increased in the last decade, despite efforts on the part of several communities to combat terrorism and extremism. One of the most important methods that governments can utilize to combat terrorism is education, and this has been seen in the new PSHE curriculum of England (Lewis, 2020) which seeks to discuss extremism, terrorism and radicalisation of different violent extremist groups. The educational route could be used to explain the dangers of extremism and terrorism and at the same time to clarify its reality, including its link to religion, especially Islam. Academics differ on whether

extremism should be addressed in schools at all; I will explore whether such an idea is an issue of concern within the educational system.

Hussain (2018) has explored the possibility of using education as a means of tackling extremism. He states that academics differ regarding the idea of using education as a tool against extremism. Gereluk (2012) is from the group of academics who believe that extremism should not be addressed in schools. Several arguments have been put forward. The first reason appears subjective as she believes that the educational system is already struggling with trying to keep the educational level as high as possible, and extremism is a problem within wider society; therefore, addressing the issue of extremism in a school platform will put more pressure on teachers to provide students with quality education.). Chitty (1991) notes as follows: 'in some schools the curriculum has been overloaded, so that skills of literacy and numeracy, the building blocks of education, have been neglected' (p.42). This was mentioned over forty years ago, however, more recently, Mr Oats, Director of Research at Cambridge Assessment claimed that schools were struggling to give the students the best education because the curriculum was overloaded (Paton, 2013). As mentioned, the argument put forward by Gereluk (2012) that the educational system 'should not have to be burdened by the problems of the society' (Hussain, 2017, p. 12) is subjective. Clarke and Phelan (2017) echo this point by asserting that teachers are 'caught, if not in the crossfire, then at least in the tensions, between discourses of security and intelligence on the one hand and the discourses of education on the other' (p. 67).

Contrary to Gereluk (2012), several academics believe that the aims of the educational system are to prepare youth to live in society. Tibbitts (2020), a specialist in Human Rights Education, argues that schools have an integral part to play in the 'inculcation of values' (p. 85) to foster cohesion within schools. Tibbitts (2020) does acknowledge that 'values are complex and even contested (p.80)'; nonetheless, she believes that this is a method that could be used to address violent extremism. Similarly, Ghosh et al. (2017) assert that to counter violent religious extremism there are two types of measures: first, hard power, which refers to military action against extremists; and, second, soft measures which refers to an intellectual method to address extremism. The paper argues that

education should be included in the soft policies to enable students to be more resilient to the dangerous ideologies. John White, an Emeritus Professor at the Institute of Education (University of London), in his piece, *The Aims of School Education* (White, 2010), discusses the possibility of an aims based curriculum. He mentions that the curriculum ‘should have some bearing on the shape of our future society’ (p.5). He mentions also that this would mean ‘thinking about the personal qualities he or she should possess – such things as wholehearted absorption in activities and relationships, kindness, respect for others as equals...(p.7)’. Therefore, according to White (2010), teachers need to be able to prepare children to live and prosper in this society. One can argue that this would entail teachers explaining and clarifying the realities of terrorism to ensure the safety of people in society.

2.9 Teacher Training

Hussain (2018) states that Gereluk (2012) proffers a second point as a reason for not teaching extremism in schools, this being that teachers are not academically equipped on how to approach the topic correctly. Gereluk (2012) asserts that 'little professional development or training may be given to teachers in how they should approach the topic appropriately' (p.91). Gereluk (2012) is not the only academic to voice concerns over the training available to teachers to address extremism. Ragazzi (2016) highlighted this point while discussing the challenges of counter - radicalisation policies. He quoted the General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers: 'To put it bluntly, teachers are not counter - terrorism experts, have no wish to be ancillary members of the security service and lack the training to do it well even if they did' (p.44).

However, Hussain (2018) goes on to explain that the government has put in place several guidelines and reports to ensure that teachers are prepared to address extremism in schools. An example of this is the guide for teachers developed by the Expert Subject Advisory Group, entitled, *The Prevent Duty and teaching controversial issues: creating a curriculum response through Citizenship* (2015) The aim of this guide is to 'support schools and teachers as they consider and develop their response to the prevent duty' (p.2). Moreover, Miller-Idriss (2005) states that in fact the state does provide material to aid teachers in their

efforts to address extremism, however it is the teachers who are not 'motivated to seek out the resources from these centres' (p.107). A worrying question arises about why this would be the case; a simple answer could just be that teachers are overburdened with other subjects, as stated by Gereluk (2012). Another article written with the aim of training teachers was written by UNESCO (2017a), entitled *A Teachers Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism*. It concentrates on preparing the teacher for discussions in class about extremism and terrorism. The topic of extremism can be a tricky one to address in a classroom environment. Therefore, this publication assists teachers to be able to open up a discussion about sensitive issues like extremism. UNESCO (2017b) has also written '*Preventing violent extremism through education: a guide for policy makers*'. This looks to discuss what it believes are the pathways to extremism and mentions the 'push and pull factors'. Vergan et al. (2018), while researching the reasons why people may participate in extremism, clarify what is meant by these terms note that 'Push factors overlap with the structural root causes of terrorism that drive people toward resorting to violence, and include, for example, state repression, relative deprivation, poverty, and injustice' (p.3); while 'Pull factors capture the aspects that make extremist groups and lifestyles appealing to some people, and include, for example, ideology' (p.3). The UNESCO Report (2017b) attempts to explore the role of education in the context of these factors. The report mentions important points regarding different approaches to tackling the problem. An example mentioned by UNESCO (2017b) is 'whole-school approaches and interventions' (p.60). This approach utilizes the school setting to 'provide opportunities for students to apply critical thinking and civic education lessons in real-life settings' (p.60); school assemblies can be used to address issues pertaining to extremism.

Alongside the aforementioned concerns, an additional important point should be noted. A study carried out by the University of Durham, Coventry and Huddersfield (Busher et al., 2020) has shown that teachers have voiced concerns regarding the *Prevent* scheme. The research included interviews with 70 teachers from 14 different schools alongside a survey of 225 staff. The result showed that even though in general the teachers were happy to accept the idea of *Prevent*, they showed resentment to the fact that because of the duty, there was an increased stigmatisation of Muslim pupils. Furthermore, the teachers were worried that

promoting the idea of British values could impede the goal of shared values. The aim of the prevent scheme is to make sure that children are not being radicalised by extremist ideologies (Heath – Kelly, 2013). However, on closer look at the literature surrounding the *Prevent* scheme, we find that from the very beginning, many academics and researchers have been cautious about the scheme, especially with its link to Muslim engagement. Thomas (2012) draws on research to suggest that *Prevent* has been ineffective and causing a barrier between the government and Muslims. This point was reiterated in an article by O’Toole et al. (2015) who stated the following:

Fairly soon after its inception, *Prevent* was subject to extensive criticism. In particular, critics argued that the focus on Muslims, the approach to community engagement through the prism of counterterrorism and the overlap between *Prevent* and Community Cohesion policies securitised state engagement with Muslims’ (pp.160 – 177).

O’Toole et al. (2015) also assert that ‘Tensions in the logics of engagement with Muslims under *Prevent* were evident from the start’ (pp. 160 – 177). Furthermore, an article by Mythen et al. (2016) analyses the impact of social policies. Mythen et al. (2016) allude to the fact that certain social policies have been having a negative and damaging effect on society. It is not only academics and researchers who share this view. Hussain (2018) mentions that the *Prevent* scheme is ‘clearly a controversial issue’; he also refers to a newspaper article written by Adams in 2016 who notes that ‘during the National Union of Teachers annual conference, a motion was backed to scrap the *Prevent* scheme as they believed it was ineffective’ (see Hussain, 2018, p.19) This point was made by Adams (2016) and echoed by Reed (2016) who noted that many teachers have ‘voiced concerns over the prevent scheme’ (pp. 85-86). Evidently, teachers are also worried about the adverse effects of the *Prevent* scheme.

If teachers are suspicious about any students showing signs of radicalisation or extremist views, then it is their duty to refer them to the deradicalization programme; this is aimed at changing the perception of those affected by extremism. Koehler (2017) mentions that the majority of programmes ‘deploy a mixture of psychological counselling, mentoring, vocational training, education and techniques designed to help build self- awareness and positive identities’ (p.291). However, the majority of literature that is circulated does not look

favourably on the programmes. Elshimi (2015) worryingly notes ten possible problems with the deradicaliz programme; she argues that there is ‘lack of clarity’ (p.4) about what deradicalization means and one finds that the term is conflated with the term extremism. Another problem is that there is no set understanding of what the process looks like, and policy makers are ‘trying to understand these processes with reference to the literature on gangs, social movements and cults’ (p.4). A further problem highlighted by Elshimi (2015) is that currently there is ‘no access to measure’ (p.6) these programmes and thus their efficiency cannot be assessed. Contrary to Elshimi (2015), Clutterbuck (2015) explores the benefits of the deradicalization programmes. After acknowledging that there are challenges that need to be addressed, she notes nonetheless some benefits in that it can ‘assist in preventing the recruitment of a new generation of terrorists’ (p.13). However, according to Elshimi (2015), there is currently no means of measuring the success, rendering some doubt on such views. Contrary to Clutterbuck (2015), Feddes and Galluci (2016) state:

the present review shows that up to July 2014 hardly any empirically based evidence of preventive or de-radicalisation interventions exist by means of a systematic coding procedure we have described 135 samples in terms of intervention goal, evaluation focus, evaluation method, evaluation instruments, and theory driven approaches that have been used. Perhaps not surprisingly, the manuscripts included in the review were mostly anecdotal in which no explicit reference to theory and no empirical quantitative or qualitative data was reported. Primary quantitative or qualitative data was presented in only 16 out of 135 samples (12%) (p.17).

Therefore, it would be interesting to see how Clutterbuck (2015) came to her conclusion.

Similar to Elshimi (2017), Lovat (2017) is also critical of the methods initiated by a number of governments in their effort to deradicalize those who have been affected by extremism. Lovat (2017) states that there is an absence of theological discussion when attempting to deradicalize; he states it ‘can only be understood if the theological lens is applied’ (p.120). The common stance taken by governments is to distance themselves from the theological aspect of Islamism and ‘treat radicalization as an issue concerned with their glossary of terms, be it alienation, dispossession... rather than something seriously religious’ (Lovat, 2017, p.121). Furthermore, Lovat (2017) points out that the ‘human scientists possess limited or

scant knowledge' (p.121) about theological matters, and it is for this reason that they distance themselves from any theological based attempts at deradicalization, thus perhaps damaging attempts in doing so. This argument, to a greater extent, seems reasonable as the very reason *Jihadists* are radicalised may well be due to theological rhetoric and literature that they come across. Hence, it seems appropriate that theology should be employed in attempts to counter it. This opens the discussion to the importance of theological literacy; Eriksson (2010) explores the possibility of using theological literacy as a method for understanding matters of faith. She concludes that it takes 'theological literacy to be part of a religious domain..... And understanding is possible only when "the text" is put in the context of its tradition.' (p.150). More recently, Schlag (2022) proffers that theological literacy must be considered in the quest to gain a better understanding of religious practices. On the other hand, Colaert (2017) points out that the 'root causes of violent extremism are multi-faceted' (p.159). At the same time, she agrees that religious ideologies are among the factors that need to be considered when looking for policies concerning deradicalization.

An example of using theology as a means to address radical ideas, Jones (2013) explored methods used in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Yemen to counter radicalisation; he noted that these countries stressed the importance of a theological based dialogue between the scholar and those who were affected by extremism. Jones (2013) states: 'one basic yet pivotal method conducive to successful disengagement is the considerable religious authority wielded by the state' (p.14). These deradicalization programmes are offered in informal educational settings whereby schools are referring to them; this is partly due to the lack of resources as well as specialised knowledge on such issues. There is a need to focus on addressing radical ideas which is perhaps beyond the scope of the average school. Furthermore, such issues are only addressed once a radicalised individual with extremist ideology is identified. A question may be asked what is being done to educate the students on radical ideas within sects of Islam? It could be argued that these could be addressed within the school curriculum; I will explore this question in the next section.

2.10 *Jihad* in the Religious Studies Curriculum

Jihad is a topic which is covered in the subject, Religious Studies under the religion, Islam. If it should be taught at all, how and what is taught are integral questions. These questions are even more significant when this topic is taught in an Islamic school, simply because Islam is the religion chosen for study and the teacher teaching it can potentially be concealing a hidden agenda. In March 2018, a 25-year-old teacher was convicted of plotting a terrorist attack while using his status and power as a teacher to ‘radicalise vulnerable children’ (Evans, 2020), I will expand on this now.

Marshall (2010) conducted research regarding the *Prevent* scheme, its strategy and consequences. Within the research conducted, Marshall (2010) clarifies that the teaching of *Jihad* should be taught. She states that the media ‘all too often misrepresent Islamic beliefs and practises’ (p.26). Marshall (2010) argues that teachers should tackle this misrepresentation, especially of *Jihad*, by clarifying to the students the concept of *Jihad* in depth. Marshall (2010) explains how the results of her research lead to the conclusion that *Jihad* was equated with ‘notions of violence, conflict and terrorism’ (p.26). This understanding is detrimental to efforts towards counter terrorism. However, Marshall (2010) concedes that her research was on a small scale. Marshall (2010) goes on to mention the different resources used to teach *Jihad*. She proffers an important view by saying ‘A review of current RE textbooks, resources and materials has revealed the responsibility for misconceptions and controversy about *Jihad* does not just lie with media but also the educators’ (p.26). Many of the resources seem to conflate terms such as *Jihad*, holy war and terrorism. Similarly, Ford (2019) explored many textbooks that are used within the U.K. He states that while there are many research papers on terrorism, there is very little exploration of the Religious Studies textbooks. Therefore, his research concentrated on the exploration of over forty textbooks that are used within the U.K. however, Ford (2019) concentrates on terrorism and extremism within the textbooks and does not venture too far into the concept of *Jihad*, possibly because he does not specialize in Islamic knowledge. Marshall’s (2010) research also included questioning teachers about how they taught *Jihad*. Results revealed that some schools neglect the teaching of

Jihad and in the schools that did teach *Jihad*, an alarming lack of knowledge of the subject area was found, a point reiterated by Gereluk (2012), as noted above.

Worryingly, it seems that no expertise in Islamic knowledge is required in some schools for someone to teach Islamic Studies, this is apparent when Umar Haque (Individual A) was employed by Latern of Knowledge School in East London, UK to teach Islamic Studies to boys aged 11-16, this gave opportunity to Mr Haque to attempt to radicalise these children, the Charity Commission (2020) report that Mr Haque “grossly abused” the position of trust he held at the charity and exploited an opportunity to show children in the charity’s care the video, which promoted the ideology and tactics of a proscribed terrorist organisation to children’ The Charity Commissions for England and Wales (2020) further report that ‘on 2 March 2018, individual A was found guilty on multiple counts of terrorism charges and later sentenced to life in prison on the charge of disseminating terrorist material to children at the school. Although this shows a lack of responsibility on the school trustees behalf, there are strict guidelines when recruiting suitable staff at any school within the UK, this was clearly not enough to stop such an individual from entering school premises let alone being allowed to influence and radicalise innocent children. One can possibly argue that *Jihad* being in the curriculum could lend itself to distortion by any teacher.

Exploring the different curricula that are taught in the U.K in greater depth reveals that Oxford Cambridge and RSA (OCR) and Edexcel, firstly give a choice to the school to choose between five different religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The school has to choose two out of the five; therefore, if a school decides not to teach Islam, then by default *Jihad* would not be taught. Within the topic, Islam, a chapter *Jihad* is dedicated to *Jihad*. It is incumbent on the teacher to discuss with the students the two types of *Jihad*, greater *Jihad*¹⁴ and lesser *Jihad*. The teacher will also need to cover the conditions of *Jihad*. However, the curriculum refers to *Jihad* as Holy War, which is controversial and misleading (Marshall, 2010). Also, the curriculum does not clarify the differences

¹⁴ Greater *Jihad* is the personal struggle that an individual goes through to become a better person. Lesser *Jihad* is armed warfare that an individual or a country may partake in. I will discuss this point in depth in chapter 7 & 8.

between lesser *Jihad* and terrorism. This may leave the student confused as to whether terrorism is part of Islam or not.

In exploring the curricula in greater detail, we find that within the OCR curriculum (2018), the Board provides a topic in which this can be discussed. The topic entitled *Tolerance*, and especially *Muslim tolerance to non-Muslims and apostasy*, are ideal themes to utilise in order to dispel any misconceptions. As aforementioned, terrorists can and do exploit the concept of excommunication of a Muslim (*Takfir*) to wage war on whom they deem are the non-Muslim enemy. When this happens, terrorists use the fatwa of Ibn Taymiyyah out of context (Michot, 2011) to persuade the Muslims that their *war* is Islamic and something that Allah ordered. Within the curriculum provided by OCR, the Board offers certain recommended sources, such as Freidmann (2003) *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith relations in the Muslim tradition*, especially the first and fourth chapters. However, on closer examination, the source does not delve into any misconceptions between Islam and terrorism. OCR provides a booklet to assist educators in teaching Islam. Within the booklet, a sample lesson plan was provided on *Jihad*. Several weaknesses were noticed. First, concerning labelling *Jihad* as ‘Holy War’, dealt with above. Second, differentiating between *Jihad* and ‘Just War’. This latter is problematic as the notion of just war is subjective. It might well be that a terrorist will consider his actions as just. On the other hand, according to the sample lesson plan provided by OCR, the students are required to discuss how the media misrepresents *Jihad*, this could be an appropriate time to mention the misconception of the link between *Jihad* and terrorism.

As for Edexcel, we find that within the RE syllabus (Edexcel, 2016), there is a chapter on *Jihad*. The syllabus looks to address the significance of *Jihad* in Islam, the difference between the lesser and greater *Jihad* and the importance of *Jihad* in the life of a Muslim. However, once again, we find that the syllabus does not specify any misconceptions that may arise from speaking about *Jihad*. This could lead to students understanding that terrorists are performing *Jihad* and there is a link between Islam as a religion and terrorism. A closer look at the examining board Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) reveals that the syllabus is very similar to Edexcel.

Therefore, we find that the examining boards in England recognise the importance of teaching about *Jihad* and its significance, whether it is about the greater or lesser *Jihad*. Nevertheless, we find that the boards do not give enough importance to differentiating between *Jihad* and terrorism nor the importance of clarifying any misconceptions, as noted by Marshall (2010). The examining boards may respond to the lack of emphasis on misconceptions within *Jihad* by noting that PSHE is a subject that concentrates on giving the students a skill set in preparation for their future lives, and that identifying a student who may be influenced by extremist ideologies is a justifiable element in that goal. Within the PSHE curriculum, we find that extremism is covered; the PSHE association has lesson plans available on its website, dealing with topics which address the issue of extremism and radicalisation. When examining these lesson plans, the key aim is to equip students with practical knowledge on what extremism and terrorism is, how a person can become radicalised and what groups are associated with such notions. Groups such as ISIS, that use Ibn Taymiyyah's work, have been identified as an extremist group and discussion about what makes them extremist is part of the planned activities. One may query the effectiveness of such lessons, especially considering their brevity. The nature of these lessons simply does not allow for in depth theological and historical discussion to take place, such as would allow for more understanding about why they are wrong and thus effective learning to take place. Granted that extremist groups quote Ibn Taymiyyah and his works on *Jihad*, it would seem wiser to dispel misunderstandings about such a key individual in RE lessons.

Interestingly, the Board of Studies in New South Wales (NSW, 2005) in Australia decided to add certain sects of Islam, namely Muslim Brotherhood, to the RE curriculum to dispel any misconceptions that might arise through studying the works of Sayyid Qutb. The Education Standards Authority for the New South Wales Government state that a student will study significant people and ideas in different religions. Intriguingly, and to a certain extent reassuringly, the Government has provided an in-depth study of Sayyid Qutb. The Education Standards Authority has touched on his history, his link to extremism and goal of a pan Islamic State. The syllabus touches also on his call to arms. All of this is explored alongside any sacred texts that are used by him to support his claims. This process of teaching about Sayyid Qutb as a significant person allows for the

teacher to open up discussions about misunderstandings that students may have regarding extremism and terrorism. However, one would need to examine the application of such a curriculum to decide on how effective it would be.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter explored various topics that revolve around the effort to combat extremism and terrorism. The first part of the literature review examined the terminologies that are often misunderstood or even conflated, namely terrorism, extremism, *Jihad* and Salafism. Confusion on how to define these terms will surely obstruct any effort to address and combat terrorism and extremism as there is no consensus on how to define the term, terrorism. Academics differ on whether to include religious aims within the definition. Another vital point mentioned in this chapter concerns the importance of differentiating between terrorism and *Jihad*. The first stance necessary is in understanding these terms correctly, without conflating them. Once we have understood these terms, we can begin to explore various options that can be used to combat the problem of terrorism.

Among the questions that need to be asked is *where did terrorism and extremism originate in Islam?* Does it stem from the medieval period? Or is it a recent phenomenon? The literature on this topic repeatedly points to one main individual, and that is Ibn Taymiyyah. His works are often cited by extremist groups. Thus, the philosophy of Ibn Taymiyyah has been mentioned as an accepted source of extremism, yet much of the research lacks depth in the exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's work. We find that there is a lack of understanding of the theological and historical background of Ibn Taymiyyah. This inability to understand these terms and to come to an agreement has a knock-on effect; a perfect example is that at this moment many teachers and students within a school context are not able to define either terrorism or *Jihad* correctly. Another problem is that the Religious Studies curriculum in England lacks any depth concerning *Jihad* and does not explicate on Ibn Taymiyyah's understandings, something which extremists often misunderstand and exploit. This leads to the student graduating from the school with scant knowledge of the reality of *Jihad* in Islam and its link, or lack thereof, with terrorism.

This thesis looks to examine a number of the problems highlighted above. I believe that a fortified educational means of combatting extremism and terrorism needs to be explored. By exploring the origins of terrorism in Islam, and engaging with the problem through a theological lens, I believe we will be enabled to understand the issue better. Therefore, this research will move, in chapter 2, to investigate Ibn Taymiyyah's alleged role in inspiring terrorism. Existing research lacks depth concerning Ibn Taymiyyah's coverage in religious educational literature, especially concerning the alleged link to terrorism. Consequently, I will return to the primary sources of Ibn Taymiyyah and examine his views on *Jihad*, his rulings on the legitimate killing of non-combatants, the use of suicide in war and collateral damage. I will focus on these topics because they are the matters that extremists and terrorists often use to cause harm. I will also examine the Mardin fatwa¹⁵, which is quoted by many Islamic extremists. I will then proceed to look at the differences, if any, between Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij*.

Academics and educators have found difficulty in unravelling the different terms that are utilised on the topic of *Jihad*. The Religious Studies Curriculum in England and Wales as aforementioned, is not defined enough to teach the holistic nature of *Jihad* which is problematic. This leads to the second part of this research - after all this conflation of terms, misunderstandings and misuse of Islamic literature, what exactly is being taught in the schools of England regarding *Jihad*? Do we find that the teaching of *Jihad* within Religious Studies in England is defined enough to suppress any doubts being spread about Islam or do we find that it lacks sufficient depth and so could unwittingly pose a threat to national security in the UK? It is therefore imperative to identify the problem and explore possible solutions. Consequently, the second part of this research will explore the Religious Studies textbooks to investigate how *Jihad* is understood. Additionally, the second part of the research will assess whether the information in these textbooks is accurate and sufficiently informed to overcome *Khawarij* propaganda that focuses on misinterpretations and distortions of verses in the Qur'an and Hadeeth

¹⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah states within this fatwa that Mardin, a city in now the South East of Turkey, is not a Muslim area.

3. Chapter 2: Ibn Taymiyyah's Life and Work

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Ibn Taymiyyah was shown to have been an advocate for the *Khawarij* ideology that is widespread amongst terrorists today. It has been suggested by Timani (2013) that Bin Laden was radicalised by Ibn Taymiyyah's writings and committed terrorist attacks due to his influence. Likewise, Ingram (2013) mentions that 'Bin Laden's charismatic narrative draws heavily upon Ibn Taymiyyah' (p.194). In contrast to Timani (2013) and Ingram (2013), Kaminski (2017) argues that 'if one looks carefully at the ideas of Ibn Taymiyyah, it is highly questionable as to whether these extremists are appropriately using Ibn Taymiyyah's words' (p.58). This point was reiterated by Michot (2011), who asserts that many have taken the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah out of context. His discussion on the Mardin¹⁶ fatwa will be later discussed.

There is, then, a lack of consensus on whether Ibn Taymiyyah should be held responsible for the origins of terrorist ideology. In assessing the claim that Ibn Taymiyyah's writings have influenced extremists, it would seem that the majority of relevant research possesses insufficient detail regarding the history and referencing of Ibn Taymiyyah's original works. Informed literature needs to be assessed through a particular lens. Thus, in order to assess whether these claims are correct, this thesis will need to delve deeply into the life and works of Ibn Taymiyyah. A full understanding of the context of Ibn Taymiyyah's life will enable us to view his work through a historic lens. This will contextualise Ibn Taymiyyah's work. I begin exploring the context with the attack of the Mongols.

3.2 The Arrival of the Mongols

The 12th and 13th centuries were part of the Golden Age of the Abbasid Caliphate. The Islamic empire had made enormous strides in many different fields, including in medicine and science (Bennison, 2014; Al Khalili, 2012). However, it was also during the 12th and 13th centuries that the Islamic Caliphate was attacked from

¹⁶ Refer to p. 34

both the East and West. There were a number of attempts from Europe to quell the threat of the Muslims who did not believe in Christ (Theron & Oliver, 2018) and, at the same time, Genghis Khan sped through the East towards the Abbasid Caliphate stronghold of Iraq, leaving a trail of destruction in his wake. Biran (2012) mentions that ‘Genghis Khan slaughtered many believers... and inflicted upon them an unprecedented disaster’ (p.1); this was continued by the grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulegu Khan, who annihilated and ruined Baghdad (*ibid*), which signalled the end of the Abbasid Caliphate. Nonetheless, it was surprising that after this attack the Mongols accepted Islam once they reached Iran (Biran, 2012; Jackson, 2018).

Before continuing, it is of utmost importance to provide a brief historical narrative of the Mongols, since Ibn Taymiyyah’s literature on *Jihad* and its related topics mentions the Mongols on a number of occasions. As it is this literature that many terrorists refer to, explicating the history of the Mongols will enable a deeper understanding.

Genghis Khan, also known as Timujen, was born in 1162 in the Eastern part of Mongolia (McLynn, 2015). After his father was murdered in 1170 by the Tartars, he was left in the care of his mother (Jackson, 2018). Genghis Khan adhered to the Shamanic religion of Tengrism. Laruelle (2008) mentions that ‘the word *tengr* or *tergir* (*tänri* in old Turkic) means “sky” in the Turkic–Mongol languages. The cult of the sky or of deities linked to it is confirmed by many written and archaeological sources’ (p.203). Biran (2012) states that ‘at the head of the supernatural hierarchy was the blue and eternal heaven, the sky God of the Steppe (*Koke Mongke Tengri*)... beneath *Tengri* (and his much less significant wife, the Earth and fertility Goddess, *Itugen*)’ (p.7-8). Other sources allude to the fact that certain religious practices within the Mongols would include the worshipping and seeking of help from Ongons. When a pious person passed away, certain tribes would erect images of the deceased and they would be referred to as Ongons. These, over time, became deities. However, it was also thought that there were evil Ongons who might harm those on earth. At the same time, the Mongols revered celestial objects including the sun and moon (Znamenski, 2013). Laruelle (2008) refers to sources that talk of Tengrism as an amalgamation of different practices. From this it can be understood that the religion practised by the

Mongols was polytheistic in nature. Genghis Khan's religion comes to the fore when, according to Amitai-Priess (2008), 'Chinggis Khan had been given a divinely inspired mission to conquer the world and place it under Mongol domination' (p.9). This point was echoed by de Hartog (2004), who mentions that Genghis Khan 'was sent by the eternal Heaven to rule over the world' (p.35). Genghis Khan's end goal of conquering the world was based upon a religious belief that a higher or supernatural being had encouraged him to undertake.

John Man (2015), in contrast, mentions that there is a possibility that Genghis Khan concocted the idea of conquering the world as being divinely inspired to motivate his followers. Academics, both medieval and contemporary, differ regarding Genghis Khan's reason for attacking the West. Some literature proffers the opinion that Genghis Khan wanted to gain retribution for the killing of his men, while others believe that it was the fulfilment of a divinely inspired mission (Jackson, 2018). Nevertheless, Genghis Khan instilled into his tribe the aim of conquering the world and any opponents to the Mongols would be given the choice of submitting or facing annihilation.

Genghis Khan launched his first offensive against neighbouring states in 1211CE. Once he had placed the surrounding states under the control of the Mongols, he set his eyes on the West (Amitai-Priess, 2008; Pizzo, 2011). In 1219, he launched a massive offensive against Khwarazm-Shah. (Pizzo, 2011). Khwarazm-Shah decided that it would be better to scatter his force throughout the towns of Transoxiana instead of meeting head on with the Mongols on the field of battle, a decision that led to the population of Khwarazm being defeated. The Khwarazm-Shah himself fled before the arrival of the Mongols. Jalal al Din, the son of the Shah, had opposed his father's decision and fought bravely, eventually fleeing to Iran. In reality, Khwarazm-Shah's army could not provide any real opposition to the Mongols, although the battle become prolonged thanks to the efforts of Inalchuq, who was brutally killed after being captured alive and taken by the Mongols on their route to Samarqand. Jackson (2018) mentions 'taking with them Inalchuq, who was there executed by the gruesome method of having molten metal poured into his eyes, ears and mouth' (p.78). Next, Genghis Khan's sights were on Samarqand — however, after being informed of the defences there, he opted to head towards Bukhara. The people of Bukhara decided that it was in their best

interests to surrender. With the confidence of ever-increasing sovereignty, the Mongols finally decided to head towards Samarqand and captured it in March 1220CE (*ibid*). Zanzan, Qaswin and Azerbaijan were next to fall and in 1221CE, the Christian Kingdom of Georgia was attacked and nullified. Jackson (2018) states that, after defeating the Christian army, the Mongol army destroyed the city. In April 1221CE, Nishapur became the next victim of the Mongol army, with its population being massacred (Jackson, 2018; Saunders, 2001). Evidently, Genghis Khan's conquering of the world was not limited to the Muslim world. In fact, anyone who stood in his way was defeated. When analysing this brief historical narrative, it is significant to recognise, firstly, the speed with which the Mongol army advanced and, secondly, the use of brutality and cruelty during the conquering of different states that defended themselves. It is a recurring theme in the attacks made by the Mongols.

After Genghis Khan's death in 1227CE, one might assume the advancing of the army would have stopped or at least slowed. On the contrary, the advance continued under his successor, Ogedei (Hamilton, 2016), regarded by some as the 'true founder of the empire' (Jackson, 2018, p.81). Jalal al din, who had escaped to Northern Iran, once again faced the Mongol army. This time his army 'would be eliminated' (Jackson, 2018, p.82). The expansive aims that drove the Mongols endured through three generations all the way to Hulegu, the grandson of Genghis Khan, who wanted to attack Iran in 1257CE (Jackson, 2018). After consolidating their position in Iran, Hulegu turned his attention to the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, Baghdad. Al Mu'tasim, the Caliph of the Abbasids, was at first willing to surrender to Hulegu and his army, but then decided against it. According to Islamic Scholars such as Ibn Kathir (1990) and Western historians, such as Jackson (2018), Hulegu and his army unleashed a pitiless attack on the population of Iraq, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate which had ruled for over five hundred years. The Khalifa Mu'tasim was put to death. However, some of his ministers, notably Al Alqami, were spared. This led to the Ilkhan–Mamluk wars beginning in 1270CE.

Having briefly discussed the arrival of the Mongols and the methods used during their invasions, it is important to move on to examine how some of the Mongols accepted Islam.

3.3 Mongols and Islam

As previously mentioned, the basis of the Mongol religion, as practised by Genghis Khan, was Tengrism, one evidently in opposition to the core principles of Islam, which is wholly monotheistic (Jackson, 2018). However, by the middle of the 13th century, the Mongols had swiftly taken over a vast area of Muslim lands and some amongst the higher hierarchy of the Mongols had been affected by the teachings of Islam. Deweese (2010) states that, in 1257CE, the grandson of Genghis Khan, Berke, who was in charge of the Golden Horde¹⁷, formally accepted Islam. DeWeese (2010) asserts that the literature seems unanimous in mentioning that a man from Bukhara, known as Saif ad Deen Bakharzi, played an important role in Berke's conversion (Jackson, 2018) — he even influenced some of Berke's ministers to accept Islam (DeWeese, 2010). However, unsurprisingly, this led to dispute and friction between Hulegu and Berke and, to some extent, to the weakening of the Mongol empire.

A number of historical sources state that Berke was incensed after Hulegu crushed Baghdad and massacred the Muslim residents, and that Berke swore to gain revenge (DeWeese, 2010). Another significant figure amongst the Mongols to accept Islam was Ghazan Khan in 1296CE (Jackson, 2018) — although sources have questioned his conversion. As Jackson (2018) mentions, 'having converted, he maintained a belief in various aspects of the Mongol custom and tradition, much of which explicitly contradicted the precepts of his new religion' (p.261). An example of this is mentioned by Amitai-Preiss (2005), who states that Ghazan Khan wanted to marry his deceased father's wife, Bulughan Khatun. Unquestionably, Islam prohibits the marriage of 'one's deceased father's wives' (Amitai-Preiss, 2005, p. 3). However, as reiterated by Aigle (2014), Ghazan Khan was adamant that he wanted to marry her and was prepared to leave Islam to do so and at the same time continue the practice of Mongol law. Another example of how Ghazan Khan never fully left the practices of his predecessors was when he took part in 'hanging cloth steamers to a tree and dancing around it', a well-known Mongol tradition (Jackson, 2018 p.261). It seems evident that Ghazan Khan accepted Islam but continued to practise some traditional rituals, regardless of

¹⁷ Westernmost division of the Mongol Empire (DeWeese, 2010, p.67)

whether they were in contradiction of Islam or not. He seemed reluctant to let go of the Yasa code (Jackson, 2018). Janin and Kahlmeyer (2015) assert that ‘the Mongols had nominally converted to orthodox Islam, but they still ruled themselves and the lands they conquered according to the Mongol code of Genghis Khan, not according to the Sharia’ (p. 79). The Mongols, even after converting to Islam, never gave up their cultural traditions even if the Yasa code opposed Islam. It was for this reason that Ibn Taymiyyah visited Ghazan Khan and advised him about a number of issues relating to this.

The Yasa code or, as Lane (2012a) expresses it, the ‘Great Yasa code’ of Genghis Khan was ‘a body of laws governing the social and legal behaviour of the Mongol’ (Lane, 2012a, p.35). Initially, the Yasa code was based on Mongol traditions and customs (Lane, 2012a, p.36) and Lane (2012a) explicates further by stating:

Chinggis Khan had laid down a basic legal code called the Great Yasa during the *Quriltai* of 1206 and written copies of his decrees were kept by the Mongol princes in their treasuries for future consultation. (p.230)

This law would be the governing law the Mongols would rule by once a piece of land was acquired through their invasions. Jackson (2018) states that it seems feasible that the Yasa code already existed by the time Genghis Khan passed away and was used in the Ilkhan state in 1268CE. This becomes particularly significant as the Yasa code was ‘undeniably in conflict with Islamic Law’ (Jackson, 2018, p.116). The Ilkhan state in Iran and Iraq proceeded to attack the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt, and this was the period in which Ibn Taymiyyah was most influential. Perhaps this was the very reason that Ibn Taymiyyah excommunicated the Mongols and pronounced that they could be fought against.

Ibn Kathir (701-774H – 1302- 1375CE), a celebrated scholar and historian of Islam and a student of Ibn Taymiyyah, recounted in his mammoth work, *Al Bidayah wan Nihayah*, an in-depth book on Islamic history, the story of when Ibn Taymiyyah went to visit Ghazan Khan. He asserts that this meeting took place towards the end of the 13th century after news had reached Damascus that Ghazan Khan was now intent on attacking the city. Ibn Taymiyyah and a number of his students went to visit the Mongol leader. Ibn Taymiyyah was firm with Ghazan Khan and said.

You claim to be Muslim and you have with you those who call the Adhaan and a judge, an Imam and Islamic scholar and you want to invade our city for what? Your father and grandfather Hulaku were disbelievers and they never tried to invade us, they in fact made a pact with us. As for you, you made an agreement with us but went against it. (Ibn Kathir, 1990, vol 14, p.102)

This did not prevent Ghazan Khan from continuing with the attempt to invade Damascus. The residents of Damascus were understandably worried about the advancing army, and it was Ibn Taymiyyah who reminded the Sultan and those residing in Damascus that it was obligatory to fight and defend themselves against the oncoming Mongols and reassured them that victory would be for the Damascenes.

Thus, this brief historical narrative provides a context for the legal pronouncements made by Ibn Taymiyyah which form the basis of the issue at hand — which is the use made by the *Khawarij* and extremists of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature excommunicating the Mongols as a reason for fighting against them. However, the matter proves to be deeper than one initially thinks with Ibn Taymiyyah's other literature expounding on many other factors relating to excommunication and *Jihad*. Therefore, it is incumbent upon anyone looking to have a holistic understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's work to take into consideration all his different literature. For this reason, it seems rational to seek and analyse these matters from the different literature written by Ibn Taymiyyah so as to clarify certain misunderstandings the *Jihadists* may have.

I will begin with a biography of Ibn Taymiyyah to ensure the context is clear.

3.4 Ibn Taymiyyah's Biography

Ahmed ibn Abdil Haleem ibn Taymiyyah al Harrani, commonly known as Ibn Taymiyyah, was an Islamic scholar and reputable teacher in the 13th century, born in the city of Harran which currently lies in the south-east of Turkey. His student, Muhammad Ibn Ahmed, well known as Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011), states in the biography of his teacher that Ibn Taymiyyah was born on 'Monday the 10th and it

is said the 12th of Rabee' al Awwal¹⁸ of the year 661' (p.5), which corresponds to 1263CE. He was born into a family of scholars (Arikewuyo, 2020)). Abdul Haleem, the father of Ibn Taymiyyah, was a man known for his knowledge and was a judge in Harran just like his grandfather Abdus Salaam (Sharif, 2011). Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011) asserts that his father, Abdul Haleem, fled with his family to Damascus in the year 667 (1269CE). This point is reiterated by Sharif (2011) who states that due to the invasion of the Mongols in 1268CE, the family had to move to Damascus. Khan (2010) states that Ibn Taymiyyah was five years of age when the Mongol army attacked his hometown of Harran.

Ibn Taymiyyah's father moved his family to the territory of the Mamlukes (Khan, 2010, p.43). Once in Damascus, Abdul Haleem began to teach in Dar al Hadith Sukkariyah (Sharif, 2011) – a role that Ibn Taymiyyah took over after his father's death. Ibn Taymiyyah's 'worldwide reputation as a teacher' was recognised at the Madrasah as-Salaahiyah, where he gained students from different corners of the world (Sharif, 2011). Ibn Taymiyyah memorised the Qur'an and delved into the Islamic sciences, including Arabic Grammar, Hadeeth, Tafseer, Usul al Fiqh, and completed all these studies in his early teens (Ibn Abdil Haadi, 2011).

Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011) reports a story that indicates the strength of Ibn Taymiyyah's memory. A man came from Aleppo¹⁹ requesting to see a young boy named Ahmed Ibn Taymiyyah, as he was known for his memorisation. The local tailor advised him to wait on the path until Ibn Taymiyyah passed for school. When Ibn Taymiyyah was passing for school, the man from Aleppo called him and requested him to wipe what he had written on his board. The man told Ibn Taymiyyah to write approximately 13 hadeeth. Ibn Taymiyyah had only looked at the board once and the man told him to repeat the hadeeth from his memory. Ibn Taymiyyah was able to do so without any mistakes, so the man gave him more hadeeth with the same response from Ibn Taymiyyah. This was done a number of times until the man stated, 'if this boy lives, he will have a great position, for verily the like of him has not been seen' (p.9).

¹⁸ The third month of the Islamic Calender.

