
A Virulent Ideology in Mutation: Zarqawi Upstages Maqdisi

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IN LATE JUNE, THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT THOUGHT they had a good thing going in the war against terror: they intended to release Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi and have him express his views to the press. Maqdisi was the spiritual and ideological mentor of Abu Musaab Al-Zarqawi, as well as a whole generation of those who call themselves Salafi Jihadists. The Jordanians thought that a public ideological rift between Maqdisi and Zarqawi would be broadcast to the whole jihadi world and shake it to its foundations—but they were mistaken.

Maqdisi had been an ideological pioneer for radical Islam: it was he who laid the theological foundation for the concept of *al-wala' wel-bara'* (*loyalty and renunciation*). He was also the first prominent Islamist scholar to brand the House of Saud as unbelievers, and to hold forth that the adoption of democracy is tantamount to apostasy. But while in prison over the last couple of years, Maqdisi had taken issue with some of the tactics employed by Zarqawi in Iraq, such as the excessive use of suicide bombers and the targeting of Shias, and was counseling moderation.

It was thought that re-introducing Maqdisi into the picture as a more moderate foil to Zarqawi would cause confusion and spiritual drift within the camp of the fundamentalist insurgents fighting in Iraq. After all, Maqdisi is the more learned of the two, and was throughout Zarqawi's formative years in Afghanistan, as well as in the brief prison stint they shared in Jordan, the acknowledged ideological figurehead of Salafi-Jihadism. Surely, the reasoning went, Maqdisi will set the tone and re-assert his dominance by putting the upstart Zarqawi in his place, but everyone had underestimated the rapid morphing of radical Islam.

Today, something new has emerged as the cutting-edge, hardcore version of jihad, and Zarqawi is its master. It is a sign that even the most radical notions of Salafi-Jihadism are entering new, uncharted ideological territory.

The back-and-forth between the two men painted Maqdisi as an armchair, bookish fatwa wonk, while Zarqawi emerged as the man who tests theory in

real time and in a real war. All that Zarqawi needs to justify jihad as he sees it is his own literal and selective interpretation of the Koran, since he does not have the luxury of getting entangled in opaque scholarly obfuscations; he has thus carried the theological debate into a simpler, more murderous realm.

In an odd twist of events, Zarqawi—who was a virtual nobody in jihadist circles two years ago—has surfaced as the leading ideologue of jihad. His ideas are not even faintly rooted in Islamic reasoning and precedent, but rather sketched-out in battlefield-mandated rationale. One notable innovation of his that deviates from what was known before is the concept of unselective targeting of Shia civilians, which is a precursor to policies of mass murder.

This paper aims to give a cursory overview of Maqdisi's prolific writings and ideological path that apparently began with a strong influence from Ju-haiman Al-'Uteibi's organization. It is a trajectory that is very different from neo-Salafist trend influenced by Seyyid Qutub's later writings, and Saudi Arabia's neo-Wahhabism of the late 1980s and early 90s. Understanding the current concepts driving Zarqawi must be inferred from his former tutor; Maqdisi's life and ideas deserve further study.

Who Is Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi?

Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi speaks for himself in an interview with Nida' Al-Islam magazine in 1997:

I am your brother Abu Muhammed 'Issam or 'Assim (this is more preferable to me) son of Muhammed son of Taher Al-Barqawi by birth, Al-Maqdisi by reputation, Al-'Uteibi by origin.

Muhammed is the eldest of my sons and he is 12 years old and I am known by his name [Abu Muhammed], and I have two other sons, 'Umar and 'Ibrahim, and a daughter too. Al-Maqdisi is the name I have come to be renowned by in the beginning of my preaching and writing and it has stuck to me, and it is an honorific relation to the Bayt Al-Maqdis [Jerusalem] that is nearby to my birthplace which is the village of Barqa, in the environ of Nablus...I was born there is 1378 AH which corresponds to the year 1959 AD¹, and I left after three or fours years with my family to Kuwait where I stayed until I completed my secondary education...And it was my wish at the time to study shari'a in the Islamic University in Medina...But I went to study science in the University of Mosul in Northern Iraq according to the wishes of my father.

