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RACE AND SECULARISM IN AMERICA

EDITED BY
JONATHON S. KAHN
AND
VINCENT W. LLOYD

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RACE AND SECULARISM IN AMERICA

5

OVERLOOKING RACE AND SECULARISM IN MUSLIM PHILADELPHIA

Joel Blecher and Joshua Dubler

Have you considered what noble lineage is?
The best of you in lineage is the best of you in manners.
—A SAYING ATTRIBUTED TO THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD
CIRCULATING ON GERMANTOWN AVENUE, NORTH PHILADELPHIA

THE PROPHET'S TOOTHBRUSH IS ON GERMANTOWN AVENUE

TRUE TO the Arabic sense of the word, *jum'a*, on the 4900 block of Germantown Avenue, is a day of assembly. Early Friday afternoon, after prayers have finished, the streets clog with people. All but a few are black. The men sport beards, some hennaed red, and they don white *thawb*s for prayer that overhang the high-water pants that leave their ankles bare on ordinary weekdays too. From their own separate entrance at the adjoining storefront, women, the majority draped head to toe in black fabric, mix in with the men and spill up to, around, and through a jagged commercial row. The vendors' wares have been displayed on tables, or have been laid out on blankets on the sidewalk, or remain boxed in the trunks of the cars that brought them. Items for sale include home-baked entrées and desserts indigenous alternatively to the Middle East or the American South, books and CDs, scented oils, and boxes of individually wrapped *siwak*—the bristled

branch of an arak tree, the implement with which the Prophet Muhammad is said to have cleaned his teeth.

Though but a small piece of a materially rich cultural universe, the Prophet's toothbrush nonetheless makes for an apt introduction to contemporary Philadelphia Salafism. Imported from South Asia or the Arabian Peninsula, sometimes by way of Brooklyn, the *siwak* is embedded in a field of textually regulated norms. As a commodity, the *siwak* is a shibboleth. Its social function is as a partially concealed marker of a subculture styled in protest yet laden with universalistic aspirations. But to its practitioners, this sociological function is largely beside the point. Ask a man in front of the Germantown mosque about the *siwak*, and he will likely take one from his pocket, describe its proper use, and reference one or two traditions (*hadith*s) attributed to the Prophet Muhammad through which this use is recommended. In this case, as in every case, cues are said to be taken from the example of the *salaf*—the Prophet, his companions, and pious followers from the first three generations of Islamic history. Contemporary Philadelphia Salafis draw on and project upon these pious exemplars to manufacture an idealized code for daily life whose rigidity and concern with purity rarely flag. For these people, the straight path is as wide as a tightrope and flanked on each side by hellfire. Nothing in one's daily practice is extraneous to this code. If not to the existential degree of the rules dictating prayer, alms, and pilgrimage, how one brushes one's teeth or cares for his cuticles are matters no less subject to prophetic example.[1] And so, a short walk up the Germantown mosque's creaky stairs discloses a seminar table in a windowless library, where, in his spare time, a Yemeni-trained American prison chaplain devotes three two-hour sessions of his larger course on Islamic law to explaining the *hadith*s that govern the *siwak*'s proper use.[2] These sessions are only for men, but via simulcast, through the shared eastern wall, women may listen in.

Attention is not a zero-sum game. But if the intense concern paid by Salafis in Philadelphia to proper Islamic dental care illustrates a preoccupation with bodily and creedal purity, it also hints at the sorts of things to which this community, at least in its public discourse, turns a blind eye. Broadly conceived, what Philadelphia's Salafis do not talk about is race or politics. Considering the prominence historically of race and social-justice discourses within African American Islam, this would seem surprising, and indeed it

is. That this community explicitly denounces those Muslims that do engage race and politics is even more surprising. How this curious configuration of religion and race came about and how it might be read are the questions with which our contribution to this volume will grapple.

On the one hand, the Salafis' overlooking of race and politics is a reflection of our secular moment, as Vincent Lloyd defines it in the introduction to this volume. While Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X brought discourses of race and religion to public rallies, lecture halls, and living-room televisions across the country, contemporary Salafism in Philadelphia, by contrast, embraces a politics of quietism, discouraging any race-based mobilization and any explicit confrontation with or action against the state. By failing to name and directly oppose the secular and racial status quo and by condemning those Muslim movements that explicitly do this critical work, the Salafis have come to accommodate themselves snugly to a secular regime that regulates—and relegates—race and religion to the discursive margins.

On the other hand, Salafism's ascendency in Philadelphia may be attributed, at least in part, to how it presents its practitioners with a radical alternative lifestyle that pays no heed to the existing racial and secular order. Contrary to the standard liberal formulae for containing religion in the public sphere, Salafi creed neither protects any private personal space in which the individual is freed from the obligations of the Qur'an and the Prophet's example (*sunna*), nor would it concede any facets of public life upon which the *sunna*'s prescriptions are silent. By this reading, Salafism's silence about certain aspects of secular discourse is actually a willful silencing. In its silent repudiation, it offers a righteous and sacred rejection of its predecessors in the faith who fought religiously against racial and economic injustice but who, in the Salafis' account, failed to extricate themselves from a fundamentally secular framework that doomed them from the start.

From the Salafi perspective, then, religiously infused political movements that purport to reject the status quo are, in fact, inextricably bound to the secular statist order. These movements, the critique runs, are polluted by secular idols, ideas, and ideologies—like nationalism—that ignore and suppress God's commands. By this view, figures like Malcolm X—not to mention Martin Luther King Jr.—belong squarely to the secular apparatus, in so far as they willfully allow their religious commitments to intermingle with and,

often, to be eclipsed by their secular drive for racial solidarity, economic uplift, and other false gods.

This rejectionist attitude is rife with historical irony and unintended consequences, but taken on its own terms, the Philadelphian Salafi mode of overlooking the politics of race poses an apt and abiding provocation. By exploring the contested and intersecting local, national, and transnational histories of contemporary Philadelphia Salafism, this case study has as much to teach us about our own normative racialized and religious assumptions about black politics as it does about race and secularism in Muslim America.

SALAFISM IN AMERICA: A CONTESTED HISTORY

Secular scholars have been slow to document the emergence of Salafism in America.[3] Of late, however, in blogs, YouTube videos, and conferences, American Salafis have themselves begun to recount their history. In these oral and written narratives, heated disputes arise at certain historiographical flashpoints, one of which being how the community ought to be portrayed in relation to the politics of race. A recent debate between Umar Lee and Dawud Adib is particularly illustrative. Along with other members of the black vanguard, Adib, a former imam of the Germantown *masjid*, embraced Salafism in East Orange, New Jersey, in the 1980s. Lee, a white convert to Islam from St. Louis, joined the movement in the 1990s, and he became a high-profile Salafi dissident in 2007 when he posted in ten installments on his Wordpress blog, "The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Movement."[4]

To date, Lee's "Rise and Fall" is the closest thing we have to a historical description of what we might call "black Salafism" in America. In tone, Lee's textured and detailed account is much closer to lament than to polemic. The story is a familiar one. It is that of an idealist once activated but of late grown weary, a story of fervor fanned and snuffed out. Lee's history begins in the early 1990s during the Malcolm X revival that accompanied the release of Spike Lee's biopic. The film sparked a resurgent interest in Islam and the dissemination of the Salafi "call," or *da'wa*, by way of networks not dissimilar to the punk underground of the same historical moment. It was this movement, one nurtured by bootlegged tapes, surfed couches, and shoe-strung

conferences, that called Umar Lee to Islam. Lee responded emphatically. These were halcyon days of zeal and idealist dreams of social justice. "The environment often was hypnotic," Lee remembered. "We believed with our very beings that this was going to be the answer to the world's problems."[5]