¹⁹ City in southern Syria, lies 355 km south of Damascus

3.5 His Teachers

Ibn Taymiyyah started his Islamic education from a young age. Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011) states that Ibn Taymiyyah had over 200 teachers. Abdul Qaadir Sufi (2005), a Professor at the Islamic University of Medinah, states that Ibn Taymiyyah was raised in an environment where Islamic academia was given significance. His grandfather, Abdus Salaam, was a man with a great amount of Islamic knowledge, as well as Abdul Haleem, the father of Ibn Taymiyyah. Sufi (2005) asserts that this academic environment had a profound effect on Ibn Taymiyyah. Abdur Rahman Al Mahmood (2011), a professor at the University of Imam Muhammad ibn Saud, points out that Abdus Salaam, Ibn Taymiyyah's grandfather, was a specialist in Hadeeth, Fiqh and Tafseer and Abdul Haleem specialised in Islamic creed and Tafseer. Apart from his father and grandfather, Ibn Taymiyyah had numerous other teachers (Ibn Abdil Haadi, 2011):

- 1) Al Majd Ibn Asakir;
- 2) Muhammad ibn Abdul Qawiy ibn Badran Al Maqdisi, Ibn Taymiyyah studied Arabic language with him;
- 3) Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Ibn Ali Ibn Ahmed Al Hanbali;
- 4) Al Manja ibn Uthman at Tanoukhi – Ibn Taymiyyah studied with him Fiqh.

As can be seen, Ibn Taymiyyah was known for his Islamic knowledge from a young age and, for this reason, was permitted to give fatwa (Islamic verdict) at the age of nineteen (Ibn Abdil Haadi, 2011; Al Mahmood, 2011). The capital where education thrived, prior to the Mongol invasion, was Baghdad. However, after the invasion took place, this centre moved to Sham and Egypt (Matrudi, 2006, p.50). Hence, the era and area in which Ibn Taymiyyah lived was when and where education flourished (Al Mahmood, 2011) and Ibn Taymiyyah was able to establish an influential teacher status, teaching the Islamic sciences, as well as producing refutations on groups that he perceived to be intellectually attacking the Islamic religion. At the age of 21, Ibn Taymiyyah's father, who was a teacher at the Dar Al Hadeeth as Sukariyyah, passed away and thus Ibn Taymiyyah took his

father's position (Al Mahmood, 2011). The writings about his life all convey the same message — that Ibn Taymiyyah had great ability to enlighten attendees about various Islamic sciences including, but not limited to, Islamic creed, Tafseer, Fiqh, Arabic Language and Medicine (Ibn Abdil Haadi, 2011). Al Mahmood (2011) asserts that Ibn Taymiyyah would not lecture or write about a subject without those listening or reading believing that that subject was his speciality. Al Bazzar (2011), another student of Ibn Taymiyyah, in his biography of his teacher, states that his method of teaching was unrivalled, and his gatherings were heavy with scholars, jurists and local people, all hoping to benefit. Ibn Taymiyyah's influence as a prominent Islamic educator can be seen by his student's achievements, amongst whom can be mentioned:

- 1) Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr – well known as Ibn Qayyim Al Jawziyyah;
- 2) Ismail Ibn Umar Ibn Kathir;
- 3) Muhammad ibn Ahmed Ibn Abdil Haadi;
- 4) Muhammad ibn Ahmed Ad Dhahabi;
- 5) Umar ibn Ali Al Bazzar.

These students are celebrated Islamic scholars and educators.

3.6 Ibn Taymiyyah's Literature

Ibn Taymiyyah has many famous written works clarifying what he believed to be the correct position on many Islamic issues. Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011) asserts that Ibn Taymiyyah wrote up to 200 books. This research explores Ibn Taymiyyah's *oeuvre* as used by the *Khawarij* to legitimise violent ideologies. However, due to the sheer quantity of works he authored, the research will concentrate on the books in which Ibn Taymiyyah specifically wrote about *Jihad* and issues relating to it. The central subjects of some of these works are other important topics in Islam, such as the names and attributes of Allaah and Qadr (Pre-decree), but any that also mention issues regarding *Jihad* will be included and the relevant

information extracted. The other information will not be considered due to its irrelevance to the matter at hand.

Shamela, which is a computer-based Islamic library, was used to identify specific works by Ibn Taymiyyah that surround the issues that this research sets out to explore. Keywords in Arabic were entered into the search, the following being translations of what was entered:

- *Jihad* ;
- Mongols;
- Tartars;
- Ghazan Khan;
- Suicide;
- *Dhimmi* - a non-Muslim living under the protection of a Muslim state;
- *Mu'ahad*- a non-Muslim who has a pact with the Muslims.

The following books written by Ibn Taymiyyah were found to have these keywords:

1) *Dar' at Ta'arud al 'aql wan naql* (2008)— al Mahmood (2011) states that ‘this is one of the greatest books written by Ibn Taymiyyah, he wrote it as an answer to the Asha’ira who believe that it is obligatory to use intellect over the holy texts’ (p.186). Within this book, Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the concept of *Jihad* .

2) *Al Jawab as Saheeh liman baddala Deen Al Maseeh* (1999) — This was a book written as a reply to a letter sent to Ibn Taymiyyah from Cyprus discussing the proofs used by the Christian scholars to defend their beliefs. Within this reply, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts the importance of accepting all that which Allaah has legislated.

3) *Iqtida' as Sirat al Mustaqeem* (2007)— This book revolves around the principle that Muslims are not allowed to emulate the Non-Believers and take their days of celebration as days of festivity. This book will be used to gain an understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on emulating non-Muslims.

4) *Minhaaj as Sunnah* (2003)— This book fills up 9 volumes of theological work by Ibn Taymiyyah, largely discussing the mistakes of the Qadariyyah²⁰ and the Shi'ah. In this book, Ibn Taymiyyah talks about Ghazan Khan and the Mongols.

5) *Mas' alatu al Kanais* (1995) — This was an answer to a question posed to Ibn Taymiyyah from Egypt. 'The non- Muslims claim that the churches in Egypt have been closed by the Muslim leaders oppressively and they claim that the churches should be open and are requesting the churches to be opened, should we accept this claim from them and allow the churches to be open?' (As Shibl, 1994; p.99). Ibn Taymiyyah uses examples of Tartars, i.e the Mongols, to clarify his point.

6) *Bayaan ad Daleel 'ala ibtaal at Tahleel* (1998) — This book is based around an important issue in Islam, which is what is the ruling of those who make permissible that which Allaah has prohibited. Although the book specifies a particular issue, which is what is the ruling of the marriage of a person who divorces his wife three times, Ibn Taymiyyah refers to the fact that the Mongols, and specifically Ghazan Khan, made lawful for themselves that which Allaah had prohibited.

7) *Ar Rad 'ala alBakry* (2010)— Here, Ibn Taymiyyah answers doubts posed by Ali bin Yaqub al Bakry regarding seeking aid from the dead. Within this book Ibn Taymiyyah refers to the concept of *Jihad* .

8) *As Safdiyyah* (1984) — This book is an answer to the question are the miracles of the prophets a sign of the power that the prophets themselves hold? Within this answer, Ibn Taymiyyah refers to the Tartar army and their action of leaving off certain Islamic practices. This book will be used to paint a clearer picture of Ibn Taymiyyah's stance on the Mongols.

²⁰ A sect of Islam

9) *Amradh al Quloob (1982)* — Ibn Taymiyyah addresses an important issue regarding illnesses of the heart and methods of rectifying them. Within this book, Ibn Taymiyyah points out different types of *Jihad* .

10) *Al Istiqamah (1982)* ± In this book, Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the importance of acting on the orders of Allaah and his Messenger, Salallaahu alayhi was sallam, and refraining from deviating from the path Allaah has ordered. Within this book, Ibn Taymiyyah makes reference to the Mongols and how they deviated from the laws of Allaah. This book will help build a clearer picture of Ibn Taymiyya's stance on the Mongols.

11) *Az Zuhd wa al Wara'wa Al Ibadah (1987)* — In this book, Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the importance of worshipping Allaah and emphasises that a servant of Allaah needs to have patience whilst worshipping him. He also clarifies that Allaah has warned his servants from falling into following their lusts and desires. Within this, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that there are different types of *Jihad* . This book will be useful to gaining a holistic understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's views on *Jihad* .

12) *Qaidatun Fi al Inghimas fi Al 'Adu (2002)* — Within this book, Ibn Taymiyyah addresses the issue of plunging oneself into enemy lines, even if leads to the death of the person. Ibn Taymiyyah uses verses from the Qur'an and narrations of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to clarify his position. This book will be used to analyse Ibn Taymiyyah's views on suicide missions.

13) *Qaidatun fi al Mahabba (2005)* — In this book, Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the importance of loving for the sake of Allaah. He also states that everyone will be judged by their intentions. Within this book, Ibn Taymiyyah points out different types of . This book will be also used to understand the views of Ibn Taymiyyah on *Jihad* .

14) *Majmu' al Fatawa (1995)*—This is a collection of *Fatawa* of Ibn Taymiyyah by Abdur Rahman Ibn Qasim (1995) and extends to a formidable 37 volumes. The volumes that will be used are volumes 3, 7, 12, 23, 28, and 34, as these volumes concentrate on issues of *Jihad* , its types and conditions.

15) *Sharh al Umda* (1993)— This is Ibn Taymiyyah’s explanation of a well-known book written by Ibn Qudama Al Maqdisi, entitled *Umdatul Uloom*. The author, Ibn Qudama, expounds on issues pertaining to jurisprudence. Within this explanation by Ibn Taymiyyah, he once again touches on the topic of *Jihad* — however, interestingly, he refers to the term *irhaab* (terrorism or to terrorise). This book will be used to shed light on his stance on *Jihad* and terrorism.

16) *Ar Radd ‘ala Akhnai’* (2000)— This book is a response from Ibn Taymiyyah to Ibn Al Akhnai’ who had disagreed with Ibn Taymiyyah on a number of issues. Within this response, Ibn Taymiyyah points towards certain sects misunderstanding the concept of *Jihad* and makes reference to the *Khawarij*.

17) *Masa’il Al Mardiniyyah* (1980)— This book is an answer to a number of questions posed from the geographical area known as Mardin. The majority of the questions revolve around Islamic Jurisprudence. Within these answers, Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies how one should deal and interact with the Tatar who resided in Mardin. Also within this piece, Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to the fact that the Tartars had opposed the Islamic legislations.

18) *As Saarim al Maslul* (1983) — The main point of this book is the defence of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Sallaahu Alayhi wa sallam. Ibn Taymiyyah makes important references to the fighting of innocent civilians and the spilling of their blood.

19) *As Siyasatu Ash Shar’iyyah* (1998) — This book examines the role of the Muslim leader and also the role of those living in a Muslim ruler’s state. Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies the role of the Muslim leader regarding *Jihad* and also how to deal with those who leave off certain obligatory actions, e.g. prayer.

20) *Risalatun ilaa as Sultan Al Malik An Nasir fi Sh’an At Tatar* — This is a letter that was written by Ibn Taymiyyah to the Sultan of Damascus expounding on the reality of the Tartars. This letter will be essential to gaining an understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah’s stance regarding the Tartars. This letter has been printed separately but is also found within the biography of Ibn Taymiyyah by Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011).

3.7 Conclusion

As aforementioned, this list of literature written by Ibn Taymiyyah has been chosen because of certain concepts that have been discussed within these books. It is imperative that we explore as much of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature to help us understand the the context behind each *fatwa* given by Ibn Taymiyyah. By sufficing with only a few of his works will prevent us gaining a holistic understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah's view on these important concepts.

This section has presented a short biography of Ibn Taymiyyah and the historical context in which he lived, including consideration of the Mongols and their way of life, their religion and war tactics. The historical context is of significance for a full understanding of the positions Ibn Taymiyyah held regarding the Mongols and for interpreting the written works in which he makes rulings concerning them. As aforementioned, the *Khawarij* tend to draw on some of the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah to reinforce their ideologies. Therefore, accordingly, the next section will be an exploration of the literature of the *Khawarij*, followed by a detailed account of the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, all the while exploring the notion that Ibn Taymiyyah's literature encourages extremist ideology and that the *Jihadists* have been radicalised by it.

4. Chapter 3: The Khawarij

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was ascertained that Ibn Taymiyyah was a prominent scholar of Islam who authored many works. Certain literature has clearly proffered the opinion that the *Khawarij* ideologies have stemmed from the works of Ibn Taymiyyah. To reiterate, Ingram (2013) and Atwan (2013a) note that Ibn Taymiyyah was Bin Laden's 'most frequently cited ideologue' (p.194). Additionally, Ingram (2013) mentions that 'Bin Laden's charismatic narrative draws heavily upon Ibn Taymiyyah' (p.94) which is again echoed by Atwan (2013a) who notes how Bin Laden referred to Ibn Taymiyyah in 1996 when he declared *Jihad* against the Americans. Likewise, Sageman (2011), in his writing, '*Understanding Terror Networks*', clearly states that both Qutb and Bin Laden have taken the work of Ibn Taymiyyah as a basis for their actions. According to the aforementioned claims, Ibn Taymiyyah seems to have heavily influenced these *Khawarij* and therefore this chapter will examine a variety of *Khawarij* ideologies to shed light on the realities of these dogmas and whether *Khawarij* the link to Ibn Taymiyyah is justified.

4.2 Contemporary *Khawarij*

Many academics have highlighted the extremist nature of *Khawarij* ideology, however, the literature regarding the core beliefs of the *Khawarij* are scant and deficient. In a recent research paper by Zarei and Goodini (2018), they try to compare the ideologies of the classic *Khawarij* and contemporary *takfiri* groups, though, they appear to fall into the same mistake of conflating many different terms, including Daesh, Salafism, Wahhabism and *takfir*, highlighting once again the importance of my research. Therefore, this chapter seeks to elucidate on the fundamental principles that the *Khawarij* propagate and likewise search for literature of Ibn Taymiyyah that might be taken as justification for their ideologies and actions.

Before we can start examining the literature of the *Khawarij*, I believe it is proper to identify the *Khawarij* who will be investigated. Al Muhaymeed (2015), within his research entitled, *The full story, The Khawarij of our time*, has researched and written extensively about the *Khawarij* topic. He lists those who hold the ideologies of the *Khawarij* according to his in-depth examination of over two hundred books and articles. The following names are of prominent leaders of the *Khawarij* movement in our time, ones who have links with terrorist activity in the recent decade. As identified mainly by Al Muhaymeed (2015), they include:

- 1) Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi, who is at the forefront of the *Jihadists* of this era.
- 2) Abu Qatadah – Al Muhaymeed (2015) remarks that Abu Qatadah has three disturbing *fatawa* that ensures that he makes it on the list of the *Jihadists* of our time. We will look at these *fatawa* in more detail later in the chapter.
- 3) Ayman Zawahiri –Zawahiri was in fact a medical doctor who was influenced by the thoughts and ideologies of Sayyid Qutb²¹, as noted above. He was imprisoned by the Egyptian Government for professing his extremist thoughts in Egypt. Realising that he will not be able to fulfil his ideologies in Egypt, he escaped to several different countries until he finally found a safe haven in Afghanistan.
- 4) Usamah Bin Laden – Al Muhaymeed (2015) proffers that Bin Laden, a Saudi national, started off as a person who wanted to help the Muslims in Afghanistan against the Russians; however, he was known for his lack of knowledge which made him susceptible to the ideologies of the *Khawarij*. It was in 1988 in Afghanistan that Ayman Zawahiri exploited the weakness of Bin Laden and thus he, Bin Laden, became the spokesperson for the *KKhawarij*.
- 5) Muhammad Qaid also known as Abu Yahya al Libi – Another to spend a long time in Afghanistan. He met with Ayman Zawahiri, to the extent that Zawahiri counted him to be among the major scholars of this era. He wrote a number of short treatises and had visions that Al Muhaymeed (2015) asserts as ‘the strangest of visions’ (p.301). We will look at these visions later in the chapter.

²¹ See chapter 1

- 6) Hamid Abdullah Al'Ali – similarly Al'Ali, held *Jihadist* views and praised the likes of Zarqawi, who accepted responsibility for the suicide bombing in Jordan which killed fifty-seven people, all of whom were Muslims. He has written several articles which I will examine in this chapter.
- 7) Ibrahim Al Awad aka Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. Al Muhaymeed (2015) does not make mention of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi but I wish to include him as one of the more prominent *Khawarij* of recent times. The speech by Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi in the Mosul Mosque in 2014 marked the beginning of the ISIS onslaught. This speech will be examined.

If one was to look at the literature of these *Khawarij*, several perturbing ideologies become apparent. They are as follows

4.2.1 Whoever rules by other than the rule of Allaah is not considered a Muslim

This ideology is an extremely dangerous concept that is the very basis for the *Khawarij* rebelling against Muslim rulers who do not fit with their ideology. Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi (2001), in his book, *Al Kawashif al Jaliyyah fi kufr Ad Dawlah As Saudiyyah*, relies on this principle to excommunicate the rulers of Saudi Arabia. In this book, Al Maqdisi stresses that Saudi Arabia being part of the United Nations represents a sign of their disbelief and hypocrisy. Likewise, he claims that in Saudi Arabia it is allowed for the king to decide on the punishment for those who disparage, belittle or mock anything to do with Saudi Arabia. He then claims that this amounts to disbelief and hypocrisy. Furthermore, he states that the road system is an example of how Saudi Arabia has departed from the legislation of Allaah.

He ends the book by saying:

‘Oh, scholars of Islam, what do you say about this all? Is the blood and wealth who believe in the ruling by other than Allaah’s rule impermissible, or the one takes part in it, or the one who follows it and does not disbelief in it, is the blood and wealth of the one who believes or takes part in or does not disbelieve in the Gulf Cooperation Council impermissible? (2001, p.65)

He then follows this up by saying that he wrote this important book in a rush and without having many sources available to him.

Likewise, Abu Qatadah Al Maqdisi (1995) proffered this same ideology by saying ‘the rulers of our time have left off the legislation [of Allaah], and likewise those who do Friday sermons, imams of the masjid and scholars...’(p.11). He further states that they resemble the Fatimid dynasty, who were previously excommunicated for their ideologies by the scholars. As a result, Abu Qatadah claims that ‘these Imams’ prayers will not be accepted²². This theme of excommunication is also prominently used by Ayman Zawahiri (2003), he believed that whoever rules by other than the rule of Allaah is not Muslim and used this ruling to his advantage. He clearly states that Muslims rulers and scholars who do not rule by the legislation of Allaah, and therefore are considered to be apostates.²³. This is again evident when examining the creed of Muhammad Qaid, Abu Yahya Al Libi. He promoted the ideology that Muslim leaders were not ruling by Allaah’s rule and for this reason were not considered to be Muslim. He wrote a book *Daf’ al Malaam ‘an Mujahidi al Islam* (2007) in which he encourages youth to fight against those rulers. It should be noted that Abu Yahya Al Libi did not specify which rulers he was referring to, in fact it seems clear that he is referring to any Muslim government that does not rule by what he deems is the ruling of Allaah.

4.2.2 Excommunication of Muslims

Ex-communication of Muslims is to declare that they are not Muslim for an action that they committed. The scholars of Islam, past and present, have specified a number of conditions that need to be met to declare a Muslim to have fallen out of the fold of Islam. However, the excommunication of Muslims is a very important weapon in the arsenal of the *khawarj* as this ideology opens the door to their ability to shed blood, especially against Muslims.

Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi (2003), in his monologue entitled *athihi ‘Aqeedatuna* (this is our creed) is blatant in his excommunication of Muslims. He states, ‘and

²² An article written by Abu Qatadah in the Ansar journal (journal 92, p.11)

²³ In a book written by Zawahiri entitled *‘izaaz rayat Al Islam*

we believe that the scholar who pledges allegiance to the leader who has transgressed the bounds, or the non-Muslim leader ... for verily he is an apostate' (2003, p.226). He states likewise in a separate monologue entitled *Sayathakaru man Yakhsha* that the 'disbelief of these governments whether they are non – Muslims or those who apostate [from Islam] are worse than the Jews and the Christians'. Within his monologue Al Maqdisi does not specify who he is referring to from the scholars nor the governments. Therefore it could a general ex communication` (Al Muhaymeed, 2015, p.227).

Similarly, another *Jihadist* who echoed this view was Abu Qatadah; as noted above, Abu Qatadah has numerous *fatawa* that disturbingly have led to the shedding of blood around the world. He ex communicates the Muslim governments and the Imams of mosques , with the claim that Muslim governments of our time have changed Islamic legislations, therefore, according to Abu Qatadah are deemed to be apostates, and the Imams of the mosques, instead of criticising the Muslim governments, pray for them and testiify that they are Muslim leaders. Abu Qatadah asserts that scholars excommunicated the rulers of the Fatimid dynasty due to the fact that those who ruled during this period changed Islamic legislations. Therefore, Abu Qatadah believes the Muslim governments of our time are also apostates because they have changed Islamic legislatons. His excommunication of the Imams of the mosque was because they misled the laymen into thinking that these leaders were actually Muslim. Once again Abu Qatadah does not refer to any Imam specifically, therefore it seems as if Abu Qatadah is referring to any Imam that does not judge by Allaah's rule.

Ayman Zawahiri also proffers this in his monologue entitled *Shifa Sudoor Mu'mineen* (2002), He categorically excommunicates the Saudi leaders.

Interestingly, he quotes Ibn Taymiyyah in eleven different places to reinforce his view that this was legitimised; he pens down numerous reasons why he believes that fighting them is allowed, and that apostates are deserving of a more severe punishment than non-Muslims. In noting this principle, he states 'Ibn Taymiyyah said "the disbelief of the apostates is worse than those who are disbelievers" he [Ibn Taymiyyah] said also "the Sunnah has affirmed that the punishment for the

apostate is more severe than the punishment for the disbeliever” (Zawahiri, 2002, p.11). he finally asserts that the Saudi leaders are enemies that need to be fought.

4.2.3 Declaring Muslim States as non-Muslim State.

This ideology is an off shoot of the previous ideology as any State that is ruled by a disbeliever, according to them, would consequently mean that the country is a country of disbelief. Therefore, they would excommunicate the leaders of the Muslim country and then proceed to attack the country as they have deemed any land which is not Muslim to be a land of war. Bin Laden quite clearly excommunicated the Saudi rulers and then proceeded to declare the cities of Makkah and Madinah to be non-Muslim states. Likewise, Faris Az Zahrani (see Al Muhaymeed, 2015) stated that even if a country is occupied by a majority of Muslims but led by rulers who use other than the religion of Allaah to rule, then this country is still to be considered a land of disbelief. Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah, in an infamous fatwa, gave a verdict on the Mongols who resided in an area referred to as Mardin. Within this fatwa, Ibn Taymiyyah, as understood by some, such as Abdus Salaam Faraj and Bin Laden (Ryan, 2013), declares the land of Mardin to be a land of disbelief, therefore dividing the world into either the land of Islam or the land of disbelief.

4.2.4 Spilling the Blood of Muslims

In general, one would have thought that fighting *Jihad* would be against non-Muslims, however, while exploring the literature of the *Khawarij*, one finds that the permissibility of killing Muslims seems relatively normal for the *Khawarij*. Among those who allow the killing of Muslims was Abu Qatadah. In an article that he wrote in defence of the anarchy caused by the *Jihadists* in Algeria, where many innocent Muslim women and children were being killed, he defends their actions by casually starting his article with the words: ‘I would like mention a few evidences that reinforces the actions by those fighting *Jihad*.’ He proffers Prophetic narrations that he believes condone killing innocent Muslims.

Similarly, Zawahiri (2002) issued a fatwa saying that if Muslims were killed then the only thing upon the Mujahideen is expiation of blood money ‘and they can

delay the payment of the blood money until the need for the money for *Jihad* has been covered' p.62)²⁴. Therefore, it is clear that Zawahiri regards the spilling of the blood of Muslims as futile if it is in the path of *Jihad*. Similar to Zawahiri, Abu Yahya Al Libi attempts to convince the masses that the spilling of innocent blood in the path of *Jihad* was allowed (See Al Muhaymeed, 2015, p. 303). As aforementioned, Abu Yahya Al Libi wrote a short monologue where he discussed a number of dreams that he had, all with the aim to convince Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ of Islam would take responsibility for all the blood spilt²⁵.

4.2.5 Rebellious against the Muslim Leader

All of the aforementioned *Khawarij* propagate the permissibility of rebelling against a leader, however they know that rebelling against a Muslim leader is not allowed. Therefore, they initially proffer that these rulers do not rule with the legislation of Allaah which consequently negates their Islamic status and thus rebelling against them is allowed. The previous ideology subsequently leads to actions which are vital to their agendas

4.2.6 Suicide Missions are Allowed

The last two decades have seen an increase in terrorist attacks. The events on September 11th 2001 in New York and 7th July 2005 in London and other more recent attacks in London are permanently engraved in people's minds. It is evident that in the last two decades, the *Khawarij* have introduced the weapon of suicide missions to their arsenal. This has increased the terror level of their attacks. Worryingly, the youth who have committed these attacks have been convinced about their permissibility. A number of the *Khawarij* propagate the permissibility of suicide missions.

Ayman Zawahiri, in his monologue entitled *Shifa Sudoor al Mu'mineen (2002)*, discusses the different angles in which suicide missions are allowed. He pens down around thirty pages of points of why believes it is allowed. On page 62 he

²⁴ Shifa Sudoor Al Muslimeen

²⁵ Al Muhaymeed (2015) mentions that he quotes Abu Yahya Al Libi from his monologue entitled '*Mubashirat*', however, I do not find any work of Abu Yahya Al Libi with that title. Therefore, I have sufficed with Al Muhameed as a secondary source.

quotes Ibn Taymiyyah by saying that Ibn Taymiyyah holds the opinion²⁶ that it is allowed to harm or even kill Muslims if non – Muslim are using Muslims as a shield. Zawahiri’s protégé, Bin Laden , also endorsed and publicly encouraged the use of suicide missions. He stated: ‘May Allaah have mercy on our brothers the martyrs [suicide bombers] in all places, in Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Nigeria, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand’(see Al Muhaymeed, 2015

Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi is another who permitted suicide operations. In an interview²⁷ he was asked about the suicide operations that took place in the Middle East. He replied by saying that he believed that all the operations that took place against those who change the rulings of Allaah are allowed and they take precedence over fighting non-Muslims. Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah has written a treatise entitled *Al Inghimas fi ‘Al Adu (2002)*, he discusses the permissibility of attacking the non-Muslim whilst putting their life at risk, which the *Khawarij* take as proof for the permissibility of suicide missions. Winter (2017) emphasises this point in his article for the International Centre for Counter- Terrorism by saying that Ibn Taymiyyah’s work has been used by the modern day ‘Salafi-*Jihadist*’, I will expand on this issue later in the thesis.

4.2.7 Stealing from Muslims and non-Muslims

Surprisingly, the literature of the *Khawarij* includes permission to steal from the enemy. Ayman Zawahiri gave his followers the green light to take from government funds. He states ‘as for the allowance of taking funds then as long as it is a government funds then it is allowed as it is considered to be the spoils of war for the Mujahideen, this not only from the banks but in fact it is allowed for the Mujahideen to take from all governmental resources’²⁸. This point is reinforced by a number of stories related by close accomplices of the *Khawarij*, Al Muhaymeed (2015), in his research²⁹ about the *Khawarij*, conveys a story about Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi. Al Muhaymeed (2015) claims that Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi was with a couple of his close friends when they came across a

²⁶ Majmu’ al Fatawa vol 28 p.546

²⁷ Nida Al Islam p.10

²⁸ Al Muhaymeed (2015, p292)

²⁹Al Muhaymeed (2015, p. 255) Al Qisatu Al Kamilah li Al*Khawarij* ‘Asrina

Muslim policeman who seemed to be drinking alcohol, Abu Qatadah told them that it is allowed to steal his wallet and weapon from him as he is not Muslim. As-Saeed confronted Abu Qatadah and asked why he had excommunicated the policeman, he replied that he had excommunicated him because he was wearing the police uniform and because he was drunk.

This was not the only time that As-Saeed had encountered such behaviour from Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi. He states that he met Abu Muhammad again in Jordan and when Faisal As Saeed asked what he was up to, Abu Muhammad replied that he was stealing the money of Christians. Abu Muhammad not only allowed the stealing of an innocent person's money but excommunicated him first to do so. Therefore, the *Khawarij* convince youth that stealing and looting the money of non-Muslims is permissible alongside the excommunication of innocent civilians.

4.3 Conclusion

These main beliefs of the *Khawarij* constitute the problem at hand. Using these principles, the *Khawarij* are able to propagate violent ideologies and recruit individuals to carry out their political agendas. Significantly, it is evident that they use the works of Ibn Taymiyyah to substantiate their views. Using a classical scholar brings much validity to their arguments. Thus, it may seem that the argument from Sageman (2011), who proffers that the *Khawarij* make use of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature, may be true. Having said this, it is imperative as a researcher to delve into the works of Ibn Taymiyyah in depth to understand his works holistically while comparing it to the works of the *Khawarij*. I will seek to do this in the following chapter.

5. Chapter 4: Exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's views

5.1 Introduction

In the previous sections, I explored the context surrounding the life of Ibn Taymiyyah, an era of rich history including the onslaught of the Mongol army from the East, the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate and the plentiful incursions from the Crusaders from the West. These events all paved the way for Ibn Taymiyyah to write an array of works that speak on the issues of warfare, *Jihad* and excommunication. As was noted in the first chapter, numerous academics have asserted that Ibn Taymiyyah's literature is the source from which the *Khawarij* ideology stems and many of the Khawarajites have quoted him to justify their cause. The previous chapter explored the literature of the *Khawarij* and the ideologies that were clear from the literature were cause for concern. It was found that the *Khawarij* quoted from a number of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatawa, however, some academics have argued that the *Khawarij* have taken these extracts out of context in order to justify their cause. Following on from the previous chapter, it is incumbent upon us to explore thoroughly the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah and to investigate these claims. This section will therefore concentrate on his literature with specific focus on certain terms that have been mentioned in the previous chapter. It should be noted that this chapter will be dedicated to an understanding of Ibn Taymiyyah with minimal commentary — the following chapter, Chapter 5, will constitute an in-depth discussion of Ibn Taymiyyah's stances while comparing it to the literature of the *Khawarij*.

Many struggle to comprehend the term *Jihad*. To exacerbate the problem at hand, *Jihad* has been central to the *Khawarij* ideology, and their understanding of such a concept has had worldwide implications; thus, it seems appropriate to begin with this term.

5.2 Ibn Taymiyyah's views on *Jihad*

Below is a collection of ways in which Ibn Taymiyyah defines *Jihad* within his literature:

- 1) '...and that is because the reality of *Jihad* is to strive to achieve what Allaah loves from belief and righteous action; and to push (refrain from) that which Allaah hates from disbelief and disobedience' (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 15, p.191).
- 2) '*Jihad* is to do your utmost to achieve what is loved by Al Haq [Allaah] and resist what is disliked and detested by al Haq [Allaah]' (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 10, p.192).
- 3) 'The intent of *Jihad* in the way of Allaah is to make everyone submit to him and raise the word of Allaah' (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.23).

It is evident from the aforementioned quotes from Ibn Taymiyyah that he defines *Jihad* as a form of striving to succeed in achieving Allaah's love. This *Jihad* is not specific to solely fighting the perceived enemy; in fact, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, it is a generic term that encompasses the daily life of a person who endeavours to submit to Allaah and his legislations. Therefore, the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah gives an understanding of *Jihad* as a multifaceted and multi-dimensional term. This point is reiterated by the different types of *Jihad* proffered by Ibn Taymiyyah.

5.2.1 Types of *Jihad*

Ibn Taymiyyah identifies 4 types of *jihad*, and they are as follows:

- 1) '...and *Jihad* is fought by the hand, the heart, and inviting to Islam, and clarifying the truth and all possible methods' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1987, vol 5, p.538).
- 2) 'and *Jihad* is done by the hand, heart and the tongue' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2002, p.19).

3) Ibn Taymiyyah states that seeking knowledge is a form of *Jihad* and he quotes Muadh ibn Jabal³⁰

Upon you is knowledge for verily seeking it for Allaah is worship, and knowing it is having fear upon knowledge and searching for it is *Jihad* ...’ Ibn Taymiyyah states ‘he [Muadh ibn Jabal] asserts that searching for knowledge is deemed as *Jihad* and with *Jihad* you require patience (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982, p.54)

4) ‘Gaining knowledge and teaching it is to be considered to be a form of *Jihad*’.

Evidently, in numerous areas of Ibn Taymiyyah’s literature he outlines, in a very direct manner, the different types of *Jihad*. This ranges from *Jihad* that is fought on a daily basis at an individual and personal level to *Jihad* that looks to rectify the problems of society. Hence, Ibn Taymiyyah states that ordering the good and forbidding the evil is a form of *Jihad* — ‘*Jihad* in the way of Allaah and that which consists of ordering the good and forbidding the evil’ (1982, p.266). He then mentions that ordering the good and forbidding the evil can ‘sometimes be done by the heart; and sometimes by the tongue; and sometimes by the hand.’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.137).

5.2.2 *Ordering the good and forbidding the evil*

In exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, we find that he has expounded different levels of ordering the good and forbidding the evil, ranging from advising the person to imprisonment. Below are a number of examples of this:

Level 1: Disliking the evil with one’s heart

Ibn Taymiyyah, while discussing the repercussions of always using force to remove evil, states ‘the foundation of it is that a person loves the good and dislikes the evil’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.131). He goes on to mention that, as for any physical action, it is dependent on the ability and consequence of taking any action to remove an evil (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, pp. 129- 131).

³⁰ A companion of the Prophet Muhammad of Allaah Salallaahu Alayhi wassallam.

Level 2: Forbidding the evil with your tongue

While exploring Ibn Taymiyyah's literature we find that this level has different options that need to be exhausted before moving on to level 3. The 1st option is to clarify to the person committing the sin that the action they are committing is a sin, as it's possible that the perpetrator has no knowledge of this action being a sin. Ibn Taymiyyah, while explaining the verse 'the Believers are close friends of each other, they order the good and forbid the evil, and they establish the prayers and give zakat and they obey Allaah and his Messenger, they will be forgiven by Allaah,'³¹ states that 'Allaah has ordered us to order the good and forbid the evil, and knowledge of the good precedes the ordering of it and the knowing of the evil precedes the forbidding of it.' After discussing the importance of knowledge, he states, 'And the first of this [forbidding the evil] should be that the person [forbidding the evil] condemns the evil act and clarifies its dangers; this is because forbidding of the evil should be done by the heart and tongue before any physical action is taken and this is the method used in the Qur'an' (Ibn Qasim, 1995 ,vol 15, pp.236-237).

On reflecting on these two levels, it is incumbent on the person who has the intention of stopping the evil to hate the evil at all costs. If there is a possibility of advising the perpetrator of the sin, then this is the second port of call. It is necessary to understand that verbally advising a person is crucial before any physical action is taken; this point is clear from the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah.

Ibn Taymiyyah states

...and the reason for this is because educating, reminding, admonishing and guiding and anything similar to that has a person doing it [reminding and admonishing] and a person accepting it, so a teacher will remind others, this person, in turn, will take heed, or will disregard the admonishment given to him/her; if he/she takes heed then the education or the admonishment is complete, if not then, at least we find one of the two [we find the person admonishing and reminding] (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 16, p.156).

³¹ Surah At Tawbah verse no. 71

However, in certain circumstances, one finds that the verbal admonishment is not sufficient for a person to stop what he/she is doing, and therefore Ibn Taymiyyah proffers a third option.

Level 3: Boycotting and warning against the person being sinful

The third option stated by Ibn Taymiyyah is to boycott and warn against the person:

If a person makes apparent his sin then he needs to be forbidden publicly/openly and this is not considered backbiting, it is obligatory to discipline and reprimand the person so as to stop him from falling into the sin; this can be by boycotting the person or other means, so you don't greet the person nor reply to his greeting [to show your animosity to the action] if you are able to do this. (Ibn Qasim, 1995 vol 28, pp.217-218).

Ibn Taymiyyah further expounds on the issue by stating, 'It is also incumbent upon the people of authority to refrain from attending the funeral prayer of the person who sinned' (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.218), so as to not be seen condoning the action.

Therefore, the third option proffered by Ibn Taymiyyah is not to physically harm or physically stop the person, as we have seen in the literature of the *Khawarij* in the previous chapter. It is to boycott the perpetrator and warn against him/her, which necessitates informing the public of his/her action with the hope that he/she accepts what they are doing is wrong and refrains from it. Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to a fourth option if the previous options do not give the desired results.

Level 4: Threatening the perpetrator with punishment

The fourth option is that the perpetrator is threatened with a punishment. This option is indicated by Ibn Taymiyyah where he says, while explaining the verse in the Qur'an "Tell the believers to lower their gaze":

...this includes lowering the gaze from looking at the private part of others, it also includes lowering the gaze from looking into the house of others, the house of a man covers his body like his clothes, Allaah orders [in the Qur'an] the lowering of the gaze and protecting the private part after ordering of seeking permission to enter a person's house.

After asserting the ruling of lowering the gaze, Ibn Taymiyyah quotes the hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ saw a person looking into his place of residence, so he said, ‘If I knew that you were looking at me I would have pierced you in the eye’.³² Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ made clear to the man the punishment so that it would prevent him from falling into the same sin again (Ibn Qasim, vol 15, pp.379-380).

In the final stages of admonition, Ibn Taymiyyah states, while explaining the hadeeth “whoever sees from you an evil then he should change it with his hand, and if he is not able to do so then with his tongue and if he is not able to this then with his heart”³³ he states:

If the people of evil are prevalent until no one pays attention to the good, in fact they may harm the person trying to forbid the evil because the evil people have been overtaken by the evil, in this state the changing of the evil with the tongue is left and the person hates the action with his heart. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 14, pp. 469- 470).

Level 5: Forbidding the evil with the hand or by force

Thus, we have level 5 which is forbidding the evil with the hand or forcefully removing the evil. Ibn Taymiyyah states, ‘the ordering the good and forbidding the evil is not complete without legislative punishment... The person who leaves off that which is obligatory or does an evil act receives a punishment’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.107). Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that, Islamically, this falls into two categories — ‘set punishments’ and ‘unset punishments — referred to as *ta’zir*, and *ta’zir* is of different types, from the types is vocal condemnation, imprisonment, being exiled and also corporal punishment’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.109). Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to state that ‘there can also be a monetary punishment in a specific situation’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.113).

Likewise, he states:

Whoever does that which is prohibited or leaves off that which is obligatory then he deserves to be punished; if the punishment is not legislated then it is for the people in authority to decide on a punishment. Therefore, a rich

³² In Sahih Muslim no. 2156

³³ In Sahih Muslim no. 49

person who is able to repay a debt but doesn't do so is imprisoned, and if he still abstains from paying the debt is given a corporal punishment until he fulfils what is obligatory on him, and verily the scholars from the school of thought of Malik, Shafi' and Ahmed have stated this and I do not know of anyone to differ on this. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998, pp.133-134).

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah within his literature paints an in-depth picture of the different options that can be utilised to prevent evil from occurring. While discussing the different methods that can be chosen to remove the evil, he asserts that this is dependent on the situation as certain situations demand specific methods to nullify the evil.

Thus, after exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah pertaining to the prevention of evil, it is evident that there are many options that need to be exhausted before any physical action should be taken. The aim is to stop the action being done and not causing grievous bodily harm. This writing of Ibn Taymiyyah make it clear that he understood the true objective of the legislation set down by Allaah, whilst the previous chapter makes clear the *Khawarij* do not understand the objective of the legislation. I will discuss this in the next chapter.

Having discussed the different levels and stages of ordering the good and forbidding the evil, it is evident that the level of *Jihad* , as a form of warfare, is preceded by a sequence of options that must be explored and taken before such step is considered. The nature of ordering of good and forbidding evil is thus more complex and systematic than the *Khawarij* have understood it to be. The matter will be found to be even more intricate when the topic of *Jihad* , as a form of fighting, is discussed.

5.2.3 Offensive and Defensive Jihad

As for when the term *Jihad* refers to warfare, Ibn Taymiyyah clearly differentiates between attacking the enemy in their lands and defending the Muslims when they are attacked.

He states, 'It is incumbent to differentiate between warding off an imminent, oppressive non-Muslim enemy and seeking the enemy in their lands' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1987 p.532).

Ibn Taymiyyah states while clarifying *Jihad*

...and that [defensive *Jihad*] is defending of the religion and its people, and it is fighting out of necessity, and that [*Jihad* in non- Muslim lands] is fighting out of choice to raise the word of Allaah and his religion and to put fear into the enemy, similar to the battle of Tabouk.
(Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998, p.367).

Similarly, he states, ‘As for when the enemy attacks the Muslims, then it is obligatory for every Muslim to defend’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, p.171). This is reiterated in al Fatawa al Kubra (1987, vol 5, pp.538-539.)