This was the period of finding my path...I participated and communicated with different movements and groups, some of which were reformist offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood. I also communicated with the Salafists for a while, and with a section of Juhaiman's [Juhaiman Al-'Uteibi] group for another lengthier while, and visited with some of the leading lights and sheikhs of the Qutbiyeen [Seyyid Qutub's followers]...and some other jihadi trends...And from most of these I had kindly brothers and teachers whose aid I will not begrudge them, especially since it was the beginning of my path and seeking...Even though I contradicted them on matters that I was clear with them about."²

The influence of Juhaiman bin Muhammed Al-'Uteibi³ seems to have made the most profound mark on the early formulation of Maqdisi's outlook. Maqdisi was connected to 'Uteibi's network through Abdel-Latif Al-Derbas (Abu Haza'a), a Kuwaiti national who had been involved in the Mecca uprising and spent several years in a Saudi prison before his release and return to Kuwait. Maqdisi and Derbas were married to two sisters.⁴ The extent of 'Uteibi's influence can be gauged from what is considered Maqdisi's groundbreaking book, *Millet 'Ibrahim wa da'awet al-anbiya' wel murseleen* (*The Sect of Abraham and the Preaching of the Prophets and the Deliverers*),⁵ which is an exegesis and expansion on the theme of the first chapter of what is believed to 'Uteibi's last letter, "Raf'a al-'iltibas 'an millet men ja'alahu Allahu 'imamen 'ala al-nas" ("Removing the Confusion over the Sect of He Whom God Has Made a Leader Unto the People").⁶ According to Maqdisi, the foundation stone for the concept of *al-wala' wel bara'* (*loyalty and renunciation*), is the following verse in the Koran (Sura: Al-Mumtehana: 4):

You had an admirable example in 'Ibrahim [Abraham] and who was with him for they said to their nation we renounce you and what you pray to in lieu of God, we brand you unbelievers, and enmity and hatred is apparent between us and you forever until you believe in God alone.⁷

The concept of *al-wala' wel bara'* (adopted later by al-Qaeda⁸) as defined by Maqdisi was an essential tenet of the Islamic faith that revolved around a clear and unambiguous renunciation of anyone and any state that does not rule through the laws of sharia, or that introduces legal elements from beyond the realm of sharia in administering the public and private lives of Muslims. Whereas 'Uteibi was opaque and muddled in making the case, Maqdisi takes the matter further in *Millet Ibrahim* by putting such regimes and governments that do not rule through shari'a in the damned station of the unbelievers: the

kufr. Maqdisi makes the case that it is inherent upon all Muslims to vocally state, and thence act upon, their renunciation of the unbelievers.⁹ In a sense, Maqdisi was the pioneer of this concept, that has since come to dominate radical Islamist thinking and he is recognized as its leading ideologue. At this point the ideology is given a name by observers: Salafi Jihadism.¹⁰

Interestingly, Maqdisi only mentions 'Uteibi once in *Millet Ibrahim*: He credits him with being on the right path but uses him to denounce the Saudi authorities that had banned his writing even before his uprising. Maqdisi questions why the authorities feared 'Uteibi's writing even though he had not branded them as unbelievers.

After *Millet Ibrahim*, Maqdisi's largest early treatise was *Idad al-qadeh al-fawaris bi hajr fesad al-madaris* (*Preparing Courageous Leaders by Leaving the Corruption of Schools*) which he wrote in Kuwait.¹¹ By drawing on the curricula and activities of schools in Kuwait, he argues that state schools corrupt the youth and are thus inherently un-Islamic. He counsels home schooling and apparently applied his theory on his own children.¹²

Keeping track of Maqdisi's travels in the late 1980s and early 1990s is hard to pin down. He traveled widely between Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. During a six month stay in 1989 in Afghanistan, Maqdisi further focused his ideas by extrapolating the concept of *al-wala' wel bara'* to prove that the Saudi royal family and government should be branded as unbelievers.¹³ The book he produced, *Al-kawashif al-jaliyyeh fi kufr al-aawleh al-Saudiyyeh* (*The Illuminating Evidence of the Kufr of the Saudi State*), was considered too radical by Osama bin Laden at the time, and was not disseminated by al-Qaeda even during the late 1990s.^{14 15} In this book, Maqdisi claims that he is "a true Sunni Arab from Najd," probably drawing on his 'Uteiba tribal origin. He clearly revels in this connection by starting the book with an anecdote related by an elderly Saudi about one of the chief Ikhwan leaders in 1920s, Sultan bin Nejad, the head of the 'Uteiba tribe, who at the time was being attacked by 'Ibn Saud. He relates a quote from the tribal chief that "if [the Ikhwan] are eradicated, then you will be mingling with crowds of Christians in the markets of Riyadh."

Maqdisi gives tribute to the founder of Wahhabism, Muhammed bin Abdel-Wahhab, and his descendants in the early two Saudi states, but then argues that the destruction of the Ikhwan was the marker point at which the House of Saud turned into unbelievers. His case is made on the plethora of non-shari'a based regulations that are in effect in the Saudi kingdom, and colorfully uses the letters of Sheikh Muhammed bin Ibrahim Aal-Al-Sheikh, former head mufti of the Kingdom, in the 1960s and 1970s to show how far the state had

deviated. He also argues that by the very act of allowing the sale of tobacco, receiving foreign diplomatic representations (especially ones with crosses on their national flags), or participating in the United Nations Charter and the like, then the Saudi regime had gone beyond the pale of Islam. This book is said to have inspired Abdel-Aziz Al-Ma'athem, the Saudi mastermind behind the attacks on the National Guard training headquarters in November 1995.¹⁶