Not all of it was that heady. At the material surface of this righteous zeal, Salafism simultaneously became a visible force in the marketplace of black urban style. In Philadelphia especially, Salafi norms of speech, dress, and worship spread throughout the African American Muslim community. Even non-Muslims started growing beards in the Salafi style, what to this day is called the "Philly beard."[6] "It was," as Lee somewhat neutrally observed, "the latest trend."[7]

The 1990s saw the Salafi movement's rise, but for Lee, the new millennium brought about its fall. Some of this decline, Lee readily conceded, can be fairly attributed to the panic and persecutions of the post-9/11 period, but ideological infighting and schismatic acrimony were, for Lee, the greater culprits. Need one be loyal to the Saudi throne? Was one sufficiently connected to the proper religious authorities, the *'ulama'* of the Arabian Peninsula? Were one's practices free of innovation, *bid'a*? Depending on the answers to these questions, groups of Salafis were fractured, and dissidents were shunned. For those like Lee who had come to take—or, in retrospect, mistake—the world of the religious enclave for the world as such, the effects of this dissolution were devastating:

> Brothers like me made their full time jobs "being Muslim." We would just find an odd job here or there to support ourselves and our families and return to our Salafi world. Many others dedicated their time in trying to "go study" with no thought of what we were going to do when we got older. We had no idea that the world—the real world—was continuing to move on without us.[8]

Not all were so disillusioned. To some ears in the Salafi community, Lee's implicitly secular and materialist hierarchy between the "Salafi world" and "the real world" struck a dissonant chord. In 2011, at a conference that took place on the other side of the Ben Franklin Bridge in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Dawud Adib delivered a two-part lecture entitled "The History of the Salafi Da'wah in America." As an explicit rejoinder to Umar Lee's "Rise and

Fall," Adib's address was very different in style and content. Adib was polemical, denunciatory, and rambling, and he dismissed any notion that the Salafi world was a world apart. He maligned Lee's ideals of secular engagement and social betterment and argued instead for an orientation of pious steadfastness.

Adib's address began ad hominem. That Adib believed Lee was a "*shaytan*" and a "criminal" was not atypical when considering the heated atmosphere of these exchanges. More provocative, however, was Adib's accusation that Lee was a "fed"— that is, on the government's payroll.[9] Given Lee's erudition and detailed knowledge of events for which Lee was not actually present, he must be, Adib conjectured, a federal informant and perhaps even an agent provocateur.[10] This accusation indicates both the culture of fear and suspicion in which Salafi discourses operate and the degree to which accusations of collaborating with the state can serve as a powerful cudgel in diminishing one's credibility. It also suggests that Adib may have been exploiting his audience's sense that there was some ideological overlap, however subtle, between Lee's goals and those of the state.

Philadelphia Salafism's delicate balance between quietism and protest was also evident in Adib's history's pronounced, and even advertised, lacunae. As Adib declaimed at the outset: "When we talk about *tarikh*—history—we have to have accuracy," and with the passage of time, such accuracy becomes difficult to obtain.[11] What historical claims Adib did make he substantiated with what little documentary evidence he could find: a newsletter from the 1980s, a list of contacts from the 1990s. Such characteristically Salafi textual scrupulousness aside, however, there were tactical reasons for these narrative gaps: he was "advised not to mention" certain persons and names. Advised by whom, and for what reason? Adib did not say.[12]

Were Adib to play by the same narrative rules as Lee—secular rules, we should note, for which Paul and Augustine forged the prototype—Adib might have begun his history of Salafism in America with autobiography. This would have entailed describing his own youthful encounter with black nationalist Islam, an era that Umar Lee could access only secondhand by way of Alex Haley and Spike Lee. Adib, after all, who was born in the 1950s, was a member of the Nation of Islam, and upon Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, he followed Muhammad's son Wallace into Sunni Islam.[13] But Adib sidestepped this obvious narrative arc. Understandably, only fragmentary

glimpses of Adib's own reckoning with the legacy of the Nation of Islam poked through. What for many black Muslims of his generation was *the* watershed event was for Adib, in retrospect, not half as transformative as they thought it was. As he and some of his brothers and sisters came to realize in the decades since the 1975 conversion to Sunnism, Wallace Muhammad's Islam "was as bad, and maybe even worse than what his father was teaching, and Allah knows best."[14] Proudly evincing the sort of divisive absolutism that Umar Lee decried, Adib was unequivocal: "You only have two things—*sunna* and *bid'a*"—the righteous path and blasphemous innovations. For Adib, there was only correct and incorrect, no in-between. Those who follow an alternative methodology or *manhaj*, whether it be that of Wallace Muhammad, the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Tablighis, were not, for Adib, true Muslims. What mattered, for Adib, then, were not the facts of history but the moral and ethical lessons contained therein. And these lessons were not to be found in the historical experiences of a man or his community. Like everything else in the present day, they were prefigured by—and to be found in—the prophetic *hadith*.

Rather than to the history advertised in his title, then, Adib dedicated much of the first hour of his oratory to the recitation and catechistic repetition of a supplicatory prayer contained in a well-known *hadith*. For the history of the Salafi *da'wa*, the lesser, recent history of Salafism in America is somewhat beside the point. The history that matters is that of the *salaf*, and it is their language that addresses the sources of his audience's being, their ethical obligations, and the divergent futures that unfold before them. First in Arabic, then in English, Adib recited a *hadith*: "*Ya muqallib al-qulub, thabbit qalbi 'ala dinik*. Oh, Controller of the hearts, make my heart firm on your religion."[15] For Adib, that religion was fixed in the seventh century. That Umar Lee had smuggled in a secularist, sociological framework—that he had termed Salafism a "movement"—was, for Adib, a key tell that Lee was "off the *manhaj*," the idealized methodology based on the model of Muhammad and the first three generations of Muslims. Salafism could not "decline," on this view, because it is an enduring path to proper conduct and beliefs, not a political group or a sociological trend. In characteristic Salafi fashion, Adib teased mighty stakes from this fine-grained terminological distinction. "Only Allah knows what will happen to us in the future. Sala*fiyya* [as a methodology] is

safe, but no one knows what will happen to the Sala*fis*." Should their hearts weaken, they too might drift away. And so, again and again, the men present and the women listening in were repeatedly called upon to chant the declaration of their steadfastness: "*Ya muqallib al-qulub, thabbit qalbi 'ala dinik*."