He expounds on the intent behind *Jihad* by saying:

...and if legislated fighting, in principle, is *Jihad* , then the objective of it [*Jihad*] is to make all religion [worship] purely for Allaah and to elevate the word of Allaah above all else, whoever prevents the raising of the word of Allaah is fought, however as for those who are not considered from those who prevent this or are not considered to be from those who fight like woman, children, religious clerics, old people, the blind and those disabilities are not fought with the majority of the scholars, unless they fight, in this scenario they will be fought. There are some scholars that believe it is correct to fight all non-Muslims because of their disbelief... however the correct opinion is the first [those who are not considered to be from those who fight are not fought] because fighting has been legislated against those who fight us because we want to raise the word of Allaah.
(Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, p.359)

Ibn Taymiyyah proffers a number of narrations from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. From the narrations, he states “he came across a woman who had been killed in a battle and said ‘she was not to be fought’³⁴. Ibn Taymiyyah comments on the hadeeth by saying, ‘...and this is because the killing of people is only permitted to the level that allows the rectification of the creation... so whoever does not prevent the establishment of the religion then their disbelief only harms themselves’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, p.360).

It is evident that, with defensive *Jihad* , it is obligatory on Muslims to defend themselves at all costs; however, more significant to our discussion is to point out that the aim is to only attack those who are blameworthy, as opposed to attacking everyone in the blameworthy party. This view is far different to that of the

³⁴ Sunnan of Abu Dawud, book of *Jihad* , chapter – Killing of women, hadeeth no. 2669

Khawarij, who attack innocent civilians as part of their *Jihad* against non-Muslims. I will expand on this point in the next chapter. An important tool in the arsenal of the *Khawarij* in harming innocent civilian is suicide attacks. In the previous chapter, the *Khawarij*, namely Ayman Zawahiri, use Ibn Taymiyyah to back their claim that suicide attacks are permissible, I will discuss this next.

5.2.4 Suicide Attack in the Literature of Ibn Taymiyyah

Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah has a monograph discussing plunging into enemy territory, entitled *Qaaidatun fi al Inghimas fi al A'du, wa hal Ubah?* (2002) translated as the principle of plunging [oneself] or immersing oneself into the enemy, and the monograph asks if this is allowed. Within this work, Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the concept of plunging oneself into enemy lines with the high possibility of being killed. Ibn Taymiyyah starts by mentioning that there are many types of *Jihad* — *Jihad* using one's body, using one's wealth, and sometimes *Jihad* can be simply in the heart.

He goes on to outline the scenario by saying:

This issue is about a person or a group of men fighting over double their number and there is a good chance that they will be killed, like a person a man carries himself in to enemy lines and enters within them, and the scholars name this issue as “plunging into the enemy”, because he goes missing within the enemy, as if he has been immersed in to something or similarly a person who kills the heads of the non-Muslims while being amongst them, such as the person pounces on the leader overtly as he believes he is able to kill him and he is then abandoned, and similarly to a person whose allies are being defeated enters into the enemy to weaken them from the inside... all of this [these scenarios] are allowed by the majority of the scholars of the four schools of thought and others, and no one really opposes it except the odd [one or two], as for the Imams who are to be followed like Ash Shafi' and Ahmed, then they have stated that it is allowed, and it is the stance of Abu Haneefa, and Malik and others. (2002, pp.23-25)

He then continues by mentioning pieces of evidence that substantiate his view. The first piece of evidence he proffers is the verse in the Qur'an “there are some who sell themselves seeking the pleasure of Allaah, and Allaah is full of kindness to his slaves.” Regarding verse 207 chapter of the cow, Ibn Taymiyyah states:

It has been mentioned regarding the reason for the revelation of this verse that Suhayb migrated from Makkah to Medinah. However, the polytheists caught up to him [while he was on route] and he was alone and he nudged his arrows and said, “I will direct the arrow towards anyone one who comes to me from you.” So he wanted to fight them. Then he said, “If you want to take my wealth in Makkah, then take it and I will point you towards it.” He then carried on towards the Prophet [in Medinah] so the Prophet said to him, “The transaction has been profitable...” (2002, p.31).

Ibn Taymiyyah mentions this verse and its reason for revelation as a proof for the permissibility of plunging into enemy territory even if it could result in death. Similarly, Ibn Taymiyyah mentions a number of hadeeth to corroborate his stance on the permissibility of plunging into enemy lines. He proffers a well-known story of people of Ukhdood, where a polytheistic king would kill anyone who believed in other than him as a lord. The king ripped a person in two with a saw; he threw another from the top of the mountain. And there was one young boy the king tried to kill — however, each time the young boy would come back alive. Then the young boy said to the king, “You will not be able to kill me until you do what I say.” The king replied, “And what is that?” The young boy answered, “Bring everyone together, on one plain and crucify me on to a wooden stalk, then place one of my arrows into a bow and then say in the name of the lord of the boy, then throw the arrow, with this you will kill me.” This was done and the young boy was killed, so the people watching all believed in the Lord of the young boy. The king then ordered with a pit which was lit on fire and anyone who believed was thrown into the fire. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ narrated this story to his companions to give them strength against the harm they faced from their enemies (Al Qurtubi, 2017). Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that within this hadeeth, the cleric was killed by a saw because he did not stop believing in Allaah, also the young boy ordered the killing of himself from what he knew would lead to the appearance of belief [in Allaah]. Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah uses this hadeeth as a proof for the permissibility of plunging oneself into enemy territory even if it could lead to death. However, does this monologue promote suicide attacks?

It should be noted that Ibn Taymiyyah does not clearly mention the term suicide, *intihaar*, but rather *inghimaas*, which is to plunge, dive or immerse. The term *intihaar* or suicide results in a definite death, hence it being referred to as suicide. In contrast to the term *inghimaas* or plunging, diving, or immersing into enemy

lines, means that is not certain that the person will be killed. Additionally, this evidence relates to the enemy who are attacking the Muslims in armed combat. As for suicide within the realms of civilian society, it is apparent that this is not what Ibn Taymiyyah is alluding to, and this evidence goes against the actions of the *Khawarij* who carry out suicide missions amongst innocent civilians.

I believe it is pivotal to explore Ibn Taymiyyah's views on non-Muslims in response to the claim that *Khawarij* follow his views. Additionally, there is a whole monologue attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah asserting that the principles of Islam forbid the killing of non-Muslims. This will be explored now.

5.3 Ibn Taymiyyah's views on non-Muslims

Regarding having dealings with the non-Muslims, Ibn Taymiyyah states:

It is also allowed to live in their place of residence and to wear their clothing and have their weaponry. Likewise, it is allowed to have transactions with them just as the Prophet had transactions with the Jews of Khaybar.³⁵ Similarly, how the Prophet and Abu Bakr hired Ibn Urayqit, a man from the tribe of Ad Deel as he was intelligent regarding map reading and [knew the route to Medinah from Makkah] and entrusted him with their lives and their riding beast, where they agreed to meet at the cave of Thor after three days. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to accept the advice of certain tribes, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. Abu Talib³⁶ used to aid and defend the Prophet even though he was a polytheist. There are many examples of this. (Ibn Qasim, 1995 vol 4, p. 114)

Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies his reasoning for this stance:

For verily within the polytheists and people of the book³⁷ there are those that can be entrusted as Allaah states “from the people of the book that if you entrust them with Qintar [a great amount of wealth] they will return it to you, and there are those who if you entrust them with a single silver coin they will not return it to you unless you constantly stand demanding”, for this reason it is allowed to entrust them with your wealth and likewise it is allowed to entrust them in medicinal matters if they are trustworthy. This is a point the Imams have noted, like Ahmed and others, because this is

³⁵ A city 170 km north of Medinah

³⁶ The Uncle of the Prophet Muhammad

³⁷ Jews and Christians

accepting their information in matters that they have knowledge of and trusting them in worldly affairs. (1995, p.114)

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah does not paint the disbelievers with one brush and look to harm them all. In fact, we see that Ibn Taymiyyah looks to differentiate between them and act justly towards them.

Similarly, Ibn Taymiyyah proffers different methods of discussing with non-Muslims without harming them or calling to take arms against them:

As for that which is in the Qur'an from the statements of the non-Muslims and their proofs that Allaah replies to, then there are many. [Allaah] answers their doubts sometimes by affirming his oneness, sometimes by affirming prophethood and sometimes affirming the day of Judgement and other times clarifying the legislation in the most prolific way... and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ discusses with non-Muslims after the verse of fighting was revealed and Allaah stated "and if anyone of the polytheists seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the words of Allaah, and then escort him to a safe place (a safe route)"³⁸ will know for sure that the claim that the verse of war and fighting has abrogated the verse of debate and discussion is false. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004, vol 1, p.231)

To continue he maintains that:

It is well known that fighting has been legislated in necessity, so if the people believe in the signs, there is no need for war. To make clear the legislations of Islaam is obligatory at all times and as for *Jihad* then it is legislated in necessity, so how can this [*Jihad*] be something that prevents that [discussion about signs of Islam]')Ibn Taymiyyah, 1999, vol 1, p. 238)

There is an important monograph, attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah, entitled *Qaidatun Mukhtasara fi Qital al Kufar wa muhadanatum wa tahrir qitalihim limujarad al kufir* (2004), explicating the reason for fighting the non-Muslims. Within this monograph it is claimed that Ibn Taymiyyah states:

Is the reason for fighting the non-Muslims because they engage in warfare [against the Muslims] or is it very simply because they are non-Muslim? The scholars differ in this issue into two opinions, those who hold the first opinion is the majority of the scholars like Malik, Ahmed, Abu Haneefa, and others, and the second is the opinion of Ash Shafi. (2004, p.86-87)

³⁸ Surah At Tawbah, verse 6

He asserts that ‘the opinion of the majority of the scholars is what the Qur’an and Sunnah points towards’ (2004, p.90), and then provides evidence to substantiate his point to the reason for fighting against non-Muslims is because of warfare and not simply because they are not Muslim. The reasons he puts forward are as follows:

1. Allaah states in the Qur’an “and fight in the way of Allaah those who fight you”. Ibn Taymiyyah states, ‘Allaah has specified the ruling of fighting them [non-Muslims] to those who fight us — this proves that the reason for the fighting is warfare.’ Allaah then says, “And do not transgress the bounds,” which proves that killing those who don’t fight us is considered transgressing the bounds.
2. “And fight in the way of Allaah those who fight you.” ‘These are the ones who have prepared themselves to fight us, as for those who have not prepared themselves to fight, like the religious figures, the elderly,..., the blind and the insane, verily these people are not be killed and this ruling has not been abrogated... as for the claim that it is abrogated, then an evidence is needed to prove this and there is nothing in the Qur’an that contradicts this verse, in fact in the Qur’an there is that which agrees with this, so where is that which abrogates it [this ruling]’ (2004, p.100).

The second point stated by Ibn Taymiyyah is an important one. Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to the fact it is wrong to harm innocent civilians. In other works by Ibn Taymiyyah this point becomes vividly clear.

5.3.1 The Killing of Innocent Civilians in the Literature of Ibn Taymiyyah

Ibn Taymiyyah states in *As Saarim Al Maslul*

That is because the intent of fighting is to elevate the word of Allaah and to make all worship for Allaah alone, and that there is no fitnah, meaning that no one prevents anyone from the religion of Allaah, for verily the one who prevents this [anyone from the religion Allaah] is to be fought and they are the people of warfare. As for those who do not fight, then there is no reason to fight them — like a woman, the elderly, religious clergy, and those who are similar to that. (1983, p.514)

Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies a misunderstanding regarding the Messenger’s reply about the woman and the children that are killed in battle when he replied, “They are from them.” Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies this by saying:

These are those who were killed unintentionally [those who are caught in the cross-fire], the woman and children who are part of the armed forces are not fully protected from being killed. However, it is not allowed to kill them intentionally if they are not from those who take part in warfare. (1983, p.104)

Ibn Taymiyyah stresses once again that killing innocent civilians, including women and children, is transgressing the bounds of Islam:

There are four opinions regarding what is meant by the term “transgress” [in the aforementioned verse]. The first opinion: it [transgressing the bound] is killing women and children. This opinion is held by Ibn Abbas and Mujahid. The second opinion: do not kill those who do not fight you. This position is held by Saeed ibn Jubayr, Abu ‘Aliyah and Ibn Zayd. The third opinion: to do that which is not permissible. This opinion is held by al Hasan [Al Basri]. The fourth opinion: to start the war against them in the holy months. (1983, p.115-116)

He then moves on to state another proof as to why he believes that those who are fought should be only those who engage in warfare and not any non-Muslim:

The Messenger, during a battle, walked past a woman who had been killed and said “she was not to be fought” so it is understood that the reasoning why it was impermissible to kill her was because she was not to be fought... and also the Messenger said “Go forth in the name of Allaah, and for Allaah, and put the way of the Messenger, and do not kill the elderly, nor children, nor the young, nor woman...” (1983, p.119)

This hadeeth has been mentioned above in the section regarding the aims and objectives. This point is emphasised by Ibn Taymiyyah in *As Saarim al Maslul*. ‘The non-Muslim woman is not to be fought if she does not engage in warfare’ (1983, p.515). He states further on that ‘therefore whoever is not from the people of warfare then it is not allowed to kill them’ (1983, p. 515).

In *As Siyastu Ash Shar’iyyah*, he states that:

As for the person that is not from those who prevent [you from your religion] or from the people of warfare like the woman, children, clergy, the elderly and the blind... are not be killed with the majority of the scholars until they fight, even though some scholars consider that the non-Muslim are to be killed for the reason of their disbelief ... and the first [opinion] is the correct one. (1998a, p.359)

Therefore, if one was to be accurate one would have to accept that Ibn Taymiyyah did not allow the harming of innocent civilians and he categorically asserts that it is Islamically impermissible to harm innocent civilians. Similarly, within Ibn Taymiyyah's literature we find him discussing the rulings regarding the Dhimmi.

5.3.2 The Permissibility of Agreeing Pacts with non-Muslims and the Stance on the Dhimmi

A Dhimmi is a non-Muslim residing within Muslim lands who has a contract or pact that ensures his safety, as long as the non-Muslim adheres to the conditions set; a Mu'ahad is a non-Muslim that enters a Muslim country under a contract to ensure his safety. The *Dhimmi* and *Mua'had* are both protected by Muslims due to the contract and are forbidden to be killed.

In *Qaidatun Mukhtasara fi Qital al Kufar wa muhadanatuhum wa tahrir qitalihim limujarad al kufr*, which discusses the permissibility of agreeing pacts with the non-Muslims, he asserts that 'whoever wants a pact and not to fight against us is not to be fought, whether he is from the people of book or a polytheist' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2004, p.185).

He emphasises this point by saying:

The agreements between the Prophet and the polytheists were general agreements [without a time period] and they were not specified by time. The Qur'an differentiated between the agreement that has a time period and the agreement where no time period has been set; however, if there is interest in abandoning the agreement that has no time period then it is allowed but, as for the agreement that has a time period, then it is not allowed to abandon or discard the agreement. (2004, pp.186-187)

Similarly, he states in *As Safdiyyah* (1984)

The Prophet had agreements that had no time period set with many of the Polytheists... and the correct opinion is that it is allowed to have agreements that have no time period set and agreements that have time periods set. (1984, vol 2, p.318)

He adds further examples and states that:

And the Muslims, during the caliphate of Waleed ibn Abdul Malik, requested to take from the Christians some of their churches which were outside Damascus, so he [Waleed ibn Abdul Malik] agreed to give them [the Christians] the churches which were inside Damascus, and Umar Ibn Abdil Azeez and those who were from the people of knowledge in that time agreed with him, for verily the Muslims wanted to increase the size of the main Mosque in Damascus by [using] the church which was next to it, which were from the churches that were under the agreement, so therefore the [Muslims] could not take it by force, so they agreed to give them other [churches] in exchange...(1984, p.368)

This example proffered by Ibn Taymiyyah is an illustration of how Muslim-Christian relations have been during some past periods of time.

Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies the ruling if the non-Muslims oppose the pact by saying

‘However, as soon as they oppose the pact, the churches which are under the agreement are taken from them and the churches that are not under the agreement in the first instance, just as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ took that which was for the tribe of Quraydah and Nadhir when they violated their agreements. For the reason that a person who violates the pact is worse than those who fight [the Muslims] from the beginning, just as he who nullifies his belief is worse than the one who is a non-Believer from the beginning (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000, vol 2, p.368)

Thus, it is evident that non-Muslims who are not engaged in warfare, either by speech or action, are not to be fought and are to be left alone. This is clearly at odds with the actions of the *Khawarij* who seek to kill innocent civilians within their safe environments, such as we have seen in the Manchester bombing. This will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Ibn Taymiyyah expounds on the different ways Muslims can treat non-Muslims by stating:

If the non-Muslims go against the agreement, it is not obligatory on the Muslims to request another agreement with them, it is allowed for them [in this scenario] to fight them... until they surrender and it is allowed to remove them from the Muslim land if they see this to be in the interest for the Muslims, for verily the Jews of Bani Nadheer opposed the agreement [between them and the Muslims] so the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ surrounded them and then removed them from the city [of Medinah]. (2000, p.184)

Similarly, this is an example of how intricate the rulings regarding dealing with non-Muslims can be. This is in opposition to what was seen in the literature of the *Khawarij* in the previous chapter.

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah was asked about a Jewish man who was killed by a Muslim. Is he to be killed or what is obligatory in this situation? Ibn Taymiyyah replied:

The Imams of Islam say that there is no retaliation and it is not allowed to kill a *Dhimmi* without reason... however, it is obligatory for them to pay blood money, it has been said that it is half the blood money of a Muslim, and some say that it is a third... also upon the person is expiation of the killing which is to free a believing slave and if this not possible then fast two months consecutively. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 24, p.146)

He reiterates this point by saying:

As for the narration “whoever harms a *Dhimmi*, then he will have Allaah to dispute with on the day of judgement” then this narration is weak; however, that which is well known is that “whoever kills a *mu’ahad* wrongly will not smell the fragrance of Jannat”. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 18, p.127)

Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that:

It is allowed to return the greeting to a *Dhimmi* or it is allowed to say “welcome” to them; it is allowed to visit them and to send condolences to them; it is allowed for them to enter the Masjid if it is believed that they convert to Islam; the Scholars say that it is not allowed for them to make apparent their religion in the Muslim lands. (1987 p.615)

Abiding by the agreed pact is an important element of Islam and historically the non-Muslim in Muslim lands are protected and have special conditions set for them. The event mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah regarding Waleed Ibn Abdul Malik is just an example of this. By exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, we find that that his views are unambiguous.

This subsection has explored the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding those non-Muslims residing in Muslim lands. However, what is the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding the non-Muslims who may not reside in the Muslim lands?

5.3.3 How to deal with Non-Muslim Parents

As for parents that are not Muslim, Ibn Taymiyyah states, while explaining the verse “and be dutiful to your parents”, that:

If the father calls his son to polytheism, it is not allowed for him [the son] to obey his father; in fact, it is allowed for him to order him [with good] and prevent him [from evil], this ordering and preventing is being dutiful to his father, and if he is a polytheist then it is allowed to kill him, however the scholars differ whether this is disliked or not. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 14, p.478)

Ibn Taymiyyah, within this fatwa, points towards the permissibility of killing your non-Muslim parents, a point that the *Khawarij* utilize to defend their killing of innocent civilians. However, once again, the *Khawarij* have taken the fatwa out of context. Ibn Taymiyyah is referring here to the context of battle and not the permissibility of killing innocent civilians. The exegesis of the aforementioned verse is the key to understanding the context of the answer of Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah is giving an answer to the question by pointing towards a number of important issues. He states that it is not allowed for a Muslim to accept his parents call to polytheism, however anything less than this then the son should be dutiful to his parents. Ibn Taymiyyah then goes on to state that it is allowed for the son to kill his polytheistic father however there is disagreement amongst the scholars regarding this. This last statement needs clarification as the full understanding of exactly what is disliked is not stated by Ibn Taymiyyah. This ambiguity may cause some confusion, however if one is to return to the exegesis of the verse, they would find that the scholars differ on whether it is disliked or not to kill your father in the scenario of battle.

The following *fatwa* reinforces this point:

Therefore, Allaah has ordered him [the son] to be dutiful to his parents, and then has prohibited him to obey them if they order with polytheism, hence this is a clarification that the parents are not obeyed in this issue but has ordered that even with that the parents are to be accompanied in a good way. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000 vol 4, p.275)

Thus, he argues that ‘it is incumbent on a person to obey his parents in that which is not a sin even if the parents are people of sin’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1987, vol 5, p.381.)

Ibn Taymiyyah’s stance is that even if your father is a non-Muslim, you must remain dutiful to him unless he orders you into disbelief, in which scenario it is not allowed for you to obey him. However, if you come across your father in battle, and he is on the opposing army, in this scenario you are allowed to kill him because he is fighting against Islam, and what is not meant by Ibn Taymiyyah is that you can kill your father in any normal situation.

This section has clarified Ibn Taymiyyah’s views on the role of a Muslim towards a non-Muslim within various contexts. The diverse nature of society and its many implications is recognised by Ibn Taymiyyah and thus he educates through his literature on the different modes of behaviour. This is in stark contrast to what we came to see in the previous chapter with the *Jihadists* who seem to believe that non-Muslims fall under one context and thus one mode of behaviour. Ibn Taymiyyah states that within a war context, only the direct enemy who attacks either with his speech or actions is to be fought, leaving innocent civilians aside; this is with the condition that the Muslims have strength and there is a valid reason for doing so. Furthermore, the *Dhimmi* and the *Mua’had* must adhere to the contract that has been agreed to and by this they are protected in society; they must not be killed, and this is considered a sin. Importantly, the non-Muslim parent must be respected as is commanded by Allaah in the Quran; however, the son or daughter should refrain from obeying their parents when it comes to the issue of worshipping anything other than Allaah, as Allaah’s right to be worshipped alone is greater than obeying parents.

Aforementioned are important issues that are clarified by Ibn Taymiyyah, which point towards having a good relationship with non-Muslims. However, it is incumbent on use to understand that *Jihad* as a form of fighting is an important part of Islam, and in fact a form of worship. Having said this, Ibn Taymiyyah proffers numerous integral conditions that need to be met for *Jihad*, as a form of fighting, for it to be considered a form of worship.

5.4 Conditions of *Jihad*

Ibn Taymiyyah clearly states that defending Muslim land from an imminent threat or defensive *Jihad* has no conditions. He states:

As for the warding off the imminent threat which may harm a person regarding his [a Muslim] religion or worldly affair then there is nothing more obligatory upon him [a Muslim] without any conditions, rather he/she defends themselves in any way possible. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, p.171)

However, he also states in other writing that sometimes making an agreement with non-Muslims who attack Muslim lands is also a possible route to preventing bloodshed.

The issue of fighting an aggressive group is dependent on ability, and fighting the aggressive group is secondary to fighting the non-Muslims and it is well known that fighting the non-Muslims is dependent on ability and sometimes agreeing a pact with them is better, as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did more than once. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 4, p.442)

Likewise, he states that if the enemy attack an Islamic country there is no doubt that the enemy needs to be defended against by all Muslims without the need of the permission of the parents (1987, vol 5, p.539). This is referred to as defensive *Jihad* .

As for pursuing the enemy in their lands then Ibn Taymiyyah states a number of conditions that have to be met.

5.4.1 Condition 1: *Jihad* cannot be fought except with ability

Ibn Taymiyyah states:

And likewise all the different types of worship from prayer and *Jihad* , all of this is obligatory with ability. As for those who are unable, verily Allaah does not burden a soul except with that which it has ability to do. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995, vol 28, p.388)

He also asserts ‘...*Jihad* , leadership and other religious affairs all fall within the verse ‘have Taqwa of Allaah as much as can’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.389)

Further to this he adds:

Therefore, it is obligatory upon the Muslim to strive in this affair as much as possible. Whoever gains control [as a leader] and with it intends to be obedient to Allaah and establish what he can from his [Allaah's] religion and to benefit the Muslims and establishes what Allaah has ordered and stays away from that which Allaah has prohibited, he [the leader] will not be held accountable for what he was not able to do. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, pp.461-462)

These quotes from Ibn Taymiyyah point towards the fact that ability is an important condition of any type of worship, including *Jihad* .

5.4.2 Condition 2: *Jihad* cannot be fought except with the permission of the leader.

Ibn Taymiyyah states:

It is obligatory to know that those who have been put in charge over you is one of the most important affairs of the religion, in fact the religious and worldly affairs cannot be carried out except with having a leader in charge. The betterment of the children of [Prophet] Adam cannot be achieved except with the coming together as one body and this body requires a head [leader]...

He goes on to firmly assert:

‘...and Allaah has made obligatory the ordering the good and forbidding the evil and this cannot be complete except with ability and leadership and likewise all of that which Allaah has made obligatory from *Jihad* and justness and the establishment of Hajj, Jumuah, Eid prayer, aiding the oppressed and establishment of punishments.’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.390)

He reiterates this point by stating:

...and for this reason, from the main fundamentals of *Ahlus Sunnah wa Al Jama'ah* that the attacking of non-Muslims is done with a leader, whether the leader is pious or evil for verily may aid the religion through an evil man and through groups that have no religion with them. If it so happens that the fighting of the war is not possible except with an evil leader or an army that has many wrongdoers then there is one of two choices, either leaving of fighting and this will result in the enemy overpowering you, who have far more harm with them, or fighting alongside an evil leader and with it push away the worse of the two and have the ability to establish the

majority of the legislations of Islam even if it is not possible to establish all of them, and this is what is obligatory in this situation. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, pp.506-507)

Similarly, in another place in his literature he stresses that:

The majority opinion, and it is the madhab of Abu Haneefah and Ash Shafi'i and Ahmed, and they said that the battle is fought with all leaders whether pious or evil, if the attacking of non-Muslims is allowed, if the non-Muslims are fought or those who have left Islam or those who break a pact or the *Khawarij* are fought with a leader, however if the leader attacks someone who is not allowed to be fought, then in this situation, they should not fight alongside him, so he is aided in that which is piety and not aided in that which is oppression...and *Jihad* is not established except with the leaders. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2003, vol 6, p.116-117)

Therefore, these quotes by Ibn Taymiyyah stress the importance of having permission and fighting alongside a leader.

5.4.3 Condition 3: *Jihad* can only be fought with the permission of the parents.

Ibn Taymiyyah states that, for defensive *Jihad*, there are no conditions; he specifies that in the scenario of an enemy attacking the Muslims there is even no need to seek permission from parents to fight (1987, vol 5 p.539). Ibn Taymiyyah specifies that the permission of parents is required in the context of defensive *Jihad*, from this one would understand that within the scenario of an offensive *Jihad*, one would then require permission from their parents, this point is also reiterated by Wahdan (2006). Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah believed that seeking permission from parents to participate in *Jihad* is a condition of offensive *Jihad*.

5.4.4 Condition 4: *Jihad* can only be fought if it is prepared for

Ibn Taymiyyah states:

...and likewise it is obligatory to make preparations for *Jihad*, via amassing strength and organising the necessary equipment, in times where the obligation of *Jihad* itself falls due to inability, because “anything that, without it, an obligation cannot be completed becomes itself obligatory” as opposed to the ability which is necessary for Hajj, and that which resembles it — because that form of “ability” is not obligatory to achieve. This is

because the obligation itself is not mandated except with that “ability” being present. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol 28, p.259).

Therefore, an exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah’s writing clarifies that there is a clear protocol that must be followed before embarking on *Jihad* for the sake of Allaah. The conditions set are deep and specific so as to avoid any unnecessary bloodshed. *Jihad* through the lens of Ibn Taymiyyah is seen as an important form of worship that has been legislated and cannot be carried out except with knowledge of its conditions. Knowledge of Islaam and its rulings are vital before action, which is a main theme propagated by Ibn Taymiyyah and there are dangerous consequences to having a lack of knowledge on matters such as *Jihad* which are intricate and profound. There are grave implications if *Jihad* is fought incorrectly, as manifested through the actions of *Khawarij* who have misunderstood vital aspects of *Jihad*, which has led to the killing and harming of innocent civilians.

One cannot just proceed with *Jihad* instantaneously as permission needs to be sought by and from a number of people, including the parents and the Imam of the Muslim land. However, this, as mentioned by Ibn Taymiyyah, is for the offensive *Jihad*; as for defensive *Jihad*, then one should defend themselves at all costs. Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that the defensive *Jihad* is when an enemy is attacking you in your lands, or where the threat is imminent. In this scenario there is no need to gain permission from the Muslim leader or parents. This from a logical point of view it makes complete sense and is in line with the natural defences within us.

Ibn Taymiyyah utilises the term *Jihad* in other works as well. The following are examples of this:

In his monologue, *Amradh al Quloob*, he states:

This is similar to the Hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who prohibited being envious of others except for the person who has knowledge and acts upon it and teaches it and the one who has wealth and spends it in the way of Allaah. As for the one who has knowledge and does not act upon it, or is given wealth and does not spend in the obedience of Allaah, then these two are not to be envied and no one should hope to be like them because they are not focused upon good, that one should strive to imitate them, in fact they are heading towards a punishment. As for a person who has been put in charge and deals with issues with knowledge and foresight and judges between the people according to the Qur’an and Sunnah has a high position,

this person is really striving hard/greatly (*Jihad* adheem) and is similar to a *Mujahid*, the one who fights in the way of Allaah...(Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982, p.15)

Likewise, in his book *Kitab Iqamatu ad Daleel 'ala ibtaal at Tahleel* (1998b):

...and for someone people Hajj is better for them than *Jihad*, like women and those who are not able to perform *Jihad*, even though in general *Jihad* is better as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, “Hajj is the *Jihad* of the weak” (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998b, p. 467)

In the very same book, Ibn Taymiyyah, in the chapter on *Jihad*, brings a number of narrations that show the superiority and significance of *Jihad* in Islam. One example he gives is a saying of the Messenger. When he was asked about the best of actions, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ replied, “Believing in Allaah and his Messenger.” He was then asked which action is the most important. In response, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ replied, “*Jihad* in the way of Allaah.” He was then asked what the best action is, and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ replied “Hajj al Mabroor”

Ibn Taymiyyah asserts in *Jaami' al masaail* (2000):

Verily Allaah has obligated *Jihad* upon the people of his religion against the people of disbelief to make religion (worship) purely for Allaah and to elevate the word of Allaah above all else, and so that they [people of disbelief] return back from their false religion to guidance and the correct religion which Allaah sent the seal of the prophets with. (2000, vol. 3, p. 336)

Ibn Taymiyyah states in *Jaami Al Masail* (2000)

...and it's not allowed for the Muslims to wait for the enemy to enter the Muslim land as they did in the first year, for verily the Prophet said, “a group of people have not fought the battle in their land except that they have been humiliated”. And Allaah obligated *Jihad* upon the Muslims against those who oppose the religion even if they [the enemy] do not intend on attacking the Muslims like the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and those who took charge after him would prepare and send the army towards the enemy even if the enemy didn't intend on attacking the Muslims. To the extent that when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ passed away – and this was the greatest afflictions – the people started to differ after his death. Abu Bakr As Siddique prepared and sent out the army of Usamah ibn Zayd — which was from the order of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ — to Sham to fight against the Christians. The Muslims at this stage were very weak, which put fear

into the enemy. When they saw the Muslim army, the enemy said that if these people [Muslims] were weak they would not have sent an army. Similarly, Abu Bakr, as death approached him, said to Umar, “Do not let the affliction of my death busy you from fighting the enemy.” (2000, vol 5, pp.302-303)

Ibn Taymiyyah, in *Jaami' al Masail* (2001), expounds on the issue of those who oppose certain parts of the legislation:

Allaah has obligated the people of the religion to fight those who oppose the religion and to make the religion (worship) purely for Allaah. Those who oppose some of the religion and they have the ability to do it, they are ordered to do it. If he does not accept, then he/she is imprisoned and punished until that obligatory action is done; if the person stills refuses the action, the person is given the death penalty. And if there is a group of people who refrain from doing an action they are fought, similar to how Abu Bakr as Siddique and the rest of the companions fought those who refused to give Zakat while they accepted Islam and prayed the five prayers to the extent that Abu Bakr as Siddique said, “By Allaah if they refused to give me a piece of the Zakat that they use to give to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ I would have fought for them for it.” (Vol 5, pp. 304-305)

There is no doubt that *Jihad* is an important part of Islaam. We can understand that *Jihad* is a vital aspect of a Muslim’s life, whether that is *Jihad* of the soul or *Jihad* which involves physical action; but each type of *Jihad* must be fought within the right context

Ibn Taymiyyah, in his work entitled *Minhaj As Sunnah an Nabawiyyah Fi Naqd al kalam as Shi'a wal Qadariyyah* (2003), brings numerous examples of the mistakes of the Shi’a and the Qadariyyah. In the first volume, he asserts that *Jihad* is part of the religion. He states the following: ‘For this reason, there are similarities between them [shi’a] and the Jews in following their desires and similarities between the Shi’a and the Christians in transgressing the bounds’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2003, vol 1, p.23). Ibn Taymiyyah continues by quoting the words of Ash Sha’bi³⁹: “The Jews say that the kingship is not permitted except in the family of David, the Shi’a say that leadership is not permitted except from the children of Ali, the Jews say that there is no *Jihad* in the way of Allaah until the anti-Christ

³⁹ ‘Aamir ibn Sharaheel Ash Sha’bi — from the first generation after the companions of the Messenger, it is stated that he was born 28th Hijri, and he took knowledge from over forty-five companions of the Messenger. (Siyar A’lam an Nubula, Ad Dhahabi,

appears, the Shi'a say that there is no *Jihad* in the way of Allaah until the Mahdi appears.' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2003, pp.24-25)

Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah's stance on *Jihad* and fighting the non-Muslim army and also his stance on those who claim to be Muslim but refuse to practise some of the obligatory practices of the religion has been clarified and it is understood that the matter is deeper than at first appears. *Jihad* is an intricate and multi-faceted type of worship with conditions that must be adhered to before carrying it out. It is deeper than the *Khawarij* seem to claim; they propagate *Jihad* as being straightforward killing of the enemy which will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.5 *Jihad* and Terrorism

In Chapter 1, I allude to the fact that there are certain academics who struggle to differentiate between *Jihad* and terrorism. The academics deem the terrorist attacks a form of *Jihad*. In fact, the *Khawarij* themselves deem their actions to be a form of *Jihad*. Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah uses the term terrorism while discussing the permissibility of using gold on weaponry whilst fighting the enemy. He states that 'because the intent of the weaponry is to fight the enemy and terrorising them so it is allowed to use gold to what will aid the terrorising of the enemy...' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1993, p.312).

This is the only literature of Ibn Taymiyyah where the term *al-irhaab*, which means terrorism, is used. It is clear from the war context within which it is used, that this refers to being face to face with the enemy in battle and by no means does it include terrorising innocent civilians who mean no harm in an urban context.

After exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding *Jihad*, one has to conclude that he sees *Jihad* as a multi-faceted form of worship. It is evidently clear that Ibn Taymiyyah deems it necessary to fulfil numerous conditions for *Jihad* to be viable. Therefore, the *Khawarij* either have misunderstood Ibn Taymiyyah or have taken his work out of context to suit their ideologies. However, a number of academics consider the *fatwa* and the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah on the Mongols or the Tatar army as problematic, as it could be deemed as excommunication of Muslims. In Chapter 2, I have spoken about the

Mongols and their role in the destruction of the Abbasid Caliphate, but what was the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding them? I will discuss this next.

5.6 Ibn Taymiyyah's View on the Tatar Army

It is clear that the *fatawa* regarding the Mongols and the Tatar army are central to the *Khawarij* propaganda, so I will explore this aspect of Ibn Taymiyyah's writings next.

Ibn Taymiyyah was asked about those who refuse to fight the Tatar army that was approaching Sham, and they say that from those in the army where those who were being forced to fight, he replied with an extremely thorough answer:

All praise is for Allaah, Lord of all that exists, fighting the Tatar, those who are approaching Sham is obligatory according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allaah states in the Qur'an "and fight them until there is no more fitnah [disbelief and polytheism] and the religion [worship] will be for Allaah" and religion is obedience and worship, so if some of the religion is for Allaah and some of it for other than Allaah then it is obligatory to fight them until the religion is for Allaah. And this is why Allaah states "those who believe, have Taqwa of Allaah and give up what remains from usury if you truly are believers. And if you do not do so, then take a notice of war from Allaah and his Messenger, but if you repent, you will have your capital sums" — this verse was revealed for the people of Taif⁴⁰. When they entered into Islam they were steadfast on their prayers and fasting, however they refused to stop dealing in *Riba* [usury], so Allaah clarified that they were at war with Allaah and his Prophet Muhammad ﷺ if they didn't put a stop to their dealing with usury... if they are at war with Allaah and his Prophet Muhammad ﷺ then it is obligatory to fight them, so then how is it for the one who leaves off many legislations or the majority of them like the Tatar?. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.544)

He further states:

The scholars of the Muslims all agree that if a group of people refuse to perform some of the obligatory outward actions need to be fought, if a person utters the shahadatayn (the testimony) but refuses to pray or pay zakat or fast... or refuses to accept the impermissibility of fornication or drinking of alcohol or the marrying of those who Allaah has made impermissible to marry [i.e. the marrying of mothers, fathers, brothers, sister etc], the killing of innocent civilians...then they need to be fought

⁴⁰ A city that is approximately 87 km southeast of Makkah

until the whole religion [worship and obedience] is for Allaah alone. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.545)

The second example Ibn Taymiyyah proffers is that of the *Khawarij*:

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ states regarding the *Khawarij* that “one of you would consider your prayer negligible in comparison to theirs [the *Khawarij*], and your fasts compared to theirs, their reading [of Qur’an] compared to theirs, they read the Qur’an and it does not surpass their throats, they [the *Khawarij*] leave the religion like an arrow leaves the game, wherever you find them fight them, for verily in the fighting of them is a great reward with Allaah on the day of resurrection, of I met them I would fight them like the people of ‘Aad were killed”. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, pp.545-546)

He then asserts his main reason for this, by saying:

The Tatar and those similar to them have left certain practices of Islam which are far greater than those who refused to give Zakat or the likes of the *Khawarij*... whoever has doubts in fighting them [the Tatar] then he is the most ignorant of the religion of Islam...’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.546)

He reiterates:

Verily the Tatar are not fighting for the religion of Islam, in fact they are fighting so that the people will submit under their orders; the one who submits to them will be safe from them [the Tatar] even if they are polytheists, Christians or Jews, and those who do not enter under their orders are their enemies if they are Prophets or righteous people. Verily Allaah has ordered the Muslims to fight the non-Muslim enemies and to take the believers as allies. Therefore, it is obligatory upon the Muslims from the Sham, Yemen, and Moroccan armies to work together to fight against the non-Muslims and not be fighting each other just for desires and superiority. As for the Tatar, then the least that is incumbent upon them is to fight those around them from the non-Believers and to stop fighting the Muslims. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, pp.551-552).

It is important to note that the concept of fighting those who opposed the sharia, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, was not specific to the Tatars. Ibn Taymiyyah believed it to be incumbent upon Muslims to fight all of those who erred from the truth and refused to practise the religion fully. This is significant — Ibn Taymiyyah replied, when asked about the Nusayriyyah, that ‘it is obligatory to fight them as long as they refuse to practise that which has been legislated’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.553). It is important here to refer back to the different

levels of ordering of the good and the forbidding of evil proffered by Ibn Taymiyyah. As Ibn Taymiyyah refers here to the fighting of those who do not practise the religion of Islam, this has to be understood in the light of his other literature which indicates the importance of using the correct means of admonishment, whether it is clarifying the truth, boycotting or in some cases fighting those who do not acknowledge the rights of Allaah.

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah's reason for fighting the Tatars was based on the fact that the Tatars refused to practise certain rights of Islam. This point is reiterated by Ibn Taymiyyah in a letter that he wrote to the Sultan Nasir. In the year 705, after the battle at mount Kasrawan, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote to Sultan Nasir – this letter is found in *Majmu' al Fatawa* (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, pp. 398-409) and is also in the biography of Ibn Taymiyyah by his student Ibn Abdil Haadi (2011) — clarifying the reality of the Tatar army. It is imperative to understand Ibn Taymiyyah's view on the Tatar army so as to expound the reason why he believed that *Jihad* was obligatory against them. Within his letter he says as follows:

...fighting *Jihad* against the enemies of Allaah, those who have left the religion, and they are of two types

Firstly, the people of corruption and those who have transgressed the bounds, those who have sinned and oppressed, those who have left certain practices of belief while searching for power on earth and causing disruption and corruption and left the way of guidance, and these are the Tatars and those similar to them, those who have left the legislations of Islam even if they testify to the shahada or some parts of the religion.