One also finds in *Al-kawashif Al-jaliyyeh* a hint as to why Maqdisi parted ways with Juhayman Al-'Uteibi's group: The latter had claimed that the oath of allegiance given to the Saudi royal family was ungrounded in Islam since this allegiance can be only made to a member of the Quraish tribe, whereas Maqdisi was already veering towards renouncing the Saudi state as idolatrous.¹⁷

The Tutor and His Pupil

Maqdisi first met Ahmed Fadheel Nezzal Al-Khalayleh, better known as Abu Musa'ab Al-Zarqawi, in Peshawer, Pakistan, in the early 1990s.¹⁸ It was a brief introduction to what later became a very important relationship in both their lives. Maqdisi had relocated to the Palestinian refugee camp of Ruseifa near Zarqa (Al-Khalayleh's hometown, from which he derived the nom de guerre, Al-Zarqawi) in Jordan after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. After Zarqawi's return from Pakistan, the two met up again and began to work together in the summer of 1993, and called their organization "Tawhid wel Jihad."¹⁹

Although both Maqdisi and Zarqawi felt that their primary task was to proselytize the wayward youth of Zarqa and convert them to the notion of *al-wala' wel bara'*, there is evidence that they were planning for terrorist activities. Maqdisi possessed a sack full of hand grenades that he had brought from Kuwait hidden among his furniture, and handed them over to a group planning a raid on Israeli targets over the Jordanian border.^{20 21}

It was in this early period, and as a reaction to the Jordanian parliamentary elections underway at the time that Maqdisi authored a polemic entitled *Al-Deemoqratiyya Deen (Democracy is a Religion)*, in which he argued that turning to democracy constitutes the equivalent of conversion from Islam into another religion and hence is tantamount to apostasy.^{22 23} Again, this is a pioneering work whose arguments Zarqawi and al-Qaeda would later use to discredit the Iraqi elections of January 2005.

Zarqawi and Maqdisi were separately arrested in late March and early April 1994 by Jordanian authorities in light of what became known as the Baya'at Al-Imam Group, although Maqdisi denies that his organization had ever carried this name.^{24 25} They were tried, convicted and given life sentences.

About fourteen men were convicted in the Baya'at Al-Imam case. They initially spent their sentences in Jordan's Mukhaberat prison, mostly in solitary confinement. They were later shunted around individually to many state prisons around Jordan before being re-united in April 1995 in the Suwaqa prison.²⁶ There, the organizational model of Tawhed wel Jihad, with Maqdisi being the ideologue of the group while Zarqawi served as its 'operations' leader or emir, was replicated. Maqdisi argued that since Zarqawi was an East Bank Jordanian with strong tribal roots in the Bani Hassan tribe, then he would be in a better position to confront Jordanian authorities than someone with Palestinian origins like himself.²⁷ However, in the Al Jazeera interview, Maqdisi minimizes the importance of giving allegiance to Zarqawi at the time by saying it was only for the limited scope of regulating prison life.²⁸

The various prisons Maqdisi and his group were detained in contained an eclectic group of Islamist dissidents, and Maqdisi was busy at work arguing and refuting their ways of thinking, while Zarqawi provided the muscle and protection for such an ideological turf war in a confined space. A hint of such an encounter is evident in an updated introduction to *Millet Ibrahim*, where Maqdisi claims that he was accused by the Hizbul Tahrir as someone who is trying to reconcile with Jews and Christians because Maqdisi had chosen the Jewish prophet 'Ibrahim, or Abraham, as his spiritual guide.²⁹

These experiences of arguing with other currents of radical Islamic thought led Maqdisi to expand on an earlier treatise called *Ishba'a al-nadher fi kashf shubuhat Marji'et al-'asr* (*Exposing the Vagaries of Today's Marji'eh*).³⁰ A common vitriolic theme in Maqdisi's work begins to emerge after his first stint in prison, one of railing against the Marji'eh, or prevaricators, and "those who delay" action against the unbelievers. This line of thinking has also influenced authors sympathetic to al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia (Zarqawi's new organization since October 2004) to denounce neo-Salafist groups such as Muslim Clerics Association and the Iraqi Islamic Party (an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood) as Marji'eh.³¹ However, the pioneer of re-introducing the concept of Marji'eh and relating it to contemporary Salafist groups is Sheikh Safar Al-Hawali, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the topic.³²

After four years together in prison, Maqdisi and Zarqawi were released by royal pardon in March 1999 upon the ascension of King Abdullah II. They met briefly one last time after their release, before Zarqawi went off to refuge in Afghanistan under the Taliban.³³ Maqdisi was not in favor of his followers going off to jihad in Afghanistan, and lamented the loss of some of his more astute students. But in Zarqawi's case, Maqdisi felt that although he could be of some use in Jordan, he was not a critical element in proselytizing for Salafi-Jihadism.³⁴