SALAFISM COMES TO AMERICA: TOWARD A CRITICAL HISTORY

Philadelphia's Salafi callers occupy the intersection of two distinct historical arcs. The first arc, already alluded to, is the tradition of African American Islam. As conventionally reconstructed, black Islam came with the African slaves, died with their descendants, and was resurrected in the twentieth century by the religious leaders and rank and file in the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam. The heyday of the Nation, when Malcolm X might credibly speak for American Muslims, was ironically enabled by a racist immigration law that barred from naturalization peoples from Muslim-majority lands.[16] With the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the influx of Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East, African American Muslims were simultaneously educated about the broader Islamic tradition and marginalized from it. Driven by this dialectical pressure, the mass embrace of Sunni Islam following Elijah Muhammad's death—what Wallace called "the second resurrection"—played the role of synthesis.[17]

The second arc picks up where the first leaves off chronologically, but spatially it jumps the ocean. This arc pertains to the late twentieth-century transformation of the Salafi *'ulama'* in the Arabian Peninsula. These very *'ulama'* appear, albeit obliquely, in Umar Lee's description of American Salafism's first stirrings in the late 1980s. Certain "individuals," Lee wrote, "really took 'the dawah' to the converts where it was originally mostly a Gulf Arab thing."[18] Here, Lee explicitly namechecked Dawud Adib alongside other prominent African American Salafi callers. Although Adib would later balk at Lee's characterization of Salafism as "a Gulf Arab thing," Lee had hit upon a crucial connection.

Charted genealogically, Philadelphia Salafism has deep roots in the Arabian peninsula. Although one could trace its origin to the militant puritanical

movement founded by the eighteenth-century Arabian preacher Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, the quietist articulation of Salafism that would ultimately find a home in Philadelphia arose in the Saudi Kingdom in the aftermath of the 1979 occupation of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. This quietist Salafism was first propagated in Yemen, other centers of Islamic learning in the Middle East, and then Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. In fact, a particular network of Saudi and Yemeni shaykhs have, over the last generation, exerted a direct influence in Philadelphia. One place where this legacy is visible is in Philadelphia Salafis' interest in authenticated *hadith*s on issues evocative of bodies, politics, and race.

The practice of Muslim scholars scrutinizing the authenticity of the transmitters contained in a *hadith*'s chain of transmission (*jarh wa-taʿdil*) stretches back to the classical period of Islamic history. After a period of relative decline among the Ottomans, however, the tradition was revived by a number of key figures in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Most notable for our purposes was the iconoclastic scholar Nasir al-Din al-Albani, who rose to prominence and notoriety in the 1960s and died in 1999.[19] Responding both to internal and external charges concerning the authenticity of the *hadith* corpus, al-Albani reopened scrutiny over the authenticity of *hadith*s long thought settled. Inevitably, controversies arose as al-Albani and his colleagues deauthenticated certain *hadith*s upon which contemporary practices and beliefs relied and authenticated other *hadith*s that contemporary discourses had previously ignored. Many of these controversies circled around matters of personal and group comportment: attire, music, purity, and worship practices.

As a general rule, al-Albani and the larger movement he inaugurated endeavored to remove piety from the corrupting aims of modern political theories. He issued withering criticism, for example, of the Islamist political activism of Sayyid Qutb and the Muslim Brotherhood. One potentially subversive exception to this rule stood out. On the basis of his methodology in authenticating *hadith*s, al-Albani asserted that a Muslim ruler must hail from the Prophet's own tribe, the Quraysh.[20] Armed with this opinion and its correlative prooftexts, al-Albani and his students came into conflict with the authority of the Saudi royal family, which could claim no such tribal lineage.

Not by accident did the Salafis stir up this hornet's nest. Rather, the subversive potential of al-Albani's new approach to *hadith* dovetailed with a

widespread perception among Salafis and others that the Saudi royal family had been co-opted and corrupted by the secular West. This Salafi rejectionism reached an extreme in 1979 with the militant seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca.[21] In a matter of weeks, this blunt challenge to Saudi rule was put down, and in the aftermath, al-Albani and his Salafi intellectual allies were driven underground or into exile.[22] A number of Salafi *ʿulama'*, however, forged an intellectual compromise that allowed them to remain in the Saudi Kingdom. They stood by al-Albani's insights on everyday matters of piety, attire, purity, worship, and manners, but they explicitly disavowed the Salafi challenge to the House of Saud. Sidestepping the question of a ruler's pedigree, they reasserted the longstanding Sunni tradition that as a citizen, a Muslim owed his or her obedience to those in authority.[23]

Among the Salafi scholars who charted this strategic course was Muqbil ibn al-Wadiʿi, who died in 2001.[24] Earlier in his career, al-Wadiʿi had taken a number of provocative positions that had driven him into exile even before the Grand Mosque standoff. In Yemen, al-Wadiʿi cultivated an accommodationist attitude toward both the Saudi royal family and the Yemeni state. In theory, the position was essentially a quietist one. For al-Wadiʿi, quite simply, a Muslim's obligation is to practice the *sunna*, and the politics of the secular world are not his or her concern. To al-Wadiʿi's right, a Saudi shaykh named Rabiʿ al-Madkhali went even further by demonstrating fervent loyalty toward the Saudi throne.[25]

In the 1980s, a vanguard of African Americans, Egyptians, and Sudanese luminaries journeyed east to Mecca and Medina to deepen their knowledge of Islam. After cultivating a Salafi practice at institutions like the Islamic University in Medina and the Umm al-Qura University in Mecca, these scholars brought the *daʿwa* to New York and the mid-Atlantic states through publications, magazines and conferences.[26] By the 1990s, al-Albani had become viewed as one of the group's most eminent authorities, and a cadre of shaykhs including al-Wadiʿi and al-Madkhali had been taken up as gatekeepers.[27]

In Philadelphia, traces of this influence abound. A mosque named for al-Wadiʿi, which is located on the 2700 block of Allegheny Avenue in North Philadelphia, was recently the site for a conference in which Rabiʿ al-Madkhali and his colleagues delivered a telelinked lecture.[28] The International Islamic Information Network (IIIN), a nonprofit "Authentic Islamic Audio

Warehouse" that sells predominantly English recordings of lessons delivered by speakers at the Germantown mosque and whose proceeds go directly to support the Germantown mosque, directs its web traffic to six Arabic-language websites, one belonging to Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, one to Rabi' al-Madkhali, and one to Rabi''s brother, Zayd.[29] To this day, African American Muslims continue to go to Medina for study, and an increasing number of prominent Salafi callers have received their training in al-Wadi'i's Dar al-Hadith in Dammaj, Yemen.

It would be a mistake to read reductively the Philadelphia presence of al-Madkhali's and al-Wadi'i's articulation of Salafism as being a Saudi or Yemeni export. Though initially cultivated in the Arabian Peninsula, Salafism's worldwide dispersal from Indonesia to the United States is a reflection of its catholic elasticity and its ability to resonate across a range of cultural divides. Enabled by a secular-age consumer culture in which individuals are adept at navigating an unprecedented mélange of traditions, its emphasis on austerity, bodily purity, dress, and creed has proven to have widespread appeal for a variety of divergently placed Muslims, who, around the globe, have taken up the Salafi method and made it their own.

But Salafism's positive appeal has been only part of its success. In Philadelphia and elsewhere, Salafism has thrived both for what it speaks to and for what it chooses to remain silent. In the American context, its principal lacunae are politics and race. That is to say that the Salafism of al-Madkhali and al-Wadi'i offers not only an approach to a body of authenticated texts and the correlative pietistic practices. Also, as informed by its formative experience of political overreach, this strand of Salafism offers a conception of Islam in which personal piety is best practiced when it is insulated from the macropolitical order.