And the second type: the people of innovation, those who have left the religion [of Islam], misguided hypocrites, those who have left the *Sunnah* and the main body of the Muslims, those who have abandoned the legislations, the example of these are those who have been fought at the mount [Kasrawan], it is from the blessings of Allaah upon the Sultan that he gave him victory against these wicked people.

He expounds on the issue by stating

And when the Tatar approached this country the way they dealt with the Muslim army was unimaginable, they carried the Christian cross and they sent to Cyprus prisoners of war from the Muslim army, only Allaah knows the exact amount, and this cursed methodology from the likes of people of

Jezzine⁴¹ and those in the surrounding areas and also those residing in and around Jabal Amel⁴² were pleased with the arrival of the Tatars. All of this and that which is more severe than this within this group [*Rafidhah*] was from the foremost reasons for Genghis Khan to attack the Islamic empire and Hulagu's reign of terror against the Abbasid Caliphate and his approaching towards Aleppo and his destroying of Salihyyah⁴³ and other than that from the enmity and hatred of Islam and its people.... (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, pp.398-401).

Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to explicate that creed of Rafidhah that he states has been taken from the works of Ibn Al 'Oud, a respected figure of the Shi'ites (Ibn Kathir, 1990).

He asserts:

And these people [*Rafidhah*] have left the Shari'ah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Sunnah, they are worse than the Tatar from many angles however the Tatar have more number and more strength, and this is why their evil is more prevalent. And most of the evil of the Tatar stems from mixing with them [*Rafidhah*] like the time of Gazan and Hulegu and other than them, for verily they took the money of the Muslims more than they took of the others.

Furthermore, he states:

Within this group [the Tatar army] a huge number of them do not accept [the obligation of] prayer nor fasting nor Haj or Umrah. They also do not make impermissible the carcass and blood and meat of the pig. They do not believe in paradise and hell similar to the *Ismaa'iliyyah* and *Nusariyyah* and the *Haakimiyyah* and *Baatiniyyah*⁴⁴ and they are disbelievers and their disbelief is worse than the Jews and the Christians and the Muslims do not disagree on this issue.....for verily what they have done to the Muslims in the area of Sis⁴⁵ is an example of their treacherous behaviour. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.408)

One can deduct from the aforementioned quotes of Ibn Taymiyyah a number of significant points. Ibn Taymiyyah's reasoning for propagating a *Jihad* against the Tatar army is highlighted; the Muslims were initially reluctant to fight due to the Tatar army claiming to be Muslim and thus Ibn Taymiyyah argued with them that

⁴¹ A town south of Beirut, Lebanon, well known to adhere to the Rafidhah sect of Shi'ite Islam.

⁴² Mountainous region of southern Lebanon, well known to adhere to the Imamiyyah sect of Shi'ite.

⁴³ A city northwest of Damascus

⁴⁴ Ismaa'iliyyah, Nusariyyah, Haakimiyyah and Baatiniyyah are all sects attributed to Islam

⁴⁵ A rural town in Kurdistan

the soldiers of the Tatar army did not pray, they drank alcohol in addition to the fact that the Tatar army were happy to kill and attack Muslims even though they claimed to be Muslims themselves. Ibn Taymiyyah relays the story of Abu Bakr, the first Caliph, who fought anyone who refused to pay any portion of the *zakat* that was due and likewise Ali, the fourth caliph, who fought against the *Khawarij*. This is crucial, as Ibn Taymiyyah based his decision upon the conduct of the caliphs before him. Ibn Taymiyyah did not allow for the Tatar army to gain control over them primarily because the Tatar army's aim was to enlarge their dynasty and it was not done for the spreading of Islam. Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah was looking to safeguard the Muslims from being harmed by the Tatar army. Additionally, Ibn Taymiyyah knew that if the Tartar army took control over Damascus and the surrounding Muslims cities, many of the Islamic practices would cease to exist. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to take into consideration the context as Ibn Taymiyyah is trying to prevent the greater evil. Likewise, at the beginning

Importantly, when referring to the different levels of *Jihad*, it is evident that Ibn Taymiyyah approached Ghazan Khan, the leader of the Tatar army, before heading back to convince the Muslims to defend themselves against Ghazan Khan and his army. Ibn Taymiyyah reprimanded Ghazan Khan for having the audacity to attack fellow Muslims, if the Tatars were Muslims. Furthermore, he clarified the mistakes of the Mongols in detail. He also asserts that the protocol of *Jihad* is that if the Muslims are being attacked there is no need for permission to be sought to carry it out; the matter that complicates the issue with *Jihad* on the Tatar army was their claiming to be Muslim, and thus Ibn Taymiyyah clarified that the Tatar army were not carrying out the obligatory actions of Allaah and they practised customs and religious practices that opposed the core fundamentals of Islam, and thus fighting against them was justified, especially since the Muslims in Damascus were being attacked by the Tartar army. This falls in line with what the caliphs did when they fought those who resisted carrying out the obligatory actions in Islam.

Whilst exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, the notion of Ibn Taymiyyah being a just person becomes apparent. In fact, in many places in his literature he warns against excommunication.

5.7 Ibn Taymiyyah's Stance on being Just and Excommunication

In the previous section, extracts from Ibn Taymiyyah's writing regarding how one interacts with the general non-Muslims were explored. However, how did he interact with those who opposed him? Any exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's work will demonstrate the importance he placed in fairness and being just.

He states in *Minhaaj as Sunnah* (2003) regarding a person who has erred

'if someone speaks to him [the one who has erred] with knowledge and justness and his intention is to advise him, then Allaah will reward him for that. Especially if the person [who is being advised] is a caller to innovation it becomes more of an obligation to clarify his affair to the people, for verily the removing of his evil from them is greater than removing the evil of the highway bandit' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2003, vol. 5, p.146)

His sense of justness comes clear in a number of works, an example being when Al Akhnai, who is his adversary, curses him, and Ibn Taymiyyah replies with the following:

And in this issue the person and those similar to him have erred... we will be just to him and intend to give the correct position as Allaah has ordered us, for verily he had ordered us to be just against our non-Muslim enemies... so how is with our Muslim brothers, and Muslims are brothers, may Allaah forgive him and give him success and all our Muslim brothers. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000, p.92).

Elsewhere he says:

I have an open chest to those who oppose me. If they transgress the bounds of Allaah against me by excommunication or claiming that I am sinner for verily I will not transgress the bounds of Allaah, I will specify what I say and what I do, I will use due justness based upon the book [Qur'an] which Allaah sent down... (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 3, p.245)

Ibn Taymiyyah asserts also:

And for this reason the people of knowledge and Sunnah do not excommunicate those who oppose them even if the adversary excommunicates them, because the ruling of excommunication is a legislative ruling and it is not for a person to punish the person with the same sin that he committed upon you, like the one who lied upon you and

committed fornication with your wife, it is not for you to lie upon him and fornicate with his wife, because lying and fornication are forbidden by the right of Allaah and likewise the excommunication is the right of Allaah so we do not excommunicate except the one that Allaah and his Prophet Muhammad ﷺ have excommunicated. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2010, p.492)

Ibn Taymiyyah emphasises this point in numerous places in his literature.

Another example:

This is why I, and those around me know this of me, that I am from the severest people against labelling a specific person to be non-Muslim or a person of sin, except if it is known that the proof was given to him. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 3, p.229)

Any study of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature will show that he would always endeavour to find an excuse for the adversary. Ibn Taymiyyah states in his extensive work, *Bayan Talbis al Jahmiyyah (2005)*:

The majority of people who seek knowledge and religion do not have an intention other than wanting the clear truth; however, many doubts and opinions have appeared and have captured and seized the hearts, to the extent that a statement that a person who has been given belief and knowledge will know that it opposes the Qur'an and guidance, in fact the statement is disbelief in which the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came with, some noble people may not understand this and they believe that it is in fact the very essence of belief. (2005, vol. 9, p.1)

In his monograph entitled *Raf' al malam 'an a'imati al'alam (1992)*, Ibn Taymiyyah states:

And if we find that an Imam utters a statement that opposes the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ then it is incumbent to search for an excuse, and all the excuses fall into three main groups: the first, he [the person who opposed the Messenger] believed that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never said that statement; secondly, he didn't realise that that was the intended issue by the statement of the Messenger; and thirdly, he believed that the ruling was abrogated. And these three reasons split into many other reasons. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1992, p.12)

Evidently, Ibn Taymiyyah seems reluctant to excommunicate an individual or a group of people for sins they may commit — he views this matter to be grave and one that must not be dealt with in a hasty manner. Further to this, it is apparent that his advice is to make excuses for that individual who may be at fault and to have good thoughts further emphasising the need to be cautious with the matter of

excommunicating. When applying this to the Tatar army, as aforementioned, it seems difficult to state that Ibn Taymiyyah excommunicated the Tatar army for opposing the Islamic legislation; in addition, there is no clear wording that could be derived from his works to suggest this.

In numerous places in his literature, he states that he intends good for all. He writes, ‘and I love goodness for every Muslim, and I want goodness for every Muslim like I would love it for myself.’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.55)

He emphasises this point by saying:

People know that between the Hanabilah and the Al’Asha’riyah was disparity, and I was the one who tried my best to unite the hearts of the Muslims and I wanted them to unite upon the that which we have been ordered with, which is the rope of Allaah... (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 3, p.227)

His wanting of good was not specifically for Muslims; he also wanted good for non-Muslims. In a letter he wrote to Sarjun, the Christian king of Cyprus, he says, ‘We are a nation who want good for everyone, we love that Allaah joins for you good in this life and in the hereafter’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995 vol. 28, p.615).

These excerpts from the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah have presented a clear image of fairness, justness and softness regarding how Muslims should interact with one other. However, there are certain circumstances where it is incumbent on Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars to clarify the truth to others, especially where there is a danger that may arise if the scholars of Islam do not address the issue. An example of this is the danger the Muslims faced by the oncoming Mongol army. Similarly, the longstanding and recurring problem of the *Khawarij*.⁴⁶

5.8 Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij*

Interestingly, we find that Ibn Taymiyyah spoke extensively about the *Khawarij*.

He states

⁴⁶ Please refer to chapter 1

The *Khawarij*,... those who the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ ordered to fight and the ones who were fought by the Ameer al Mu'mineen, Ali Ibn Abi Talib, one of the four rightly guided Caliphs, and the Imams of the religion from the companions [of the Messenger] and the generation after them agreed that they [the *Khawarij*] should be fought. Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas and others from the companions did not remove them from Islam, they regarded them as Muslims even though they fought and killed Muslims. Ali did not order to fight until they spilt blood and they stole the money of the Muslims; he then ordered that they be fought to push away their oppression. (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 3, p.282)

This statement by Ibn Taymiyyah is important as he alludes to an important consequence of the ideology of excommunication, which is that the *Khawarij* then deem it permissible to spill the blood of those people and to take their money.

The *Khawarij* are aware that the spilling of Muslim blood is impermissible, so they excommunicate the Muslims to open the door to the spilling of blood and spreading of fear. I have spoken about this in Chapter 3.

This point is reiterated by Ibn Taymiyyah in another of his works:

As for those who rebel and rise up against the Muslim nation, then they are those who transgress the bounds, and their main purpose is money similar to bandits and those similar to them. Or their purpose is leadership similar to the ones who fight people of a city under the leadership of other than them. Or those who sanction the spilling of the blood of the people of the Qiblah [Muslims] like the *Haruriyyah* ⁴⁷those who were fought by Ali may Allaah be please with him. (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000 vol. 1, p. 250]

The next statement of Ibn Taymiyyah refers to the possible reason that has led the *Khawarij* towards evil ideology.

Ibn Taymiyyah stated, 'The *Khawarij* revere the Qur'an and deem it obligatory to follow it, though they do not follow the guidance [of the Messenger] which opposes the apparent understanding of the Qur'an, and they talk badly about Ali and Uthman and those who ally with them though they do not speak ill of Abu Bakr and Umar' (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998a, p.122).

⁴⁷ A sect of Islam

Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah in his Monologue entitled *Al Istiqamah (1982)* demonstrates that the *Khawarij* have left off acting upon the Sunnah which, in their view, contradicts the Qur'an. Ibn Taymiyyah states that from the beliefs of the *Khawarij* also is to excommunicate anyone who falls into a sin and excommunicate anyone who opposes them, to the extent that they excommunicated Uthman and Ali, two of the rightly guided caliphs. In another place in the same monologue, Ibn Taymiyyah states that if one was to look at the apparent actions of the *Khawarij* then one would see that they strove hard to worship Allaah, but since their actions were not according to the way clarified by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ it led to them to fall into extremity.

Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to the very essence of the problem in his monologue entitled *Al Istiqamah (1982)*. He states that one of the most important issues to comprehend is the ability to differentiate between Sunnah and Bid'ah. The Sunnah is that which that legislator ordered with and Bid'ah is that which the legislator did not order with, because of this issue many people have strayed. He goes on to mention that all sects of Islam claim their way is the correct way and others are misguided and because of this mentality evil prevails. He more significantly states that the first to fall into this spiral of evil was the *Khawarij*, where they believed that they were following a correct way and that Ali and Mu'awiyah and the army with them were people of sin and innovation; and this led to consenting to the spilling of Muslim blood.

Moreover, Ibn Taymiyyah in *As Siyasatu Ash Shar'iyah (1998a)*, is clear that the *Khawarij* rejected the proposition of Ali. Ali believed that there was betterment in his proposition as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had ordered prior to his death that they be fought because the ideology and religion that the *Khawarij* propose is corrupt and this methodology will not rectify anything, whether it is regarding affairs of this life or the Hereafter. Ibn Taymiyyah clearly advocates that the ideology held by the *Khawarij* is one that will cause more harm than good.

Ibn Taymiyyah's characteristic of being just becomes apparent once again when he discusses the topic of sinning in *Jaami' Ar Rasail (2000 vol. 2 p.81)* He elaborates by saying that sinning and righteous deeds can be seen in one person; that a person can fall into committing evil but he or she may do righteous actions

as well. However, he iterates that this is contrary to the ideology of the *Khawarij* who believe that it is impossible for the two to come together in one person, as the evil deeds in essence nullify the righteous deeds, therefore in the view of the *Khawarij* once a person falls into a major sin, he or she automatically falls out of the fold of Islam and therefore their blood is permissible to be spilt. Ibn Taymiyyah states that he has clarified in numerous places the falsehood of this ideology by using verses from the Qur'an and narrations of the Messenger.

The *Khawarij* believe that a Muslim who falls into a major sin and dies without repenting will not receive intercession from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ on the day of reckoning. Ibn Taymiyyah points out that this stance opposes the stance that was held by the earlier generation, who believed that a Muslim, even if he or she falls into a major sin, could receive the intercession on the Day of Reckoning (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 1, p.116).

From the main principles of Ahlul Sunnah, the form of Islam that is propagated by Ibn Taymiyyah is that the religion consists of statements and actions, the statement of the heart and tongue and action of the heart, tongue and bodily limbs. In addition to this, he also believes that belief increases and decreases, increases with obedience and decreases with sin. Ibn Taymiyyah argues that we do not excommunicate in general those who face the Qiblah [Makkah in prayer] for a sin that they committed as the *Khawarij* do, however the brotherhood is affirmed even if a sin committed as Allaah states:

And if two groups from the believers fight then reconcile between them and if one group oppresses the other then fight the oppressor until they return to the order of Allaah and once they have returned then reconcile between them with justness for verily Allaah loves those who are just... verily the believers are brothers so reconcile between the two group of brothers.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Surah Al Hujuraat, verse 10

5.9 Conclusion

Therefore, after looking into the literature of the *Khawarij*, and their effort to utilize the works of Ibn Taymiyyah for their evil objectives, one can clearly see that Ibn Taymiyyah's position does not coincide with the *Khawarij* position. Interestingly, Ash Shatabi, a medieval Islamic theologian, stated that the people who innovate into the religion have a set principle which is that they have an ideology that they believe in and thereafter look for any verse in the Qur'an, a narration of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or any statement of a well-respected religious figure to reiterate their point, even if the statement that they use to substantiate their creed is not vividly clear.

This chapter has presented a thorough exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's relevant work, all the while examining the coinciding creed of the *Khawarij*. In the next chapter I will endeavour to look closely at and compare the two schools of thought, to begin to understand whether there is a substantiated connection between Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij*.

6. Chapter 5: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, numerous academics claim that the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Islamic scholar, is the source for extremist ideologies and that Bin Laden, Ayman Zawahiri and ISIS have all been motivated by it. In chapter three, I explored the literature of the *Khawarij*, namely Ayman Az Zawahiri, Abu Qatadah and others. It is evident that they propagate a violent form of Islam and they quote Ibn Taymiyyah to authenticate their claims. This led to chapter four, which was a thorough exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's relevant work, alongside an examination of the coinciding creed of the *Khawarij*. It was found that Ibn Taymiyyah was a fair Islamic scholar, full of mercy for other Muslims and non-Muslims. Therefore, where is the link between the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and the literature of the *Khawarij*? Within this chapter, I will endeavour to elaborate on the distinction between the two schools of thought to try to understand whether there is a substantiated connection, or not, between Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij*.

6.2 Ibn Taymiyyah and His Literature at a Glance

First, it is clear from an exploration of his work that Ibn Taymiyyah was a scholar with profound understanding of Islam. His writings fall into three broad categories: short treatises, including *Al Waasitiyyah* (1999), *Al Hamawiyya* (2004) and *Al Tadmuriyyah* (2010) which all discuss the names and attributes of Allaah in detail and other matters of creed; second, in-depth discussions on various topics, such as *Minhaj As Sunnah fi Naqd kalam Ash Shi'a wa Al Qadriyyah* (2003) and *Dar' At Taarudh Bayna Aql wa Naql* (2008) ; third, his fatawa. All his work reveals the deep knowledge he has on everyday *fiqh* issues, including that of *Jihad* . His work on *Tafsir* of the Qur'an makes apparent his profound understanding of the Qur'an literature⁴⁹; furthermore, his knowledge about Islamic history⁵⁰, hadeeth, principles of the Qur'an and various other subjects in Islamic sciences

⁴⁹ Refer to Salih Aal As Shaykh (2013)

⁵⁰ Refer to Ibn Qasim (1995)

indicate the immense range of his knowledge. Ibn Abdil Haadi, in his biography (2011) of Ibn Taymiyyah shares examples of this, including from when he was young. Furthermore, one of Ibn Taymiyyah's principal students, Ibn Al Qayyim, who himself was a highly respected scholar of Islam (Sufi, 2005) refers to Ibn Taymiyyah as *Shaykh Ul Islam*⁵¹ in numerous places in his literature⁵².

Ibn Taymiyyah's knowledge has also been recognised by western academics. McAullife (2006), while discussing the education of Ibn Kathir, states that 'certainly the most famous of Ibn Kathir's teachers, and perhaps the one who influenced him the most, was the Hanbali theologian and juriconsult, Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Kathir was only twenty-eight when this great Faqih died' (p. 72). Time and again, Ibn Taymiyyah stresses the importance of gaining knowledge. In fact, he refers to ignorance as an illness that can kill the heart and to knowledge as a cure.⁵³ He states that there are two reasons that lead people to going astray—oppression and ignorance. Coincidentally, we find that the literature of the *Khawarij* also emphasises the need to avoid these same two things. With no background in the Islamic sciences and feeling no need to learn from the scholars of Islam, avoiding these attributes led the *Khawarij* towards the spilling of blood and the spread of anarchy.

Second, whilst exploring the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, one can clearly see that he avoids and dislikes excommunicating people from Islam. In contrast to this, the *Khawarij* excommunicate at the very first mistake. Ibn Taymiyyah seeks to excuse people with regards to the issues that will lead to disbelief. A clear example of this is his clash with the Ash'aris concerning concepts that are regarded to be fundamental, such as the names and attributes of Allaah, and belief in Pre-decree to name two. Ibn Taymiyyah refrains from excommunicating the Ash'aris even though he states that if he was to have said what they said he would have fallen into disbelief (Al Mahmoud, 2011). Compare this with Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi, who would excommunicate a believer for consuming alcohol.

⁵¹ The scholar of Islam – one of the highest position a person can be referred to

⁵² Refer to l'Iam Al Muwaqi'een – Ibn Al Qayyim

⁵³ Refer Amradh Al Qulb – Ibn Taymiyyah

6.3 Ibn Taymiyyah's Stance on the Mongols

Many academics use the *fatwa* against the Mongols as an example of excommunication by Ibn Taymiyyah. But a careful reading of the literature shows that Ibn Taymiyyah had a by-no-means simple view of the Mongols. First, he likened the Mongols to those who prevented giving *Zakat* after the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ when Abu Bakr, the first caliph, ordered that the giving of *Zakat* was obligatory. Many have spoken about those who stopped giving the *Zakat* during the reign of Abu Bakr, and the scholars differed on whether they had left the fold of Islam or not. This research does not aim to dwell on the issue of whether this group of people were considered Muslim or not, but to reflect on Ibn Taymiyyah's opinions regarding this group. There are numerous *fatawa* from Ibn Taymiyyah regarding them and in some it could be understood that he considered this group to be non-Muslim for not paying the *Zakat*, as he refers to them as *Ahl Ridda*^{54 55}. On this basis, it would mean that Ibn Taymiyyah excommunicated the Mongols for not abiding by the Shariah and this could be utilised by the *Khawarij* who excommunicate the Muslim rulers for opposing the shariah. But, in contrast to these *fatawa*, there are others that lead us to believe that Ibn Taymiyyah considered them to be Muslim. Within these *fatawa*, he refers to this group as being from the *Ahl Qiblah*⁵⁶, a term that is used for Muslims.⁵⁷ When combining the two names, *Ahl Ridda* and *Ahl Qibla*, there seems to be a contradiction in the meaning — however, when analysing the linguistic meaning of the term *Ridda*, it does not necessarily mean leaving the fold of Islam completely but could mean leaving out part of the religion. However, important to note is that the Mongols differ from those who prevented giving *Zakat* in the reign of Abu Bakr. They also did not pray, drank alcohol and held onto many cultural practices that opposed the foundation of Islam. Ibn Taymiyyah states ‘the Tatar and those similar to them have left certain practices of Islam which are far greater than those who refused to give *Zakat* or the likes of the *Khawarij*...’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.546)⁵⁸, this point was echoed by Jackson (2018).

⁵⁴ Those who leave the religion

⁵⁵ Refer to *Minhaaj as Sunnah* vol 6 p. 348

⁵⁶ People of the *Qiblah* (those who face Makkah)

⁵⁷ Refer to vol 28 of *Majmu' Al Fatawa*, p.512- 520

⁵⁸ Refer to chapter 4

Likewise, when Muslim scholars and historians, such as Al Khattabi and Ibn Hajr Al Asqalani, refer to those who refused to pay *Zakat* as people of *Ridda*, they are actually using a general term applied to any who opposed the caliph at that time, and not necessarily implying that all those in that group have left the fold of Islam. Therefore, if we were to reflect on all the statements of Ibn Taymiyyah regarding the group that prevented Abu Bakr, the first caliph, from collecting their *Zakat*, we would find that it is not clear that he excommunicated this group. However, after an exploration of the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, his stance on the Mongols is sterner, as he notes many issues of concern regarding their form of Islam. In addition to this, if we were to reflect over the *fatawa* given by Ibn Taymiyyah, and likewise his biography by Ibn Abdil Haadi, we will find that he advised Ghazan Khan, the leader of the Mongols, against attacking the Muslim Empire as the intention to attack was merely to expand territory, as aforementioned. As a result of his advice being ignored, Ibn Taymiyyah encouraged Muslims to stand against the oncoming Mongol army.

To conclude, if one was to reflect over Ibn Taymiyyah's work as a whole, one would come to the conclusion that it does not support the mass excommunication of Muslims. In fact, it clearly shows that he disliked excommunicating Muslims from Islam, in direct contrast to the ideology of the *Khawarij*. However, in some cases, excommunication is allowed and his stance on the Mongols could be seen as an example. Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognise the context in which his stern stance was taken. The Mongols would leave off certain obligatory actions of Islam, such as prayer and giving of *Zakat* in addition to practising certain practices that opposed the foundation of Islam. This was topped off by the Mongols' willingness to spill the blood of Muslims, take their wealth, and leave Muslim cities in ruins. Within this context, one can understand why Ibn Taymiyyah ordered Muslims to stand against the oncoming Mongol army. Therefore, employing Ibn Taymiyyah's stance against the Mongol by the *Khawarij* in our time is clearly out of context, as we do not see the situation of the Muslims rulers today similar to the Mongols, neither do the Muslims rulers today practice any cultural practices that oppose the foundations of Islam, and neither do they wage war against the Muslims. In chapter 4, I state that Ibn Taymiyyah proffers numerous levels to ordering the good and forbidding the evil. The 1st level is to dislike evil with one's heart, the 2nd level is to forbid evil with your tongue, the 3rd

level is to boycott and warn against the sinful person, the 4th level is to threaten the perpetrator with punishment, and lastly forbid evil by force. Regarding the oncoming Mongol army, Ibn Taymiyyah clearly has gone step by step in an effort to solve the problem before resorting to force. His biography and academic literature⁵⁹ has made mention of his pure dislike for the actions of the Mongols; similarly, of him going to Ghazan Khan and reprimanding him for his actions. Additionally, Ibn Taymiyyah would clarify the evil of the Mongols to Muslims in Damascus. The last resort was to stand against them physically and with force. In contrast, the literature of the *Khawarij* paints a simple picture in that the one and only way to change anything is by brute force.⁶⁰

A thorough examination of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature gives an impression of a person who always wanted to be fair. Fairness does not always necessitate being merciful but necessitates taking the correct stance.

6.4 Ibn Taymiyyah and the Importance of being Merciful and Fair

Ibn Taymiyyah's work often reveals a surfeit of mercy towards Muslims and to non-Muslims. In numerous places, he discusses the importance of being good to your neighbours, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. Likewise, he discusses the importance of treating one's parents well, even if they are non-Muslim. However, let us highlight the *fatwa* regarding killing a person's non-Muslim father that can be found in *Majmu' al Fatawa*, volume 14, p.478. In contrast, there are numerous other *fatawa* from Ibn Taymiyyah that discuss the importance of being dutiful to non-Muslim parents, so long as they do not promote polytheism. If the parents do anything that opposes Islam, the child should not accept this from them, but nonetheless must remain dutiful. We must also explore the context of the *fatwa* regarding the permissibility of killing non-Muslim parents.

The *fatwa* was given in the context of warfare, when the question at hand was if a Muslim was to come across his father in a battle is it allowed to fight him or not? This is what Ibn Taymiyyah is discussing within this *fatwa*, which shows how important it is to explore the whole work and not take any of his *fatawa* out of

⁵⁹ Refer to chapter 4

⁶⁰ Refer to chapter 3

context. This way, we can understand his other fatwa where he unequivocally states:

‘Therefore, Allaah has ordered him [the son] to be dutiful to their parents, and then has prohibited them to obey them if they order with polytheism, hence this is a clarification that the parents are not obeyed in this issue but has ordered that even with that the parents are to be accompanied in a good way’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2001, vol. 4, p.275).

Similarly, his kindness and mercy are apparent when he observes how, should his enemies excommunicate him from Islam and use derogatory terms regarding him, he would respond in a kind way. In volume three of *Majmu’ Al Fatawa*, he specifies that he is open-hearted towards those who oppose him — in stark contrast to the *Khawarij*, who excommunicate anyone who opposes them, consequently giving themselves license to spill innocent blood. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah wrote a whole monologue regarding removing the blame from the scholars showing the importance of being fair; yet again, this is in contrast to the methodology used by the *Khawarij* who seem to be prepared to excommunicate and spill the blood of anyone who opposes them. It should be pointed out that Ibn Taymiyyah’s kindness and mercy is shown not only to Muslims but spreads to non-Muslims also. This is in stark contrast to *Khawarij* literature which presents a worldview in which all non-Muslims are seen as ⁶¹enemies to Muslims⁶².

Most importantly, an issue that needs to be discussed in depth concerns Ibn Taymiyyah’s views on *Jihad*. As stated in the first chapter, there is an array of literature concerning *Jihad* and many academics have conflated the term with terrorism and extremism. However, after exploring the work of Ibn Taymiyyah, they would find that *Jihad* is a multi-faceted term that needs to be very carefully understood. Some academics attempt to confine the meaning of *Jihad* into one of struggle and omit the element of combat. Others consider *Jihad* to be solely about warfare. Ibn Taymiyyah explains in detail the different branches of *Jihad*. He says that a person who struggles to fight off the whispers of the devil and struggles with his own desires is someone who is fighting a personal *Jihad* ⁶³. Likewise, fighting off a physical enemy is also referred to as *Jihad*. While

⁶² Refer to chapter 3

⁶³ Refer to chapter 4

exploring the literature of the *Khawarij* one will find that they perceive *Jihad* as a method of killing the enemy and spilling their blood, and this perception of *Jihad* is what is understood by many. However, Ibn Taymiyyah's work paints a different picture. He deems it obligatory to honour a contract or pact that a Muslim has with anyone, be it with a Muslim or non-Muslim whilst⁶⁴, on the other hand, the *Khawarij* deem a contract to be null and void if it has been made with non-Muslims⁶⁵. According to the *Khawarij*, any *Dhimmi* or *mu'ahad* are allowed to be killed while Ibn Taymiyyah clearly considers it forbidden. Ibn Taymiyyah pins down numerous stringent conditions for *Jihad* and points to the importance of exploring the benefits and drawbacks of *Jihad*. In contrast, the *Khawarij* do not blink an eye before engaging in warfare⁶⁶.

Ibn Taymiyyah states explicitly that the aim of *Jihad* is not to harm or spill blood but to raise the word Allaah. He argues that only those who attack Muslims need to be fought against. He also writes, in more than one place, that women and children are not to be targeted as they are not the intent of *Jihad*⁶⁷, which is in clear contrast to the literature of the *Khawarij* who deem it fair to kill innocent civilians. To be clear, all of Ibn Taymiyyah's work concerning *Jihad* as warfare refers to meeting the army on the battlefield. He never refers to engaging with the enemy within an urban setting, unless in defence. Another important piece of work that is attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah, which the *Khawarij* seem to neglect, is entitled 'A summarised principle regarding the fighting of the non-Muslims and having agreements with them, and the impermissibility of fighting them because of their disbelief'. Within this important piece of work, Ibn Taymiyyah states that the correct opinion regarding this issue is that non-Muslims are not to be fought due to their disbelief, but rather the Non – Muslims are being fought because they are fighting the Muslims.⁶⁸ Therefore, according to this piece of work, anyone who fights the Muslims for trying to raise the word of Allaah are to be fought, whilst those who do not fight the Muslims are not be fought. Ibn Taymiyyah goes on to proffer numerous arguments from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that prove his point. However, as aforementioned, some scholars

⁶⁴ Refer to chapter 4

⁶⁵ Refer to chapter 3

⁶⁶ Refer to chapter 3

⁶⁷ Refer to chapter 4

⁶⁸ Refer to chapter 4

have stated that this piece of work is incorrectly attributed to Ibn Taymiyyah. However, it should be noted that the point of not harming innocent civilians is asserted and emphasised by Ibn Taymiyyah in various places in his other works⁶⁹.

6.5 Ibn Taymiyyah's View on Suicide Missions

A monologue written by Ibn Taymiyyah, which specifies plunging oneself into enemy lines, has been understood by some to mean that Ibn Taymiyyah approved suicide attacks. Once again, this link between the monologue of Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij* attacks on innocent civilians is fragile, for a number of reasons. First, Ibn Taymiyyah is discussing the permissibility of plunging oneself into enemy lines in the midst of battle, when two armies are in combat and the Muslims are struggling to gain an upper hand — in this scenario, it is allowed for one of the soldiers to plunge himself into enemy lines to disorientate the enemy in order to give the Muslims an opportunity to draw back and regroup. Such missions or *Inghimas* are to be used in warfare, when Muslims have no way of escaping except if one plunges into the enemy. Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah never refers to organising suicide missions against innocent civilians, nor does he permit the ransacking of buildings. The term used by Ibn Taymiyyah is *Inghimas* which necessitates plunging into the enemy, and not *Intihaar* which necessitates suicide. It is important to understand the linguistic difference between *Inghimas* and *Intihaar*. *Intihaar* is an action that causes one's death, whilst *Inghimas* involves plunging into enemy lines which does not necessarily result in certain death. Identifying this key difference in meaning brings to the surface two observations about the *Khawarij* — either there is profound ignorance in their understanding of key issues in *Jihad* or they purposefully misquote Ibn Taymiyyah, using isolated extracts from his writing without giving the full context. To explore this observation further, it is important to discuss the Mardin fatwa which may be another example of misquotation.

⁶⁹ Refer to chapter 4

6.6 The Mardin Fatwa

As many academics have argued, this fatwa by Ibn Taymiyyah has been used by the *Khawarij*. It needs to be discussed from numerous angles. First, it originated as an answer to a question regarding the Mongols who were residing in an area known as Mardin. The questioner asks whether it is obligatory to migrate from this area to Muslim lands, and further asks about those who help and aid the Mongols against the Muslims. Second, the context behind Ibn Taymiyyah's answer is extremely important. In Chapter 2, I explored the background of Mongols and how some accepted Islam. However, it is clear that those who accepted Islam seemed to still abide by certain practices of their previous religion, which clearly opposed Islam. Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah was judging what he saw from the Mongols. He saw a group of people who were not practising the religion of Islam — they were not praying, they were drinking alcohol and holding on to practices that opposed Islam and, even more worryingly, the Mongols were content to kill Muslims. Therefore, within this context, Ibn Taymiyyah states that the spilling of Muslim blood is impermissible, and that it is preferable to move to a land in which Islam is properly practised. Indeed, it becomes obligatory for those who are unable to practise Islam to migrate to a different land. He goes on to state that it is not permitted to help and aid the enemy against Muslims. He also states within this fatwa that this area is not considered to be Muslim land but, at the same time, it is not considered to be *dar Al Harb*, which is a land of war. In fact, it is to be considered in which the Muslim is to be treated as deserved and the one who is outside the legislation of Allaah is to be fought and killed.

This last part of the *fatwa* is what many of the *Khawarij* have taken to condone attacks against innocent civilians around the world and likewise many academics have identified Ibn Taymiyyah as the inciter for violence based on this fatwa. The last part of the *Fatwa* states that non-Muslims are to be fought and killed. However, a conference that was held in Mardin in 2010, one which explored the applicability of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwa today, came to the conclusion that the *Khawarij* use of Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatawa* was incorrect and not applicable (Ryan, 2013). More importantly, one of the participants at the conference argued that the oldest copy of the manuscript of the *fatwa* does not state that 'non-Muslims are to be fought and killed' but in fact states that those who are outside the legislation of

Allaah ‘should be treated accordingly’ (the term in Arabic being either *yuqatal* which means to kill or fight or *yu’amal* which means to treat) (Ryan, 2013). The version which includes the term ‘treat’ is strengthened by the fact that Ibn Muflih, a student of Ibn Taymiyyah, in his mammoth work entitled *Adaab Ash Shar’iyyah* (1999), quoted the same fatwa with the wording *Yu’amal* (treated) and not *Yuqaatal* (fought/killed). Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah does not say that those who are outside the religion of Allaah are to be killed and fought but in fact he says that that they are to be treated in the correct way, which they deserve. Ibn Taymiyyah has explained in depth in various *fatawa* or books how he believes they should be treated, and the first section of this chapter has given a glimpse of some of Ibn Taymiyyah’s views on this matter.

6.7 Examples of Misquotation of Ibn Taymiyyah’s Literature by the *Khawarij*

It seems clear that there are numerous differences between Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij*, many of which have not been understood by academics. More significantly, there are numerous examples in the literature of the *Khawarij* that refer to the sayings of Ibn Taymiyyah while disregarding the context in which they were said, and either purposefully or through ignorance omitting parts of the full saying. An example of this is seen in Zawahiri (2002), in his monologue, *Shifa’ Sudoor Al Mu’mineen*. On page 11, Zawahiri attempts to make permissible rebelling and fighting against the rulers who he deems are not Muslim. He states that the principles of Islam point to the fact that fighting these rulers is prioritised over fighting the enemy and he attempts to substantiate his point through the use of Ibn Taymiyyah’s work, arguing that he states that the imminent enemy is to be fought⁷⁰. When looking back to the original work that this quote is based on, it is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah is referring to a non-Muslim enemy that is attacking Muslims, an imminent threat that needs to be suppressed as soon as possible. Ibn Taymiyyah does not state anything about Muslim rulers here, however, Zawahiri excommunicated the Muslim ruler and declared war against him based on conjecture and a mere snippet of Ibn Taymiyyah’s work to justify the action.

⁷⁰ See chapter 3

Zawahiri's second reason for rebelling is even more far-fetched. He states that the punishment for a person who leaves the fold of Islam is worse than the punishment for a person who has always been non-Muslim. His alleged proof, once again, is to be found in a *fatwa* from Ibn Taymiyyah who asserts that the punishment for a person who leaves Islam is worse. Zawahiri attempts to convince the audience that legitimated Muslims killing Muslim rulers who he believes have left the fold of Islam. Again, he is employing a general *fatwa* of Ibn Taymiyyah out of context as justification. Likewise, Zawahiri conveniently refrains from stating Ibn Taymiyyah's view that those who leave the fold of Islam fall into different groups, and some of these are merely to be advised and allowed to repent.⁷¹ He expediently leaves out stating Ibn Taymiyyah's clear stance on the impermissibility of rebelling and fighting against an unjust Muslim ruler.

Another example in Zawahiri's work is on page 17 of the same monologue. Within this section, Zawahiri attempts to legitimise suicide missions. He entitles the section 'the allowance of sacrificing one's body for the benefit of the religion' and he once again quotes Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah, in one section of his *fatwa*, does discuss the permissibility of *al Inghimas* which, as previously discussed, means to plunge into the enemy during warfare. Nowhere in this section does Ibn Taymiyyah discuss suicide missions against innocent civilians in an urban context. He discusses its permissibility for the benefit of the religion within the context of warfare. In the case of the *Khawarij*, suicide missions are allowed to be used against innocent civilians.

Clearly, Zawahiri has used the *fatwa* of Ibn Taymiyyah to his own advantage to convince youth that suicide missions are part of the religion. Similarly, on page 62 of the same monologue, Zawahiri endeavours to convince the audience that non-believers should be fought even if there are innocent casualties. In legitimating this, he utilises Ibn Taymiyyah⁷² by stating that the scholars agree it is allowed for Muslims to fight non-Muslims who use Muslim captives as shields, even if they harm or kill these Muslims as a result. But Ibn Taymiyyah is very specific in his *fatwa*. First, he specifies that it is the non-Muslim army that should be fought; second, he states that if the non-Muslim army uses Muslim prisoners of war to

⁷¹ Refer to as Saarim al Maslul

⁷² Refer to Majmu' al Fatawa – vol 28

shield themselves, engaging with the non-Muslim army is allowed, in this scenario, even if Muslims are harmed as a result. It is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah is referring to warfare on the battlefield, rather than to random attacks against innocent civilians. Third, he states that this should only be done if the Muslims will come to harm by not engaging in battle with the non-Muslim army. Therefore, once again, one finds that the *Khawarij* make incorrect use of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature, taking it out of context and using it to substantiate their beliefs in *Jihad*

Such are some examples of Zawahiri making use of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature for his own benefit. It should be noted that Zawahiri does not only specify Ibn Taymiyyah⁷³, but uses other literature to strengthen his point as well.

Likewise, Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi of the Islamic State group, quoted Ibn Taymiyyah in his infamous speech in Mosul in 2014, by referring to the rebellious *Jihad* that he was calling for as the 'aiding sword', a term that was used by Ibn Taymiyyah. Once again, an audience not well acquainted with Ibn Taymiyyah's work would regard this as a term that calls for bloodshed — however, we need again to examine his work in context before any such claim can be made. Like so many before him, Ibn Taymiyyah regarded *Jihad* as an important part of Islam. He stipulated that it has to be fought only if certain conditions are met and in particular only against those who actively fight against Muslims, whilst Baghdadi asserts that *Jihad* is to be fought against all non-Muslims regardless. Moreover, Ibn Taymiyyah does not allow the killing of innocent civilians and importantly he takes into consideration the balance of benefits and harms that may manifest themselves because of the *Jihad* being fought. Lastly, he does not permit an uprising against a Muslim government.