The Rupture

After they had parted ways, Maqdisi found himself hauled back into prison on charges of inspiring terrorist activities against Jordanian targets in 2000, while Zarqawi was allowed by the Taliban to set up a training camp for Jordanian, Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese jihadists near Herat. Apparently at the time, Zarqawi was still true to his teacher and carried pronounced ideological differences with al-Qaeda's leadership. But that did not prevent them from hosting and supporting him in a bid to recruit more disciples from areas other than Egypt and the Persian Gulf, which was their forte.³⁵

Zarqawi's trajectory led him from Afghanistan to Northern Iraq and then, after the American invasion and toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime, he became the leader of a nascent jihadist group called Al-Tawhid wel Jihad.³⁶

The first signs of rupture between Maqdisi and Zarqawi appeared in a letter titled "Al-Zarqawi, munaseha wa munasera" ("Al-Zarqawi: Advice and Support"), and in a simultaneously published booklet, *Waqafat me'a themerat al-jihad* (*An Appraisal of the Fruits of Jihad*) dated Rabi' Al-Thani 1425 AH (July 2004) and written in the Qefqefa prison.³⁷ This was Maqdisi's first critique of what he had been hearing of Zarqawi's tactics in Iraq. In the Al Jazeera interview, Maqdisi claims that he only wrote the two tracts after learning that Abu Anes As-Shami had been arrested.³⁸ Shami was one of Maqdisi's star pupils, and when he initially joined Zarqawi, Maqdisi felt relieved that the jihadist group would have an able theological arbiter to clarify thorny issues of religious legality. However, it seems that Shami was still alive and free when Maqdisi went public with his criticism, according to Zarqawi who wrote that he cannot forget the tears Shami shed when he saw the look of sadness upon Zarqawi's face while reading the text.³⁹

Zarqawi did not respond to the criticism at the time. However, Maqdisi's stinging disparagement might have contributed to Zarqawi changing tack and pledging allegiance to Osama Bin Laden in October 2004, and renaming his organization as al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia. This response came almost a year later; after Maqdisi's release and subsequent publicizing of his disapproval of his former student during a very important interview with Al Jazeera.

The Back and Forth

On December 28, 2004, the Jordanian State Security Court found Maqdisi innocent of the charges leveled against him four years earlier.⁴⁰ He was released on June 28, 2005 and it was hoped by Jordanian authorities that a public rift between him and Zarqawi would dent the latter's leadership of the jihadists in Iraq.⁴¹

Shortly after his release, Maqdisi taped an interview with Al Jazeera that was aired on July 5, throughout which he re-iterates most of what he had written by way of earlier criticism and defends himself by saying that these ideas are not new and that they are enshrined in a lengthy treatise he had written earlier titled *Al-risaleh al-thalathiniyeh fi at-tahdheer min al-ghilow fi at-takfir* (*The Thirtieth Letter on Cautioning Against Excesses in Rendering the Verdict of Unbelief*).⁴²

Maqdisi's key point in the interview was:

My project is not to blow-up a bar, my project is not to blow-up a cinema, my project is not kill an officer who has tortured me...My project is to bring back to the Islamic Nation its glories and to establish the Islamic state that provides refuge to every Muslim, and this is a grand and large project that does not come by small vengeful acts. It requires the education of a Muslim generation, it requires long-term planning, it requires the participation of all the learned men and sons of this Islamic Nation, and since I do not have the resources for this project then I will not implicate my brothers...in a small material act that is wished for by the enemies of our nation to throw our youths behind prison bars...

...Every stage has its priorities, and at this stage I do not want Iraq or any other place to become a furnace for the sons of this movement...

...They may call these retractions or re-evaluations, let them call it what they may, this talk is not new for us and since when did we say otherwise? Since when did we speak of killing women and children? Since when did we speak of killing the laymen of the Shia? Since when did we say anything of the such?⁴³

Maqdisi criticizes overindulgence in employing suicide bombings against the 'enemy,' and that such means should only be used under conditions of necessity. "I do not shut the door on these missions, but I also do not fling the door wide open," he says. Maqdisi puts suicide bombings in the category of 'exceptional' and not 'original' in the realm of jihad. He argues against taking one's life in the first place and cautions against collateral damage by drawing a *qiyas*, or analogy, that had been employed by previous Islamic scholars in taking the middle-ground on the issue of the *tirs*, or those who the enemy uses as human shields.⁴⁴

The issue of the *tirs* or *tatarrus* has become one of the most important points of contention among radical Islamists since Zarqawi issued his letter entitled

“Wa ‘aad ahfad Ibn Al-‘Alqemi” (“The Grandchildren of Ibn Al-‘Alqemi Have Returned”), which is a diatribe against the Shias of Iraq.⁴⁵ Zarqawi provides a variety of justifications for wholesale casualties caused by suicide operations by pointing out that the Shias are reprobates and that if their status as unbelievers is in dispute, then it is lawful to shed their blood by the analogy of the tirs, since the Shia—willingly or unwillingly—are in the way of targeting the ‘crusaders’.

