

The Creedal Foundations of Authoritarianism: A Critical Study of Al-Madkhaliyya Al-Jamiyya's Role in Enabling Despotism and the Prospects for Da'wah Reform

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the profound correlation between political authoritarianism and the creedal foundations promoted by the "Al-Madkhaliyya Al-Jamiyya" current in contemporary Arab societies. While existing literature often views this movement through a purely theological lens, this research argues that it functions as a strategic intellectual framework designed to stabilize despotic regimes. Using a conceptual-analytical approach, the study deconstructs how core creedal concepts—such as "Absolute Obedience" (Sam' wa Ta'ah) and "The Sanctity of the Ruler"—have been instrumentalized to paralyze political consciousness and dismantle any legitimate resistance. The research reveals that this discourse creates a "creedal shield" that immunizes power from accountability. Finally, the study proposes a revitalized Da'wah methodology that seeks to reclaim the "Objectives of Sharia" (Maqasid) and empower the Muslim mind with a critical, independent perspective, effectively countering the systematic use of religion to sustain oppression.

Keywords: al-Madkhaliyya al-Jāmiyy. Political Theology. Authoritarianism .al-sam' wa-l-ṭā'a . Da'wa Reform. Contemporary Salafism

INTRODUCTION

In the complex landscape of contemporary Islamic political thought, the emergence of the *al-Madkhaliyya al-Jāmiyya* trend represents a significant shift in the functional role of creed (*'aqīda*). While Islamic history has witnessed various manifestations of political quietism, this particular movement has refined the traditional concept of "obedience to the ruler" into a sophisticated ideological mechanism that operates within the framework of the modern nation-state. This study does not merely treat *al-Madkhaliyya* as a marginal theological phenomenon; rather, it identifies it as a pivotal intellectual catalyst that provides the "theological oxygen" necessary for authoritarianism to breathe in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. By systematically merging legalistic rigor with absolute loyalty to the state, the movement has succeeded in creating a religious discourse that views any form of civil accountability or political reform as an ontological threat to the unity of the *Umma*.

However, despite the burgeoning academic interest in contemporary Salafi movements, existing scholarship on *al-Madkhaliyya al-Jāmiyya* has remained largely confined to historical trajectories or descriptive jurisprudential accounts. While these studies provide valuable insights into the movement's emergence during the geopolitical shifts of the 1990s, there is a conspicuous analytical lacuna regarding the functional transformation of creed into a systematic tool for political neutralization. Current literature often overlooks how traditional theological concepts are not merely preserved but are strategically re-engineered to erode the foundations of civic consciousness and collective moral agency. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by deconstructing the "Creedal Shield" that provides theological immunity to authoritarian structures, shifting the focus from what the movement *believes* to how those beliefs *function* as a mechanism of political control.

To achieve this, the article is structured into four main sections. First, it examines the semantic transformation of foundational terms such as *al-jamā'a* and *walī al-amr*. Second, it analyzes the weaponization of "civil strife" (*fitna*) as a means to paralyze the public sphere. Third, it deconstructs the reduction of *hisba* (public accountability) into a tool for clerical neutralization. Finally, the study concludes by proposing a reformist *da'wa*

framework centered on "Creedal Empowerment" and the reclamation of the moral independence of the Muslim mind.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic literature addressing Salafi movements has historically focused on their historical evolution or jurisprudential details. However, there is a distinct lack of critical analysis regarding the creedal foundations that serve as a direct catalyst for political despotism.

Studies such as **Al-Khalidi (2018)** treat Al-Madkhaliyya as a traditional scholarly movement dedicated to "Purist Creed" *"Aqidah"* (and political neutrality). This paper argues that such a perspective is insufficient, as it fails to see how "neutrality" is itself a **creedal construct** designed to empower the status quo. On the other hand, **Al-Harbi (2020)** and **Ghannouchi (2017)** move toward a political critique, suggesting that these currents function as ideological tools for regimes. Yet, their analysis often remains at the political surface without deconstructing the **creedal mechanisms**—such as the distortion of "Loyalty and Disavowal" *"Wala' wa Bara"*—that make this tool so effective.

While **Al-Jubouri (2022)** provides an excellent internal critique of the contradictions in Madkhali texts, the "Research Gap" remains in the absence of a study that links **creedal pillars** directly to the "Structural Oppression" in Arab societies. This research fills this gap by demonstrating that Al-Madkhaliyya is not just a theological choice, but a **creedal re-engineering** of Islam to suit the needs of authoritarianism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Qualitative Conceptual-Creedal Analysis to examine the functional relationship between religious discourse and political power. The methodology is designed to move beyond traditional descriptive approaches, focusing instead on the "Deconstruction of Creedal Structures." This is achieved through the following steps:

1. **Semantic Analysis of Creedal Terms** :The research traces the transformation of foundational terms such as *Al-Jama'ah* (The Community), *Wali al-Amr* (The Ruler), and *Fitna* (Civil Strife). It analyzes how these terms are stripped of their ethical and contractual essence to become " **Creedal Mandates** " for unconditional submission.
2. **Textual and Contextual Critical Review** :The study analyzes primary Madkhali texts and fatwas, linking their literalist interpretations to the specific political needs of authoritarian regimes.
3. **Synthesis of Variables** :The methodology treats " **Madkhali Creedal Pillars** " as the Independent Variable and " **Political Despotism** " as the Dependent Variable, establishing a causal link that explains how religious re-engineering leads to social and political paralysis. As illustrated in Figure (1)

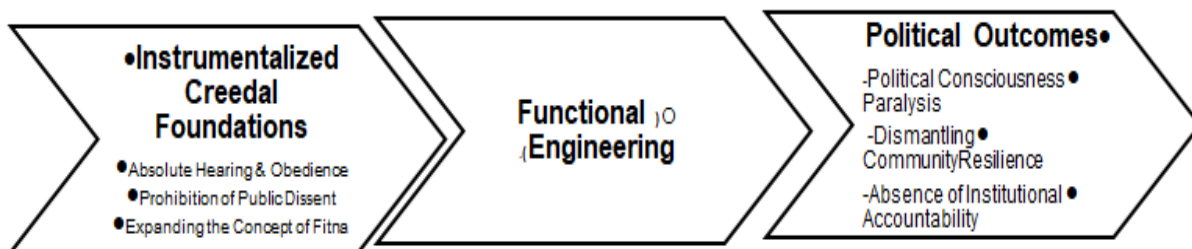


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of Creedal Despotism.

This diagram illustrates how the instrumentalization of religious tenets (Independent Variable) leads to the stabilization of authoritarian regimes (Dependent Variable) through a systematic process of functional engineering.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From "Contractual Agency" to "Divine Right": The Creedal Sanctification of Power The analysis reveals that the Madkhali discourse has shifted the concept of Imamah (Leadership) from a political contract based on justice to a creedal pillar based on absolute submission. By utilizing selective interpretations of "Hearing and Obeying," the discourse creates a "Creedal Immunization" for the ruler. In this framework, the ruler is no longer an agent of the people who can be dismissed for injustice, but a sacred entity whose authority is intertwined with the believer's sound creed. Consequently, any political accountability is framed as a "creedal deviation," effectively shielding the despot from any legal or moral oversight.

The Weaponization of "Fitna": Paralysis of the Public Sphere

The study identifies the weaponization of the creedal concept of Fitna (Civil Strife) to suppress civic engagement. In Madkhali discourse, Fitna is expanded to encompass any form of peaceful protest, intellectual criticism, or demand for rights. This creedal intimidation forces the collective consciousness to retreat from the public sphere into a state of "forced passivity." By framing stability as a religious end in itself—even under tyranny—this discourse dismantles the society's moral capacity to resist oppression, branding the "struggle for justice" as a "threat to the community's unity".

Neutralizing the Clergy: The Reduction of "Hisbah "

Finally, the research demonstrates how the creedal re-engineering of the principle of "Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil" (Hisbah) serves authoritarian ends. By restricting advice to the ruler to "secret corridors," the Madkhali current effectively cancels the public role of the scholar as a guardian of justice. This reductionism transforms the clergy into "state-sponsored apologists" whose primary creedal duty is to justify the ruler's actions rather than guiding them. This erosion of public Hisbah provides a structural vacuum that allows corruption and despotism to flourish without religious or popular checks.

As illustrated in Figure (2). "...

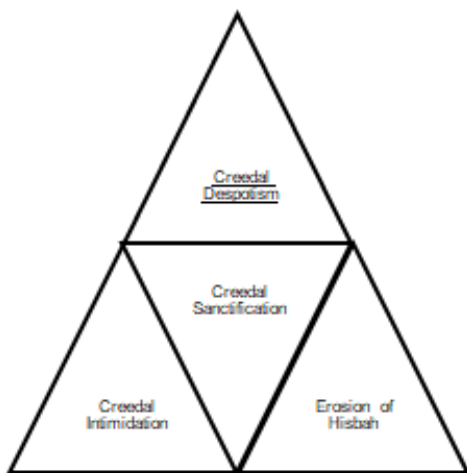


Figure 2: The Triad of Submission in Madkhali Discourse.

This model demonstrates the interconnectedness of three creedal pillars that function collectively to immunize the political authority against any form of democratic or moral accountability.