Let us not forget Bin Laden (2007), whose monologue entitled *Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places* has references to Ibn Taymiyyah. Bin Laden, within this monologue, quotes Ibn Taymiyyah and utilises his *fatawa* against the Mongols to legitimize war against the Saudi state. In this monologue, Bin Laden excommunicates the Saudi rulers and permits rebellious acts against them based on Ibn Taymiyyah's response to the Mongols.

⁷³ Refer to chapter 3

First, as we have seen, whether or not Ibn Taymiyyah's expressly excommunicated the Mongols is ambiguous —undeniably, he encouraged the government to fight the Mongols but that does not necessarily mean that he excommunicated them. If he did, he never condoned rebellious acts against his own government, which Bin Laden unquestionably did. We have said before that Ibn Taymiyyah only allowed the taking of arms against those who were fighting Muslims and that, in whatever circumstances, innocent civilians are not to be fought. Bin Laden, on the other hand, repeatedly opposed and overlooked these important points in Ibn Taymiyyah's work. Additionally, Ibn Taymiyyah believed it to be obligatory to stand against the oncoming Mongol army because the Mongols were attacking the Muslims and it is, in this scenario, obligatory to defend. It is true that Ibn Taymiyyah believed that a defensive *Jihad* does not require any conditions to be met, the aim of defensive *Jihad* being straightforwardly to defend against an imminent threat that may lead to deaths that cannot be prevented except with armed resistance.

What imminent threat was Bin Laden worried about from the Saudi government, or any other Muslim government, that compelled him to unleash a war against them? Bin Laden called his followers to wage war against both Muslim rulers and non-Muslims because, according to him, they were disbelievers. Ibn Taymiyyah, in a monograph attributed to him, discussed this issue and asserted that in fact the reason for fighting is not the opponents' state of disbelief but rather it is because Muslims are being attacked. The monologue written by Bin Laden seems to be directed at western military forces that have occupied Saudi Arabia —however, it would be innocent civilians who would bear the brunt of the wrath. In contrast to the violent ideologies of the *Khawarij* against innocent civilians, we find that Ibn Taymiyyah prohibits spilling the blood of innocent Muslims. Likewise, If the innocent civilians are non-Muslims, then they have entered the country under a pact, we find Ibn Taymiyyah prohibits spilling the blood of the *Dhimmi* and the *mua'had*. Bin Laden has conveniently left these quotes out of his speech.

6.8 Summary

In the previous chapter, we found numerous examples of similarities between the *Khawarij* of the past and the *Khawarij* of the present day, with Bin Laden and

Zawahiri as examples of the latter. Interestingly, Ibn Taymiyyah spoke about the *Khawarij* in detail and strongly criticised their ideologies. These passages from Ibn Taymiyyah's work need to be highlighted to show that he does not agree with their ideologies and in fact calls for peace and fairness, a point that is emphasised by Michot (2011). This chapter has endeavoured to explore some of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature in depth and to examine the authenticity of the claim that it has led to the ideology of the *Khawarij* which, in turn, has led to the spilling of innocent blood around the world. It is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah has spoken about many different areas within Islam in depth and many have either misunderstood his work or taken it out of context. This is a point that is reiterated by Michot (2011) who argues that the violent interpretation of his *fatawa* is solely the fault of the *Khawarij* and should be seen as having no connection with that of Ibn Taymiyyah. Hoover (2019) nonetheless argues that Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatawa* 'lends itself' to those with extremist ideology.

Having mentioned these two points, it is fair to say that the core beliefs and moral ethics of Ibn Taymiyyah must be considered and reflected on in order for him to be fairly quoted. This can only be achieved by holistically considering his literature, as opposed to selecting one specific segment of his writing. Therefore, Hoover's (2019) argument would be valid only if the *Khawarij* had limited access to Ibn Taymiyyah's literature, but this is not the case and his literature condemning acts of unlawful violence against innocent civilians is readily accessible, as has been seen in this chapter. This shifts the blame for violence from Ibn Taymiyyah to the *Khawarij*. Having set their intentions on violence, they sought ways to substantiate their beliefs. It seems clear that the *Khawarij* have a set of ideologies that they believe in and propagate, all the while using classical literature that is widely recognised to validate their claims. They emphasise words and sentences that support them and conceal anything that will oppose their ideologies, which is apparent in the case of Ibn Taymiyyah. This methodology is used by the *Khawarij* to persuade the layman to believe their violent ideology. Bazmul (2011), a professor at the University of Umm al Qura, proffers twenty different methods used by deviant sects in Islam to convince others about their ideologies. He states that 'they believe and then look for proofs.' (p.19). He

utilises the works of Ibn Taymiyyah⁷⁴ to clarify this point. The *Khawarij*, amongst other sects, have set creeds they wish to adhere to and, knowing that the creed must be substantiated with evidence from authentic sources of the Qur'an and Sunnah, they seek to do so using any texts that can somehow validate their views, even if these texts are taken out of context.

Including using works of classical scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah. This point is also made by another medieval Islamic scholar, Ash Shatibi, which makes evident to us that this method has been used many for centuries.⁷⁵

6.9 The Role of Education in refuting the *Khawarij* Ideology

The *Khawarij* use *Jihad* as a tool to entice zealous individuals who have little knowledge of *Jihad* to defend Islam from every possible evil enemy⁷⁶. It is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah's literature does not propagate an ideology of harming innocent civilians⁷⁷.

The *Khawarij* lack essential knowledge of important rulings on *Jihad*⁷⁸. As discussed, *Jihad* is a multi-faceted concept. This problem of the *Khawarij* has been exacerbated by the fact that many terms have been conflated, as highlighted in the first chapter. *Jihad*, terrorism and extremism have become almost synonymous terms, which is problematic as these terms are subjective, lacking any objectivity. These terms are being conflated and misunderstood by some academics and there needs to be amelioration in their understanding; conflation of these terms leads to misunderstandings of the literature of Islamic scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah. This same literature could possibly be used to refute the ideology of the *Khawarij* as opposed to targeting it as a cause. Official military advisors to the UK Government have also failed to understand the deep factions of the Islamic faith and failed to differentiate between the Salafi purist creed and the ideology of the *Khawarij*. Not knowing this vital knowledge can be a hindrance to the solution as not understanding the roots as well as conflating and mislabelling

⁷⁴ Refer to Muqadimah Usul at Tafsir – Ibn Taymiyyah

⁷⁵ Refer to Al 'Itisaam (vol. 1) – Ibrahim ibn Musa Ash Shatibi

⁷⁶ Refer to chapter 3.

⁷⁷ Refer to chapter 4.

⁷⁸ Refer to chapter 3.

terms and groups will add further confusion⁷⁹. Ibn Taymiyyah, who ascribes himself to the Salafi creed, in fact differs from the *Khawarij* ideology who also claim to be on the way of the Salaf; these categorical nuances have been explicated in chapter 3 and 4, thus allowing us to pinpoint the exact principles in *Jihad* about which Ibn Taymiyyah and the *Khawarij* disagree.

Now that these principles have been clarified, it is incumbent on us to explain the reality of *Jihad* through education as young people are prime targets for the *Khawarij*⁸⁰. This could include teaching about the true reality of classical Islamic literature, such as Ibn Taymiyyah's, to expose the way divine Islamic texts have been grossly distorted.

Students, who are religiously zealous but not sufficiently and correctly educated about *Jihad*, may have a pre-existing incorrect understanding of *Jihad*, which may lead them to be attracted to the *Khawarij* ideology. Students who are prone to their extremist ideology may not be exposed to the knowledge of definitions, conditions, and types of *Jihad*, as explored in chapter 4. Education about the correct understanding of *Jihad* in the English curriculum can be a robust, grounded and long-term solution to eliminating misunderstandings about *Jihad*. As such, it has potential to eliminate the threat of the *Khawarij* in the UK. Solutions to extremism must be robust and long lasting, and therefore we must analyse how education against extremism can play its part.

This leads to the second part of this research. After all the conflation of terms, misunderstandings and misuse of Islamic literature, what exactly is being taught in the Religious Studies curriculum in England and Wales regarding *Jihad*? Do we find that the content of *Jihad* in the Religious Studies textbooks is sufficiently robust enough to suppress any doubts being spread about *Jihad* or do we find that it lacks depth to the extent that it poses a threat to national security in the UK?

The following chapters will explore the English Religious Studies curriculum and will examine the content which is taught within schools. The textbook of the four main examination boards in the UK will be scrutinized, the headings, chapters and

⁷⁹ Refer to chapter 1

⁸⁰ Refer to chapter

the information will be used to assess whether these textbooks serve as efficient instruments in educating students against terrorism or if they promote terrorism or islamophobia. In the next chapter, I will outline my research methodology.

7. Chapter 6: Jihad within the Religious Education curriculum in England

7.1 Introduction

The first half of this research thoroughly explored the religious and educational literature of the medieval Islamic scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah. The intent of the exploration was to investigate the claim that his work has led to extremism and terrorism (Atwan, 2013; Ingram, 2013). The result of the thorough investigation of his literature exposed the weakness of this claim and emphasised the justness and fairness of Ibn Taymiyyah's teaching. The main problem identified was that academic studies have isolated many of his *fatawa*, misquoting them and taking them out of context. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that many terms have been conflated, as highlighted in the first chapter — in particular, *Jihad* and terrorism have become synonymous terms.

These terms are being conflated and misunderstood by academics such as Hughbank in his work, *The Phenomenon Known As Terrorism* (2011). Kretsch (2016) states that many have misunderstood the term *Jihad* and see it as a synonym for war. Academics and law makers have been unable to come to an agreement on how to define terms such as extremism and terrorism. The conflation of these terms leads to a misunderstanding of the literature of Islamic scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah, whose work could possibly be used to refute the ideology of the *Khawarij* as opposed to it being held up as a cause.

Especially knowing that minors or the youth are prime targets for the *Khawarij*, Oppetit et al. (2019) concluded that 'radicalized minors...are mainly vulnerable adolescents who try to deal with their identity issues and to soothe their distress through radical engagement' (p.5); further to this Idris (2019) suggests that much of the youth in the Indo-Pacific region are indeed radicalised due to a number of factors that make them more susceptible including the lack of knowledge, political and economic reasons. Afrianty (2012), however argues that young students that have attended Islamic schools, which teach the different Islamic sciences, overall

gain a better understanding of their religion and the dangers of an extremist point of view. She further suggests the following

The latter's lack of knowledge [i.e those who have graduated from public and secular schools] about religion makes them more vulnerable to radicalization. Secular education leaves 'students with such minimal knowledge of religion vulnerable to being influenced by radical teachings, which often use Quranic verses to justify their claims...students unequipped with adequate religious skills and understanding are easily influenced by the radical ideologies that penetrate campus life' (Afrianty, 2012, p.142).

Thus the need for educational clarification regarding the reality of *Jihad* and the incorrect understanding promulgated by the *Khawarij* is clear; this could include the teaching of classical literature, such as Ibn Taymiyyah's, to expose the gross distortion of divine Islamic texts.

Is the curriculum in England equipped to educate the young about the reality of *Jihad* so that they are able to withstand the doubts of the *Khawarij*? Or do we find that the curriculum is insufficiently defined to teach the holistic nature of *Jihad* ? If so, that is a problem from two angles. The students may have a pre-existing incorrect understanding of *Jihad* , which may lead to them being predisposed to and sympathising with the *Khawarij* ideology. The curriculum in England, with respect to the teaching of Islam and specifically about *Jihad* , may not be detailed enough to amend the perspective of certain students. Therefore, the first half of my research resulted in finding that Islamic literature has been misunderstood and a number of terms are being conflated, which has resulted in a gross misunderstanding of important concepts in Islam, especially *Jihad* . Hence, the aim of this part of my research will be to analyse the textbooks used within English schools during Religious Studies lessons on Islam to discover whether the content in the textbooks is correct and sufficiently detailed to provide a holistic understanding of *Jihad* .

Before delving into the curriculum and related textbooks it is imperative to contextualise the subject of Religious Studies.

7.1.1 Representation of Religion and Religious literacy in the curriculum and in schools.

Before delving into the content surrounding *Jihad* within Religious Studies textbooks, an essential discussion regarding how religion is understood and represented in schools has taken place in the last few decades (Conroy, 2016); this topic in academic literature is referred to as ‘religious literacy’ (Dinham & Shaw, 2017). Religious Literacy is a term referring to the ability, or the lack thereof, to understand important tenets of major religions, as Dinham and Shaw (2017) state ‘literacy in religion is about an understanding of the grammars, rules, vocabularies and narratives underpinning religions and beliefs’ (p.1).

Research has shown that the West struggles to grasp important tenets of world religions (Tsonis, 2020). Dinham and Shaw (2017) assert that ‘the religious literacy critique starts with the observation of a lamentable quality of conversation about religion and belief in the developed West’ (p.1). Dinham and Francis (2015) assert that the issue of concern is the lack of knowledge about different religions. They state that ‘we found the problem is not people’s willingness to have the conversation [about religion]; it is their ability to do so’ (p.5). Moore (2015) further comments on this issue and discusses the diminishing literacy of religion. She points out that many schools treat religion as something of the past. Tsonis (2020) reiterates the point ‘that modern Western societies are marked across the board by a critical lack of understanding about religion’ (p. 331). He asserts that most people working in the ‘academic study of religion would agree with that assessment’ (p.331). Similarly, Shaw (2018) discusses the misrepresentation of religion in Religious Education (RE); she asserts that there is a clear gap between the reality of religions and that which is proffered by Religious Education. Moreover, she states that the ‘approach is widely criticised for its reductionist and universalist portrayal of religions’ (p.364). This point is echoed by Dinham and Shaw (2018) who assert that a history of ‘secular assumptions’ (p.119) has resulted in the West not talking positively about religion. Barnes (2016) proposes that there needs to be a new vision regarding Religious Education that takes into account existing criticism. Barnes (2016) clarifies why he believes that Religious Education has fallen short in understanding, by stating:

Religious Education has misrepresented the nature of religion in efforts to commend itself as contributing to the social aims of education, as these typically framed in liberal democratic societies such as Britain, in terms of furthering tolerance, respect for difference and social cohesion. (p. 76)

Barnes (2016) goes on to proffer that the misrepresentation of religion does little to improve tolerance and respect. In fact, one might argue that the lack of religious literacy and misrepresentation of religion has led to intolerance and, in some cases, hatred of religion. Moreover, Moulin (2015) discusses the case of identity masking within schools. Identity masking is when a person hides their identity of ascribing to a certain religion because they are too scared of the backlash; Moulin (2015) asserts that this could be the direct result of the misrepresentation of religion in the curriculum; this would add strength to Barnes's argument.

It is clear that the aims, content and structure of Religious Studies lacks the ability to absorb the reality and depth of the different world religions and therefore fails to grasp the core elements of religion.

However, as this thesis looks to explore the topic of *Jihad* within the Religious Studies textbooks, discussing how Islam is represented within these textbooks is the greater concern. Jackson et al. (2010) explored the materials used to teach world religions. They employed a robust methodology of exploring textbooks and interviews of teachers and pupils and state within their research that 'the content and quality of the presentation of Islam was seen to be helpful in conveying a rich and attractive picture of Islam' (p.6). One might argue that this methodology was overly generalised and there needed to be a more thorough exploration of the Islamic content within the Religious Studies textbooks. In contrast to these research conclusions, Professor Lynn Revell, a specialist in RE and Islam, has done extensive research regarding the representation of Islam through RE. As part of this, Revell (2012) has thoroughly explored the Religious Studies textbooks of the era. Revell (2012) asserted that all too often Islam was linked with terrorism, extremism and radicalisation. She argued that there needed to be a change in the knowledge that is disseminated about Islam within the textbooks to challenge the prevalent misrepresentation of Islam. Hussain (2012) and Cooling (2013), in separate reviews of her work, commented on the importance and significance of this research. Revell (2015)

explores Islam in 72 Religious Studies (RS) textbooks between 1968 and 2012 and concludes that even though there might be a desire to represent Islam positively, there actually is a dissemination of false information of Islam within many of these books. This reality is aggravated by the fact that the information within the Religious Studies textbooks does little to rebut the media's narrative of Islam. Chadderton (2014) elaborates on this point and asserts that popular and longstanding discourse labels Islam as an 'underdeveloped culture which condones and, even encourages violence' (p.131). An example of this misrepresentation, which is rife within religious discourse, is that terrorism is committed by Muslims and therefore is part of Islam. If this is the case, then Islam is cast as not being compatible to Western life, and thus not welcome in Western territories. Similarly, Thobani (2017) states that the current methodology used in forming the curricula for Islamic Studies falls short in providing a holistic form of Islam as it does not take into consideration the context of many of the issues within Islam. More recently, Brooks et al. (2020) discuss the possible role of graphic novels as a method to improve religious literacy. They assert that the current dominant depiction of aspects of Islam has led to a distorted understanding of Islam within society. Brooks et al. (2020) conclude that educators should be teaching 'deep, complex, and nuanced concepts in faith systems, rather than teaching students a few central tenets of a religion' (p.10). Similarly, Borghi & Lucenti (2020) assert that there needs to be urgent changes to Islamic content within textbooks which currently portray a sense of prejudice, stereotyping and inaccuracies.

Therefore, the aforementioned literature offers a clear indication of the problem at hand. There is a lack of religious literacy within the West, which has resulted in a superficial and, in some cases, false portrayal of religion in general and Islam specifically within Religious Studies textbooks.

Another issue of concern, and possibly another reason for the lack of religious literacy and the reductionist portrayal of religion, is the confusion of the role of Religious Studies in education. Educators are confused about the role of Religious Studies and consequently are uncertain how to implement lessons in the area (Conroy, 2015). Conroy et al. (2013) assert that 'many of the conceptual questions, confusion and challenges held to be a function of its conflicted location

in the school curriculum' (p.85). Therefore, what is the role of Religious Studies in the curriculum and in education in general? This will be explored next.

7.1.2 Role of Religious Studies in the curriculum

A possible route in which extremism could be addressed is via religious education. Many academics have stated the importance of Religious Studies in the curriculum. Rahmawati, Rosita and Asbari (2022) argues that it is imperative for students to be taught Religious Studies to be made aware of 'spiritual and moral issues in contemporary culture and in their own lives' (p.1). With regard to issues that are affecting the UK in the Middle East, it is imperative that such issues be understood in the light of religious education in order for students to become 'engaged citizens'. This is further supported by Estrada et al. (2019) in an article discussing the importance of Religious Education in school and its role in contributing to improvements in adolescent mental health. The authors proffer a number of positive points that surface while studying RE at school, they state an 'increase awareness regarding religious beliefs and practices and their influence on the individual, the family, and the community' (p.1).

On the contrary, Horell (2018) discusses the journey of Religious Studies and states that it is now in an 'era of uncertainty'. He states 'Today, there are many within and beyond the field of religious education who have raised serious doubts about its continued viability' (p.14). Cush (2016) argues that Religious Education 'has long been seen as a Cinderella subject, with low status'(P.64).

Ofsted (2013) in a report clearly mention the weakness of Religious Studies as having 'failed to keep pace with changes in the wider educational world' (p.4), and as a result of this local educational authorities have not been able to 'promote high-quality religious education' (p.4). In fact, the report suggests that changes to educational policies such as the introduction of the English Baccalaureate have led to an actual decline in the effective teaching of RE in certain areas.

Another Ofsted report (2013) titled 'Religious education - realising its potential' concluded that 'not enough has been done since 2010...to promote high-quality religious education' (p. 4), and additionally and more worryingly, the report

concluded that children ‘leave school with scant subject knowledge and understanding’ (p.8).

Clayton and Stevens (2018), within their research entitled ‘what is the point of religious education?’, state that one of main aim of Religious Studies is to nurture tolerance and mutual understanding and this aim can be achieved by other means. Clayton and Stevens (2018) proffer that this aim deserves ‘consideration in some part of a curriculum, such as, for example, Citizenship Studies’(p.68) and therefore there is no need for it to be studied in a specific subject. Rt Nick Gibb (DofE, 2017) argued that Religious Studies is also crucial in the preparation of adult life as it allows students to understand the ‘most divisive issues’ surrounding our communities today, such as abortion. Morrison (2014) and Byrne (2014) argue that Religious Studies is vital in pluralistic communities and in understanding current affairs that surround society, and thus for preparing students for adult life.

7.1.3 Position of Religious Studies

Jackson & O’Grady (2007) state that even though there has been an increase in faith based schools, the majority of state funded schools are community schools. However, Ipgrave (2013), in her exploration of secular and faith based schools, asserts that ‘A sizeable proportion of state-maintained English schools (as well as a number of independent schools) have the designated status as being of “a religious character”’ (p. 30). She asserts that these schools have a faith – based ethos and the schools that do not have a religious status are still ‘legally bound’(p.31) to provide Religious Education. Interestingly, Ipgrave divides the faith based schools according to three approaches:

‘I categorize these perceptions and practices under three headings:doxological approaches,where the life and work of the school is bound up with religious witness and praise; sacramental approaches, entailing the demarcation within the school of places and moments open to religious significance; and instrumental approaches, employing and adapting religious content for educational and societal, rather than religious, ends. There has been a long discussion concerning whether Religious Education should be in the National Curriculum or not.

Educationalists and lawmakers have been deliberating on issues such as who will decide what would be taught and who would control the subject (Brown, 2013). Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states regarding Religious Education ‘that the whole curriculum should be a balanced and broadly based curriculum which “promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life”.

Wright (2008), a Professor of Religious and Theological Education, opined that Religious Education, even though it is compulsory, does not form part of the national curriculum. He further states:

‘that the curricula for RE are determined locally. Community Schools follow an Agreed Syllabus approved by the Local Education Authority (LEA). Each LEA has a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), constituted by representatives of the principal religious traditions in the locality, the Church of England (except in Wales), teachers’ associations, and elected councillors’ (p. 517).

This point was echoed by Jackson (2013), a Professor of Religious Education. Wright (2008) states that locally determined syllabi led to a variation in the quality of the subject provided, which subsequently led the Department of Educational Skills in 2004 to publish a non statutory framework to provide a guideline in setting a syllabus. Similarly, Moulin (2012) proffered that the publication of the non- statutory national framework was a ‘landmark event in RE policy’ as its aim was to ‘strengthen the position of RE in schools by putting it on par with other curriculum subjects’ (p.163).

However, having said this, with the presence of faith – based ethos, there are reasons that lead some academics to believe that Religious Education has been neglected. This will be taken up in the following section.

7.1.3 Reasons to suggest neglect

Lundie (2017) states that arrival of the conservative government in 2010 is often regarded as the beginning of a 'significant change in emphasis' which led to a disinterest in Religious Studies. Cush (2016) sheds light on this by explaining that the 'current government and university establishment have dealt a number of blows to religious education which have exacerbated the situation' (p.64). This observation is also noted by Graeme Paton, Education Editor for the Telegraph, who wrote an article in 2013 entitled 'Religious Education being edged out of school timetables illegally.' He mentions that 'a third of comprehensives are breaking the law by dropping Religious Education lessons for teenagers,' and that '900 state secondary' schools were dropping RE to make more space for other subjects. Paton also quotes Michael Gove, Education Secretary in 2013, admitting that RE was the 'unintended casualty' of certain new reforms by the government, such as the introduction of the aforementioned EBacc. As we have seen, the 2013 Ofsted survey (2013) found that 'RE often had a very low priority, and its provision and effectiveness was not carefully monitored and improved' (p.15) and due to this RE receives the 'least time on the timetable' (Cush, 2016, p. 64). Furthermore, the Ofsted report (2013) stated 'RE lessons were often squeezed out by other curriculum areas. It was not uncommon for inspectors to find long gaps in pupils RE books when no work had been done' (p.16). Thus, the lack of RE in the EBacc suggests that the government has to a large extent neglected the subject and considered it less important than those included in the EBacc, such as Mathematics. While Mathematics is crucial to the purpose of education mentioned by Nick Gibb (DofE, 2017), it has also been argued that RE is crucial in the preparation for adult life as it allows students to understand the 'most divisive issues' surrounding our communities today such as 'abortion' (Morrison, 2014).

When examining these observations, a number of points can be ascertained about Religious Studies and its position on the curriculum. It has been neglected in terms of its level of 'provision'. Not including Religious Studies in the National Curriculum has led to the neglect of the subject in terms of the time it is given; furthermore, the teachers are no longer specialised in Religious Studies; and lastly it has been given less importance as a subject, due to it merging with PSHE and citizenship. Unsurprisingly, then, it has not only been neglected by the

government and local authorities but by teachers and students too. The report from Ofsted (2013) highlights this clearly by stating ‘the quality of teaching in the secondary schools visited was rarely outstanding and was less than good in around half of the lessons seen. Common weaknesses included: insufficient focus on subject knowledge; an over-emphasis on a limited range of teaching strategies that focused simply on preparing pupils for assessments or examinations’ (p. 6). The title of the Ofsted report, ‘Religious Education, Realising its potential’ gives a clear indication that the potential of teaching RE has not been realised and implies that the government and teachers are not giving RE the emphasis it warrants. The Ofsted report (2013) also mentions that ‘very little provision was made for staff training in RE or for subject leaders to work alongside colleagues to develop their practice’ (p.16). The aforementioned article by Paton (2013) also alludes to this point. ‘A fifth of schools reported a cut in specialist RE teachers in 2013/14 and 42 per cent claimed that at least one-in-10 lessons in the subject were delivered by staff trained in other disciplines.’ The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) conducted a survey in July 2012 which ‘found a quarter of the 625 schools responding to its survey reported a decline in the level of specialist RE staffing. It also found that, in nearly half of the schools that responded, at least one in 10, and in some cases one in five, RE lessons were taught by teachers whose main time was spent in another curriculum area (Ofsted, 2013, p. 18). It seems quite clear from these reports and articles that by using teachers specialised in subjects other than Religious Studies, the subject has been neglected when employment decisions are made. This point is echoed by the chair of the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE, 2018), who stated, ‘Research indicates that over half of secondary schools without a religious character fail to provide RE at KS4, and that this lack of provision is more pronounced in schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students’.

Worryingly, according to statistics by Ofqual, there has been a steady decrease of students who have received a certificate in Religious Education. It should be noted that from the steady decrease, 20% of the students received a grade 3 or lower in 2022. According to Natre, between 2010 and 2017, there has been a steady decrease of students taking a GCSE in Religious Studies. In 2017, just under 43.7% of students who took Religious Education as a GCSE were classified as White British, while just under 55.8% were classified as ‘all other pupils’, and

under 49.3% were unclassified. In 2018, the amount of students dropped to 37.8% classified as 'White British', 53.3% classified as 'All other pupils' and 37.5% classified as 'Unclassified'. From this research, one can see that those students classified as 'White British' were less likely to take a GSCE in Religious Studies, while we see only a slight drop in the 'All other pupils' category. (NATRE, 2019).

Additionally, Ofsted report (2013) mentions that the quality of the curriculum was 'good or better in just under two fifths of the secondary schools' (p.12).

Furthermore, the leaders in schools complained about the amount of guidance that was given regarding the curriculum and the need for developing more 'challenging topics' (Ofsted, 2013, p. 14) in RE. These points were not just mentioned by Ofsted but also the Religious Education council. The council carried out a report in 2013 to look at the aims of RE and also the curriculum. The report mentions a number of weaknesses. It argues that there is a widespread uncertainty regarding the purpose of RE. Worryingly it is the teachers who are also confused about what the purposes of the subject are. The report mentions that there is 'a lack of confidence and subject knowledge' (REC, 2013, p. 12).

Another aspect of RE's subject neglect is that of funding and bursaries. A bursary is a sum of money that is given to a student to study a specific course at a university or college — in other words, an incentive for students to study certain courses. Jackson (2013) stated 'The removal of bursaries for religious education PGCE applicants has meant a very significant decline in student applications for religious education teaching' (p.131). This point was also reiterated by Cush (2016, p. 65) who mentions that 'most subjects receive varying amounts of bursaries to help towards training fees, and religious education received nothing.' This lack of funding and bursaries compounds the issue surrounding the shortage of RE teachers which has already been discussed. The lack of bursaries available results in a lack of specialised teachers and this results in subject neglect. However, in 2014-15 Religious Studies was seen as a priority subject and students were eligible for a bursary of £9000 if they achieved a 1st class degree and £5000 if they achieved a 2:1 (Noyes, Geppert and McIntyre, 2019). However, a recent article by NATRE (2020) states that there are plans to cut the Religious Studies Bursaries once again in the coming year.

Therefore, it can be acknowledged that less of an importance has been given to Religious Studies in the last few years which demonstrates a neglect of the subject and I will discuss the implications of this within the discussion section later. In comparison, terrorism has been on the rise throughout the last two decades and governments are examining possible methods to address it, this includes the use of education to address terrorism through Religious Studies. However, as aforementioned, one has seen that there has been conflation of important terms regarding Islam such as *Jihad* and terrorism; similarly, the research has also shown that academics have made general and incorrect comments about the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Islamic scholar, which has led some academics making a link between the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and the literature of the *Khawarij*; misunderstandings often leads to conflation of important terms.

Consequently, an important question arises which is, what is being taught in schools regarding terms such as *Jihad*, terrorism and extremism? Previous research has shown a mixed bag of results. Jackson et al. (2010) state, within their research, that ‘the content and quality of the presentation of Islam was seen to be helpful in conveying a rich and attractive picture of Islam’ (p.6), while other research, such as Revell (2015) asserted that there actually was a dissemination of false information of Islam within many of these books. Chadderton (2014) asserted that popular and longstanding discourse labels Islam as an ‘underdeveloped culture which condones, and even encourages, violence’ (p.131).

It should be noted that the aforementioned exploration of textbooks has put forward valuable research, however, none of the the research has explored the Religious Studies textbooks, specifying the chapter of Jihad with a theological lens. This research will explore the content within the textbooks that have been endorsed by the examination boards in England. Making use of this material, I will analyse if the information that is being taught is, firstly, theologically correct and, secondly, sufficient to address terrorism. Or, on the other hand, has the misunderstanding of certain important terms, as seen in academic literature, had any effect on what is being taught in schools. The next section will outline the methodology I will follow to analyse the textbooks.

7.2 Methodological approach.

In this section, I will begin to explain my ontological and epistemological research stance. This will form the basis of the methodological approach I will use and the methods pertaining to it.

Much debate has surrounded the perception of knowledge and its attainment and it is not the intention of this study to delve into this profound subject. However, I do wish to contextualise it within the specific realm of attaining Islamic knowledge. The main focus of this section is to determine the ontological and epistemological stances this research will be based on and which stance I associate myself with.

7.2.1 Positionality

The Qur'an and Hadeeth are primary sources in Islam, divinely revealed by Allah, verses that are not only to be read, but pondered and reflected over (Ibn Al Qayyim, (2009). Muslims believe that Islam is not a just a religion but a way of life. Similarly, Muslims believe their religion is complete and that there is divine wisdom in that which occurs and that which has been legislated. In chapter 4, it has been asserted that *Jihad* is part of Islam and there are verses in the Qur'an that mention *Jihad* ⁸¹. However, what is the aim and objective of defensive and offensive *Jihad* ? What is the intent of the conditions of *Jihad* ? These questions and that which are similar are essential to understanding *Jihad* .

The reasoning for certain rulings maybe not mentioned within the verse itself, however, there are other sources that need to be utilized to comprehend these concepts. The reasoning and wisdom of the rulings fall into an important topic in Islam known as *Maqasid*, which discusses and explores the aims, objectives and wisdoms of rulings in Islam. Many western educators lack knowledge in this topic which results in misunderstanding of Islam (Lovat, 2018). Muslim scholars for centuries have paid attention to the *Maqasid* of the legislations; Ash Shatabi

⁸¹ Refer to chapter 4

(2008), a medieval Muslim scholar, wrote an extensive book entitled *Muwafaqaat* where he discusses issues revolving around the *Maqasid*.

In chapter 4, we see that Ibn Taymiyyah explores the *Maqasid* of the divine revelation in trying to understand important topics, including *Jihad*, and therefore resulting in Ibn Taymiyyah having a holistic understanding of *Jihad*. In fact, Ibn Taymiyyah, in numerous places in *fatawa* mentions that understanding the *Maqasid* of the legislator (Allaah) is of the utmost importance⁸² in understanding the religion. Dr Muhammad Al Youbi, a lecturer at the Islamic university, in his PhD research (2009) explores the reality of *Maqasid* in Islamic legislation. *Maqasid*, which is the plural of *Maqsad*, linguistically means the objective. However, within the Islamic religion, Muslims scholars have discussed the meaning in some detail. Al Youbi (2009) states that ‘the *Maqasid* are the meaning and the wisdoms and that which is similar to it that the legislator [Allaah] intended in the legislation, whether generally or specifically, for the betterment of the servants [of Allaah] (p.37). Al Youbi (2009), within his thesis, mentions important chapters discussing the importance of exploring the *Maqasid* to understand the sources in Islam. In this era, we don’t find many Western academics delving into this topic, and thus find it difficult to accept *Jihad* as part of the religion, or they struggle to grasp the reality of *Jihad*. Bauer (2021) asserts that the Western educationalists need to improve their understanding of Islam. This view is echoed by Lovat (2020) who states ‘consideration of an Islamic perspective on education, as conveyed in this paper⁸³, could be seen to have potential for enhanced respect and understanding by Western educators of the wisdom inherent in Islam’ (p. 13). Having said this, it is important to mention here the work of Dr Jon Hoover, an associate professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Nottigham, has done extensive research on Ibn Taymiyyah. Recently, Hoover (2019) has a series on Ibn Taymiyyah and his view on *Maqasid*, within this series Hoover discusses important issues surrounding the *Maqasid* of the Shari’ah such as *Maslaha* (benefit) and *Mafsada* (harm), more research such as Dr Jon Hoover needs to be done to improve the Western understanding of Islam

⁸² See volume 11, p. 354

⁸³ Refer to ‘Islamic Education Today and Yesterday: Principal Themes and their Potential to Enlighten Western Education’ by Professor Terence Lovat.

through the knowledge of *Maqasid* to understanding to objectives of certain rulings in Islam.

Talbi, an Islamic historian, utilized a method he referred to as the ‘vectoral method’ in trying to understand the Qur’an and Sunnah through the *Maqasid* (Lovat, 2018). Talbi, puts forward an important concept, which is that the rules and regulations of Islam can be used different time and place as long as the *Maqasid* are understood. This point is emphasised by Al Jaami (1993) Talbi goes on to rebuke the *Khawarij* for their constricted understanding of *Jihad* and their ignorance regarding the *Maqasid* of the divine legislation. Therefore, the research that is carried out on essential topics in Islam, such as *Jihad*, should be carried out by Islamic scholars who have a strong background in Islamic Theology, History and rulings. These scholars need to recognize the importance of delving into the various reasoning behind divine ruling and similarly the wisdom that are an intrinsic part of Islam.

As a Muslim educator, I have been researching and learning about Islam for almost two decades. This has taken me to Cairo, Madinah, Makkah, Riyadh, Jazan, Hafr Al Batin and many cities in the UK in search of Islamic knowledge. I have gained a bachelor degree in Islamic Studies and Prophetic Narration from the prestigious Islamic University of Madinah, a post graduate diploma and two masters degrees all related to Islamic theology and Islamic education. Additionally, I have worked at different institutions, in different parts of the world, developing Islamic Studies Curricula. My research and work has led me to believe that some academics struggle to grasp the reality of important topics in Islam for a number of reasons. Firstly, because their research is not exhaustive of the abundance of Islamic literature; secondly, some of the literature is taken out of context, and thirdly, the lack of importance given to the *Maqasid* of the legislation - a clear example of this is what is claimed about Ibn Taymiyyah. It is clear that some academics have not read through the many volumes of Ibn Taymiyyah’s literature in depth, they have taken portions from his literature and left out important material thus taking his work out context; they have also not taken into consideration Ibn Taymiyya’s view on *Maqasid* all resulting in pointing the blame towards Ibn Taymiyyah and his literature as a possible reason for terrorism. In chapter 2-5 I clarify the reality of Ibn Taymiyyah’s literature.

Consequently, the aim of the second part of the research is to explore content of the chapter of *Jihad* in the Religious Studies textbooks that are used in schools in England. *Jihad* is not a topic that can be skimmed through as it has to be mentioned in detail out of fear that a student may be left with a misconstrued understanding of the topic.

A final word about researcher positionality before moving on to those following sections. It could be argued that due to the personal nature of the topic for me as a Muslim believer, the research might contain sufficient bias to affect its validity. In this regard, I need to make it clear that I have done my utmost to maintain a research appropriate level of objectivity to ensure that this study has proceeded in as as critical a way as possible. To this end, I have investigated the widest sampling of Ibn Taymiyyah's prodigious array of literature to identify the complexity entailed in analysing his scholarship, as opposed to selecting only those texts that might skew the research to support my own preferred view. Further to ways in which I ensured the validity and reliability of this research is discussed in the following sections.

7.3 The study

I have already mentioned the main aim of this research. In this section, I will expound on it in more detail. Education is the key element by which individuals can reject ideas that are propagated by the *Khawarij* of today. It therefore seems fair to assume that the subject of RE or Religious Studies can be used as a medium to educate students about the misunderstandings of *Jihad* and the true nature and aims of *Jihad*. Therefore, this study will aim to examine the content of religious studies textbooks to assess the content for its accuracy and depth. I will state my research design as follows.

7.3.1 Research Methodology and Design

Payne and Payne (2004) assert that documentary analysis is a research method that aims to interpret physical sources such as written sources. Similarly, Chism and Banta, 2007 state that 'document or product analysis focuses on institutional records or artifacts produced or contained in the setting under study. Examples of

documents for assessment might include curriculum plans, syllabi, classroom handouts, journal' ... (p.17), this point was reiterated by Tarman & Kılınç (2018). Therefore, I will use documentary analysis as a method to explore the Religious Studies textbooks.

However, within documentary analysis, I will use qualitative content analysis to carry out my research, as Maier (2018) states 'content analysis can be used to describe communication messages. Content analysis focuses on the specific communication message and the message creator' (p.2.) Mayring (2010) defines qualitative content analysis as a 'systematic analysis of texts of many kinds, addressing not only manifest content but also the themes and core ideas found in texts as primary content.' According to Krippendorff (2018) there are 3 different types of research design within content analysis, the exploratory/ descriptive design best fits this research, this is where 'knowledge of content and contexts is described,' (Drisko and Maschi, 2016, p. 90); this is opposed to the other designs in which theories and hypothesis are identified prior to the research.

Cohen et al. (2017) give a summary of the essential features of content analysis which include 'breaking down text into units of analysis, undertaking statistical analysis of the units and presenting the analysis in as economical a form' (p. 476). This summary does not include the generation of a theory from the data as this is not part of my research, my research aims to examine the accuracy and depth of the content. Cohen and Malin (2010) contextualise content analysis within the field of education and bring eleven steps that aid the researcher in analysing the content of bodies of text. This framework provides a strong basis for reliable and valid content analysis which I will expand on later. In addition to this, the framework provided by Wade (1993) categorises methods used by researchers in social studies when adopting the content analysis of texts, this will also be taken into consideration.

Wade's (1993) research, although dated, recommends valuable insight into textbook analysis for social studies, to ensure that results and findings are trustworthy and robust. She urges researchers to be explicit and critical in their research particularly in the data collection and analysis, for this reason I will state my data collection method and explicate on the method of analysis which

increases the credibility and trustworthiness of such research. Further to this, she argues that researches must ‘investigate the impact of textbook content on teaching and student learning...and to uncover ideological contexts that shape the structure and content of the books’ (Chu, 2017, p. 230). Although investigating the impact on teaching and learning is beyond the scope of this research, I will however strive to explicate on the ideological foundations of such textbooks and attempts to investigate the possible agendas of the textbook publishers and authors will be made to shed light on the accuracy and depth of the textbooks.

The following are the steps that will be taken for the content analysis of the GCSE Religious Education textbooks:

1. Defining the research questions
2. Defining the population from which units of text are to be sampled
3. Defining the sample to be included and how the sample was generated
4. Defining the units of analysis, what levels will be used.
5. Constructing the categories for analysis
6. Deciding the codes to be used in the analysis and choosing a system of enumeration
7. Conducting the coding and categorizing of the data
8. Ensuring inter-coder reliability for accuracy.
9. Conducting the data analysis
10. Reporting the findings through a narrative format
11. Discussing the findings

7.3.2 Reliability

Content analysis has been labelled as a relatively ‘safe’ and an ‘unobtrusive’ (Maier, 2018) process as researchers have the text at hand and can refer back to the text multiple times during the analysis process in any research. While this may be the case, the researcher must be careful to code the text properly and avoid any important data is skipped which is always a possibility with this type of research; content analysis may reduce in reliability if the coding process is not done properly, therefore to ensure accuracy, which is the strongest form of reliability (Krippendorff, 2018), I will ensure inter-coder reliability by recruiting and

training an individual holding a Masters degree in Education who has sufficient knowledge in research methods. Further to this, I will use test and re test methods to ensure nothing has been missed out to establish reliability.