Some Salafis who claim al-Madkhali as an influence have gone even further by explicitly condemning, as al-Albani did, those Muslims who seek involvement in the national politics of several Middle Eastern states, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Since 2009, some English-speaking supporters of al-Madkhali have created, maintained, and updated a website polemicizing against those Islamist movements who do engage the secular political order. Singled out for special criticism is the Muslim Brotherhood, who, it is said,

"come out in the name of refuting Secularism" but do so "through involvement in the current secular political apparatus" at the explicit expense of the Qur'an and the *sunna*.[30]

The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, part of the secular political apparatus? Much as we saw in the dispute between Umar Lee and Dawud Adib, "secularism" in this case may simply be the discursive stuff of which ad hominem attacks are made. But this counterintuitive suggestion is worth entertaining. Is there a perspective from which the structures of secular power and the religiopolitical activists that prominently oppose it are mutually reinforcing? Has the entrenched antagonism of these oppositional forces left open a space at the margins for those who might seek radically to redescribe themselves wholly outside of secular discourses and practices? Is there a space for those who abstain from resisting secular authorities on the grounds that resisting is itself a kind of co-optation if not properly authorized by the Islamic foundational texts?

At the very least, this posture has done vital social work. In Philadelphia, this overlooking of politics and race has provided African American Salafis with a modicum of stability that could endure an American surveillance state that, beginning with the first World Trade Center attack in 1993 and intensifying exponentially since 9/11, has indiscriminately trained all of its powers of control on Muslim bodies prejudged as suspect. Needless to say, the swearing off of explicit and explicitly antagonistic political discourses has not ensured Germantown's black Muslims with "security" in any substantive way. For this, a host of structural changes would be necessary. But this abstention has significantly improved the chances that they would avoid the fate that following 9/11 befell the more bellicose Salafi preachers. For having preached Muslim politics to his community in northern Virginia, a politics in which jihad by the sword has its place, Ali al-Tamimi is currently serving life in a federal penitentiary.[31]

The value of the renunciation of politics for black Muslim survival in the post-9/11 era should not be underestimated. This, quite simply, may well be the difference between imprisonment and freedom, death and life. But there is also another value here, a soulful, psychic value. For Philadelphia's black urban poor men and women accustomed to malignant neglect and social

control by the institutions of society and state, the good news that they themselves are *not* responsible for fixing the broken systems that they are wholly disempowered to fix could only have come as a tremendous relief.

PROPHETIC *HADITHS* IN CONDEMNATION OF RACISM?

The Salafi renunciation of politics also needs to be understood within a finer-grained and more intramural cultural context. In their self-fashioning as Muslim, both as individuals and as a collectivity, Philadelphia's black Salafis explicitly remove themselves from the "black Muslim" tradition that began with Noble Drew Ali, was refined and mainstreamed by Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, and which was preserved in a tempered form by Warith Deen (né Wallace) Muhammad. Nowhere is this sequestration clearer than in the Salafi redescription of the categories of "race" and "racism."

As is true of the black churches of their parents and grandparents, Philadelphia's Salafism is a religious subculture at once richly oral but also steeped in the written word. These two tendencies are plainly on display on Germantown Avenue following the conclusion of *jum'a*, where, on the vendors' tables, texts come in two varieties: CDs and paperbacks. Of the CDs, some are professionally produced and feature recitations of the Qur'an delivered by Saudi chanters. Other CDs have a more homemade look and feature recordings of local Salafi callers' Friday sermons and other public lessons. Judging from their titles, the CDs address a range of topics, some of them narrowly doctrinal but many of them geared to instruct the listener on how to live his or her everyday life *Islamically* in an otherwise secular world: how to be a nurturing husband, a dutiful wife, a user of the new technologies. Among the printed works, some bear the imprint of Authentic Statements, a West Philadelphia publishing house, but many come from farther afield. The printed matter, in general, makes little attempt to address local racial and political issues and is more narrowly focused on issues of creed, *hadith*, and law. An exception that proves the rule is the sale and circulation of Sunnah Publishing's *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, initially published in 2012.

From its Grand Rapids, Michigan, home base, Sunnah Publishing has become a major contributor to the Philadelphia Salafi scene. Since 2010 it has

sponsored biannual conferences in Philadelphia, and it translates and distributes works by many Saudi and Yemeni scholars in the networks mentioned above.[32] Some of Sunnah Publishing's translators are Philadelphia locals, such as Abul Hassan Malik, an imam from Camden, New Jersey, who claims a reading license (*ijaza*) that certifies he has studied under the Yemeni scholar al-Wadi'i.[33] The lion's share are produced by Maaz Qureshi, who, prior to founding Sunnah Publishing in 2004, was active in a Canadian Salafi association called "The Revival of Islamic Dawah" (TROID) and sold his print and audio media by way of a still vital online outlet called SalafiPublications.com. Qureshi has been a resident of Grand Rapids since 1997 and by day works as a data specialist for Pitney Bowes.[34] Like all translations, Qureshi's are not mere replications of the original. Rather, they are peppered through with novel aspects intended to make the translated work speak to the new context where it is received. As with *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, they often include translators' notes that explicitly address Western audiences and report al-Albani's grades on the *hadiths*' authenticity.

As is so often the case with books, there is reason to suspect that books on Germantown Avenue are sometimes bought more for their talismanic value than for actual engagement with the theological and legal claims contained between their covers. But in content, *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism* is both surprising and revealing. Against Philadelphia's urban backdrop, "racism" may bring to mind white flight, sprawling ghettos, school closures, and expansive prison projects and evoke flashpoints such as the firebombing of MOVE and the conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The titular "racism" condemned by the Prophet in the Sunnah Publishing volume, however, is of a wholly different order. Authored by 'Abd al-Salam Ibn Burjis (d. 2004), a late Saudi national, the book not only ignores the African American intellectual tradition of W. E. B. Du Bois, James Baldwin, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Cornel West, and others, but it also speaks very little to the underlying concerns about injustice that animate these thinkers.[35] Indeed, if anything, by appealing to the familiar language of "racism," *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism* makes a strong play to erase that critical race discourse and to supplant it with another.

Almost immediately in *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, it becomes clear that the theme of the *hadiths* and their commentary is

not *'unsuriyya*—the term in the title that Qureshi sensibly translated as "racism"—but, rather, *'asabiyya* and *nasab*—which Qureshi renders in turn as "tribalism/nationalism" and "lineage."[36] From the first eighteen *hadith*s out of twenty-two explored in the volume, the reader receives a heavy-handed presentation on Muhammad's musings on tribalism and lineage. At first, the message seems to be one of democratic universalism and divine meritocracy. As compared to the fear of God (*taqwa*) that one exhibits in his or her faith and works, markers of lineage are said to mean next to nothing. Indeed, the commentary explains, when accorded undue status at the expense of one's faith and works, a focus on tribe and line proves, in fact, harmful. Hence the translated *hadith*: "The noblest of you according to Allah is the one with the most *taqwa*. Have you considered what noble lineage is? The best of you in lineage is the best of you in manners."[37] Before God, it would seem, *taqwa* is the only measure of a person's value.

A second *hadith* hews closer to the "racism" suggested by Qureshi's title. Speaking directly to distinctions of race and ethnicity, the *hadith* reads: "Indeed, an Arab has no excellence over an Arab, nor does a white person have any excellence over a black one, nor does a black person have any excellence over a white one, except through *taqwa*."[38] Here, too, then, the message seems clear: earthly hierarchies and lineages hold no weight in the hereafter.