On the question of the Shias, Maqdisi says that he is of the opinion of Ibn Taymiyya in not declaring Shia laypeople as unbelievers, and that “as [Ibn Taymiyya] says in his fatwa under the section of fighting the rebels that one should not equate [the Shia] with the Jews and the Christians as to how they are fought.”⁴⁶ Maqdisi warns that taking the campaign against the Shia even further would lead to *fitna*, or upheaval, among the Muslims and would deflect energy and attention from fighting the enemy. He goes on to say:

The expansion of the field of killing Shias and sanctioning the spilling of their blood is due to a fatwa that emerged during the Iraq-Iran War from under the hands of regime clerics in order to justify that war at the time when the regimes of the [Persian] Gulf were all standing behind Saddam.

There is no justification according to Maqdisi in targeting the mosques and holy places of the Shia, since “the laypeople of the Shia are like the laypeople of the Sunna, I don’t say 100%, but some of these laypeople only know how to pray and fast and do not know the details of [the Shia] sect.”

The Triumph of ‘Battlefield’ Logic over Theology

A few days after the Al Jazeera interview, Zarqawi’s response began floating around jihadist websites.⁴⁷ He hit back with a vengeance. Although maintaining a respectful tone towards his former tutor, he comes back to say that Maqdisi is essentially a relic of the past, and that he is now “a soldier of Osama bin Laden.” Zarqawi hints that Maqdisi is being used as a tool by the enemies of Islam who are “waging the largest crusader campaign of our times.” Feigning hurt and bewilderment, Zarqawi says that it is now clear to him after viewing the interview, and from the earlier letters, that the matter is beyond being a lapse of judgment on the part of his former ‘friend’. Zarqawi goes on to say that Maqdisi was but one of several early influences on his thinking. He said that he never sought to emulate a teacher and if that had been his goal, he would have found someone more learned than Maqdisi.

Whereas Maqdisi claimed ownership to the name Tawhid wel Jihad, and that Zarqawi had been a follower of his doctrine, Zarqawi admonishes Maq-

disi for claiming to have brought about a new doctrine when he had claimed all along to following in the footsteps of the salaf.

After re-affirming some examples of Shia reprobation, Zarqawi says:

He who knows their situation in Iraq would surely realize that they are no longer laypeople in the sense you put, for they have become soldiers for the unbeliever occupiers, and the eyes that watch the true mujahedeen, and would Ja'afari and Hakim and other reprobates have come into power had it not been for the votes of these lay-people?! And it is unjust to cite a fatwa from Ibn Taymiyyeh's era and have it apply to the reprobates today without judging the differences between the two eras, and then there are scholars who have spoken of lay Shias as unbelievers like Sheikh Hmoud Al-'Aqla' may he rest in peace, and Sheikh Suleiman Al-'Alwan and Sheikh Ali Al-Khudhair (may God set them free) and Sheikh Abi Abdullah Al-Muhajir and Sheikh Al-Rashoud may he rest in peace, and others.

Zarqawi makes a play at internal Iraqi sensibilities by saying that his targeting of the Shia is in response to their own provocations of the Sunnis and alliance with the 'crusaders,' and that in this sense they were the transgressors.

Zarqawi tells Maqdisi that "I can strongly repudiate many of the errors in the judgment you had rendered, but this strength and harshness I save for the enemies of [our] religion and not to my brothers." He tells him that the 'crusaders,' secularists, the Shias, the Islamic Party, and the Marji'eh are gladly distributing these criticisms against jihad. He also strongly rebukes Maqdisi for calling the jihad in Iraq a 'furnace' by citing Bin Laden's and Dhawahiri's support for what he claims is a patent victory in Iraq. Zarqawi tells him:

You should have waited until you got a more accurate sense of the reality we live with here, then you could chose whichever theological avenues you would like to advise [us] on, and we would employ what is worthy [of your opinions], and what is otherwise then we would point out to you our theological opinion and exercise our judgment according to the reality we live in and which you are ignorant of due to your distance from it.

The Final Tally

Maqdisi was re-arrested by Jordanian authorities on July 6. What was intended as a public rift between tutor and pupil became a very big embarrassment to the Jordanian government. Not only did Maqdisi not forcefully denounce Zarqawi, but the latter appeared as the 'hero' with battlefield

credentials.⁴⁸ A couple of hours after he was hauled back to prison, a statement attributed to Maqdisi was broadcast on the web and he had this to say:

[Zarqawi] is the beloved brother and hero that is seeking to defend the sanctities of [our] religion...Our mujahedeen brothers in Iraq have their own interpretations and choices that they choose as they see fit in the battlefield that we are distant from.⁴⁹

Maqdisi—once on the cutting edge of radicalism—has been upstaged by Zarqawi, a man with very little tolerance for the intricacies of theology and hence even less hesitant to employ the most murderous methods for the most murderous justifications.