7.3.3 Data Source and Variables

I will examine the chapter on *Jihad* within the four main examining boards in England. Below is a table highlighting the four examining boards with the corresponding textbooks.

Examining Board	GCSE
AQA	GCSE AQA Religious Studies A Islam
Edexcel	Edexcel. (2016b). GCSE (9-1) <i>Religious Studies faith and practice in the 21st century</i> (1st ed.).
OCR	OCR. GCSE (9-1) Specification RELIGIOUS STUDIES
WJEC	<i>WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Route A.</i>

Table 1 List of books I will use to examine the chapter of *Jihad* . Note: Although WJEC is a welsh board it is still used within England.

I have decided to analyse GCSE books as research has shown that between these ages children are more susceptible and vulnerable to radical ideas (Idris, 2019; Oppetit et al. 2019).

As mentioned, I will use Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of *Jihad* as a point of reference, and this will be the standard by which I will measure the content within these textbooks. In a previous part of this research, I gathered all of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature regarding *Jihad* using the programme Shamela, which allowed me to examine only those books that contained the following words in Arabic:

- *Jihad*
- Mongols
- Tartars
- Ghazan Khan
- Suicide
- *Dhimmi*- a non-Muslim living under the protection of a Muslim state
- *Mu'ahad*- a non-Muslim who has a pact with the Muslims.

Using this approach, I was able to gauge Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of *Jihad* in which I concluded that it was a more holistic understanding than the *Khawarij* understanding of *Jihad*. I have created Table 2 to summarise Taymiyyah's understanding and these will be the variables I will measuring:

Themes/Topics	Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding
Intent and objectives of <i>Jihad</i>	Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that the intent of <i>Jihad</i> is to raise the word of Allah and have people submit

	to Allah. He clarifies that the intent is not to fight or harm non-Muslims.
Types of <i>Jihad</i>	<p>Ibn Taymiyyah, like Islamic scholars before him, states that there are numerous types of <i>Jihad</i> .</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Jihad</i> of the soul 2. <i>Jihad</i> of the pen 3. Rebuking and answering doubts about Islam 4. Ordering the good and forbidding the evil 5. <i>Jihad</i> with the meaning of fighting which Ibn Taymiyyah states fall into two categories <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Offensive <i>Jihad</i> b) Defensive <i>Jihad</i>
Conditions of <i>Jihad</i> as a form of fighting	<p>Ibn Taymiyyah unequivocally asserts that defensive <i>Jihad</i> has no conditions, however making an agreement with non-Muslims who may attack Muslim lands is also a possible route to stopping bloodshed and thus defending ones-self</p> <p>Regarding offensive <i>Jihad</i> , Ibn Taymiyyah proffers numerous conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Jihad</i> cannot be fought except with ability - <i>Jihad</i> cannot be fought except with the permission of the leader - <i>Jihad</i> can only be fought if it is prepared for - Permission of parents

Verses of <i>Jihad</i>	Ibn Taymiyyah proffers many verses regarding <i>Jihad</i>
Quran verses that could be misunderstood	Ibn Taymiyyah discusses many verses that could be understood
Suicide	Ibn Taymiyyah has a monologue entitled ' <i>Qaaidatun fi Al Inghimas fi al 'Adu wa al Ubah</i> ' where he discusses the permissibility of plunging into enemy lines and not suicide.

The following questions are based upon the information that Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in his literature and will be the questions used to critically analyse the accuracy and depth of the textbook.

1. Do the textbooks mention all the intent and objectives behind *Jihad* ?
2. Do the textbooks mention all the types of *Jihad* ?
3. Do the textbooks mention all the conditions of *Jihad* ?
4. Do the textbooks explain the verses of *Jihad* ?
5. Do the textbooks mention verses of the Quran that could be misunderstood?
6. Do the textbooks mention suicide bombing?

In order to judge the textbook content, I created a rubric to measure how informative the content is for the student. Table 3 shows the criteria by which I will assess the content and the point system in brackets will aid me to conclude which book is most holistic in content. There will be one table

Criteria	No mention at all	Mentions with little detail	Mentions it with depth	Explains all including possible doubts regarding it
Intent and objectives of <i>Jihad</i>				
Types of <i>Jihad</i>				
Conditions of <i>Jihad</i>				
Verses of <i>Jihad</i>				
Quran verses that could be misunderstood				
Suicide bombing				

After the textbooks have been examined, results from each textbook will be organised according to the following themes:

- Intent and objectives of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the intent and objectives of *Jihad* ?
- Types of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different types of *Jihad* ?
- Conditions of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different conditions of *Jihad* ?
- Verses of the Qur'an about *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different verses in the Qur'an about *Jihad* .
- Qur'anic verses that could be misunderstood (there are numerous verses in the Qur'an that refer to *Jihad* and some are misunderstood) — How many of these verses does the textbook comment on and explain?
- Suicide attacks — how much information does the textbook include regarding suicide attacks and the stance of Islam regarding them?

7.3.4 Research limitations

This thesis is limited by the scope of research, A-Level textbooks were not used in this study to assess its content of *Jihad* . Further to this, teacher knowledge was also not included in this study, perhaps researching how teachers deliver this content could shed light on how this information would be disseminated to the students. However, the reason why teacher knowledge was not included was because of aforementioned neglect of the RE subject, the lack of expertise in the subject and the lack of funding for specialist RE teachers⁸⁴, this could form a separate research paper. Thus, this study focuses on textbooks only as these form the basis of the lesson.

7.3.5 Research bias

While all research contains bias, it is important to state the dimensions in which bias can appear. Bias on a topic level and analysing data were the two areas in which bias appeared. The research was entirely based upon the framework that the researcher set out. The framework was developed by the researcher using the first

⁸⁴ Refer to p. 3 of this chapter

part of this research and therefore the coding was done according to these themes mentioned above. This automatically analyses the textbooks using these themes and codes only. To reduce this bias the framework was substantiated using numerous primary sources in the first half of this research.

8. Chapter 7: Results

It has been shown that some academics have conflated Islamic terms which have led to misunderstandings of crucial literature regarding *Jihad*. Research has also shown that the *Khawarij* tend to target the young and encourage them towards extremist political ideologies under the pretence of *Jihad*. Therefore, it is imperative to give young people a firm and holistic understanding of the concept of *Jihad* substantiated by compelling evidence. However, two important questions need to be asked as outlined in the previous chapter:

- Has the conflation of terms by some academics led to the Religious Studies curriculum in England and Wales becoming inconsistent with the reality of *Jihad* and lacking in detail?
- Has the conflation of terms led to young people being susceptible to dangerous ideologies of the *Khawarij*?

The aim of this chapter is to look at the Religious Studies textbooks set by the main examining boards in England and Wales — AQA (2016), Edexcel (Pearson) (2016), OCR (2018), and WJEC (2017). I decided to explore the books used at GCSE level as research has shown that children are more susceptible to extremist ideologies during the ages when these courses are studied (Oppetit et al., 2019), as noted in the previous chapter⁸⁵. The aim was to see if the textbooks that are used in schools contain correct and sufficient content to refute and deter extremist *Khawarij* ideologies. In the previous chapter I outlined the themes that I will be exploring⁸⁶. This chapter will be dedicated to the results found within the school textbooks.

I have decided to present the results of each Religious textbook set by the different examining board separately so that a judgement can be made about each and possible improvements if needed. I have also decided to place the results from

⁸⁵ Refer to chapter 6

⁸⁶ Refer to chapter 6

the textbooks in a box to ease the flow of the chapter. The following chapter will be a discussion on the results in more details

Before delving into each the Religious Studies textbooks from each examining board, I will reiterate the themes that will be explored within each textbook.

- 1) Intent and objectives of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the intent and objectives of *Jihad* ?
- 2) Types of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different types of *Jihad* ?
- 3) Conditions of *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different conditions of *Jihad* ?
- 4) Verses of the Qur'an about *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different verses in the Qur'an about *Jihad* ?
- 5) Qur'anic verses that could be misunderstood (there are numerous verses in the Qur'an that refer to *Jihad* and some are misunderstood) — How many of these verses does the textbook comment on and explain?
- 6) Suicide attacks — how much information does the textbook include regarding suicide attacks and the stance of Islam regarding them?

The reason that I have chosen to explore these six themes is linked to the findings in the first half of the research. Whilst exploring the research on the *Khawarij*, these themes were highlighted as issues of concern and for this reason I determined to scrutinise the Religious Studies textbooks to see if these issues are addressed.

8.1 Intent and Objectives of *Jihad*

8.1.1 AQA (2016)

1. In part one: Study of religions; sub chapter 2.8 – *Jihad* .

Jihad ‘refers to struggling against evil’ and it is also a struggle to improve themselves and the society around them. (p. 46)

2. In part two: Thematic studies, sub chapter 6.6 - Holy War

‘The lesser *Jihad* makes holy war an important concept, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims’ (p. 120)

‘Holy war cannot be declared to force people to convert to Islam. Even though enemies defeated by Muslim armies during the time it was establishing itself were encouraged to convert to Islam, this was not the intention of the fighting. In addition, holy war criteria cannot be used to justify taking over other countries, nor for financial gain. The war must be fought for God.’ (p.120)

‘For a holy war to be declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat or the right to worship and practise Islam must be denied.’ (p.120)

‘As with a just war, holy war must be a last resort, in self-defence.’ (p.120)

Therefore, the AQA textbook for GCSE does proffer possible intent and objectives for *Jihad* but with little detail. This weakness is compounded by the fact that the textbook refers to *Jihad* as holy war which can have a negative connotation. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

8.1.2 Edexcel (2016)

Within the Edexcel Religious Studies textbook for GCSE, each topic is split into areas of study. There are a number of areas of study that specify Islam and look into the Islamic perspective. Area of study two looks into some of the beliefs of a Muslim. It is mainly dedicated to the six pillars of Eemaan (Faith) — however, there is a small section entitled ‘Muslim attitudes to good, evil and suffering’. Likewise, under section three, living the Muslim life, the book discusses the five pillars of Islam and *Jihad*. Whilst the section entitled ‘Muslim attitudes to good, evil and suffering’ seems like a suitable chapter to discuss the evil of terrorism, surprisingly nothing is offered here to suggest that terrorism is not part of Islam. Within this chapter, the references to evil are split into two categories, one touching on moral evil and one suggesting that any physical harm wreaked on humanity through natural disasters is also classed as an evil. This suggestion that natural disasters should be regarded as evil, although not the intended focus of this study, is an interesting concept that requires an in-depth analysis and exploration which Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn Al Qayyim have discussed in depth. Regarding moral evil, the Edexcel (2016) textbook defines it as:

‘Evil that is caused by humans misusing their free will (the human faculty of making choices). When faced with a moral decision, it is always possible to choose to do something good or something evil. When humans choose to do evil, it is described as moral evil. Rape, murder and burglary are clear examples of moral evil.’ (p.226)

This would be a suitable context in which to explore the evils of terrorism — but there is no mention of it here. Elsewhere there is passing mention of DAESH and other *Khawarij* groups, but with very little information. This is a concern — fundamentally distorted beliefs should be refuted as opposed to just mentioning them.

The set Edexcel textbook does proffer a couple of points regarding the possible intent behind *Jihad*. Under the subheading ‘*What is Jihad?*’:

‘The word *Jihad* means ‘to strive, to apply oneself, to struggle, to persevere’. However, it has come to be connected with struggling ‘in the way of religion’ or ‘striving in the cause of God’ (p.278).

The textbook explains the linguistic meaning of the word *Jihad* by saying that it means to strive or struggle but simply to state that it is connected to struggling in the way of the religion or striving in the cause of God is neglecting many important issues regarding *Jihad* .

8.1.3 OCR (2018)

Within the textbook set by OCR (2018) there are a couple of chapters addressing issues concerning *Jihad* , extremism, and radicalism. The textbook has eight main chapters and, in Chapter Four entitled ‘Practices’, there is a sub-chapter on *Jihad* . Likewise, in Chapter Seven, entitled ‘Religion, peace and conflict’, there is mention of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation.

Chapter 4 – Practices; sub chapter eight – *Jihad* (p.294)

Similar to AQA and Edexcel, *Jihad* is split into greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad* , and the textbook states the following:

‘Greater *Jihad* is the inner struggle that a Muslim strives with in order to control bad desires and intentions. Lesser *Jihad* is an outer struggle and is often linked with a military struggle.’ (p.147)

‘Greater *Jihad* is a continuous process as each Muslim strives to follow ‘the straight path’ and to please Allah. So, in all Islamic duties, Muslims are learning to be obedient to Allah, to control their own desires and to lead a disciplined life that will bring pleasure to Allah... Their reward will be to enter Paradise after death. Achieving this requires Muslims to overcome

many negative qualities, such as greed and anger; overcoming these is the Greater *Jihad* .' (p.147)

'Greater *Jihad* requires Muslims to conquer their hearts and minds and with the words of the Qur'an, not with the use of a sword or a gun.' (p.147)

'Greater *Jihad* is essential for all Muslims, and it takes precedence over lesser *Jihad* , as without overcoming badness within themselves it is hard for Muslims to deal with the lesser *Jihad* .' (p.148)

'Lesser *Jihad* is an outward *Jihad* that is about creating a good and fair Muslim society.' (p.148)

They refer to lesser and greater *Jihad* as being an outer and inner struggle respectively. This is a good start as they have specified where the intent stems from. However, the objectives, though clear to some extent, need to be expanded on.

8.1.4 WJEC (2017)

The Religious Studies book set by the WJEC – Eduqas (2017) is split into three different components. The examination board have placed Islam in the third component. Within the component there are two main sections — firstly the beliefs and teachings in Islam and secondly the practices within Islam. *Jihad* is included in the second section under the practises in Islam.

Component three, section two – Practices

'*Jihad* is the struggle to live according to God's laws. It is one of the most misunderstood words in Islam, because to many people *Jihad* simply means 'holy war', but in fact it has a deeper meaning than this.' (p.253)

‘*Jihad* actually means ‘directed struggle’: striving to serve God, making an effort to live a moral life, actively trying to live in peace.’ (p.253)

‘Many Muslims make a distinction between greater *Jihad* (the personal struggle for right) and the lesser *Jihad* (the desire to remove evil society).’ (p.253)

‘The greater *Jihad* is the spiritual struggle with oneself. It is the desire and commitment to live the perfect Muslim life: • to perform the Five Pillars with devotion • to practise the path set out by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sunnah) • to seek justice and fairness for all • to rise above one’s own greed and selfishness.’ (p.253)

WJEC provide the most holistic understanding of term *Jihad* and give examples, but fall short by splitting *Jihad* into either greater or lesser.

8.2 Types of *Jihad* — How much information does the textbook include regarding the different types of *Jihad* ?

8.2.1 AQA (2016)

1. In part one: study of religions; Chapter 2; sub chapter 2.8 – *Jihad* .

The AQA textbook splits *Jihad* into two main sections: greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad* .

‘There are two elements to *Jihad* : greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad* .’ (p.46)

In the section entitled ‘*Greater Jihad* ’:

Greater *Jihad* is for Muslims ‘a constant struggle to purify one’s heart from all evil traits’. (p.46).

Within the section entitled ‘*Lesser Jihad* ’:

‘As the term lesser *Jihad* suggests, it is considered less important than greater *Jihad* .’ (p.47)

‘*Lesser Jihad* is seen as the outward struggle to defend Islam from threat.’ (p.47)

2. In part two: Thematic studies, sub chapter 6.5 – The just war

‘*Lesser Jihad* obliges Muslims to fight under certain conditions. It covers fighting against non- Muslim aggressors and there are strict rules regarding its conduct.’ (p. 118)

3. In part two: Thematic studies, sub chapter 6.6 – The just war

‘For Muslims, the lesser *Jihad* makes holy war an important concept, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims.’ (p.120)

‘For a holy war to declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat or the right to worship and practise Islam must be denied.’ (p. 118)

Also, within the key terms is the term *holy war*:

‘fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader.’ (p.120)

The term *Jihad* and its different types have been split only into greater and lesser *Jihad* with many other types of *Jihad* left out. Likewise, ‘lesser *Jihad*’ seems to be only referred to as a method of defence against an enemy and this not to mention the discussion surrounding the term ‘lesser *Jiha*’. In addition to this, the AQA textbook does not explore other possible examples of *Jihad*. It could be argued that limitations on the word count allocated to this topic may predetermine concise content, but it means there is possibility for misinterpretation on the part of young readers who may come away believing that this is the only method of defence in Islam. The possible reasons and repercussions for this will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, a number of terms have been conflated within the different chapters which has led to important points being misunderstood which will also be discussed in the next chapter.

8.2.2 Edexcel (2016)

The Edexcel textbook, like AQA, splits *Jihad* into greater and lesser *Jihad*, all the while proffering certain verses. The textbook states a few types of *Jihad*.

‘It seems clear from these verses that *Jihad* means to strive with one’s self and one’s money in the cause of God. It is determining exactly what is meant by the cause of God which has led to there being two ideas about *Jihad*: greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad*.’ (p.279)

Thus, the textbook proffers two types of *Jihad* — striving with one’s self and one’s money — but in reality there are numerous types of *Jihad* that have been neglected and the book does not give any explanation or examples of these two types.

8.2.3 OCR (2018)

There are many types of *Jihad* proffered by OCR and this curriculum, thus far, has been the most expansive regarding the different types. They explore numerous, although not all, types of *Jihad*, which allows for a greater understanding of what *Jihad* entails.

Jihad as an inner struggle

‘This striving takes two forms in Islam: greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad*. Greater *Jihad* is the inner struggle that a Muslim strives with in order to control bad desires and intentions.’ (p.147)

‘So in all Islamic duties Muslims are learning to be obedient to Allah, to control their desires and to lead a disciplined life that will bring pleasure to Allah.’ (p.147)

‘Greater *Jihad* requires Muslims to conquer their hearts and minds with the words of the Qur’an.’ (p.147)

Jihad as a military struggle

‘Lesser *Jihad* is an outer struggle and is often linked with a military struggle.’ (p.147)

Ordering the good and forbidding the evil

Striving against doing what is wrong (Munkar) and seeking to do what is good (Maroof) is called Nahi ‘Anil-Munkar and Amr-bil-MarooF. This is

built upon the teaching of the Qur'an (3:110). This section of the Qur'an sets the Muslim ummah (community) up as the best model for all societies.' (p.147)

Jihad as a form of fighting

The lesser *Jihad* is an outward *Jihad* that is about creating a good and fair Muslim society. Some also believe it to include war. When speaking specifically about war, however, the Qur'an uses the word 'Qital' rather than '*Jihad*'.

'If lesser *Jihad* is in the form of a war then it should either be defensive or be a war against an unjust regime. Such a war should be fought against the leaders of that regime in order to liberate the people so that they are free from tyranny and oppression.' (p.148)

8.2.4 WJEC (2017)

Like other textbooks, WJEC splits *Jihad* into two main types — greater *Jihad* and lesser *Jihad*. This textbook is more exhaustive than those of Edexcel and AQA.

The need to control desires

Islam teaches that Muslims need to control their own desires and behaviours, to follow the Five Pillars, and live a life that is pleasing to God. This will ensure that when the last day comes, and they are brought to judgement by God, they will be worthy to receive God's favour and thus to enter paradise. (p.253)

The battle against laziness

There is a prayer of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ which says: 'God, I seek thy protection against helplessness and laziness, and against cowardice... and miserliness.' This describes the greater *Jihad*. It is the commitment to make the effort to be a better person and live as God has instructed. The greater *Jihad* is the spiritual fight against the tendency to be lazy: to get up for prayers before dawn, to only eat food that is halal (permitted), to show kindness and generosity towards other people. (p.253)

Encourage what is right

The Qur'an urges Muslims to 'encourage what is right (ma' ruf), and forbid what is wrong' (3:104). This process is partly about removing evil from yourself, but also about making the world a better place. (p.253)

The lesser *Jihad* (holy war)

There are certain circumstances in which Islam accepts that force needs to be used, but only ever in self-defence. While the greater *Jihad* is the personal struggle against sin, the lesser *Jihad* or holy war is the struggle to remove evil from society. This involves the whole community, rather than the individual, and there are strict rules for the use of force in *Jihad*. (p.254)

8.3 Conditions of *Jihad* — How much information does the textbook include regarding the different conditions of *Jihad* ?

8.3.1 AQA (2016)

The AQA (2016) textbook does allude to some of the conditions of *Jihad* .

1. In part one: study of religions; chapter 2; sub chapter 2.8 – *Jihad* .

‘It must only be declared by a fair religious leader

It must be a response to a threat to the faith,

It must be the last resort – all peaceful methods must have been tried first.’
(p. 47)

2. In part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.6 – The just war
(p. 118)

‘War can be just and therefore permitted if it meets the following conditions:

- It is the last resort – fighting must be the last option when diplomacy and negotiation have failed.
- It is in self-defence – the initial aggression should come from the other side and there should be attempts to solve the problem without fighting.
- As lesser *Jihad* is a religious concept, the decision to fight should be made by a state leader.
- It is done for a just cause, not for gain of territory – the reason should be to protect territory from an outside aggressor or, in cases of civil war, rebel groups from within the state.
- An Islamic country has been attacked – countries are allowed to join a conflict to assist another Muslim state which is under threat.

- Another state has tyrannised its Muslim citizens – if a country mistreats its citizens, it is permissible to fight in support of fellow Muslims.

If these conditions are met, the war is thought a just one and it is believed that those who fight for the cause of Islam will receive the favour and reward of God.

3. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.5 – The just war (p. 118 -119)

The first Islamic Caliph and companion of Muhammad, Abu Bakr, devised some rules that Muslim armies must obey in the way a conflict is conducted:

- Muslim armies must not commit treachery or stray from the right path
- Children, women and old men should not be killed
- People who are devout in their faith, such as monks, should not be harmed
- Wars should be fought only with the necessary amount of force
- Fighting should be without anger
- Prisoners should be treated in a civilised way
- Soldiers must be of a sound mind and body

4. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.6 – Holy war (p. 120)

‘For Muslims, the lesser *Jihad* makes holy war an important concept, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims.’

‘As with a just war, holy war must be the last resort, in self-defence following negotiation and diplomatic efforts to find a solution.’

‘For a holy war to be justly declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat or the right to worship and practise Islam must be denied.’

‘Holy war must only be declared by a fair religious leader.’

The AQA textbook proffers numerous conditions of *Jihad* in various sub chapters, and this is important as it helps clarify that there are conditions that must be met before declaring *Jihad*, something that the *Khawarij* often overlook. However, AQA has conflated between the different types of lesser *Jihad* which has led to stating conditions for defensive *Jihad* which scholars of Islam do not state as Ibn Taymiyyah has clarified. I expand on this problem in the next chapter.

8.3.2 Edexcel (2016)

The Edexcel (2016) textbook mentions certain conditions on *Jihad* under the title ‘different understandings of *Jihad* in Islam’. The section begins by mentioning that some Muslims believe the lesser *Jihad* allows for a Holy war against non-Muslims to bring them to Islam.

‘However, the Muslim Law Schools say that a Holy War can only be fought in the following conditions:

1. in self-defence: ‘Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for God loveth not the transgressor’⁸⁷.

‘To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight because they are wronged; – and verily God is most powerful, for their aid’⁸⁸.

2. if it is led by a religious leader well known for piety and chosen by the whole community

⁸⁷ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

⁸⁸ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

3. if all the soldiers are good faithful Muslims well versed in the Qur' an
4. if there is a good chance of the war being successful, as long as the war does not harm the innocent (women, children or the elderly) after the enemies have been invited to join Islam peaceably.

Other Muslims feel that they are entitled to wage a Holy War against non-Muslims and they even call themselves *Jihad* i. They believe that because Muhammad was forced to fight to defend Islam when attacked by Makkah (and there are verses in the Qur' an about this) they have the right to fight for the faith, especially as the Qur'an says that those who die fighting Holy War will go straight to paradise:

Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord. ⁸⁹ (p. 280)'

Although the conditions of *Jihad* have been mentioned within the textbook set by Edexcel, the conditions have been listed as conditions for the defensive *Jihad* . This is a great error and is a prime example of conflation of terms — this will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion.

8.3.3 OCR (2018)

Islamic law has very strict guidelines for when a Lesser *Jihad* is led by a religious leader as a military action. These are:

- 1) The opponent must always have started the fighting.
- 2) It must not be fought to gain land.
- 3) It must be started by a religious leader.

⁸⁹ Surah Aal Imran, verse 169

- 4) It must be fought to bring about good (something that Allah will approve of).
- 5) It must be last resort.
- 6) Innocent people must not be killed or harmed.
- 7) Enemies must be treated with Justice.
- 8) Wounded enemy soldiers must be treated in exactly the same way as one's own soldiers.
- 9) The war must stop as soon as the enemy asks for peace.
- 10) Property must not be damaged.
- 11) Poisoning wells is forbidden: or in modern terms, chemical or biological warfare is not allowed. (OCR, 2018, p.148)

The conditions of *Jihad* mentioned by OCR would seem the most comprehensive — however, on analysis, they cannot all be classified as conditions but rather as terms of etiquette that a person carrying out *Jihad* , after conditions have been fulfilled, should follow, once again highlighting a lack of important content knowledge about the conditions of *Jihad* .

8.3.4 WJEC (2017)

Under the subtopic entitled '*Jihad* must never be aggressive' and 'Who can declare *Jihad*?' a number of conditions are stated.

'The Qur'an lays down the condition that the Muslims must not be the first to attack; a war of aggression is prohibited. However, if it can be agreed

that a war is a '*Jihad*', then it is a duty to fight back, but only against those who are attacking you, never to kill civilians.' (p.255)

'Who can declare a *Jihad* ?

Muslim law is clear that *Jihad* can only be declared by a Muslim leader who is holy and pure and who has the support of the whole Muslim community. Some Muslim communities do believe their leaders are able to declare *Jihad*. However, many Muslims today say that it is difficult to see how these conditions for *Jihad* could be met, because there is no one indisputable Muslim ruler who would be eligible to declare it.' (p.255)

Within these two paragraphs one can extract a number of conditions that need to be met for *Jihad* to be declared, which are the following:

- 1) Muslims should not be the first to attack.
- 2) The Muslims only fight those who are fighting them.
- 3) Civilians are not to be killed.
- 4) *Jihad* can only be declared by the Muslim leader.

There are various other places within the WJEC (2017) chapter on *Jihad* where conditions are outlined. It states

'There are certain circumstances in which Islam accepts that force needs to be used, but only ever in self-defence' (p.254),

pointing to the fact that *Jihad* can only be fought in self-defence. Likewise, on page 573, after quoting the verse from the Qur'an

‘Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, God is competent to give them victory’⁹⁰

‘This passage from the Qur’an records the permission given by God for the Muslims to defend themselves against their enemies. Some argue that war with such a pure motive (to establish the principle of religious freedom) is a true *Jihad* .’ (p.254)

Similarly, on page 574 the chapter states that holy war can only be called against an aggressor that threatens Islam. The textbook identifies between five to six possible conditions of *Jihad* which are discussed in detail in the chapter.

8.4 Verses of the Qur’an about *Jihad* — how much information does the textbook include regarding the different verses of the Qur’an about *Jihad* ?

8.4.1 AQA (2016)

The textbook set by AQA (2016) refers to a number of verses of the Qur’an pertaining to *Jihad* across various chapters.

1. In part one: study of religions; chapter 2; sub chapter 2.8 – *Jihad* .

“This is my path, leading straight, so follow it, and do not follow other ways: this will lead you away from it – this is what he commands you to do, so that you may refrain from wrongdoing.”⁹¹ (p.46)

⁹⁰ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

⁹¹ Al An’am, verse 153

“But those who have believed, migrated, and striven for God’s cause, it is they who can look forward to God’s mercy. God is most forgiving and merciful.”⁹²

2. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.2 – Violence, violent protest, and terrorism

“Do not kill each other, for God is merciful to you. If any of you does these things, out of hostility and injustice, We shall make him suffer the fire.”⁹³(p.112)

“Do not take life, which God has made sacred.”⁹⁴ (p.113)

3. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.4 – Nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction

“Fight in God’s cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits.”⁹⁵ (p.117)

“Do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do good.”⁹⁶ (p.117)

4. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.5 – The Just War

“Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in God’s way. To anyone who fights in God’s way, whether killed or victorious, We shall give a great reward.”⁹⁷ (p.118)

5. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.7 – Pacifism

⁹² Surah Al Baqarah, verse 128

⁹³ Surah An Nisa, verse 29-30

⁹⁴ Surah Al Isra, verse 33

⁹⁵ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

⁹⁶ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 195

⁹⁷ Surah An Nisa, verse 74

Within this chapter the textbook explains how it is difficult for Muslims to identify themselves as pacifists because of *Jihad* but that they do, however, share principles of pacifism. A couple of verses are stated.

“Fighting has been ordained for you, although it is hard for you. You may dislike something although it is good for you, or you like something because it is bad for you. God knows and you do not.”⁹⁸ (p. 122)

“But if they [non-believers] incline towards peace, you [Prophet] must, also incline towards it, and put your trust in God. He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.”⁹⁹ (p.122)

6. Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.8 – Religious responses to victims of war

“Whoever saved a life, it would be as if they saved the life of all mankind.”¹⁰⁰ (p.124)

AQA have tried hard to include a good selection of verses pertaining to *Jihad* or fighting in general. However, it seems that certain verses have been taken out of context, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

8.4.2 Edexcel (2016)

The textbook set by Edexcel (2016) brings numerous verses under the section of *Jihad* .

⁹⁸ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 34

⁹⁹ Surah Al Anfal, verse 61

¹⁰⁰ Surah Al Maeda, verse 32

'Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main in God's cause with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of God. These are the people who will achieve salvation.'¹⁰¹(p.278).

'And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive.'¹⁰² (p278

'Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive against them.'¹⁰³ (p.278)

'That ye believe in God and His Apostle, and that ye strive your utmost in the cause of God, with your property and your persons; that will be best for you if ye but knew!'¹⁰⁴ (p.278)

In the sub section entitled 'different understandings of *Jihad* in Islam' the book states three verses only.

'Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for God love not the transgressor.'¹⁰⁵ (p. 280)

To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight because they are wronged; – and verily God is most powerful, for their aid.¹⁰⁶
(p.280)

'Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord'.¹⁰⁷ (p.280)

¹⁰¹ Surah At Tawbah

¹⁰² Surah Al Hajj, verse 78

¹⁰³ Surah Al Furqan, verse 52

¹⁰⁴ Surah As Saff, verse 11

¹⁰⁵ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

¹⁰⁶ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

¹⁰⁷ Surah Aal Imran, verse 169

Similar to AQA, the textbook set by Edexcel have stated a few verses pertaining to *Jihad*, however, some of the verses could be misunderstood and taken out of context.

8.4.3 OCR (2018)

Within the Religious Studies textbook set by OCR (2018), five verses of *Jihad* are mentioned. Some explicitly mention the word *Jihad* and some are more general.

“Fight in the way of Allaah against those who fight you and do not go beyond the limits. Indeed, God does not love those who go beyond the limits.”¹⁰⁸ (p.147)

“But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in Allaah; for He is the one who hears and knows all things.”¹⁰⁹ (p.147)

“Do great *Jihad* with the help of the Qur’an.”¹¹⁰ (p.147)

“And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allaah does not like corruption.”¹¹¹ (p.147)

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.”¹¹² (p.147)

These verses have been mentioned in the textbook with minimal commentary which could lead to the student misunderstanding the verse. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

¹⁰⁹ Surah Al Anfal, verse 61

¹¹⁰ Surah Al Furqan, verse 52

¹¹¹ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 205

¹¹² Surah Al Baqarah, verse 256

8.4.4 WJEC (2017)

The WJEC (2017) textbooks also includes a number of verses of the Qur'an within the chapter on *Jihad* . However, similarly, the verses are accompanied by minimal commentary and explanation, which means that teachers are relied upon to give the necessary interpretation.

‘If anyone slew a person ... it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.’¹¹³ (p.254).

‘To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.’¹¹⁴ (p.254)

‘Fight in the way of God those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.’ (Surah 2: verse 190)

8.5 Ambiguous verses

8.5.1 AQA (2016)

Within the textbook set by AQA (2016) there are numerous verses pertaining to *Jihad* and killing. Of these verses, there are three that could be misunderstood and may need extra explanation to remove any doubt. No effort has been made to clarify these possible misinterpretations and thus misconceptions could be formed.

1) Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.4 – Nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction

¹¹³ Surah Al Maeda, verse 32

¹¹⁴ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

“Fight in God’s cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits.”¹¹⁵ (p. 117)

2) Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.5 – The Just War (p. 118 – 119)

“Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in God’s way. To anyone who fights in God’s way, whether killed or victorious, We shall give a great reward.”¹¹⁶ (p. 118)3) Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.7 – Pacifism

“Fighting has been ordained for you, although it is hard for you. You may dislike something although it is good for you, or you like something because it is bad for you. God knows and you do not.”¹¹⁷ (p. 122)

8.5.2 Edexcel (2016)

The verses used in the Edexcel (2016) textbook that could be misunderstood are as follows:

‘Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive against them.’¹¹⁸ (p. 278)

‘That ye believe in God and His Apostle, and that ye strive your utmost in the cause of God, with your property and your persons; that will be best for you if ye but knew!’¹¹⁹ (p. 278)

¹¹⁵ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

¹¹⁶ Surah An Nisa, verse 74

¹¹⁷ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 280

¹¹⁸ Surah Al Furqan, verse 52

¹¹⁹ Surah Al Saff, verse 11

‘To those whom war is made, permission is given to fight because they have been wronged –and verily God is most powerful, for their aid.’¹²⁰

(p.280)

‘Think not of those who are slain in God’s way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.’¹²¹ (p.280)

The term *Jihad* in the Arabic language is translated as to strive. However, striving against disbelievers can be understood in different ways which could be detrimental to efforts to stop suicide attacks or innocent civilians being killed. Therefore, the textbook presents a number of verses of the Qur’an pertaining to *Jihad* that could be misunderstood, once again with limited commentary and thus relying heavily on the teacher to clarify any possible misunderstanding. This point will be expanded on in the next chapter.

8.5.3 OCR (2018)

There is verse proffered by OCR (2018) that could be misunderstood, from the verses mentioned is:

“Do great *Jihad* with the help of the Qur’an.”¹²² (p.147)

There is no explanation with regards to this verse and it seems like a very general verse to be used for the topic of *Jihad* .

¹²⁰ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

¹²¹ Surah Aal Imran, verse 169

¹²² Surah Al Furqan, verse 52

8.5.4 WJEC (2017)

There is only one verse which could be open to gross misinterpretation and this is the least of all the textbooks.

‘To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.’¹²³ (WJEC, 2017, p.254)

8.6 Suicide attacks — How much information does the textbook include regarding suicide attacks and the stance of Islam regarding them?

8.6.1 AQA (2016)

1) Part two: Thematic studies, chapter 6; sub chapter 6.2 – Violence, violent protest, and terrorism

While explaining and defining terrorism, the textbook touches on examples of terrorist attacks and, specifically, suicide attacks.

‘While a person who commits terrorist acts may claim to do so in the name of a religion, for example Christianity or Islam, no religious tradition promotes terrorism. On 7 July 2005, there were four suicide bombings in London that killed 52 people and injured 700. Even though the terrorists attached themselves to the religion of Islam, most Muslims, including their religious and community leaders, condemned the attacks.’ (p.113)

¹²³ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

8.6.2 Edexcel (2016)

The textbook does not specify the term “suicide attack” but does refer to killing innocent civilians.

‘Those who kill innocent people in the name of Islam or in the name of God, and who think of themselves as martyrs, should think twice. Their act is categorically condemned by God ... in the Quran. These people are disobeying God’ s commandments and instead upholding the fabricated claims of their teachers / leaders!’ (p.280).

None of the verses used in the Edexcel textbook are given any in-depth explanation, allowing for students to interpret them for themselves. This can only be avoided if the teacher explores the verses with the students in class. Thus, the matter is left to the teacher and this can be taken down many different paths as will be discussed later on.

8.6.3 OCR (2018)

The OCR (2018) textbooks include a section entitled ‘Terrorism’ which is under the topic entitled ‘Religion, Peace and conflict’ and the main image is of the September 11th terror attacks in New York.

‘Terrorism is the illegal use of violence to cause fear and intimidation for political aim. It is often carried out against civilians rather than military targets.’ (p.233)

‘Instead, Islamic terrorist groups have interpreted the teaching on *Jihad* to justify the use of violent methods. Using terror tactics, including suicide bombings, *Jihadist* groups often aim to establish strict Shari’ah law and an Islamic state.’ (p.233)

‘Radicalisation happens when a person’s thinking becomes significantly altered from that of the majority of people within their society or community. They may seek to change the nature of society or community, which may lead to some people who have become radicalised using violent terrorist action.’ (p.233)

After the above paragraph about radicalisation, the OCR textbook clarifies the Christian stance on terrorism in some depth but fails to fully state the Islamic position. Instead, it states that ‘the majority of Muslims say that these groups have distorted the Islamic teaching on *Jihad*, which in the Qur’an is a call to put Allaah first in their lives and reflects the inner, spiritual battle that has to be undertaken to achieve this.’ (p.490).

Interestingly, the OCR textbook has a section that discusses the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation and there is a section entitled ‘Christian teachings and beliefs about justice, forgiveness and reconciliation’ (p. 532) where there are quotes from the Bible regarding the Christian position concerning forgiveness and reconciliation. There is not, however, a section that contains the Islamic perspective on this topic.

8.6.4 WJEC (2017)

The Religious Studies textbook set by WJEC (2017) contains a topic entitled ‘*Jihad* today’ within which terrorism is discussed. The book states,

‘Some Islamic extremist groups argue that the attack on the World Trade Centre (the Twin Towers) in New York, on 11 September 2001, commanded by Osama Bin Laden, was an act of *Jihad*’ (p.574).

The book goes on to explain why that is wrong by stating,

‘However, moderate Muslims reject this idea, arguing that this attack was an aggressive act, which targeted innocent civilians and so fails the test set by the Qur’ an’ (p.574).

The term suicide is not mentioned but the book refers to the terrorist attack on 9th September as an attack on innocent civilians. The book also places an image of the plane hitting the twin towers, all of this under the subtitle ‘*Jihad* today’.

Likewise, the book includes another subtitle, ‘The rise of *Jihadist* groups’, within which the groups such as Al Qaeda, Daesh and Boko Haram are declared as *Jihadists*. The book comments on the group Daesh in a little more detail by stating that;

‘In 2014, *Jihad* i fighters, saying they were loyal to Islam, captured large areas of Northern Syria and Iraq, setting up what they called a ‘caliphate’. This is a state governed in accordance with Islamic (Shari’ ah) law. Islamic State (IS) say they want to restore God’s rule on earth and defend the ummah (Muslim community) against infidels (non-believers)’ (p. 574).

8.7 Conclusion

In the last two decades, terrorism has spread destruction around the world. The *Khawarij* have tried to link their actions to Islam and lured the young into their dangerous ideologies. Education has an important role to play in addressing these extremist ideologies and the curriculum set for Religious Studies needs to be sufficiently robust in order to combat these ideologies from the foundations of their doubts. This chapter has explored the textbooks of four different examination boards within England and Wales to determine whether opportunities to deter *Khawarij* ideologies related to *Jihad* have been taken and executed well. The results have been presented above and a number of issues of concern are visible. An in-depth discussion follows in the next chapter.

9. Chapter 8: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This research thesis sets out to shed light on concepts in Islam that have been misunderstood by many Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The chosen focus was *Jihad*, and the intent was to look at the literature of an important figure in Islamic history, Ibn Taymiyyah, who is commonly associated with terrorism. The research also explored the chapters on *Jihad*, and those related to it, in the most commonly used Religious Studies textbooks in England, drawing on the misconceptions found in the former part of this research. The *Khawarij* have targeted the young, in trying to convince them that terrorism is permissible in Islam. Hence, it is crucial that the education that young adults receive is sufficient to give them a holistic, multifaceted understanding of *Jihad* and not one that is superficial, as is found in some common literature.