But in a seeming reversal, the collection's final two *hadith*s offer definitive proof of the very thing the volume is generally intent on dispelling. Apparently, in God's mind, a hierarchy among lineages *does* exist. To be sure, *taqwa* remains the principal measure by which Muslims are judged by God, but, as the *hadith* proclaims, a Muslim of nobler tribal lineage is divinely awarded twice the benefit of that given to a Muslim of lesser tribal lineage for the performance of the very same good deed.[39] This privilege cuts both ways. For his disobedience, a Muslim of nobler lineage is divinely punished at twice the rate as well. Analytically, however, the net result is the same: in the judgment of *taqwa*, God is not blind to lineage. Thanks to lineage, one's reward or punishment can be augmented or diminished.

The collection's final *hadith* grants a special designation to Arabs. More so than other peoples, according to the Messenger of God, Arabs, it is alleged, are naturally inclined toward goodness, are "more given to generosity, forbearance, courage and more given to fulfilling the trusts and other than that from

[among the] praiseworthy manners."[40] With increasing precision, the *hadith* commentary continues with the further elevation of those descended from the Prophet's own tribe, the Quraysh, and further still of those who may be counted among the Prophet's actual family. As with the markers of material success for Weber's Calvinists, these genealogical designations are no guarantee of God's favorable judgment, but as external indicators, they tend to correlate positively.

In his commentary, Ibn Burjis rests conclusively on the following tension. On the one hand, "making tribes the epitome of excellence and aiding its individuals from them over another individual from them due to an action or a statement is far from the standards of the *shari'ah* of al-Islam."[41] What matters is not the doer but the deed. On the other hand, however, "it is obligatory to submit fully to Allah with regards to mentioning the virtues of the tribes which have been related in the *shari'ah*."[42] In other words, one is ultimately judged on one's *taqwa*—hence the pious predecessors' robust emphasis on creed and bodily purity—but at the end of the day, some lineages are, indeed, nobler than others, and pedigree plays a role in how God rewards and punishes Muslims in the end times, and it plays a role in how Muslims ought to govern themselves in the meantime.

When taken to its logical conclusion, this privileging of the Qurashi lineage, in fact, undermines the Saudi royal family's claims to legitimacy. But for a Salafi dissident like Umar Lee, the sort of plainly pro-Arabian bias that lies at the heart of *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism* would stand as further proof, as he put it in a video blog, that men like Dawud Adib are basically "Uncle Tom to the Saudi King." As Salafi Muslims, black people had simply moved "from the back of the bus to the back of the camel."[43]

Telling inferences about *'asabiyya* (tribalism) may also be derived from another source: a purported dialogue between the Saudi dissident al-Wadi'i and Abu Muslimah, a black Salafi caller who, as you may recall from Umar Lee's history, hailed from the same East Orange clique as Dawud Adib.[44] As it is reported in a 2003 post on an English-language discussion board in a Salafi corner of the Internet, Abu Muslimah went to Muqbil al-Wadi'i to help repair his reputation after al-Madkhali cursed and disparaged him for being a black nationalist. While this may sound harsh, Abu Muslimah's predicament was not an unusual one within his scholarly network. After all, al-Madkhali

was well known for applying the procedures of *jarh wa-ta'dil* to evaluate the trustworthiness of living scholars, a controversial but not unprecedented practice. The resulting exchange between the African American caller and his Arab shaykh reveals a great deal about Salafi discourse: its style, its mechanisms of interpretive authority, and its embedded perceptions of nationality and race.

In the exchange, which likely occurred in Arabic, the Yemeni shaykh Muqbil al-Wadi'i probed at the root cause of al-Madkhali's grievance against Abu Muslimah. We will quote at length, and transcription, transliteration, and translation inconsistencies are reproduced *sic erat scriptum*:

SHEIKH MUQBIL: Some of the brothers say that you have (call to) nationalism?

ABU MUSLIMAH: And how is that?

SHEIKH MUQBIL: Meaning that you prefer the non-Arab over the Arab.

ABU MUSLIMAH: How do I prefer them? With my Dawah? My dawah is for my people.

SHEIKH MUQBIL: So this (nationalism) is not what you are on. I was sure that due to the many blessings and good that Allaah has bestowed (given) you, that there would be many envious people. People who would envy you because of that and if they found any of your shortcomings they would propagate it. And if they did not find any shortcomings, would create something just to divert the people from being around you.

ABU MUSLIMAH: My dawah is very clear, walhamdulillaah. I call to the book of Allaah and the Sunnah of his Prophet (saw) based on the understanding of the Salaf of this Ummah. I give daily classes in the masjid and all of my classes are recorded. So, if I am calling to any nationalism, then where is this call? The issue is that I am an American. I live among the American, I know their language, I know their culture and I am from them. So what is the sin that I committed teaching my people their religion?

SHEIKH MUQBIL: You are to be praised (commended) on that. We did not think you had any of this nationalism, as we were in Al-Madinah calling to Allaah and everyone around us was Saudi. And we used to tell them; if you have any racism we would not accompany you. The dawah of the

Messenger (saw) is for the white, the black, the Arab and the non-Arab, in any country without any differentiation.

ABU MUSLIMAH: Abdullah McCafee was one of my students and he is a white American.[45] Now he is one of your students. Also, the Sheikh (referring to Abu Hatim, one of Sheikh Muqbil's students who is attending this session) visited us in our masjid. If I claim that a black Muslim is better than the white one, what is my proof from the Book of Allaah?[46]

Whether a faithful transcript of an actual exchange or an apocryphal fancy, Abu Muslimah's defense of his *da'wa*'s colorblindness speaks volumes about how race discourse has been inflected for Salafi Muslims. We might expect race discourse here to serve its conventional function of making sense of and critiquing social injustice. From what we reflexively know about black people's historical status in America, it would be understandable if Abu Muslimah were uncomfortable with Salafism's tendency for privileging Arabs. In his exchange with al-Wadi'i, however, the roles one might have anticipated are reversed. That is to say, it is Abu Muslimah, the black caller, who is forced to defend himself from the charge that as a purported sectarian black nationalist he is prejudiced against Arabs. Abu Muslimah is portrayed as having repaired his reputation in the eyes of his Yemeni shaykh and having averred that he overlooks racial differences in accordance with the Qur'an.

At the conclusion to *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism* is appended a creedal statement from Muqbil al-Wadi'i. In language borrowed from al-Albani, al-Wadi'i offers a cultural diagnosis and a plea for Muslim unity: "We hold that this multiplicity of present-day parties is a reason for the division of the Muslims and their weakness. So therefore we set about 'freeing the minds from the fetters of blind-following and the darkness of sectarianism and party spirit.'"[47] While, in its original context, al-Wadi'i and al-Albani would have been referring to the party politics of the Muslim Brotherhood and other species of Islamism indigenous to the Middle East, the condemnation of race-based politics on Germantown Avenue is difficult to miss. And so, to a population predisposed to use the critical discourse of race and racism to make sense of their own material and social disadvantage and to argue publicly for remediation, the message of *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of*

Racism is clear: racism is, indeed, something that black people must struggle to overcome *in themselves*.

IS BLACK ISLAM SECULAR?