Towards a Reformist Da'wah Framework: Counter-Creedal Empowerment

To dismantle the creedal pillars of subservience, this study proposes a revitalized Da'wah methodology that shifts from "Passive Indoctrination" to "Critical Creedal Empowerment." This framework is based on three strategic pillars:

1. **Restoring the "Creed of Justice :**"Da'wah must re-establish that Justice) *Adl* (and Human Dignity)*Karama* (are not secondary political issues but core **creedal obligations** .Monotheism) *Tawhid* (should be taught as the ultimate liberation of the human mind from all forms of earthly tyranny.
2. **Reconstructing "Political Hisbah :**"The proposed methodology calls for the reactivation of "Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil" as a **collective oversight mechanism** .This means educating the public that holding authorities accountable is a religious necessity for the survival of the *Ummah* ,breaking the monopoly of "secret advice" that has been used to shield corruption.
3. **Intellectual Decolonization of the Muslim Mind :**Da'wah must focus on" **Creedal Literacy** ", enabling individuals to distinguish between authentic prophetic tradition and the "functionalized interpretations" used by state-sponsored discourses to enforce submission.

The Dynamics of Creedal Enabling: A Synthesis

Before concluding, it is essential to visualize the operational cycle of this phenomenon. The study identifies a **"Triad of Submission"** engineered by Madkhali discourse through systematic methodological mechanisms:

I. The Creedal Input: The Semantic Redefinition of Obedience

This stage involves a "theological displacement" of Sharia texts. Specifically, the prophetic exhortation: "Obey him, even if your back is whipped" is stripped of its original context—intended as individual ethical guidance to avoid communal strife—and is instead re-engineered into an "Absolute Creedal Pillar." This confers a quasi-theocratic immunity upon the ruler, constructing a psychological barrier that prevents the believer from conceptually articulating any form of accountability.

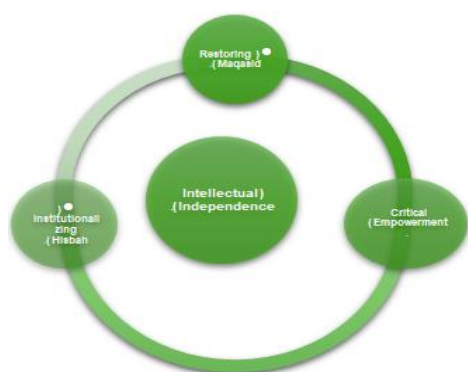
II. The Structural Output: Dismantling Public Consciousness and Neutralizing Hisbah

In this phase, the prophetic etiquette of "Private Advice" is weaponized to prohibit all forms of institutional oversight or constructive public dissent. By framing any public critique as a violation of the "Methodology of the Salaf," the discourse effectively dismantles the principle of Political Hisbah (Public Accountability). This leaves the socio-political structure devoid of internal check-and-balance mechanisms, rendering the "Ummah" functionally passive.

III. The Resultant Reality: Metaphysical Despotism and the Shielding of Power

This cycle culminates in a form of governance that is profoundly immune to reform, as any call for change is branded a "Betrayal of the Faith." The gravity of this phenomenon lies in the fact that authoritarianism is no longer merely physical—enforced by security apparatuses—but has become "Metaphysical." It resides within the very conscience of the subject, where submission to oppression is internalized as a spiritual virtue and a religious necessity for maintaining the "Unity of the Congregation" (Al-Jama'ah). **As illustrated in Figure (3)** ."

The Creedal Liberation Model



As illustrated in **Figure (3)**, the study proposes the "**Creedal Liberation Model**" as a normative alternative to the discourse of submission. This framework illustrates the transition from political subservience to **Intellectual Agency** through three integrated dimensions:

1. **The Maqasid Integration:** Transitioning from a literalist, selective reading of texts to a "Purposive Approach" (*Maqasid al-Sharia*). Here, the preservation of Religion, Life, and Intellect is seen as a mandate for justice and human dignity, rather than a justification for absolute power.
2. **Critical Literacy:** Cultivating the believer's ability to distinguish between "Divine Revelation" and "Political Interpretation." This empowers the individual to reject the "sacralization" of authoritarianism and restores the cognitive autonomy of the Muslim mind.
3. **The Restoration of Public Oversight (Hisbah):** Reclaiming the principle of *Hisbah* as a collective social duty for **Public Accountability**. This transforms the "Ummah" from a passive subject into an active guardian of justice, ensuring that the ruler remains a servant of the law, not its master.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the *al-Madkhaliyya al-Jāmiyya* phenomenon is not merely a marginal religious current, but a sophisticated creedal engineering designed to provide a theological shield for political despotism. By transforming the political contract into a sacred mandate of absolute obedience, this discourse has systematically dismantled the *Umma's* capacity for accountability and resistance. The research concludes that the crisis of contemporary Arab societies is deeply rooted in this "**Metaphysical Oppression**"—"a state that effectively paralyzes the mind before the body.

Therefore, the path to political liberation must necessarily pass through **Creedal Liberation**—a *da'wa* strategy that reclaims the foundational objectives) *maqāṣid* (of Justice and Dignity. Only by restoring the intellectual independence of the Muslim mind can we effectively confront the manufactured triviality and institutionalized tyranny that threaten the future of the *Umma*. This research calls for a paradigm shift in Islamic political theology, one that transcends state-centric quietism and restores the moral agency of the individual believer.

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