The objective of this chapter will be to discuss the findings and results presented in the previous chapters. This research has two main themes which have an important connection. The first half of the research set out to explore the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Islamic scholar, with particular focus on his views on *Jihad* and dealings with non-Muslims. Further to this, the claims that identify Ibn Taymiyyah's literature to be the source of terror have been investigated using his own works and comparing them to the literature and propaganda of the *Khawarij*. The reality of Ibn Taymiyyah's knowledge and understanding of *Jihad* was shown to be holistic and quite different from that found in the literature of the *Khawarij*. With this in mind, the second aspect of research aimed to explore GCSE Religious Studies textbooks in relation to *Jihad* and the main question that was explored was: Is there enough information and detail, as well as correct information in these textbooks, to quell doubts regarding *Jihad* and counter any inclination to terrorism?

I will now focus on specific research questions and discuss in detail the results, all the while returning back to Ibn Taymiyyah's position on the matter, to see whether or not the textbooks have accurately conveyed the information. I will also allude

to matters that could be potentially useful, but that the textbooks might have omitted.

9.1.1 Intent and objectives of *Jihad* : how much information does the textbook include regarding the intent and objectives of *Jihad* ?

Ibn Taymiyyah, speaking about the intent of *Jihad* , writes: ‘The reality of *Jihad* is to strive to achieve what Allaah loves from belief and righteous action; and to push (refrain from) that which Allaah hates from disbelief and disobedience’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 15, p. 191). Further to this, he asserts: ‘The intent of *Jihad* in the way of Allaah is to make everyone submit to him and raise the word of Allaah’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p. 23). Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah conveys a multifaceted understanding of the objectives of *Jihad* — it is not solely about fighting a perceived enemy. In fact, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, it is a generic term that encompasses the daily life of a person who endeavours to submit to Allaah and his legislations.

While exploring the Religious Studies textbooks set by the various examining boards, we see a similar tone being used between them regarding the intent and objectives of *Jihad* . The textbook set by AQA proposes that the intent of *Jihad* revolves around a number of key points — one of them being that *Jihad* is a struggle against evil. It is also a personal struggle for individual improvement and for improving wider society. The textbooks allude to important points regarding *Jihad* by saying that it is a struggle against evil but they do not go into any depth. Importantly, however, the textbook set by AQA seems to portray a negative spin on *Jihad* by suggesting it is a struggle to ‘improve’ themselves and society. *Jihad* is not confined to changing evil to good — it can also involve a person *doing* good and his struggle (*Jihad*) to remain good or become even better. If we compare this with Ibn Taymiyyah’s literature, he depicts it in a much more positive manner by using terms such as ‘achieve what Allaah loves from belief and righteous action’. *Jihad* is more than repelling evil as it is a form of worship in itself and should be seen as a means of getting closer to Allaah. Having said this, we can see from the previous chapter that AQA have allocated much space for discussion on *Jihad* and made a considerable effort to include topics that surround *Jihad* in various other units and chapters.

Similarly, within the Religious textbook set by OCR states that greater *Jihad* is linked to distancing oneself from evil. They state in numerous places that greater *Jihad* is when a ‘Muslim strives ... to control bad desires and intentions’, or ‘badness within themselves’. Therefore, according to the textbook set by OCR, *Jihad* is all about the removal of evil despite the fact that *Jihad*, as defined by Ibn Taymiyyah, has much broader connotations. This narrowed understanding of *Jihad* could stem from a lack of theological and historical background in Islam, as proffered by Lovat (2017). AQA also state in various places in their textbook that one of the aims of *Jihad* is to defend Muslims from harm from possible enemies. They refer to this as ‘lesser *Jihad*’ and ‘holy war’ and therefore allude to *Jihad* as a form of fighting and lesser *Jihad*. While defending the rights of Muslims is of the utmost importance, the AQA’s referral to it as ‘lesser *Jihad*’ or ‘holy war’ could be problematic. I will discuss this in more detail under the section ‘types of *Jihad*’, later on in this chapter.

As for the textbook set by Edexcel, it gives more emphasis to the linguistic meaning of the word *Jihad* — to struggle. The textbook mentions that it has come to be connected with struggling ‘in the way of religion’ or striving in ‘the cause of God’. The textbook set by Edexcel states that it is connected to struggling in the way of the religion or in the way of God but does not really explain how. It is important to understand that the term *Jihad* has been given a negative connotation by leaving the intent behind *Jihad* open-ended and the reader or the student has no option but to continue with the negative narrative being propagated. It would be more beneficial for the student if Edexcel had explained how *Jihad* can take the form of an individual struggling with themselves, for example, or a group struggling with drugs in their community. One response to this would be to say that it is the job of the teacher to explain and give commentary on the textbook in use and this issue will be discussed in the limitations and implications chapter. An important point to note is that the section on *Jihad* in the Edexcel text is too short to be able to include all the essential information on *Jihad*. A brief chapter can only lead to superficial knowledge and ultimately lead to misconceptions within the young that could be detrimental to those prone to extremism. An example of this would be where a student is taught to think that *Jihad* is principally to repel evil and is then exposed to extremist ideology suggesting that they should take up a physical fight against evil, such as disbelief, then it will be easier for such a

student to accept this ideology. Whereas, if a student is taught the holistic intent of *Jihad*, they will understand it as a means of striving to do what Allaah loves with the intent of spreading Islam and not spreading corruption through the use of violence.

Unlike AQA and Edexcel, WJEC, within their Religious Studies textbook, have made a conscious effort to address the topic of the intent of *Jihad* in a more comprehensive manner. They state that, '*Jihad* is the struggle to live according to God's laws. It is one of the most misunderstood words in Islam, because to many people *Jihad* simply means 'holy war', but in fact it has a deeper meaning than this.' This represents a solid start to the topic of *Jihad* as they have stated that *Jihad* is to live according to God's law and therefore the student is not led to believe that it is only the removing of evil. The textbook set by WJEC (2017) likewise states:

The greater *Jihad* is the spiritual struggle with oneself. It is the desire and commitment to live the perfect Muslim life: • to perform the Five Pillars with devotion • to practise the path set out by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sunnah) • to seek justice and fairness for all • to rise above one's own greed and selfishness. (p.570)

Once again, the WJEC board has tried to be as holistic as possible regarding *Jihad*. It can be concluded that, regarding the objectives of *Jihad*, WJEC has provided a more complete understanding of *Jihad* than other boards. However, having said this, it would be better if the boards differentiate between the objectives of the different types of *Jihad*. The objective of the *Jihad* of an individual between himself and Allaah differs from the objective of the *Jihad* that needs to be performed by a society which, in turn, differs from the objectives of *Jihad* as a form of fighting. This is a better way of informing students of the objectives of *Jihad* as it clarifies to them, from the outset, that it is not possible to lump all the objectives under one banner. This will become clearer once we have discussed the different types of *Jihad*.

We can conclude that the religious studies textbooks that are currently used in England generally do not contain accurate information regarding the definition and objectives of *Jihad* and neither do they provide a holistic understanding of *Jihad*. The Religious Studies textbooks set by AQA and WJEC board both

emphasise several worthy points, and caution against falling into the trap of using the term ‘holy war’. However, a concept such as *Jihad*, which is multi-faceted, needs to be studied in detail to avoid any misunderstanding of the term. Hence, we can say that the Religious Studies textbooks need to be filled out with much more detail regarding *Jihad* and not just skim the surface as this will cause more harm than benefit. One may argue that it is the job of the teacher to expand on the information which is in the book, and this leads to an important issue. Who should be teaching the Islamic portion of the Religious Studies syllabus? Should it be left to a general Religious Studies teacher who may specialise in Christianity but has a PGCE in Religious Studies? Or should it be left to an Islamic Studies teacher who is an expert in Theology and Islamic History and is knowledgeable enough to be able to answer any questions from the students and will have the ability to explain the concept of *Jihad* and other multi-faceted concepts in detail? Finding out how many Islamic Studies specialists we have teaching the Islamic syllabus in England is an interesting topic and could be left to later research.

9.1.2 Types of *Jihad*

I think it is imperative to start with a common problem that has been seen throughout the different textbooks. The Religious Studies textbooks set by the four examining boards have stated that *Jihad* falls into two main categories, major and minor — major being the *Jihad* that is fought by an individual to repel evil within himself, while the lesser *Jihad* is the *Jihad* as a form of fighting an enemy. Ibn Taymiyyah, in numerous places in his literature, discusses these two terms and categorically asserts that referring to *Jihad* as greater and lesser *Jihad* is incorrect for two main reasons. First, it is incorrect to refer to *Jihad* as greater and lesser as the narration that mentions these two terms is weak. He states, ‘As for that which is narrated after the battle of Tabouk, “we have returned from the lesser *Jihad* to the greater *Jihad*” then it has no foundation and none of those who have knowledge of the narrations and actions of the Prophet have narrated this’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 11, p. 197). Second, Ibn Taymiyyah states that actually fighting the enemy is regarded as one of the important types of worship, so by stating that it is lesser *Jihad* is in fact lowering the level of *Jihad* of fighting the enemy. Some of the Religious Studies textbooks state this — an example is the Religious Studies textbook set by AQA where we read: ‘As the

term lesser *Jihad* suggests, it is considered less important than greater *Jihad* (2016, p. 47)'. This may in an effort to deter the youth from extremist ideologies. However, to modify and adjust important areas of the Islamic faith as a form of watering down the religion of Islam is also not a valid response — rather, the answer is to teach students the realities of *Jihad* in Islam in detail. *Jihad* is a form of worship, and, like other forms of worship, it points to a specific time and a specific place. The realities of *Jihad* are far deeper than one assumes, and these must be brought forth for students to understand what this type of worship entails. Every type of worship has conditions that need to be met if the action is to be accepted; similarly, there are stringent conditions for *Jihad* as a form of fighting and, without these conditions being met, the *Jihad* will not be accepted as a form of worship, something that is grossly misunderstood in the *Khawarij* understanding of Islam. The conditions of *Jihad* constitute a profound matter that requires a section of its own.

A thorough exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature revealed that he proffers many types of *Jihad*. Ibn Taymiyyah states that the origin of trying to fight the disbelievers is to first fight the individual's own whims and desires. He stresses that a person will not be able to strive against the disbelievers until he strives against his own weaknesses and desires. This statement is recorded within the works of Ibn Al Qayyim (2010) entitled *Rawdatu Al Muhibeen*, one of the principal students of Ibn Taymiyyah, who asserts that he heard his teacher saying this. Evidently, Ibn Taymiyyah believed that striving against one's desires is a form of *Jihad*. Many of the textbooks set by the examining boards do place emphasis on the *Jihad* of oneself, striving against evil, albeit under the sub heading of 'greater *Jihad*'. AQA state that greater *Jihad* is a 'constant struggle to purify one's heart from all evil traits' (2016, p. 46), while the textbook set by Edexcel proffers two types of *Jihad*, striving with oneself and striving with one's money. On the other hand, the Religious Studies textbook set by OCR proffers a slightly more holistic understanding of *Jihad*. The board includes *Jihad* of oneself, the *Jihad* against the disbelievers, the *Jihad* that is needed in ordering the good and forbidding the evil, and *Jihad* as a military struggle. Similarly, WJEC, while setting their Religious Studies textbook, have tried to be slightly more comprehensive in their view of the different types of *Jihad*. The board asserts the need to control desires, the battle against laziness, and encouragement

of what is right. However, within the explanation, WJEC do not make it clear that these are forms of *Jihad* ; therefore, one can say that the explanation is lacking in depth.

To summarise the information presented in the textbooks: The textbooks lack important information regarding the different types of *Jihad* . When comparing them with the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, we find a significant difference. Ibn Taymiyyah identifies numerous types of *Jihad* : seeking knowledge, striving against the evil of your own desires, striving to improve oneself, all on an individual basis. Additionally, he defines types of societal *Jihad* : ordering the good and forbidding the evil, refuting and answering those who spread incorrect ideologies, and the role of the leader. The lack of information stated in the Religious Studies textbooks stems from a misunderstanding, or a weak understanding at least, of the aims and objectives of *Jihad* in the life of a Muslim. *Jihad* has a much broader role to play than many might think.

Another issue of concern regarding the textbooks set by the various boards is that they state that *Jihad* , as a form of fighting, can only be used as a means of defence. As for AQA, the textbook mentions *Jihad* as a form of fighting in two different chapters: in part one: study of religions, chapter 2, sub chapter 2.8 – *Jihad* ; and likewise in part two: thematic studies, sub chapter 6.5 – The just war. AQA state the following: ‘For a holy war to be declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat or the right to worship and practise Islam must be denied’ (2016, p. 118). The text then reiterates this point by saying, ‘For Muslims, the lesser *Jihad* makes holy war an important concept, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims’ (2016, p. 120). It is apparent that AQA have narrowed the concept of *Jihad* to a form of fighting to defend Islam from any threat. Likewise, Edexcel (2016) suggests that *Jihad* is to be fought only for defensive purposes by stating, ‘However, the Muslim Law Schools say that a Holy War can only be fought in the following conditions:

1. in self-defence....
2. If it is led by a religious leader well known for piety and chosen by the whole community
3. If all the soldiers are good faithful Muslims well versed in the Qur’an ‘ (p. 280). OCR (2018) fall into the same trap of suggesting that *Jihad* , as a form of fighting, is to be permitted as a form of

defence by stating that, ‘If lesser *Jihad* is in the form of a war then it should either be defensive or be a war against an unjust regime...’ (p.148). The board have tried to be slightly more specific by stating that *Jihad* as a form of fighting is in fact referred to as a *Qital* [a form of fighting] and not *Jihad*. Finally, WJEC (2017) also emphasise that sometimes Islam allows force but only in self-defence. They state: ‘certain circumstances in which Islam accepts that force needs to be used, but only ever in self-defence’ (p. 254). This is problematic because there are many narrations within the biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ where he sent out a section of the army or he sent out an army. Therefore, there is an issue of the wrong information being relayed or perhaps to some extent information is being withheld. Likewise, books on Islamic history are rife with examples of how the caliphs sent out armies, and not as a defensive exercise, nor was Islam under any threat. All of this can only be understood correctly if the aims and objectives of *Jihad* are understood correctly.

Most noticeably, the majority of the boards have avoided discussing offensive *Jihad*. Edexcel (2016) is the only board that mentions it by stating there are some Muslims who believe that ‘holy war’ has been divinely prescribed against non-Muslims to call them to Islam (p. 280). The most probable reason for not including offensive *Jihad* could be due to the controversy surrounding it — the boards want to avoid teaching an ‘extremist’ part of Islam that could become part of a student’s mindset, which could in turn lead them to extremist activity.

However, hiding information or refusing to discuss crucial parts of Islam can have negative consequences. It would be far better and safer for schools to give correct and detailed information regarding *Jihad* than to leave vulnerable students open to inaccurate information from terrorism enthusiasts. Informing students of the misconceptions of the *Khawarij*, and showing their understanding of *Jihad* to be wrong, is of utmost importance for it will arm students with the mindset to question their propaganda. The school is an important platform for providing students with sound Islamic knowledge. A comparison of the Religious Studies textbooks used by the examination boards with the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah throws up significant differences. Ibn Taymiyyah differentiates between defensive and offensive *Jihad*. Defensive *Jihad*, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is when it is incumbent upon all Muslims to defend by any means necessary if an enemy has

attacked a Muslim state; while offensive *Jihad* is where a Muslim leader sends out an army to spread Islam (Ibn Taymiyyah ,1998a), although this does not necessarily mean that Islam is spread by the sword and that blood is spilt, as some may claim. Ibn Taymiyyah is being labelled the godfather of the *Khawarij* and his literature held to be the source of extremist ideologies. However, a lack of accurate information has led many to believe that anyone who promotes offensive *Jihad* is in fact promoting extremism. *Jihad* needs to be understood correctly and not be taken out of context. The historian, De O’Leary (2019), wrote in ‘*Islam at the Cross-roads*’:

History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated (p.8).

Likewise, the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah should be understood in the contexts proffered by him. So long as there is a lack of historical and theological knowledge of Islamic concepts there will be misinterpretations and misconceptions about important issues in Islam. Professor Terence Lovat (2018), in his book ‘*The History of Islam - Revelation, Reconstruction or Both?*’ stresses the importance of turning back to Islamic history and the development of the theological ideologies to form a correct narrative of Islam. This point is reiterated by Eriksson 2010 who states Therefore, considering *Jihad* from a historical and theological lens will help in understanding *Jihad* as means of spreading Islam and not through spilling of blood.

There needs to be more academic work on Islamic literature to bring forth and clarify many of these accusations and misunderstandings. It seems that many academics and historians are content to regurgitate what others have proffered before them without critically analysing the work (De O’Leary, 2019).

Having one form of *Jihad* – lesser *Jihad* – creates another problem, which is that all the Religious Studies textbooks state that there are conditions for the lesser *Jihad* to be fought; this is in contrast to the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and others before him. A defensive *Jihad* is when Muslims need to defend themselves from an oncoming enemy; not only is it common sense, but in Islamic

jurisprudence, no conditions need to be present when fighting an oncoming army as one would need to defend oneself, just as any army would in such a situation. Waiting for conditions to be met will only end in defeat or annihilation. Therefore, it is incorrect to state that lesser *Jihad* has conditions. Only offensive *Jihad* has conditions, and quite rightly so, as many can come to abuse these conditions, as has been seen with the *Khawarij*. This conflation of information is a direct result of a lack of accurate information and in-depth knowledge of Islam. I will discuss the issues regarding conditions in a separate section below.

Another cause of concern is the term ‘Holy war’ within the Religious textbooks set by many of the boards, in an attempt to describe defensive *Jihad*. AQA (2016) mention the term holy war in more than one place. An example of this is on page 120: ‘Holy war cannot be declared to force people to convert to Islam’. Likewise, Edexcel (2016) uses the term holy war by saying: ‘However, the Muslim Law Schools say that a Holy War can only be fought in the following conditions...’(p.280). The problem in this sentence is evident, as has been discussed above. In contrast, OCR (2018) decide to stick to the term *Jihad* and WJEC (2017) go a step further by saying that: ‘*Jihad* is the struggle to live according to God’s laws. It is one of the most misunderstood words in Islam, because to many people *Jihad* simply means ‘holy war’, but in fact it has a deeper meaning than this’ (p.253). The term ‘holy war’ is an incorrect definition of *Jihad* and gives a negative perception of *Jihad*. As stated by the WJEC board, *Jihad* is a difficult term to define and a difficult concept to understand for non-Muslims so branding it as a holy war does more harm than good. Once again, this is a result of misunderstanding the very foundations of *Jihad*, as well as its aims and objectives.

9.1.3 Conditions of *Jihad*

The first issue of concern regarding the conditions of *Jihad* stems from the aforementioned problem with the examining boards all stating, within their Religious Studies textbook, that the lesser *Jihad*, which involves combat, can only be fought in self-defence or in defence of Islam. This has resulted in many believing that the defensive *Jihad* is to be fought if conditions are met. The issue of concern is that Islamic scholars, like Ibn Taymiyyah, classify *Jihad* in its

combat form into two categories: defensive and offensive. In fact, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts that, ‘It is incumbent to differentiate between warding off an imminent, oppressive non-Muslim enemy and seeking the enemy in their lands’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2000 p.532). The first category is the defensive *Jihad* — an example of this is when a Muslim country is being attacked or is under imminent attack from an enemy. Ibn Taymiyyah and other scholars assert that there are no required conditions for this *Jihad* to be fought as it is a form of self-defence¹²⁴. As previously argued, there is no logic or safety in waiting for permission prior to defending oneself. The second type of *Jihad* is referred to as an offensive form of *Jihad* — an example of this is when a Muslim leader sends out an army to a foreign land to spread and raise the word of Allaah. This second type of *Jihad* has conditions that need to be met for it to be legislated. There are several examples within the religious texts that prove these points. AQA state some of the conditions for *Jihad* to be fought, the most important being that it can only be fought in self-defence and with the intention of protecting territory from an outside aggressor. But this is an example of defensive, not offensive, *Jihad* . Likewise, the AQA board states within the Religious Studies textbook that, as it is a religious concept, the decision to fight should be made by a state leader. Edexcel asserts conditions similar to those of AQA by stating that *Jihad* can only be declared by a Muslim leader, and it must be in self-defence.

On the other hand, OCR, while setting the Religious Studies textbook, have tried to be comprehensive by pointing to the many conditions around *Jihad* but have fallen into error by declaring that etiquettes of *Jihad* amount to conditions. The refraining from killing innocent civilians, treating the wounded enemy soldiers in exactly the same way as one’s own soldiers, not damaging or poisoning wells are not conditions but important etiquettes of *Jihad* . Similarly, WJEC assert several conditions of lesser *Jihad* , for instance, Muslims should not be the first to attack, Muslims only fight those who are fighting them, civilians are not to be killed, and *Jihad* can only be declared by a Muslim leader. The stating of conditions under defensive *Jihad* is a mistake which results from believing that *Jihad* as a form of

¹²⁴ Refer to chapter 4

combat has only one type, which is defensive, and this confusion stems from a weak understanding of the aims and objectives of *Jihad* .

Additionally, the boards, while setting the Religious Studies textbooks, have neglected other conditions proffered by Islamic scholars, such as Ibn Taymiyyah. *Jihad* is a type of worship and scholars of Islam have stated that ability is one of the conditions of different types of worship. Ibn Taymiyyah states: ‘And likewise all the different types of worship from prayer and *Jihad* , all of this is obligatory with ability. As for those who are unable, verily Allaah does not burden a soul except with that it has ability to do’ (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p.388). Contrary to this view, another condition that has been neglected by the boards is that *Jihad* can only be fought if it is prepared for. One can possibly argue that this coincides with the already stated condition of having ability. However, being prepared for *Jihad* is more specific than having ability. A person who is able to fight *Jihad* may not necessarily be prepared for it. It is possible that the boards have confused the two terms.

The religious Studies textbook set by AQA mentions that Abu Bakr devised some rules that Muslim armies must obey to govern the way a conflict is conducted. It goes on to mention a number of points, including that children, women and old men should not be killed, that people who are devout in their faith, such as monks, should not be harmed, and prisoners should be treated in a civilised way. Although AQA attributes this to Abu Bakr, whereas a simple look at the biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ would bring to light that, in fact, it was the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who ordered the army to conduct *Jihad* in this way, as has been already stated, an example of this is when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came across a woman who was killed and said that she should not have been killed. Ibn Taymiyyah comments on and states, ‘And this is because the killing of people is only permitted to the level that allows the rectification of the creation... so whoever does not prevent the establishment of the religion then their disbelief only harms themselves’ (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1998, p. 360). Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah offers the statement of the Messenger: “Go forth in the name of Allaah, and for Allaah, and put the way of the Messenger, and do not kill the elderly, nor children, nor the young, nor woman...” (At Tabarani, 2008)

Moreover, AQA states that one of the rules that Abu Bakr set was that soldiers must be of a sound mind and body. Once again, the board seems to have confused a condition of *Jihad* with certain rules that have been set. First, the mental and physical ability of the soldier is a condition of *Jihad*, just as it is a condition of other types of worship, such as prayer, Hajj and fasting. Second, this condition was set by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself and not his close companion, Abu Bakr. Presenting some of the etiquettes of fighting *Jihad* is a good context in which to clarify any misunderstandings; nonetheless, it is imperative to differentiate between a condition of *Jihad* and an etiquette of how *Jihad* is carried out.

Overall, the various boards do try to address the conditions of *Jihad*. The Religious Studies textbooks set by AQA and OCR give more detail than WJEC and Edexcel. Edexcel is the board that provides the least amount of information regarding the conditions of *Jihad*. Having said this, all the conditions have been proffered under the section of defensive *Jihad* which, as Ibn Taymiyyah asserts, has not been endorsed by scholars of Islam. Furthermore, placing the conditions under defensive *Jihad* is taking the verse out of context. An example of this is the verse where Allaah gives permission to Muslims to fight non-Muslims but not to transgress the bounds. The scholars of exegesis state that what is meant by not transgressing the bounds is not to harm women, children, old people or one who has a pact with Muslims. Therefore, it is incorrect to believe that if the enemy were coming to attack Muslims, they would have children and old people with them. Likewise, we would not expect a non-Muslim state that has a pact with Muslims to attack them in their lands. Therefore, trying to show that there is only one type of *Jihad*, which is defensive, is unconvincing. Interestingly, some of the boards state that not harming innocent women or children is from the etiquettes of war but simultaneously state that there is only one type of *Jihad*, which is defensive. A person with a background in Islamic Theology and rulings of *Jihad* will be able to spot the weakness of the textbooks regarding *Jihad*.

Additionally, one can state here that if we were to place conditions on defensive *Jihad*, then this would make defensive *Jihad* a cumbersome process. I will give an example. If extremists suddenly attacked a city, would it be incumbent on the local people to seek permission from the leader to defend themselves or would we

expect those who are able to protect themselves to do so? Surely, it is expected that a person will defend their life with any means necessary, and this is the point of view offered by Ibn Taymiyyah. Therefore, placing conditions of *Jihad* under the section on defensive *Jihad* opposes the literature of Islamic scholars. As for offensive *Jihad*, which is where the army will head towards non-Muslims, which may lead to blood being spilt, in this case it is not for any person to take it upon themselves to establish *Jihad*, except with prior permission from the Muslim leader. At this point, the other conditions come into play.

One of the conditions none of the boards mention is that the person who wants to fight offensive *Jihad* is required to seek permission from their parents. A clear narration of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stipulates that seeking the permission of one's parents is vital. In a narration collected by Al Bukhari and Muslim¹²⁵, a man comes to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to ask for permission to go out and fight *Jihad* with the army. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ asks if his parents are alive. The man affirms that his parents are indeed alive so the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ replies that he must go and seek their permission. This condition is extremely important in the contemporary world in which impressionable young people are being convinced by the *Khawarij* to leave home and embark on what they are deluded into believing is *Jihad*. It is clear that, for the most part, these young people are not seeking permission from their parents.

Ibn Taymiyyah alludes to this condition when he states that, for the defensive *Jihad*, there is no need to seek permission from parents. We can extract from this statement that, for offensive *Jihad*, seeking parental permission is a condition. However, the examining boards have not been clear about the differences between defensive and offensive *Jihad* which has led to inaccuracies within the set texts — inaccuracies that can have deleterious consequences, as we see around the world.

Another important condition that the boards do not mention is that *Jihad* can only be fought if there are proper preparations in place.

¹²⁵ Al Bukhari 3004, Muslim 2549

Ibn Taymiyyah states:

And likewise it is obligatory to make preparations for *Jihad*, via amassing strength and organising the necessary equipment, in times where the obligation of *Jihad* itself falls due to inability, because “anything that, without it, an obligation cannot be completed becomes, itself obligatory” as opposed to the ability which is necessary for Hajj, and that which resembles it — because that form of “ability” is not obligatory to achieve. This is because the obligation itself is not mandated except with that “ability” being present (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p. 259).

There are verses in the Qur’an that emphasise this point:

Prepare against them what you believers can of military power and cavalry to deter Allah’s enemies and your enemies as well as other enemies unknown to you but known to Allah. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be paid to you in full and you will not be wronged¹²⁶.

Had they ‘really’ intended to march forth, they would have made preparations for it. But Allah disliked that they should go, so He let them lag behind, and it was said ‘to them’, “Stay with those ‘helpless’ who remain behind”¹²⁷.

Another condition that the boards seem to neglect is that *Jihad* can only be fought with the requisite ability. Ibn Taymiyyah states:

And, likewise, all the different types of worship from prayer and *Jihad*, all of this is obligatory with ability. As for those who are unable, verily Allaah does not burden a soul except with that it has ability to do (Ibn Qasim, 1995, vol. 28, p. 388).

The verses in Surat At Tawbah allude to this condition.

However, one needs to put the verse into context by looking at the verses before it and after it, which are as follows:

‘But the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the believers with him strived with their wealth and their lives. They will have all the best, and it is they who will be successful.’

¹²⁶ Surah Al Anfal; Verse 60

¹²⁷ (Surah At Tawbah; Verse 46)

‘Allah has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever. That is the ultimate triumph.’¹²⁸

The above two verses are the verses before verse 91 and together clarify that verse 91 is about *Jihad*. The following are the verses that come directly after verse 91:

‘Some nomadic Arabs ‘also’ came with excuses, seeking exemption. And those who were untrue to Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ remained behind ‘with no excuse’. The unfaithful among them will be afflicted with a painful punishment.’

‘Nor ‘is there any blame on’ those who came to you ‘O Prophet’ for mounts, then when you said, “I can find no mounts for you,” they left with eyes overflowing with tears out of grief that they had nothing to contribute.’

‘Blame is only on those who seek exemption from you although they have the means. They preferred to stay behind with the helpless, and Allah has sealed their hearts, so they do not realise ‘the consequences’’.¹²⁹

These verses discuss how, in the time of the Messenger, there were people who were truthful and had the zeal to go out and fight *Jihad*, but they had certain disabilities that prevented them from doing so. Allaah revealed the verse to explain that there is no sin on the disabled person for not fighting *Jihad*. On the other hand, there were people who were not truthful and looked for any excuse not to go out to fight. Allaah informs us that for them a punishment is due. These verses in Surah At Tawbah clarify that ability is one of the conditions of *Jihad*.

Once again, this highlights the importance of understanding the context behind the verses of *Jihad*. Likewise, it stresses the importance of returning to the exegesis of the Qur’an, a point I will discuss in the section on implications.

¹²⁸ Surat At Tawbah; Verses 89 - 90

¹²⁹ Surat At Tawbah; Verses 92 – 94

9.1.4 Verses of the Qur'an about *Jihad* ; how much information does the textbook include regarding the different verses of the Qur'an about *Jihad* ?

One point that all academics can agree on is the position of the Qur'an in Islam and in the life of a Muslim. Muslims look to the Qur'an as a form of guidance, not just for their worship of Allaah but their everyday lives. The Qur'an is believed to be the highest form of revelation, directly from Allaah. Therefore, examining the verses of the Qur'an with regard to *Jihad* is of the utmost importance as understanding the verses of *Jihad* within its context is crucial in understanding the etiquettes involved in *Jihad* . Ibn Taymiyyah points to numerous verses when discussing *Jihad* . In the previous chapter, it was seen that the different boards also offer a selection of verses in their chapters on *Jihad* .

AQA proffer the following verses:

But those who have believed, migrated, and striven for God's cause, it is they who can look forward to God's mercy. God is most forgiving and merciful.¹³⁰)

Do not kill each other, for God is merciful to you. If any of you does these things, out hostility and injustice, We shall make him suffer the fire.¹³¹

Do not take life, which God has made sacred.¹³²

Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits.¹³³

Do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do good.¹³⁴

Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in God's way. To anyone who fights in God's way, whether killed or victorious, We shall give a great reward.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 128

¹³¹ Surah An Nisa, verses 29 - 30

¹³² Surah Al Isra, verse 33

¹³³ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

¹³⁴ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 195

¹³⁵ Surah Al Nisa, verse 74

Fighting has been ordained for you, although it is hard for you. You may dislike something although it is good for you, or you like something because it is bad for you. God knows and you do not.¹³⁶ (Surah 49, verse 9)

But if they [non-believers] incline towards peace, you [Prophet] must, also incline towards it, and put your trust in God. He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.¹³⁷

Whoever saved a life, it would be as if they saved the life of all mankind.¹³⁸

In general, the verses stated by the AQA are the common verses that are cited for *Jihad* — however, they are also used by the *Khawarij*. Therefore, it is essential that these verses are explained, and the explanation needs to have strong historical and theological backing so as to be academically sound. The doubts spread by the *Khawarij* are alleged to be based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. Like many other sects in Islam, they use verses taken out of context which leads to misunderstanding. Therefore, simply listing verses from which the ideology of *Jihad* derives is not in itself constructive. Worryingly, a concern found within these verses is that the textbooks attributes *Jihad* to verse 9 of Surah Hujraat, there is no such verse. However, there is a possibility that this a printing mistake, but shows a lack of care in attributing verses to the Qur'an.

The textbook set by Edexcel also selects a number of verses:

Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main in God's cause with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of God. These are the people who will achieve salvation.¹³⁹

And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive.¹⁴⁰

Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive against them.¹⁴¹

That ye believe in God and His Apostle, and that ye strive your utmost in the cause of God, with your property and your persons; that will be best for you if ye but knew!¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Surah Al Hujraat,

¹³⁷ Surah Al Anfal, verse 61

¹³⁸ Surah Al Maeda, verse 32

¹³⁹ Surah At Tawbah, verse 20

¹⁴⁰ Surah Al Hajj, verse 78

¹⁴¹ Surah Al Furqan, verse 52

¹⁴² Surah Al As Saff, verse 11

Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress the limits; for God love not the transgressor.¹⁴³

Think not of those who are slain in God's way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.¹⁴⁴

The first problem comes from the fact that explanation is once again non-existent; furthermore, the textbook's definition of *Jihad* lacks clarity and leaves the reader free to comprehend the verses how he/she wishes. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the examining board has not paid attention to the context of the verses of the Qur'an. The knowledge of why verses of the Qur'an were revealed [Sabab An Nazool] is an important aspect in understanding verses in the Qur'an; understanding the reason why verses were revealed gives an idea of the meaning behind the verse, likewise, it is an important tool to rebuke the ideologies of the *Khawarij*. The idea of taking the verses of *Jihad* in a general sense and allowing your intellect to dictate how they are to be put into action is the methodology of the *Khawarij* (Bakareem, 2008).

In contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah takes into consideration the reason for the revelation of the verse to assist in his understanding of it. An example of this within the Religious Studies textbook set by Edexcel is verse 52 from surah Al Furqan (surah 25). This verse is translated as 'Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive against them'. There are numerous issues with this quotation from the Qur'an. First, the verse is not quoted in full. The verse should be 'Listen not to the unbelievers, but strive with it against them a great *Jihad*'. The textbook omits the 'with it', which is actually referring to the Qur'an. Therefore, Allaah is ordering the believers to rebuke the claims of the unbelievers with the Qur'an and is not referring to physical *Jihad*. Also, the verse says 'falaatuti', which means 'do not obey' and does not mean 'do not listen.' The point is that if we employ a methodology of turning back to the context of the verse before applying it in blind, uninformed fashion, then we will have better understanding of its original intention. Verse 51 states 'and if we wished we have sent to every town a warner', but Muhammad was chosen to be a mercy to all of mankind so there was no need to send a Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to every town. The Prophet was sent with the Qur'an to guide

¹⁴³ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

¹⁴⁴ Surah Aal Imran, verse 169

people to the truth — this is why, in the next verse, it says ‘do not obey the disbelievers and strive with it [the Qur’an] a great striving,’ which means to clarify and prove to the disbelievers that the Qur’an that you have been given is from Allaah.

Likewise, in the verse ‘And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive’¹⁴⁵ the striving mentioned is a general form of striving which could be *Jihad* done by the tongue, the pen, money or with bodies. This explanation needs to be understood by students, but Edexcel exacerbates the problem by not explaining in any depth the definition of *Jihad*; in fact, they simply state that it is a form of struggling and it has become connected to armed *Jihad*. The student will be left understanding that this verse is only concerning armed *Jihad* when this is not the case. Therefore, one can see that their chapter on *Jihad* provides minimal and superficial understanding of *Jihad* and, as such, has potential to do more harm than good.

The WJEC’s textbook’s selection of verses is as follows:

If anyone slew a person ... it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.¹⁴⁶

To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.¹⁴⁷

Fight in the way of God those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, God does not like transgressors.¹⁴⁸

The rest of the WJEC chapter covers *Jihad* in some depth but is based on just these three verses from the Qur’an.

The verse ‘If anyone slew a person ... it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people’ (Surah 5: verse 32), is a good verse to show the holistic nature of Islam and how Islam is a peaceful religion. Surprisingly, WJEC (2017) does not emphasise this

¹⁴⁵ Surah Al Hajj, verse 78

¹⁴⁶ Surah Al Maeda, verse 32

¹⁴⁷ Surah Al Hajj, verse 39

¹⁴⁸ Surah Al Baqarah, verse 190

except by stating that ‘The Qur’an makes it clear that every single life is precious’ (p.571). An important point to raise here is that it is integral to understand Islam through the complete Qur’an and not to judge Islam by taking verses haphazardly from different sections. The verses of *Jihad* have to be understood alongside other verses that illustrate the comprehensive nature of Islam. Therefore, it is essential that educational literature makes use of those verses that show the mercy that is within Islam and, at the same time, does not neglect the verses of *Jihad* , but rather makes the connection between them as seen in the work of earlier scholars.

Ibn Taymiyyah is a prime example of how one should read the whole Qur’an and understand it as one text alongside the Sunnah of the Messenger. The verses or the hadeeth that may seem to point towards any violence need to be understood alongside the verses that portray the kindness that one should show to non-Muslims. This is not trying to promote the sense that offensive *Jihad* is a topic that needs to be hidden. Cook (2015) has argued that spiritual *Jihad* is a notion spoken about by Muslims and non-Muslims ‘to present Islam in the most innocuous manner possible’ (Cook, 2015, p. 166). This is an incorrect claim stemming from lack of a comprehensive understanding of *Jihad* in Islam. Scholars of Islam have been writing books or chapters on inner *Jihad* or topics within inner *Jihad* for centuries and Ibn Taymiyyah is just one of those who have penned treatises and chapters on the topic. As has been previously pointed out, Ibn Al Qayyim, the foremost student of Ibn Taymiyyah, states that he heard Ibn Taymiyyah stating that the *Jihad* against oneself and one’s desires is the basis of *Jihad* , and no offensive *Jihad* can take place until the inner *Jihad* has been won. Likewise, there are numerous statements of Islamic scholars of earlier generations specifying inner *Jihad* to affirm this type of *Jihad* .

As for the verse ‘to those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged’ (Surah 22: verse 39), WJEC presume that the verse is referring to defensive *Jihad* , even though the verse does not expressly state that. It is important here to give the explanation that is found within the textbook set by WJEC (2017) :

The concept of lesser *Jihad* arose during the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's lifetime, when he gave his faithful followers authorisation to fight. Muhammad's enemies in Makkah planned to wipe out all Muslims and so they believed that there was no choice other than to engage in conflict. (p. 572)

This is partially correct. The Muslims were harmed in Makkah; however, this verse was revealed once they had emigrated to Madinah and not whilst they were still in Makkah. This point is verified by the very next verse: 'To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged. Those who were wrongly forced out of their place of residence, only because they said that our Lord is Allaah.' Once again, the context of the verse is important for understanding *Jihad* .

The textbook set by WJEC (2017) goes on to state that 'this passage from the Qur'an records the permission given by God for the Muslims to defend themselves against their enemies' (p. 254). The verse does not specify defensive *Jihad* , but it states that fighting the enemy is now permissible where, before (meaning in Makkah) it was not. Thus, this reiterates the point that there is a lack of holistic understanding of *Jihad* in these textbooks by using inaccurate understandings of Quranic texts which have been stripped of their context.

The Religious Studies textbook set by OCR selects five verses regarding *Jihad* .

Fight in the way of Allaah against those who fight you and do not go beyond the limits. Indeed God does not love those who go beyond the limits.¹⁴⁹

But if the enemy incline towards peace, do thou also incline towards peace, and trust in Allaah; for He is the one who hears and knows all things.¹⁵⁰

Do great *Jihad* with the help of the Qur'an.¹⁵¹

And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allaah does not like corruption.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Surah Al Baqarah verse 190

¹⁵⁰ Surah Al Anfal verse 61

¹⁵¹ Surah Al Furqan verse 52

¹⁵² Surah Al Baqarah verse 205

Let there be no compulsion in religion.¹⁵³

OCR, as aforementioned, have compiled a comprehensive curriculum with just a few points of concern. An important comparison between the translations used by Edexcel and OCR is seen in the verse “Do great *Jihad* with the help of the Qur’an”¹⁵⁴. OCR have opted for the translation ‘with the help of’ while Edexcel translated the verse as ‘Listen not to the unbelievers but strive against them’. The translation by OCR is better; however, both boards neglect the context which, in relation to this verse, has already been discussed above. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to understand the context of the verses in the Qur’an to know how to interpret them. Neither board has included an explanation of what is meant by the ‘help of’ the Quran.