In *The Philadelphia Negro*, in a chapter entitled "The Present Condition of the Churches," W. E. B. Du Bois notes how among the members of Philadelphia's Negro churches he found a preoccupation with "social betterment":

> All movements for social betterment are apt to centre in the churches. Beneficial societies in endless number are formed here; secret societies keep in touch; co-operative and building associations have lately sprung up; the minister often acts as an employment agent; considerable charitable and relief work is done and special meetings held to aid special projects. *The race problem in all its phases is continually being discussed, and, indeed, from this forum many a youth goes forth inspired to work.*[48]

In the century to follow, perhaps nowhere in Philadelphia did the "race problem" inspire more original and vivacious religious "work" than among its black Muslims. By World War II, a University of Pennsylvania graduate student, Arthur Huff Fauset, was able to observe, among the urban cults catering to the glut of great migrants, the religious inventiveness of the red-fezzed Moslems in the Moorish Science Temple.[49] In 1954, a similar Islam would creep in further from the margin, when early adopters of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam were corralled by a red-headed minister and installed in their officially sanctioned institutional home. Over the next generation, Philadelphia's Temple Twelve would become a Nation of Islam stronghold, ministered in turn by Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad's son, Wallace. The temple grew to acquire half a dozen satellites. Businesses were launched, both above board and below, and eventually so too was a Clara Muhammad School.[50]

If contemporary Salafism in Philadelphia confounds one's expectations for what African American Islam ought to look like, that is because the above trajectory of what might ironically be referred to as the "more traditional" black Islam is far more consistent with the reigning paradigms for black religion in general. In this way, comparing Salafism in Philadelphia with its

predecessors in Islam is instructive, although less for the purposes of provenance than for contrast. For as has been the standard account from Fauset's day to the present day, the movements behind the Moorish Science Temple and Nation of Islam are best construed in the same Du Boisian light in which they must have seen themselves: as religious collectives armed with a practical politics engineered for the economic and social betterment of black folks. To frame this religious ethos in materialist terms is not to deny these groups their religious ideas and concerns. To be sure, each sect was led by a charismatic figure who spoke earnestly of God, and the rank and file lived rigid ritual protocols and abided in prohibitions of diet and grooming.[51] But in the critical light shined by Philadelphia's Salafis, the Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, and Warith Deen Muhammad's American Society of Muslims appear to have been and to remain, at the end of the day, *secular religions*.

Indeed, arguably, never were these groups more secular in form than when they were being religious. Their metaphysics and eschatologies pointed not away from the modern world but back to it. As individuals and as collectives, members of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam pursued involvement in public life with the utmost urgency, as if the political, economic, and social world was, for all intents and purposes, the only world there was. For these groups, the sacred lineages connecting them to their lost pasts—to Moab, Mecca, and Morocco for the Moors and to the Tribe of Shabazz for the Nation—were transparently deployed as counternarratives in service of a future, one apocalyptically imminent, in which the achievement of full emancipation and nationhood was soon at hand.[52]

For the Moors and the Nation, the modern state was both a precondition and a horizon. It was a precondition inasmuch as it set the stage historically for their disenfranchisement in the United States. It was a horizon inasmuch as a nation-state all of one's own appeared as the obvious solution to the precipitating problems. If, in the practical mean, members of the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam had played the game of American public life as every other ethnic group had learned to play it—by building their economic and political strength so as to engender for black people public power commensurate to their numbers—those at the doctrinal extreme would have still insisted on a state all their own. That is to say that even when they dreamt, brothers and sisters in the Moorish Science Temple and in the Nation of Islam dreamt in secular.

Unlike today's Islamists, then, who collapse politics into religion, Malcolm X, for one, projected a secular frame in which religion and politics were relegated to two separate spheres.[53] If and when priority was to be established, racial solidarity was to come first, and religious commitments were to follow after.[54] Or, better put, the differences inherent in the latter were to be subordinated to the project of the former. As Malcolm X told a crowd of "friends and enemies" in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1964:

> Although I'm still a Muslim, I'm not here tonight to discuss my religion. I'm not here to try and change your religion. I'm not here to argue or discuss anything that we differ about, because it's time for us to submerge our differences and realize that it is best for us to first see that we have the same problem, a common problem, a problem that will make you catch hell whether you're a Baptist, or a Methodist, or a Muslim, or a nationalist. . . . All of us have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man.[55]

Malcolm X was rallying his audience against a racial, political, economic, and cultural status quo entangled with the secular order, but he takes as self-evident and actively reaffirms the very crux of secularism: to stand in solidarity against social and economic oppression, matters of religious differences must be "submerged."

This same secular blood courses through the tradition of black Islam. At the heart of the black Muslims' Islam was a creative and critical vocabulary about race in America. It was by way of a brutal racist caste system that, as the Moors saw it, an august people had come falsely to conceive of itself as "Negro, Black, and Colored." It was in the eugenics burlesque about Yakub, the bigheaded mad scientist who invented white people, that the followers of Elijah Muhammad would manufacture a modern theodicy.[56] All at the same time, Elijah was the key for diagnosing social injustice, the marker for delimiting the boundaries of the collective, and the catalyst for mobilizing toward justice.

Blackness also inscribed an attitude of righteous refusal. As captured by its early chroniclers such as James Baldwin and C. Eric Lincoln and promoted

by its own spokespeople including Malcolm X, black Muslims were heavily motivated by political concerns, even and especially during its heyday, when the movement swore off conventional modes of party politics. In prose and in person, the black Muslims were prophetically critical and combatively polemical. As a performative style, the black Muslim mode of being in public was to signal protest. In glossing this attitude, Sherman Jackson calls on Charles Long's category of "black religion."[57] Not the same thing as African American religion, "black religion" is characterized by a "lithic consciousness, a state of mind which in confronting a reality bent on domination invokes *a will to opposition*, a veritable cosmic 'No.'"[58] This Nietzschean refusal of the status quo's politics, society, and culture, a refusal at once reactive and affirmative, polemical and self-constitutive, is black religion's animating disposition. And from a secular standpoint, given the enduring history of black disenfranchisement in America, how could it be anything else?

SAYING "NO!" TO BLACK RELIGION

In 1953, *Ebony* ran a multiarticle spread on Philadelphia's "Negro Moslems." One piece, entitled "Moslems Take Firm Stand Against Racism," detailed how a Philadelphia tenor saxophone player named Lynn Hope traveled widely through the South, from Atlanta to Birmingham, New Orleans to Nashville, Charleston, West Virginia, to Gadsden, Alabama. In Hope's telling, when he and his fellow jazzmen presented themselves as Muslims, "we are recognized as whites in the South and are not Jim Crowed."

> Hope and his men, wearing their turbans, enter a restaurant with superb aplomb, and are usually told very quickly, "We don't serve colored people here." Hope's answer is swift, calm and always the same: "We are not Negroes but members of the Moslem faith. Our customs are Eastern. We claim the nationality of our Arabic ancestors as well as their culture." Almost invariably, they receive courteous treatment.[59]

If Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X hoped to bludgeon the forces of American racism into submission by painting Christian apocalypticism in the

starkest black and white, these midcentury Philadelphia "Negro Moslems" tried their hand at something altogether different. They identified a loophole. Armed with turbans, swagger, and the conviction that their new identities were no mere surface performance, they managed to transcend blackness. The editors at *Ebony* called it "a firm stand," but, in fact, the stand was anything but firm. It was, rather, soft and pliable. As a mode of combating racism, it was jujutsu.

