Tajdīd ad-dīn: Islam and the Question of Renewal in the Thought of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī

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Abstract

One of the core debates of the Muslim scholars and thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth century was centered upon the question of whether Islam is reconcilable with modernity. It's an ongoing debate, which is still being led today. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī is arguably one of the most important and most popular Sunni Islamic authorities in the contemporary Muslim world who intensely devotes himself to this issue. He considers Islam to be comprehensive and eternally valid. By virtue of its continuous validity, Islam allows for life being subject to change, thus endorsing the renewal (*tajdīd*) of its teachings in order to respond to emerging questions of modern life and to be applicable to all eras and contexts. How should *tajdīd* be implemented, and can the teachings of Islam be reconciled with modernity? Can Islam embrace changes and new challenges created by modernity and globalization? Can the aspired *tajdīd* meet current challenges, while staying faithful to the primary principles of Islam? This essay deals with the abovementioned questions and tries to answer them by referring to al-Qaraḍāwī's concept of *tajdīd ad-dīn*. The following examination is meant to point out al-Qaraḍāwī's understanding of *tajdīd* and his opinion on the relationship between the Islamic legacy (*turāth*), modernity and the West.

Keywords: Al-Qaraḍāwī, *tajdīd*, *turāth* (Islamic legacy), *as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ* (pious Predecessors), *ijtihād* (independent reasoning), *wasaṭīya* (middle way), west, *thawābit* (unchangeable rulings), *mutaghayyirāt* (variable rulings).

1. Introduction – Brief Biographical Note

Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī is one of the best known Islamic scholars in Sunni Islam today. He was born in Egypt in 1926 and has been living in Qatar since 1961.[2] He studied Islamic theology (*uṣūl ad-dīn*) at al-Azhar University where he obtained a PhD degree in 1973. Since his early twenties, he was a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and was involved in the struggle for independence from colonialism. However, he suffered political suppression from the later nationalist Nasser regime in the 1950s. In 1997, he announced his independence from any Egyptian-based organization, including the Muslim Brotherhood. Both in 1976 and in 2004 he was requested to take the lead of the Brotherhood, but he declined, explaining that he preferred to serve all Muslims, not only one group.[3] Despite declaring his independence from all religious movements, legal, theological schools and political institutions, he is still regarded as a leading figure and the "spiritual father" of the Muslim Brotherhood. Accordingly, Gudrun Krämer describes his relationship to the latter since the early 1960s as "ambiguous".[4]

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[2] The present article is based upon the author's German-language PhD thesis, entitled: '*Mit Tradition in die Moderne: Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwis Methodologie der Fiqh-Erneuerung in Theorie und Praxis*', Köln 2016.

[3] For more details see Tammam, Husam, *Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and the Muslim Brothers. The Nature of a Special Relationship*, in: Gräf, Bettina/Skovgaard-Petersen, Jakob (eds.), *Global Mufti. The Phenomenon of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī*, London 2009, pp. 55-83.

[4] Krämer, Gudrun, "Preface", in Gräf/Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.), *Global Mufti*, p. x. For more details see Tammam, *Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī*, pp. 55-83.

The most telling sign of his ongoing strong connection with the Brotherhood is his appearance on Cairo's Tahrir Square to lead the Friday prayer on 18 February, addressing an audience estimated to exceed two million Egyptians, after being banned from leading weekly Friday prayers in Egypt 30 years ago.[5] Notwithstanding, al-Qaraḍāwī is the author of over 170 monographs and was a regular guest on *al-Jazeera* for their *Shariʿa and Life* broadcast as well as on other TV programs.[6] His last appearance on the show *ash-Shariʿa and Life* was in August 2013. Specific reasons for the discontinuation of this program are not known. However, it can be assumed that this is due to the political context in Egypt during and after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution: As a result of al-Qaraḍāwī's support of the Muslim Brotherhood and his opposition against as-Sisi's government, which he often articulated on al-Jazeera, the program was stopped, after as-Sisi's winning Saudi Arabia's and the United Arab Emirates' support.[7]

Today, he is, inter alia, the chairman of both the *European Council for Fatwa and Research* (ECFR) and the *International Union of Muslim Scholars* (IUMS).[8] As such, he enjoys world-wide popularity and increasing authority not only among Muslims in the Middle East, but also among European Muslims. He has been referred to as the "Media Mufti" or the "Global Mufti".[9] Qatar, his adopted country, is considered "of the utmost importance for Qaraḍāwī's activities".[10] From its capital, Doha, he began to preach, to give religious lessons and to appear on Qatari Radio and on TV, i. e. on *al-Jazeera* channel. Thus, he could be globally seen and heard, which earned him followers all over the world. His understanding of the media as a tool to spread the Islamic message propelled him onto the world stage. As Krämer states, "What marks him out among the scholars-cum-activists of his generation is his early involvement with the new media."[11]

By using a variety of media platforms such as books, radio, television and internet, al-Qaraḍāwī has attracted the attention of both Arabic and Western academics.[12] He has become a highly popular scholar and a controversial figure at the same time. In reaction to his approach of *tajdīd ad-dīn* ("Renewal of the Religion"), he has been criticized by Salafi oriented scholars, on the one hand, and has been called as *mujaddid* ("renovator") of the contemporary age, on the other hand.[13]

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[5] „Banned Qaradawi returns to lead Friday prayers in Egypt". Alarabiya.net. 17.02.2011, available at: http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/02/17/138093.html (last accessed: 04 June 2017).