9.1.5 Important verses of the Qur’an not included by any of the examining boards

There are several verses relevant to *Jihad* that are not included by any of the examining boards. Ibn Taymiyyah proffers many verses in the Qur’an to show the holistic nature of *Jihad* in Islam:

And fight them until there is no fitnah and the religion is for Allaah, if they leave what they are upon then let them be except those who transgress the bounds.¹⁵⁵

And fight in the way of Allah and know that is Allaah is all hearing and all knowing.¹⁵⁶

And those who emigrated and were forced out of their places of residence and were harmed in my way and they fought and were killed we will expiate for them their sins and enter into paradise under which rivers flow a reward from Allaah and very with Allaah is the best of rewards.¹⁵⁷

But if they break their pledges after their having made a treaty and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of unfaith —indeed they have no [commitment to] pledges— maybe they will relinquish.
Will you not make war on a people who broke their pledges and resolved to

¹⁵³ Surah Al Baqarah verse 256

¹⁵⁴ Surah Al Furqan verse 52

¹⁵⁵ Surah al Baqarah verse 191

¹⁵⁶ Surah Al Baqarah verse 244

¹⁵⁷ Surah Aal Imran verse 195

expel the Apostle, and opened [hostilities] against you initially? Do you fear them? But Allah is worthier of being feared by you, should you be faithful.

Make war on them so that Allah may punish them by your hands and humiliate them, and help you against them, and heal the hearts of a faithful folk¹⁵⁸

Do you suppose that you will be let off while Allah has not yet ascertained those of you who wage jihād and those who do not take, besides Allah and His Apostle and the faithful, anyone as [their] confidant? Allah is well aware of what you do.

Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you deal with them with kindness and justice. Indeed Allah loves the just¹⁵⁹.

These are extremely important verses to refer to when discussing *Jihad* as they elucidate to the reader how a Muslim should interact with non-Muslims. It is clear from the verses that a Muslim should be just and kind to non-Muslims. The verses on *Jihad* therefore are to be used as is equivocally stated in the following verse:

Allah forbids you only in regard to those who made war against you on account of religion and expelled you from your homes and supported [others] in your expulsion, that you make friends with them, and whoever makes friends with them — it is they who are the wrongdoers¹⁶⁰.

Hence, it is those who directly harm Muslims and make war against them who need to be fought, rather than innocent civilians who do not harm nor intend any harm to Muslims. Some of the *Khawarij* claim that this verse of Surah Mumtahinah is abrogated by the verses of *Jihad*. However, this is a claim without a basis, as we are able to act in accord with both verses, a point stated in several books of exegesis¹⁶¹. In the books of exegesis¹⁶², it is also stated that the reason for the revelation of the verse was that Asma', the daughter of Abu Bakr, said that her mother, Qutaylah, had come to Medinah and she had brought gifts for her daughter. Asma' was reluctant to accept the gifts from her non-Muslim mother — in fact, Asma' was reluctant even to let her non-Muslim mother into her house. Asma' asked the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ about this and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

¹⁵⁸ Surah Al Tawbah verses 12 -14

¹⁵⁹ Surah Al Mumtahinah verse 8

¹⁶⁰ Surah Al Mumtahinah, verse 9

¹⁶¹ Refer to Tafsir of At Tabari (2003) & Tafsir of Ibn Kathir (2005)

¹⁶² Ibid

ordered her to allow her mother into her house and accept her gifts and to be kind to her. This story is used by At Tabari (2008), one of the earliest scholars of exegesis, to refute the claim that the verse is abrogated. He stated that it is incorrect, as a Muslim being kind to a non-Muslim is allowed as this story of Asma' the daughter of Abu Bakr shows.

Importantly, there are numerous verses discussing how it is not permissible to transgress the bounds in *Jihad*. The transgressing of bounds includes not harming any person and/or country that may have a pact with Muslims or those who have a peace treaty with Muslims. An example of these verses is in Surah Anfal and is as follows:

Prepare against them what you 'believers' can of 'military' power and cavalry to deter Allah's enemies and your enemies as well as other enemies' unknown to you but known to Allah. Whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be paid to you in full and you will not be wronged.¹⁶³

If the enemy is inclined towards peace, make peace with them. And put your trust in Allah. Indeed, He 'alone' is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.¹⁶⁴

But if their intention is only to deceive you, then Allah is certainly sufficient for you. He is the One Who has supported you with His help and with the believers.¹⁶⁵

These verses, alongside the biography of the Messenger, especially the treaty of Hudaibiyyah in the 6th year after emigration to Medinah, clarify that, firstly, it is allowed for a Muslim country to have agreements with non-Muslim countries and, secondly, it is not allowed to harm those who have an agreement.

I examined several relevant issues in detail to make clear that, as the writing of Ibn Taymiyyah shows, Islam is an in-depth religion with much subtlety and overlapping in its teaching. Therefore, it is wrong to delve into the topic of *Jihad* with loose and scant information that risks being more detrimental than beneficial.

¹⁶³ Verse 60

¹⁶⁴ Verse 61

¹⁶⁵ (verse 62)

9.1.6 Suicide

Suicide bombings and missions have become a method that the *Khawarij* have used to spread anarchy and fear around the world, whether in Muslim or non-Muslim countries. Furthermore, the *Khawarij* have convinced the young that such methods are allowed Islamically by branding their actions as *Jihad* .

Zawahiri (2002), in his monologue entitled *Shifa Sudoor al Mu'mineen*, discusses the different scenarios in which suicide missions are allowed. He lists around thirty pages of points arguing why he believes it is allowed. He attempts use Ibn Taymiyyah's literature by claiming that Ibn Taymiyyah holds the opinion¹⁶⁶ that it is allowed to harm or even kill Muslims if the non-Muslims are using Muslims as a shield, especially if this leads to Muslims being harmed. I have discussed the issue in the previous discussion chapter where it was made clear that Ayman Zawahiri has taken Ibn Taymiyyah's words out of context.

Likewise, Zawahiri's protégé, Bin Laden, endorsed and publicly encouraged the use of suicide missions. He stated, 'May Allaah have mercy on our brothers the martyrs [suicide bombers] in all places, in Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Nigeria, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand' (see Al Muhaymeed, 2015, p. 19). Similarly, Abu Muhammad Al Maqdisi is another who has sanctioned suicide operations.

The aforementioned quotes clarify to the reader that the *Khawarij* intend to spill blood, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, and they are prepared to use any means necessary to carry out their aims. It is incumbent upon teachers to clarify to students that suicide missions have no place in Islam and certainly not as a means of fighting *Jihad* . It should be made clear that Islamic literature, whether it is the Qur'an or the Hadeeth or even the literature of Islamic scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah, has been tactfully used by the *Khawarij* to their advantage by leaving words out or taking statements out of context.

¹⁶⁶ Majmu' al Fatawa vol 28 p.546

Exploring the Religious Studies textbooks regarding the amount of information that has been proffered regarding suicide, the following information was found.

AQA

Overall, it has been seen that the Religious Studies textbook set by AQA (2016) have probably been one of the best out of the four boards regarding the information proffered. However, regarding information on suicide missions, the boards only give a limited amount of information. While explaining and defining terrorism, the textbook touches on examples of terrorist attacks and specifically suicide attacks.

While a person who commits terrorist acts may claim to do so in the name of a religion, for example Christianity or Islam, no religious tradition promotes terrorism. On 7 July 2005, there were four suicide bombings in London that killed 52 people and injured 700. Even though the terrorists attached themselves to the religion of Islam, most Muslims, including their religious and community leaders, condemned the attacks. (p. 113)

There are a few points of concern regarding the aforementioned statement. First, the only example they give is the attack in 2005, saying that the terrorists attached themselves to Islam. Acts of terrorism are conducted by people who attach themselves to other religions, such as Christianity. It would have been appropriate to provide examples of attacks carried out by terrorists that align themselves with other religions so to avoid pinpointing Islam. Second, stating that ‘most Muslims, including religious and community leaders, condemned the attack’ is not sufficient to explain to students that terrorism and suicide missions have no connection to Islam. A student may understand that there are Muslims who condone terrorist activity and that it is a viable position — that there is simply a difference of opinion, which is not the case. It would have been better to expound on the statement ‘no religious tradition promotes terrorism’ and to substantiate this statement with verses from the Qur’an and Hadeeth that way, the student would comprehend that Islam as a religion does not accept any terrorist activity. Instead, the book has given a vague response which once again could be more harmful than beneficial. Similarly, the amount of information within the AQA Religious Studies textbook regarding terrorism and its connection to *Jihad* is very limited.

As for the Religious Studies textbook set by Edexcel (2016), this board struggled to offer an in-depth explanation of *Jihad*. Regarding suicide missions, the board proffers the following:

Those who kill innocent people in the name of Islam or in the name of God, and who think of themselves as martyrs, should think twice. Their act is categorically condemned by God ... in the Quran. These people are disobeying God's commandments and instead upholding the fabricated claims of their teachers / leaders! (p. 280).

The term 'suicide missions' is not used. The board has chosen instead the term 'killing innocent civilians'. Likewise, the board states that 'these people are disobeying God's commandments.... Upholding fabricated claims of their teachers' (p. 280). This would be a perfect opportunity to clarify how these claims oppose the religion and how they misleadingly quote from Ibn Taymiyyah.

As for the Religious Studies textbook set by OCR (2018), as aforementioned, the textbook includes a section entitled 'Terrorism' which is under the topic entitled 'Religion, Peace and Conflict' and the main image is of the September 11th terror attacks in New York. The book goes on to attempt to define terrorism by stating that 'Terrorism is the illegal use of violence to cause fear and intimidation for political aim. It is often carried out against civilians rather than military targets.' Further on, the book states as follows:

Instead, Islamic terrorist groups have interpreted the teaching on *Jihad* to justify the use of violent methods. Using terror tactics, including suicide bombings, *Jihadist* groups often aim to establish strict Shari'ah law and an Islamic state. (p. 233)

There are a number of points that need to be discussed here. First, a common and recurring theme is that the textbooks seem to pinpoint and focus on terrorist activity which is carried out by those who attach themselves to Islam. Focusing so much on Islam and Muslims could lead to hatred being spread about Islam. A more reasonable method would be to bring forward different examples of terrorist organisations to demonstrate to students that this is a general problem and not specific to one religion. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that OCR (2018) proffers the Christian viewpoint on terrorism in quite some depth but does not do the same for Islam. Therefore, the book tends to put Islamic terrorism at the

forefront but then does not do it justice by failing to expand on the following short paragraph: ‘

The majority of Muslims say that these groups have distorted the Islamic teaching on *Jihad*, which in the Qur’an is a call to put Allaah first in their lives and reflects the inner, spiritual battle that has to be undertaken to achieve this. (p. 490)

This paragraph is also not without issues of concern. As previously mentioned with respect to Edexcel, by stating that ‘most Muslims’ say that they have distorted the Islamic teaching on *Jihad* automatically suggests that there are some who believe it is correct. It would be preferable to cite verses of the Qur’an or narrations of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that oppose the ideology of the *Khawarij*. However, this brings us to an important point about how much content knowledge do the authors of the textbooks have of Qur’anic verses alongside the exegesis of the Qur’an and, likewise, how much knowledge of prophetic narrations. Are they experts in the Islamic sciences? It is imperative that we deal with the threat of the *Khawarij* with sure knowledge so that the issue is not made worse.

Interestingly, the Religious Studies textbook set by OCR (2018) has a section that discusses the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation and there is a section entitled ‘Christian teachings and beliefs about justice, forgiveness and reconciliation’ (p. 532) where there are quotes from the Bible regarding the Christian position concerning forgiveness and reconciliation. However, once again, there is no equivalent section for the Islamic perspective on this topic.

As for the term and concept of suicide within the Religious Studies textbook set by WJEC (2017), there is a little more detail in comparison to the previous examining boards within a topic entitled ‘*Jihad* today’ in which the issue of terrorism is discussed. The book states ‘Some Islamic extremist groups argue that the attack on the World Trade Center (the Twin Towers) in New York, on 11 September 2001, commanded by Osama Bin Laden, was an act of *Jihad*’ (p. 574). The book continues by explaining why it is wrong by stating ‘However, moderate Muslims reject this idea, arguing that this attack was an aggressive act, which targeted innocent civilians and so fails the test set by the Qur’an’ (p. 574). This is a solid foundation for explaining to students that suicide and terrorism have no

place in Islam; however, to reinforce this point, it is vital to proffer verses in the Qur'an and narrations of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so as not to leave the student in any doubt. The WJEC (2017) text does not, however, take this opportunity to provide further context from Islamic teaching. Moreover, the term suicide is not mentioned; the book simply refers to the terrorist attack on 11th September as an attack on innocent civilians. Perhaps stating that this is considered a suicide mission, which is not permissible in Islam, would help in further clarifying the point. Surprisingly, the book also places an image of the plane hitting the twin towers — all of this under the subtitle '*Jihad* today'. Once again, this picture is not a correct depiction of *Jihad* and should not be used. Rather, the title 'terrorism today' would have been more suitable; it is imagery like this that leads to terms being conflated. Likewise, the book sets up another subtitle — 'The rise of *Jihadist* groups' — under which groups such as Al Qaeda, Daesh and Boko Haram are declared as *Jihadists*. I have stated that it would be more suitable to use the term *Khawarij* and not *Jihadists*, as this term alludes to the fact that Al Qaeda, Daesh and others are performing *Jihad* which is a form of worship, and they are far from that. In fact, it may give the *Khawarij* a sense of pleasure to refer to them as those who are fighting *Jihad*. Another point of concern is when the book comments on the group Daesh in a little more detail by stating as follows:

In 2014 *Jihad* i fighters, saying they were loyal to Islam, captured large areas of Northern Syria and Iraq, setting up what they called a 'caliphate'. This is a state governed in accordance with Islamic (Shari' ah) law. Islamic State (IS) say they want to restore God's rule on earth and defend the ummah (Muslim community) against infidels (non-believers). WJEC, 2017,(p. 574)

This statement could well leave the student confused. The book first claims that terrorism opposes Islam and the Qur'an but, in this excerpt, it points to the fact that the Islamic State is a state governed in accordance with Islamic Shari'ah Law. A paragraph explaining that even though the *Khawarij* may believe that they are performing *Jihad*, and likewise they could believe that they are setting up a caliphate which is ruled by Islamic law, this has nothing to do with Islam.

In general, WJEC have made some important points regarding extremism; however, considering the dangers of youth being convinced by *Jihadist* ideology,

more information is needed. The lack of information seems like a recurring theme throughout the various boards.

An issue of concern that has been seen through the Religious Studies textbooks set by the various boards is the very little information on contemporary *Khawarij*. Al Qaeda, Daesh and Boko Haram are different groups but abide by the very same principles. The boards should make clear to students what the dangerous groups are and there is no harm in mentioning them by name; likewise, the names of the key players within these groups —Bin Laden and Zawahiri — to name a couple. Similarly, it is incumbent on the boards to point out the main principles that these groups abide by so that if any other group appears with the same treacherous principles, the student will be able to recognise them. It is important to note that the ruling on a group being labelled as *Khawarij* is based on the principles that they fall back on. However, once again, being able to extract these principles relies upon theological knowledge of the *Khawarij* and this, worryingly, is not apparent in the Religious Studies textbooks.

Another important point that has been missing within the Religious Studies textbooks concerns any delving into the history of the *Khawarij* and the rise of this sect in different eras of Islamic history, to highlight that they have a long history of causing anarchy and bloodshed. The boards have tried to include some verses of the Qur'an to validate their points and likewise some of the boards have tried to include some narrations of the Messenger. However, none of the Religious Studies textbooks, within the various chapters surrounding the topic of terrorism, includes any mention of the severe warning that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ gave about the *Khawarij*. No one who reads the description of the *Khawarij* by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ can be in any doubt that the *Khawarij* are dangerous and need to be stopped at all costs, even if that would mean that the *Khawarij* are to be fought. I will elaborate more about this in the following section where I will talk about the implications and some possible directions for future study.

9.2 Conclusion

9.2.1 The literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and its role in inciting terrorism

One of the objectives of this research was to explore the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Islamic scholar, and compare it with the literature of the *Khawarij*, a sect of Islam. Some academics have portrayed Ibn Taymiyyah as a godfather figure to the *Khawarij* so a thorough exploration of his literature was imperative. Therefore, the first half of the research explored the works of Ibn Taymiyyah as numerous academics have suggested that it was Ibn Taymiyyah's literature that has instigated Islamic extremist attacks around the world. One of the works referred to in the first chapter was that of Sageman (2011), who clearly states in his book '*Understanding Terror Networks*', that both Qutb and Bin Laden have taken the work of Ibn Taymiyyah as a basis for their actions. Likewise, Ingram (2013), who states that 'Bin Laden's charismatic narrative draws heavily upon Ibn Taymiyyah' (p.94). Atwan (2013) alludes to a similar position by stating that Ibn Taymiyyah was Bin Laden's 'most frequently cited ideologue' (p. 194). In Chapter Three, the aim was to explore the literature of the *Khawarij* in detail to extract the ideologies being proffered. There were seven main points that could be seen emphasised in the *Khawarij* literature:

- 1 - Whoever rules by other than the rule of Allaah is not considered a Muslim;
- 2 - Ex- communication of Muslims;
- 3 - Declaring Muslim States to be non-Muslim States;
- 4 - Spilling the blood of Muslims;
- 5 - Rebelling against a Muslim leader;
- 6 - Suicide missions are allowed;
- 7 - Stealing from non-Muslims.

We find that, within the literature of the *Khawarij*, Ibn Taymiyyah's name is often quoted. Atwan (2013) notes how Ibn Taymiyyah is cited in the speech made by Bin Laden in 1996 when declaring war against the Americans. Ayman Zawahiri

(2002) also proffers this in his monologue entitled *Shifa Sudoor Mu'mineen*, within which he categorically ex-communicates the Saudi leaders. Interestingly, he quotes Ibn Taymiyyah in eleven different places to reinforce his point. Zawahiri uses Ibn Taymiyyah in numerous places in his literature to reinforce his points. In Chapter Five of my research, I discuss these points in depth and come to the conclusion that no religion allows for innocent civilians to be harmed and it is clear that Ibn Taymiyyah's literature does not propagate such ideologies. The problem of the *Khawarij* seems to be deeply rooted in the lack of knowledge of Islam and its correct rulings on *Jihad*; as discussed, *Jihad* is a multi-faceted concept. The *Khawarij* have made use of Ibn Taymiyyah's literature to their advantage in an attempt to reinforce their ideologies and to suggest that they are rooted in classical Islam. The extremists have adopted Ibn Taymiyyah with the ulterior motive of convincing people that their ideologies are correct and sound. We can also conclude, from the study that we have made of his work, that Ibn Taymiyyah has an in-depth and holistic understanding of Islam which should not be taken out of context.

Ibn Taymiyyah, as seen through his literature, puts forward comprehensive answers which need to be read within their full context to gain an understanding of what is meant. A clear example of this is his monologue entitled '*Al Inghimas fi Al 'Adu*' (2002), which in essence is a discussion of the permissibility of plunging into enemy lines. The *Khawarij* use this monologue to defend their concept of suicide missions; however, anyone who reads the monologue will realise that Ibn Taymiyyah is referring to when the Muslim army is surrounded by an enemy force in battle and there is no way of escaping unless one of the Muslim soldiers plunges himself into the enemy to preoccupy them which results in the Muslim army being able to escape and recuperate. The notion of suicide mission has taken this monologue completely out of context and therefore does not do justice to Ibn Taymiyyah.

It was also found from the literature review that academics seem to conflate certain terms regarding *Jihad*. Afsaruddin (2018) affirms that *Jihad* is a concept that is widely misunderstood and therefore misused; she mentions that whoever believes that *Jihad* is 'exclusively' for the aggressive form of struggle has misunderstood the reality of a core concept in Islam. Additionally, many tend to

use the term *Jihadist* when referring to those who commit terrorist activity which alludes to the fact that they are performing *Jihad*. Sirgy, Estes, and Rahtz, (2018). while explaining the *Jihadist*, states that it ‘refers to a person who believes that an Islamic state governing the entire community of Muslims must be created and that this necessity justifies violent conflict with those who stand in its way’ (p. 48). Ashour (2011) discusses the term *Jihadist* and states that *Jihad* ism is a ‘radical ideology within Islamism that stresses the use of violence’ as a ‘method of political and social change’ (p. 8) and is also characterised by the ‘rejection of democracy’ (p. 8). However, I concluded that the correct term for this group of people is *Khawarij*, as proffered by Muhaymeed (2015). Muhaymeed (2015) argues his point from a theological and historical viewpoint, as mentioned in Chapter Three. Therefore, we find that academics have earnestly emphasised particular aspects but, maybe unknowingly, left out other important points regarding *Jihad* while other academics may have conflated terms. In contrast, once again we find that Ibn Taymiyyah differentiates between all the different aspects of *Jihad* and differentiates between those performing *Jihad* and the *Khawarij*, showing the holistic nature of his literature. Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the intent behind *Jihad* in numerous different works and we can conclude that he believed *Jihad* to be a generic term that encompasses the daily life of a person who endeavours to submit to Allaah and his legislations.

Importantly, numerous major differences have been noted between the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and the literature of the *Khawarij*. Ibn Taymiyyah was a man who held Islamic knowledge in very high esteem and had a deep and holistic understanding of the religion. He believed that the earliest generation of Muslims had the purest form of understanding of Islam as they had taken the religion directly from the Messenger and believed that this was the route for salvation. He clearly wanted to spread Islam so that all people could submit themselves to Allaah. However, nowhere in Ibn Taymiyyah’s writings does he ever allow the excommunication of Muslims for falling into a major sin. In fact, the merciful way in which he dealt with his enemies shows the sincerity in his heart. An example of this is observed in his monologue entitled ‘*Removing the Blame of the Scholars*’, where he identified several possible reasons why scholars could have erred. This makes apparent to the reader that Ibn Taymiyyah was looking to be as just and fair as possible. In contrast, the literature of the *Khawarij* is littered with the

excommunication of Muslims for falling into major sins. The killing of innocent civilians is another example of the issue at hand. Ibn Taymiyyah did not allow the killing of civilians and proffered the hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ regarding that this is in stark contrast to the *Khawarij* who clearly allow the killing and harming of innocent civilians.

Likewise, the *Khawarij* allow for rebelling against a Muslim ruler and trying to physically remove the ruler from his position. The literature of Ibn Taymiyyah states the opposite. The ideology of the *Khawarij* revolves around a couple of major points: i) excommunication of Muslims for falling into a major sin and thus the permissibility of spilling their blood; and ii) rebelling against a Muslim ruler. Ibn Taymiyyah's literature opposes both these actions and so the claim that he is the godfather of the *Khawarij* is baseless and unfounded. One needs to be able to read the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah and comprehend the context behind it, or the *fatwa* that he may have given. Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatwa* collection comprises approximately thirty volumes and this does not include some of his other monologues and literature. It is clear that some academics have misunderstood the literature of Ibn Taymiyyah, either by taking his work out of context or just from a basic lack of Islamic grounding in theology and Islamic history. This has inevitably led to the conflation of important terms and to some authors and academics considering Ibn Taymiyyah as the possible source and cause for Islamic extremism. Undoubtedly, the issue is somewhat substantiated by the *Khawarij* quoting Ibn Taymiyyah — however, in the previous chapters, it has been made clear that the *Khawarij* have taken Ibn Taymiyyah's work out of context in an effort to reinforce and strengthen their position. An example of this is the monologue where Ibn Taymiyyah discusses the permissibility of plunging into the enemy where a person could be killed. The *Khawarij* clearly take the words of Ibn Taymiyyah out of context which results in the sanctioning of suicide missions and thus the killing of innocent civilians. The aforementioned monologue suggests that Ibn Taymiyyah is considering a certain context and, thus, when acting upon a *fatwa*, it is vital one should note this context. Further to this, his *fatwa* regarding the impermissibility of harming innocent civilians is proof that he would never have condoned *Khawarij* suicide missions. It is imperative that any academic aiming to understand Ibn Taymiyyah should explore his literature comprehensively and take into account the context in which it was written.

9.2.2 Religious Studies textbook

Having made clear the stance of Ibn Taymiyyah in relation to *Jihad*, I then turn to the textbooks set by the four examining boards and the way they relay information about *Jihad*. AQA and WJEC overall are more comprehensive than OCR and Edexcel, Edexcel being the least effective in producing valuable insight into the holistic nature of *Jihad*. Edexcel (Pearson) struggles with its chapter on *Jihad*, which lacks any substantial theological substance. Worryingly, AQA, OCR and Edexcel all lack valuable information about *Jihad*, which suggests a lack of understanding of the concept of *Jihad*. The WJEC (2017) text provides a better account of the essence behind *Jihad* by stating that the intent is ‘the desire and commitment to live the perfect Muslim life, to perform the Five Pillars with devotion, to practise the path set out by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sunnah), to seek justice and fairness for all, to rise above one’s own greed and selfishness’ (p. 253). Even though this does not give a precise understanding of *Jihad*, it is a good attempt and step in the right direction. Likewise, all the boards seem to conflate the notions of offensive and defensive *Jihad*, further demonstrating a lack of basic understanding of *Jihad*. This lack of understanding leads to mistakes seen also in the conditions set for *Jihad*. Numerous verses on *Jihad* are either missed out or misunderstood. It is imperative to return to the original sources of Islam — the Quran and Hadeeth— as well as using exegesis to explicate on the meaning of these important verses. As previously stated, there is a lack of theological understanding by many academics of important concepts within Islam and that has led to superficial and overly generalised content within the textbooks. This has led to mistakes regarding Jihad, its conditions and its types. Similarly, none of the textbooks use the term *Khawarij*, illustrating once again a lack of historical and theological background knowledge regarding the so-called *Jihadists*; this strengthens the point of view of the significance of theological literacy in RE and, more importantly, in understanding important tenets of different religions. Further to this, it is vital that the translations of the verses are thoroughly checked before inserting them into the textbooks as some have a more general understanding or may even be a wrong reflection of what is meant, as was observed in the use of some of the verses in the Edexcel textbook.

These textbooks have also failed to include more important information that could possibly quell the influence of the *Khawarij*, such as the need for the permission of parents before taking part in *Jihad*, and the significance of not harming innocent civilians, as highlighted in the Qur'an and Sunnah, all of which has been discussed by Ibn Taymiyyah in his educational literature, once again highlighting the importance of theological literacy within RE. Therefore, to conclude, there needs to be a concerted effort by the boards to look again at the content in their textbooks and explore the topic of *Jihad* through a well-informed theological and historical lens.

9.2.3 Limitations of the research

Even though the intent of the research was to go back to the original copies of the Religious Studies textbooks, because of COVID-19, I was not able to get my hands on the original copies and had to make do with e-book copies, which may have differed a little from the print copy. Likewise, to produce research that was not biased, the intent was to carry out observations of Religious Studies classes being taught to gain an insight into how much content knowledge the teachers had of Islamic history and theology to be able to enlighten the students about the correct Islamic stance on terrorism and the link between them and the *Khawarij*. Once again, the consequences of the spread of COVID-19 prevented any such observations taking place.

10. Chapter 9: Implications

This research has concluded that the concept of *Jihad* in Islam is misunderstood and conflated in various mainstream literature, as well as in educational literature that has been published by leading examination boards. These misunderstandings, due to their ambiguity, can cause confusion and poor understandings of *Jihad*, often seen in the *Khawarij* ideology. This situation can ultimately fuel forms of Islamophobia.

Jihad is a concept that is often misconstrued and misused by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It is a multi-faceted concept, not easily simplified. When these various facets are conflated, misconceptions are likely and can easily find their way into literature, both popular and even quasi-scholarly. An example of these quasi – scholars is Hughbank (2011) who states that holy war is ‘an effort to eliminate all infidels (non-believers)’ (p. 32). He goes on to mention that *Jihad* has a long history in Islam, and its ultimate goal is to eliminate or enslave all non-Muslims; this sweeping generalisation is based upon a lack of correct information about Islam. Similarly, Hughbank (2011), and others such as Bostom (2010), regard *Jihad* as a monovalent term to mean holy war, disregarding other important areas of this multi-faceted term, such as inner *Jihad*. This once again illustrates lack of understanding. To state that *Jihad* merely has a long history in Islam makes apparent that lack of knowledge. In fact, *Jihad* is a core concept in the religion of Islam, and thus such views demonstrate an erroneous understanding of a core part of Islam.

The argument proffered here leads to a key question relevant to this thesis. Namely, why this misunderstanding and conflation of terms constitutes a major and potentially highly detrimental problem. The answer, although simple on the surface, is important. If terms such as terrorism, *Jihad*, *Salafism* and other terms are not understood and, instead, conflated by many, the effort in addressing terrorism may be futile because it is impossible to address an issue that is not properly understood. After the atrocities that occurred in the United States of America in September 2001, governments and academics have pointed to the fact that part of their agenda is to address terrorism; however, continuous reports of

attacks highlight that the problem is increasing. Therefore, their effort in addressing terrorism is not having the desired effect and a reason for this, among other reasons, might well pertain to the lack of understanding of important notions such as *Jihad*.

This research thesis has highlighted that the ideologies of the *Khawarij* have a long history in causing terror across the world. Such ideologies are however not Islamic, as asserted by many Islamic scholars through time, including at-Tabari and Ibn Taymiyyah, as shown in this thesis. Nonetheless, the *Khawarij* use verses from the Qur'an, narrations of the Prophet and statements of Islamic scholars in an effort to lure those ignorant of Islam to accept their arguments. Therefore, these ideologies have to be studied from an Islamic perspective, through the Qur'an and through the teachings of the Prophet. If those who are beguiled by the *Khawarij* are shown the weakness of their arguments, as seen in the claims of Az Zawahiri and Bin Laden, they would be left with no option except to abandon these misguided and dangerous ideologies. In contrast to this method, the focus of academics and governments is often misaligned and, instead, they design schemes such as PREVENT and other counter-terrorism strategies in an effort to prevent terrorist ideologies from growing in society. This aims to marginalise any individual who might display terrorist tendencies. As has been shown, however, such counter-radicalisation discourse is insufficiently robust to withstand any ideological attack from the *Khawarij*. In contrast, it has potential to cause further alienation of the Muslim community because it refuses to focus on the core issue, namely, the radical knowledge and education that is ultimately causing terrorist ideologies. It is only when the knowledge that causes violent ideologies is targeted and refuted, using Islamic knowledge and theology, that the reality of terrorist *Khawarij* ideology can be effectively countered.

Further to this argument, popular thought is often fuelled by common literature through claims that terrorism is in fact *Jihad*, and it is being fought by the terrorists. Hughbank (2011) argues that *Jihad* is an 'effort to eliminate all infidels (non-believers)' (p. 32), however, his argument is neither substantiated nor is it conventionally accepted among Islamic scholars. Ultimately, it is clear that *Jihad* is wrongly understood and has led to a false understanding of Islam which, in turn, tends to fuel Islamophobia. To aggravate the problem further, some academics

(Cook, 2015) proffer that the concept of inner *Jihad*, the spiritual struggle, is a notion spoken about by Muslims and non-Muslims 'to present Islam in the most innocuous manner possible' (p. 166). This assumption is based on a very narrow understanding of *Jihad* specifically and Islam in general. Therefore, we have academics claiming that the aim of *Jihad* is to enslave non-Muslim populations and others claiming that the various facets of *Jihad* are designed to present Islam as a soft mystic religion. All of these, often contradictory, assumptions will naturally harm efforts to address terrorism as it blurs what *Jihad* actually is, when judged by the terms of Islamic theology. With literature of these types, ones accessible to common folk, the sources which they use to create arguments need to be explored in greater detail to repel any further miseducation.

To exacerbate the problem, many academics identify Ahmed Ibn Abdul Haleem Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 – 1328CE), a medieval Islamic scholar, as a main cause for the radical ideas that are embedded in the Islamic State's (ISIS, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) ideology and in prominent figures in Al Qaeda, such as Osama Bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri. Ibn Taymiyyah is a prominent figure in Islam, having the status of Shaykh ul Islam, one of the highest positions to be held within Islamic scholarship. Nonetheless, there has been a paucity of in-depth exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's educational literature, compared to the literature of the *Khawarij*. This holds the key to assessing claims as to whether Ibn Taymiyyah's literature is a cause for radicalisation.

This research thesis explored Ibn Taymiyyah's literature on *Jihad* and other associated topics, such as his stance on suicide missions, in their entirety and in their context to seek clarity on the historical and theological context of his instructions. This study established that Ibn Taymiyyah proffered a holistic view of *Jihad* that expounded on the different intentions, types and conditions which vastly contrast with the *Khawarij* understanding of *Jihad*. It has also been made apparent that his works have been grossly misquoted and much of what he taught about the conditions and other important elements of *Jihad* have been unfortunately ignored. This study has determined that *Jihad*, through the lens of Ibn Taymiyyah, is a multi – faceted term that needs to be understood in its complete form rather than merely through one aspect. The majority of literature focuses on *Jihad* as a form of fighting and neglects other forms of *Jihad*. An in-

depth exploration of his literature points to the fact that not even this one aspect of *Jihad* is fully understood by many. In reality, any academic who claims that Ibn Taymiyyah has any link to extremism has not understood Ibn Taymiyyah. Nor do they understand *Jihad*. In order to understand Ibn Taymiyyah or any other Islamic scholar who has authored over 200 pieces of literature, it is crucial to spend time and effort in reading all of his works and give due consideration to the context. Ibn Taymiyyah considers Islam to be a way of life, in which he sees *Jihad* to be a core component. This is because a person will undoubtedly go through many different trials in life and thus *Jihad*, in the sense of a struggle, will be required of a Muslim. Ibn Taymiyyah's holistic understanding could be used to not only explicate matters of *Jihad* to students but to also quell the misinterpretations of the *Khawarij* regarding *Jihad* in students who could be prone to radicalisation.

Worryingly, this research also concludes that these misunderstandings of the term *Jihad* have found their way into several Religious Studies textbooks. Crucially, it has been concluded that the Religious Studies textbooks that are currently used in England generally do not contain accurate information regarding the definition and objectives of *Jihad*, nor do they provide a holistic understanding such as is provided by Ibn Taymiyyah. The chapters on *Jihad* in the Religious Studies textbooks, in general, struggle with the concept and tend towards cultivating a negative depiction of *Jihad* which could not only be misleading but might even promote or exacerbate Islamophobia within the students. Alongside this weakness, this research thesis found that the textbooks do not make a clear differentiation between *Jihad*, which Islam allows, and terrorism and extremism which is explicitly prohibited in Islam. As a result, the problematic blurring between *Jihad* and terrorism is not addressed or resolved through this form of education.

In summary, content within the Religious Studies textbooks regarding the definition and objectives of *Jihad* is inadequate and in fact may even exacerbate problems related to a proper understanding of *Jihad*. Students could be left with an ambiguous concept of *Jihad* that not only fuels Islamophobia but, even more detrimentally, has potential to fuel radicalisation in students prone to such ideologies. Education is designed to be a platform for dissemination of knowledge, but if the knowledge that is disseminated is wrong or lacking in vital information, it can have detrimental consequences. An important question that needs to be

raised is what role the textbooks are playing in improving the understanding of *Jihad*. If they do not contribute to any improvement, what are the aims and objectives of the Islamic Studies curriculum? These are important questions surrounding the Islamic curriculum. Once these points are discussed, the next step would be to explore which sources are to be used to fulfil these aims. The reading of the Qur'an and early to medieval Islamic literature with an open mind would extinguish many assumptions that are based upon poor research and a poor understanding of Islam. This is because troubles related to the *Khawarij* are not new. They have deep roots in Islamic history, causing havoc in many eras of the Islamic world. It takes serious exploration of Islamic history and theology to unravel these deeply rooted problems and explore solutions to extremism. This once again, points to the importance of theological literacy in the effort to understand important concepts and nuances within Islam. Many Islamic scholars of the past have waged *Jihad al qalam* (*Jihad* of the pen) against the erroneous understandings of the *Khawarij* and have sought to refute them time and time again. It is a must that we delve into Islamic knowledge, theology and history to expose the successes of such scholars and how they defeated the *Khawarij*. In the West, this journey of countering terrorism seems relatively new when compared to the struggles of Islamic civilisations of the past. It is narrated of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that the horn of the *Khawarij* will keep reappearing and each time it reappears it will be cut off. This indicates that the *Khawarij* ideology will be a reoccurring issue in this world, as history has proven, but that it will be dealt with, which also has been proven. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to explore Islamic history and analyse how these things were dealt with. Within this history, there is no doubt that the work of the esteemed scholar, Ibn Taymiyyah, is central.

This research has extracted many points of concern that need to be addressed. It is clear that many misunderstand the topic of *Jihad*, and this is exacerbated by the actions of the *Khawarij* who use *Jihad* as a tool to achieve their political objectives. All of this is summarized by two points. First, Lovat (2018) asserts that all of this is a result of 'poor education about Islam' (p. 4) and 'poorly informed' (p. 4) academics that have led researchers to take stances that are erroneous. Additionally, Schirch (2018) states that it is the utmost importance to understand extremism before looking for ways to address it. It is clear that *Jihad* and terrorism are conflated and the over eagerness of some academics to

comprehend *Jihad*, an integral concept within Islam, makes it synonymous with terrorism and terrorism has no place in any divinely revealed religion. Therefore, all the attempts to address terrorism are in vain so long as terrorism and *Jihad* are paired together. This misunderstanding has evidently found its way into the Religious Studies textbooks used in England, so that students are learning an atomistic or, in some cases, downright incorrect version of *Jihad*, one that prevents them from being able to differentiate between *Jihad* and terrorism.

10.1 Implications and possible further research

This research thesis concludes that the Religious Studies textbooks, at least in the sections that deal with *Jihad*, are of inadequate quality and do not meet the standards of informed literacy that should prevail in schools. Thus, each Board needs to re-examine these textbooks and work to improve them in order to produce ones with accurate information based on theological and historical facts. It is clear that such an important topic with grave consequences has not been given due significance. Authors need to reassess the way they approach the topic and look at aims of the Islamic Studies curriculum in general and *Jihad* specifically. Examination Boards can use Ibn Taymiyyah's arguments, presented in his literature on *Jihad*, to aid in the writing of these textbooks.

10.2 Possible further research

This research thesis has alluded to a lack of well-informed literature surrounding key issues within Islam, particularly to the lack of a sufficient theological and historical lens. Thus, exploring the history and nature of the *Khawarij* is significant in understanding terrorism as it is known today. Historical and current literature need to be used in tandem to understand the ideology of the *Khawarij*. From the Islamic literature written by Islamic scholars and historians that could be used for this purpose, the thesis suggests At Tabari's extensive work on Islamic history, and *Al Bidayah wan Nihayah* of Ibn Kathir, a student of Ibn Taymiyyah. These are examples of Islamic literature that focus on Islamic history and theology. Terrorism and extremism are issues that the scholars of Islam have been dealing with for centuries. The issue is that whenever it crops up, it does so in a different form but the core characteristics are the same. Therefore, exploring

Islamic history and theology would enable academics and possibly certain governments to determine the specific attributes of the *Khawarij* that have been reoccurring over time. Thus, this can be used to aid counter terrorism efforts. Similarly, an important research project could look to explore the aims and objectives of Islamic Studies within the various boards and explore different sources that could be used in order to represent the correct idea of *Jihad* and concurrently clarify the difference between *Jihad* and terrorism.

Furthermore, research could be done to explore the Hadeeth of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ against the *Khawarij*. There are stern words used by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ against the *Khawarij*, illustrating their danger. All this information could be added in the Religious Studies textbooks to shed light on this dangerous sect in Islam. Likewise, a more general, but nonetheless, important research project that could be explored is one to analyse wholly Religious Studies textbooks focusing on Islam, to pinpoint mistakes and generalisations that may have trickled into the books. It is possible that the Boards in question have neglected important issues of other topics in Islam, just as they have neglected important issues regarding *Jihad* .

Glossary

Term	Definition
Ash'ari	A sect of Islam attributed to Abu Al Hasan Al Ash'ari
Dhimmi	Non – Muslim living under a Muslim rule
Fatwa	Islamic verdict
Fatawa	Plural of fatwa, more than one Islamic verdict
Fiqh	Islamic Jurisprudence
Khalifa	Leader of the Muslim Caliphate
<i>Khawarij</i>	A sect of Islam who rebel against the Muslim ruler and ex – communicates Muslims
Khaaraji	A person who rebels against the Muslim ruler
Khilafa	Caliphate
Hadeeth	Prophetic narration
Mu'ahad	Non – Muslim who has a pact/agreement with a Muslim Government
People of the book	Jews and the Christians
Qadr	Pre – decree
Qadariyyah	A sect of Islam who reject the notion of pre – decree
Salaf	Predecessor
Tafseer	Exegesis
Takfir	The ex – communication of a Muslim
Usul Al Fiqh	Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence
Zakat	A yearly tax of 2.5% paid on income
ﷺ	Salutations upon the Prophet

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