Times have changed. After 9/11, as a would-be social tactic for evading prejudice, being a Muslim for an African American has far more downside than up. But the disavowal of race that once served "Negro Moslems" down South remains for their direct Salafi descendants ready to hand. This is especially the case in the Salafi callers' interactions with the *'ulama'* in the Arabian Peninsula, for whom, as we have seen, the black nationalist legacy of African American Islam seemingly leaves an abiding taint. And they are not alone. Elijah Muhammad's *Message to the Blackman in America* offered a powerful counterhistory of race that galvanized many black folk and spoke effectively to others in the white cultural mainstream, but it came at the cost of legitimacy in the eyes of the Muslim immigrants, who, beginning with the passage of the 1965 immigration law, transformed American religious cityscapes. If, in the wake of this cultural sea change, brothers and sisters of the Nation of Islam were often surprised to hear their Islam dismissed as inauthentic, their African American Sunni counterparts were mortified to find themselves tarred with the same brush. Thus we find a residual resentment among the Salafi for the followers of Wallace Muhammad, a man whose vision of Islam was, according to Dawud Adib, "as bad, and maybe even worse than what his father was teaching."[60] For if the father was guilty of anathema of the most obvious sort—claiming that Fard Allah was God incarnate—the son's anathema was subtler and, therefore, more insidious. For even with his 1975 conversion to Sunni Islam, Wallace, according to the Salafis, never diverted from his father's religious orientation, an orientation according to which Islam is perpetually instrumentalized for sociological, political, and economic ends.

That Dawud Adib refused to put Salafi Islam to such instrumental ends is what troubles Umar Lee most of all. In Lee's words, Salafis ignore "political empowerment for African Americans," and they do no kind of "community

organizing that will make the communities cleaner and safer here in America."[61] As Lee video blogged:

> Once the Salafi *da'wa* came into being, the concept of institution building totally left. No more institutions were to be built. The Muslims' time was to be dedicated to sitting around in classes, studying basic Islamic issues, declaring people deviants, seeing who is on and off the *manhaj*, but there would be no institutions established. And we can see in the long career of Dawud Adib, we can see that he has built absolutely nothing. He's been imam of storefront *masjids*, hole-in-the-wall *masjids*. He's built no schools. He's built no institutions of learning. He's built no clinics. He's built no economic foundation for the Muslim community. And the feds love this because he's been a corrosive force in the Muslim community, because he's built absolutely nothing.[62]

As was illustrated earlier by the exchange between Abu Muslimah and al-Wadi'i as well as by the circulation of the *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, Philadelphia's Salafi are flanked to their right by their Arab *'ulama'* who wonder aloud whether black callers have truly removed themselves from the politics of their race. Meanwhile, as evident in Umar Lee's complaint, Salafis are excoriated by some for their political and social disengagement from their local communities. In his polemic against Adib's inactivity on the material level, Lee channeled the Du Boisian expectation—one no doubt shared by many of our readers—that black religion is to be evaluated by its contributions to "social betterment." Part of this expectation holds that mosques and churches ought to be sites of political organization and that, to the extent that they are not struggling to improve the economic and social circumstances of their people, black religious leaders like Dawud Adib fail to perform their allotted role properly. Indeed, as Lee would have it, by refusing such momentous burdens, Adib effectively renders himself a de facto defender of the political, social, and economic order under which *his people* suffer.[63]

The Salafi beg to differ. What is the point of mobilizing for action if the correctness of that action has not been persuasively shown to be grounded in the Qur'an and the authenticated example of the Prophet? On this view,

Elijah and Wallace Muhammad, in their political self-assurance, offered a provocative counternarrative to Jim Crow America, but, in their secular acquiescence and theological ignorance, they led their followers into the most damnable sins: *shirk*, associating partners with God. Lifting people up is certainly a noble ambition, but without the proper *taqwa*, Salafis argue, any such effort can only go catastrophically awry. As one Salafi elder at Graterford Prison articulated his own quietism: "We need to get our own house in order, and become good Muslims before we can do anything else."[64]

Philadelphia Salafis' quietism is more than a failure of courage or a byproduct of blind indoctrination. In the final analysis, Salafism in Philadelphia promises a radical alternative to the dynamics that have maintained the secularized and racialized political status quo for almost a century. This promise happens to overlap with the coerced accommodationism that the secular state and society demands, but it is not reducible to it. Through study, fashion, faith, and purity practices, Salafis overlook the cultural norms of the secular age. They reject social betterment for social betterment's sake, and they reject the pursuit of racial justice for racial justice's sake. If black religion's strength came in its willingness to say "No!" to American racism, Salafism's greatest power—and, for its critics, its greatest weakness—stems from its quietly emphatic insistence on negating this negation. With the Prophet's toothbrush in hand, Salafis call upon others to fear God and quietly look on.

NOTES

1. To sample a number of such *hadith* on the *siwak* circulating in the Philadelphia scene and elsewhere, see Muhammad ibn al-Uthaymin, *Arousing the Intellects with the Explanation of 'Umdatul-Ahkaam: The Book of At-Tahaarah (The Ritual Purification)*, trans. Abdullaah MacPhee (Philadelphia: Authentic Statements, 2011), 53–61. For an overview of the history and social function of the *siwak* in classical and medieval Islamic culture, see Vardit Rispler-Chaim, "The *Siwāk*: A Medieval Islamic Contribution to Dental Care," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2, no. 1 (1992): 13–20.
2. Field visit and interview with Anas Waters, Friday, February 22, 2012.
3. One important exception would be Sherman Jackson's *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also Abdin Chande, "Islam in the African American Community: Negotiating Between Black Nationalism and Historical Islam," *Islamic Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 221–241; and Emily Goshey,

"Salafi Islam in Philadelphia" (BA honors thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2012). It is telling that the most recent trade book on the subject is written by an FBI fellow: Chris Heffelfinger, *Radical Islam in America: Salafism's Journey from Arabia to the West* (Washington D.C.: Potomac, 2011).

4. See Umar Lee, "The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Movement," Wordpress, 2007, http://umarlee.wordpress.com/rise-and-fall-of-the-salafi-movement-complete/.
5. Ibid.
6. See Jenice Armstrong, "Philadelphia Locals Adopt Muslim-Inspired Menswear," Philly.com (August 23, 2011), http://articles.philly.com/2011-08-23/entertainment/29917726_1_beard-traditional-muslim-attire-mustache.
7. See Umar Lee, "The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Movement."
8. Ibid.
9. See Dawud Adib, "History of the Salafi Da'wah in America," YouTube (2011), http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=tixXMlFkgms, http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=n7mKE-7W6cw.
10. This is an accusation that Lee has vehemently denied. See Umar Lee, "Umar Lee Explains the Why and How of 'The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Movement,'" YouTube (July 4, 2011), http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ZC6H7pjUEJY.
11. Adib, "History of the Salafi Da'wah in America."
12. We speculate further on this question below, near the end of the third section.
13. See Edward E. Curtis IV, "Islamism and Its African American Muslim Critics: Black Muslims in the Era of the Arab Cold War," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2007): 703–704; and Clifton Marsh, *From Black Muslims to Muslims: The Transition from Separatism to Islam, 1930–1980* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1984), 89–104.
14. See Adib, "History of the Salafi Da'wah in America."
15. Ibid.
16. See Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1997).
17. For an overview, see Edward L. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2002); and Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). On the ongoing black struggle to process this cultural assimilation, see Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican.*
18. See Lee, "The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Movement."
19. On al-Albani's contribution to the tradition of *hadith* criticism, see Jonathan A. C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 301–334. On Salafism more broadly, see Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
20. See Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and His Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism," in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 72–73.
21. Ibid., 74–76.