However, the arguments made by Maqdisi may re-appear in the internal debate of radicalized Islam should Zarqawi, who is currently riding high on success in Iraq, begin to falter and fail. Critics would begin to point to Zarqawi's excessive methods for such an eventuality; resulting in an inability to gather more support from mainstream Muslims. Maqdisi might still provide the ideological heft to firm up such critiques.

But for the time being, one struggles to give a label to the new phenomenon of Zarqawi. Should we call it Salafi-Jihadism Plus? Or just plain-old Zarqawism?

NOTES

1 Saudi writer Mishari Al-Dhayedi, who had met Maqdisi in the early 1990s in Mecca, puts Maqdisi's year of birth as 1962. He also claims to have seen an earlier handwritten manuscript of Maqdisi's seminal book *Millet Ibrahim* as signed by "Abu Muhammed 'Issam bin Taher Al-Barqawi Al-Hafi Al-'Uteibi Al-Maqdisi", *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper (London), "Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi... Rihlet fikir...(Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi...The Journey of a thought that sows radicalism and reaps blood)", Issue no. 9718, July 7, 2005.

2 *Nida' Al-Islam Magazine* (Unknown), "Hiwar ma'a al-Sheikh...Interview with imprisoned Sheikh Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi; a meeting from behind the prison bars of the apostates", *Jumada Al-Aakhira*, 1418 AH (October 1997 conducted in Jordan's Balqa prison).

3 Al-'Uteibi was the leader of the 'Ikhwan movement that took over the Ka'aba Mosque in Mecca through an armed uprising on November 20, 1979, and was later captured and executed, see Joshua Teitelbaum, *Holier than thou: Saudi Arabia's Islamic opposition*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000

4 *Asharq Al-Awsat*, "Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi...rihlet fikir...". Dhayedi also claimed in an earlier article that Maqdisi became an underground member of a Kuwait-based offshoot of 'Uteibi's group, *Ahl Al-Hadeeth Al-Thawriyeen*, but does not re-state this claim in later articles, see *Asharq Al-Awsat* (London), "Shuyukh al-'unf katheeroon...(The Sheikhs of Violence are Plentiful, but Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi Remains the Most Important)", Issue no. 9178, January 14, 2004.

5 Available in Arabic from Maqdisi's official website, Al-Tawheed wel Jihad, www.tawhed.ws. Millet Ibrahim, according to an introduction to the book Maqdisi wrote several years later, started out as a hand-written chapter that was given out by him to some Algerian jihadists in Pakistan. The completed manuscript was dated 1405 AH (1984 AD).

6 From www.tawhed.ws, undated.

7 Author's translation.

8 See Al-Sheikh Al-'Imam Aymen Al-Dhawahiri, Al-wala' wel bara', 'aqeeda manqouleh wa waqi' mafqoud, (Loyalty and Renunciation: A Mandated Ideology and a Missing Reality), dated Shawwal 1423H (December 2002), from www.tawhed.ws

9 Maqdisi cites a hadith attributed to Ali bin Abi Taleb that he and the Prophet Muhammed had 'vandalized' the idols of the Ka'aba even during what is called the Meccan period of Muhammed's revelations. They acted under cover of the night and hid later in the alleyways of Mecca, according to the hadith. In a later introduction to Millet Ibrahim, Maqdisi writes that this hadith is the cornerstone of his book.

10 See article by Saud bin Saleh Al-Sarhan in Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Al-wala's wel bara', al-ideologiyeh al-jadideh... (Loyalty and Renunciation... The New Ideology of Islamist Movements)", Issue no. 9192, January 28, 2004. Al-Sarhan tries to debunk this line of thinking through the traditional establishmentarian argument of putting the proponents of al-wala wel bara' in the league of the Kharijites. The Khariji epithet has been in use for decades by religious clerics loyal to Muslim regimes against radical Islamists, see Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 107-113, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985. Dhayedi says that Millet Ibrahim was similar to Seyyid Qutub's Ma'alim fil Tariq in the extent of its influence and enunciation of Salafi-Jihadism, see Asharq Al-Awsat, "Shuyukh al-'unf katheeroon..."

11 From www.tawhed.ws, dated 1407 AH (1986 AD). In an updated introduction dated 1422 AH (2001AD) Maqdisi lauds the Koranic schools of Pakistan under the tutelage of the Deobandi sheikhs that later spawned the Taliban.

12 A claim made by his son Muhammed cited in Al-Hayat (London), "Min menzil al-Maqdisi... (From Maqdisi's house hours before his arrest)", July 5, 2005. This home-schooling may have contributed to his teenage son 'Umar going to Iraq and joining the jihad. Maqdisi does not know the fate of his son who may have been killed or is in American custody, Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Al-Maqdisi la ya'arif... (Maqdisi does not know the fate of his son)", Issue no. 9718, July 7, 2005

13 Asharq Al-Awsat, "Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi... rihlet fikir..."

14 From www.tawhed.ws, 2nd edition 1421 AH (2000 AD), the manuscript is dated 1410 AH (1989 AD).

15 Maqdisi claims that Abu Mus'ab Al-Zarqawi tried to convince Bin Laden to employ Maqdisi's books as curricula for Al-Qaeda's youth, but that Bin Laden rejected this by saying that that would anger the Saudi government. Al Jazeera TV program transcript, "Interview with Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi... Salafi Jihadism", presented by Yasser Abu Hilaleh, aired July 6, 2005, available from www.aljazeera.net

16 Maqdisi actually met Al-Ma'athem in Jordan prior to the former's arrest, see Asharq Al-Awsat, "Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi... rihlet fikir..."

17 Maqdisi also lukewarmly criminalizes 'Uteibi for the sacrilegious act of carrying arms in the Ka'aba mosque and for fighting during the month of Muharrem, but qualifies that by saying that the Saudi government was the aggressor.

18 Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Zarqawi: munaseha wa munasera* (Al-Zarqawi: Advice and Support), Jumada Athani, 1425 AH (July 2004 AD), written in the Qafqafa prison.

19 Al-Hayat (London), "Al-Zarqa anbetet Al-Khalayleh...(Zarqa produced Khalayleh and Maqdisi and was swarmed by returnees from Kuwait)", December 15, 2004. See also a book by Fuad Hussein, *Zarqawi: jeel al-Qaeda al-thani* (Zarqawi: the Second Generation of Al-Qaeda), serialized in *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (London), Vol. 17, Issue no. 4964-4978, May 12-29, 2005

20 According to the account given by Muhammed Abul-Muntasir, an early recruit of Tawhid wel Jihad and who later spent time in prison with Maqdisi and parted ways with him over Maqdisi ruling that suicide missions against Israeli targets were illegitimate because of their suicidal nature, see Fuad Hussein, *Zarqawi: jeel al-Qaeda al-thani*.

21 Nida' Al-'Islam Magazine, "Hiwar ma'a al-Sheikh..." In the Aljazeera interview, Maqdisi identifies the leader of the group as Abdel-Hadi Deghles (Abu 'Ubeida), who was arrested on an unrelated issue and revealed to the Jordanian authorities the source of the grenades. Deghles was later killed in Northern Iraq during the American-led attack on Ansar Al-'Islam in March 2003.

22 Nida' Al-'Islam Magazine, "Hiwar ma'a al-Sheikh..."

23 From www.tawhed.ws, undated.

24 See Fuad Hussein, *Zarqawi: Jeel al-Qaeda al-Thani*.

25 Al-Jazeera TV program transcript, "Interview with Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi...Salafi Jihadism". See also Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, *kash al-litham 'amen wussifou bi tandheem Baya'at Al-Imam* (Revealing the Facts About Those Who Were Described as the Movement of Baya'at Al-Imam), Suwaqa prison, Shawwal 1416 AH (February 1996 AD).

26 Fuad Hussein met Maqdisi and Zarqawi in Suwaqa where he himself was a prisoner at the time for violating journalistic laws, see Fuad Hussein, *Zarqawi: jeel al-Qaeda al-thani*.

27 Maqdisi claims that he remained overall emir for about a year, but then gave up the mantle to Zarqawi in order to pursue scholarly work. He puts the number of individuals in this group between 15 to 30 men during various times. There is a hint of resentment, echoed by Muhammed Abul-Muntasir's account, that most of the group recognized more pronounced leadership abilities in Zarqawi, see Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, *Al-Zarqawi: munaseha wa munasera*.

28 Al-Jazeera TV program transcript, "Interview with Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi...Salafi Jihadism".

29 Maqdisi identifies this group as "those who call for Khilafa" in reference to Hizbul Tahrir, see Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, *Millet Ibrahim*. The leader of Hizbul Tahrir in the Suwaqa prison was 'Atta Abu Rishteh, the official spokesman of the group, see Fuad Hussein, *Zarqawi: Jeel al-Qaeda al-Thani*.

30 From www.tawhed.ws, dated 1420 AH (1999 AD). Maqdisi claims in the introduction to have started work on this book in 1407 AH (1986 AD) and a wider version had come out in 1412 AH (1991 AD).