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. For an overview of Muqbil ibn al-Wadi'i, see Laurent Bonnefoy, *Salafism in Yemen: Transnationalism and Religious Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54–78.
25. See Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism," 76–77.
26. See Adib, "History of the Salafi Da'wah in America." Among the scholars Adib names are Sharif 'Abd al-Karim and Ibrahim 'Abd al-'Aziz, both African Americans from Brooklyn who studied at Umm al-Qura University in Mecca. Adib names, among other notable Egyptian and Sudanese scholars, Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Khaliq, who was born in Egypt in 1939, educated at the Islamic University in Medina, and contributed to Islamic periodicals that were distributed in North America.
27. Adib claimed there was a nascent Salafi *da'wa* in America since the 1950s, but the founding of Salafi institutions may be more usefully dated to 1982, which saw the establishment of the Islamic Center of East Orange and the convening of the first conference of the Qur'an and Sunna Society in Landover, Maryland. See Adib, "The History of the Salafi Da'wah in America."
28. See "Pre-Conference Schedule Philadelphia/New Jersey August 2012 CE," Sunnah Publishing (2012), http://sunnahpublishing.net/pre-conference-schedule-philadelphianew-jersey-august-2012-ce/. According to some online anecdotes, al-Wadi'i apparently visited the United States during his lifetime. See Aboo Shaahir, "Naseeha to Abdul Mun'im: Fear Allaah and Stop Waging War Against the Salafees!," Salaftalk.net (September 27, 2002), http://www.salafitalk.net/st/viewmessages.cfm?Forum=6&Topic=213.
29. The other links are to the prominent Saudi state-appointed scholars Ibn 'Uthaymin and Bin Baz and to Sahab.net, a popular Salafi website. See "Catalog," IIN Bookstore, http://www.iiinbookstore.com/catalog/.
30. See "About the TheMadkhalis.com," TheMadkhalis.com, http://www.themadkhalis.com/md/about.cfm.
31. See Milton Viorst, "The Education of Ali Al-Timimi," *The Atlantic* (June 2006), http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/06/the-education-of-ali-al-timimi/304884/.
32. For example, they published a number of works of al-Wadi'i in translation, including a five-CD-set class on hadith that the shaykh authenticated and compiled. They also published a translation of a polemical treatise authorized by al-Madkhali. See "5 CD – Jaami'us-Saheeh of Shaykh Muqbil – Abul-Hasan Maalik," Sunnah Publishing, http://sunnahpublishing.net/products-page/hadeeth-cd/5-cd-jaamius-saheeh-of-shaykh-muqbil-abul-hasan-maalik/; and "A Clarification of the Errors and Bias Present in al-Nasīhah of Ibrāhīm al-Ruhaylī," Sunnah Publishing (June 29, 2013), http://sunnahpublishing.net/a-clarification-of-the-errors-and-bias-present-in-al-nasihah-of-ibrahim-al-ruhayli-part-1-shaykh-rabi-ibn-hadi-al-madkhali/.
33. A brief biography is advertised by Abu Abdul Fattah Ali Mohamed, "Abul Hasan Malik al-Akhdar UK Dates and Venues for Lectures," Salafitalk.net (May 12, 2009), http://salafitalk.net/st/viewmessages.cfm?Forum=28&Topic=8670.

34. See Charles Honey, "Local Nonprofit Hopes to Educate Others About Muslim Faith," *Grand Rapids Press* (August 23, 2008), http://www.mlive.com/living/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2008/08/local_nonprofit_hopes_to_educa.html.
35. Ibn Burjis was a student of Ibn 'Uthaymin and Bin Baz and a prolific scholar and teacher in his own right. To access his official webpage, see "Website of the Shaykh 'Abd al-Salam Ibn Burjis," http://www.burjes.com/.
36. 'Abd al-Salam ibn Burjis Ibn Nasir al-Abd al-Karim, *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Sunnah, 2012), 8–15.
37. Ibid., 47.
38. Ibid., 28.
39. Ibid., 60–61.
40. Ibid., 70.
41. Ibid., 73.
42. Ibid., 74.
43. See Lee, "Umar Lee Explains the Why and How."
44. A brief professional biography of Abu Muslimah can be found at "Masjid Khalid Bin al-Walid," Khalidmosque.com, http://www.khalidmosque.com/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=101:speakers&catid=53&lang=en.
45. This reference is almost certainly to 'Abdullah MacPhee, who studied at al-Wadi'i's Dar al-Hadith in Dammaj for an extended period of time, perhaps ten years. Upon his return, MacPhee vied for but failed to attain the position of the imam of the Germantown Mosque. He remains an active translator for *Authentic Statements*, a Philadelphia-based Salafi press.
46. Posted by an author with the handle "Aboo Talhah" (January 28, 2003). Aboo Talhah claimed this was his translation of an audio recording but did not post the audio after another poster requested it. See Aboo Talhah, "A Meeting with Shaikh Muqbil ibn Haadi (rh) and Abu Muslimah," Siratemustaqeem.com (October 4, 2002), http://www.siratemustaqeem.com/phpBB/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=1203&hilit=abu+muslimah&start=0.
47. Ibn Burjis, *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, 85.
48. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 207. Emphasis added.
49. See Arthur Huff Fauset, *Black Gods of the Metropolis: Negro Religious Cults of the Urban North* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 41–51.
50. On Temple Twelve, see Rubin Benson, ed., *Top of the Clock: Minister Jeremiah Shabazz, Exclusive Interview* (Philadelphia: First Impressions, 1997).
51. See Edward E. Curtis IV, *Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
52. See Nathaniel Deutsch, "'The Asiatic Black Man': An African American Orientalism?" *Journal of Asian American Studies* 4, no. 3 (2001): 193–208; and Edward E. Curtis IV, "African-American Islamization Reconsidered: Black History Narratives and Muslim Identity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73, no. 3 (2005): 659–684.

53. See Curtis, "Islamism and Its African American Muslim Critics," 695.
54. Curtis writes that "his first duty in life was to work for the political liberation of all black persons around the globe." Ibid.
55. George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks*, (New York: Grove, 1990), 24.
56. Nathaniel Deutsch, *Inventing America's "Worst" Family: Eugenics, Islam, and the Fall and Rise of the Tribe of Ishmael* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 140–154.
57. See Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 32.
58. Ibid. Emphasis added.
59. "Moslems Take Firm Stand Against Racism," *Ebony* 8, no. 6 (April 1953): 107.
60. See Adib, "History of the Salafi Da'wah in America."
61. See Lee, "Umar Lee Explains the Why and How."
62. Ibid.
63. This is more or less Sherman Jackson's critique of Salafism and other modes of African American Islam that abandon the prophetic tradition of black religion. See Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 70–73.
64. See Joshua Dubler, *Down in the Chapel* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2013), 228.

PART III

INFLECTIONS