31 Anonymous, *Hay'et 'Ulama' al-Muslimeen fi mizan al-Tawheed wel Jihad* (The Muslim Clerics Association on the scales of Monotheism and Jihad), undated, from www.tawhed.ws. Dr. Abu Mariah Al-Qureshi, *Ar-red 'ala manhaj al-Hizb al-'Islami* (Retort to the Platform of the Islamic Party), undated, 'Occupied Baghdad'.

32 Al-Hawali is one of the most influential Saudi sheikhs of what is called the *sahweh*, or "age of awakening" that tried to imbue the Wahhabi establishment with a more activist spirit. Sa-far bin Abdel-Rahman Al-Hawali, *Dhahiret Al-'Irja' fil fikr al-'Islami* (The Specter of 'Irja' in

Islamic Thought), PhD dissertation, Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia, 1406 AH (1985 AD), supervised by Dr. Muhammed Qutub (Seyyid Qutub's brother), from www.tawhed.ws. The theologically dense topic of the Marji'eh as the differentiation between neo-Salafists and neo-Wahhabis versus traditional Salafism and Wahhabism should be further explored by scholars of radical Islam.

33 Fuad Hussein, Zarqawi: jeel al-Qaeda al-thani.

34 Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, Al-Zarqawi: munaseha wa munasera

35 Account provided by Muhammed Mekkawi (Saif Al-Adel), former Egyptian special forces officer with rank of Major who was a leading Al-Qaeda operative, in a letter to Fuad Hussein concerning Zarqawi's beginnings, see Fuad Hussein, Zarqawi: jeel al-Qaeda al-thani.

36 Maqdisi was not surprised that Zarqawi had chosen this name for his organization in reference to Maqdisi's website, but he claims that it was not done with any coordination between the two and hopes that the name is not sullied by wrongful actions. Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, Al-Zarqawi: munaseha wa munasera

37 From www.tawhed.ws

38 Abu Anes As-Shami was the nom de guerre for Omar Yousif Juma'a, a Jordanian of Palestinian origin (his family was from Tulkarem) born in 1969. As-Shami was the head of a religious foundation in Amman and left to join Zarqawi in Baghdad during the summer of 2003, later becoming the shari'a mufti for the Tawhid wel Jihad group. He was killed in a confrontation with US forces in September 2004, see Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Meqtel Abu Anes As-Shami dharbah...(The Death of Abu Anes As-Shami is a major blow to Zarqawi's organization)", Issue no. 9423, September 24, 2004.

39 Abu Musa'ab Al-Zarqawi, Bayan wa tawdheeh lima atharehu Al-Sheikh Al-Maqdisi fir liqa'ih me'a qanat Aljazeera (Clarification Over What Sheikh Maqdisi Raised in his Interview With Al-jazeera Channel), undated, began circulating over several websites around July 8, 2005.

40 Al-Hayat (London), "Al-Urden: tabri'et Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi... (Jordan: Exonerating Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, the Spiritual Father of Zarqawi)", December 28, 2004

41 Article by Yasser Abu Hilaleh in Al-Ghad (Amman), "Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi", July 14, 2005

42 From www.tawhed.ws, dated Ramadhan 1419 AH (December 1998 AD), written in Al-Jafr prison.

43 Maqdisi supported and was "gladdened" by the 9/11 attacks, and had called Bin Laden "the imam of the mujaheddin in this age", see Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi, "Hiwar ma'a mejellet... (Interview with al-'Asr internet magazine)", 1423 AH (2002 AD), from www.tawhed.ws. Maqdisi's official website features tens of anti-Shia polemics, poems and fatwas, and he has consistently referred to Shias as rafidha, or reprobates, in his writings.

44 Traditional Salafists loathe the concept of qiyas, even though Hanbalite doctrine does not categorically reject it, see Vincenzo Oliveti, *Terror's Source: The Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and its Consequences*, p. 29, Amadeus Books, 2002, Birmingham.

45 Posted on several websites in the early part of May, 2005. For infighting among radicals, see Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Kitabat fi mawaqi' usuliyyeh... (Writing in Fundamentalist Websites Attack the 'tatarus' of Zarqawi)", Issue no. 9670, May 20, 2005

46 Influential 13th century Islamic scholar, see Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 94-107

47 Abu Musa'ab Al-Zarqawi, Bayan wa tawdheeh lima atharehu Al-Sheikh Al-Maqdisi fir liqa'ih me'a qanat Aljazeera.

48 Al-Hayat (London), "Sibaq fi al-'Urdun bayn...(A race in Jordan between a government calling for moderate Islam...and a society that is becoming more impressed with radicalism)", August 1, 2005

49 Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Al-Maqdisi 'u'aed 'itiqaluhu...(Maqdisi was re-arrested after a conversation he had with Zarqawi)", Issue 9718, July 7, 2005. According to sources close to him, Maqdisi intends to write four new books, see Asharq Al-Awsat (London), "Itiqal Abu Muhammed... (Abu Muhammed Al-Maqdisi's arrest was demanded by several Arab states)", Issue 9719, July 8, 2005.