[6] Several scholars have examined al-Qaraḍāwī's use of the new media. See for example Salvatore, Armando, "*Muslim Publics*," in: Salvatore/Eickelman Dale F. (eds.), *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Leiden 2006, pp. 1–27, Gräf, Bettina, „*Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī in Cyberspace*", in: Die Welt des Islam 47 (2007) 3-4, pp. 403-421 and Galal, Ehab, „*Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī and the New Islamic TV*", in: Gräf/Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.), *Global Mufti*, pp. 149-181 and Gräf, Bettina, „*Media fatwas and fatwa editors: Challenging and preserving Yusuf al-Qaradawi's religious authority*", in: Hudson, Leila/Adel Iskandar/ Mimi Kirk (eds.): *Before the Explosion: Media Evolution on the Eve of the Arab Spring*, Palgrave Macmillan 2014, pp. 139-157.

[7] See al-Qaraḍāwī/ʿUthmān, ʿUthmān, „*al-Auḍāʿ fī miṣr wa-sūriyā*" (21.07.2013), available at: http://www.aljazeera.net/programsarchive?resourcesId=eccbb426-19b6-46a9-abcf-155819fb2912&year=2013 (last accessed: 18 April 2015).

[8] See for more details Gräf, Bettina, "*In search of a Global Islamic Authority*", in: ISIM Review 15/Spring 2005, p. 47, Caeiro, Alexandre/al-Saify, Mahmoud, „*Qaraḍāwī in Europe, Europe in Qaraḍāwī? The Global Mufti's European Politics*", in: Gräf/Skovgaard-Petersen (eds*.), Global Mufti*, pp. 109-148, Caeiro, Alexandre, "*The making of the fatwa The production of Islamic legal expertise in Europe*", in: *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* (155), (Sept. 2011), pp. 81-100 and Gräf, Bettina/Caeiro, Alexandre, "*The European Council for Fatwa and Research and Yusuf al-Qaradawi*", in: Peter, Frank /Ortega, Rafael (eds.), *Islamist Movements in Europe: Public Religion and Islamophobia in the Modern World*, London 2014, pp. 119-125.

[9] Skovgaard-Petersoen, Jakob, „*The Global Mufti*", in: Schaebler, Birgit (ed.), *Globalization and the Muslim World. Culture, Religion and Modernity*, Syracuse 2004, p. 153 and Gräf, Bettina, „*Der Fernseh-Mufti*", in: die Tageszeitung (taz), available at: http,//www.taz.de/1/archiv/archiv/?dig=2005/02/09/a0203 (last accessed: 06 October 12.16).

[10] Gräf, Bettina/Skovgaard-Petersen, "*Introduction*", in: Gräf/Skovgaard-Petersen, *Global Mufti*, p. 3.

[11] Krämer, Gudrun, „*Drawing Boundaries. Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī on Apostasy*", in: ders./Schmidtke, Sabine (eds.), *Speaking for Islam. Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*, Leiden 2006, pp. 181-214, here p.190. See for more details Gräf, *Sheikh Yusuf*, pp. 403-421, idem., *Media fatwas,* pp. 139-157 and Galal, *Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī*, pp. 149-181 .

[12] For more details see Gräf, Bettina, "*Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī. State of research*", in: Gräf,/Skovgaard-Petersen (eds.): *Global Mufti*, pp. 17-25 and El-Wereny*, Mit Tradition*, pp. 12-30.

[13] See for instance al-ʿUdainī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr, *Rafʿ al-lithām ʿan mukhālafat al-Qaraḍāwī li-shariʿat al-islam*, Sanaa 2001, p. 4, as-Saiyid, Usāma, *al-Qaraḍāwī fī l-ʿarāʾ*, Beirut 2002, p. 14 and at-Tarkāwī, Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Juhud at-tajdīd ad-dīnī ʿinda*

The present article aims to shed light on his understanding of *tajdīd ad-dīn* in order to answer the following questions: What does he mean by *tajdīd*? How does he evaluate the relationship between traditional legacy (*turāth*) and the aimed renewal (*tajdīd*)? In how far is his concept compatible with the needs and challenges of today's age? How does he see the relation between the West and the Islamic world? To answer these questions I will first provide an overview of the main features of al-Qaraḍāwī's thought. Subsequently, I will set out his understanding of *tajdīd* in respect of the abovementioned questions.

Al-Qaraḍāwī's monograph *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida* ("For a Right Guidance of the Awakening Movement") is his first contribution relating to *tajdīd ad-dīn* in which he explicates the main characteristics of his aspired renewal. This book was essentially devoted to the "Islamic Awakening movement" (*ḥarakat aṣ-ṣaḥwa al-islāmīya*) in the 1980s, as will be demonstrated in the following.[14] In his booklet entitled *Tajdīd ad-dīn al-ladhī nanshuduh* ("The Renewal of Religion which we aspire"), which was published in 2011, he discusses the subject of Islamic-religious renewal.[15] These two publications are the main sources, upon which the present article relies.

2. An Overview on al-Qaraḍāwī's Thinking

Al-Qaraḍāwī considers the Qurʾān and the Sunna (teachings, deeds and sayings, silent approvals or disapproval of the prophet Muḥammad) as the basis for dealing with religion-related issues. The particular importance which he attaches to the Qurʾān and the Sunna is obvious in his different publications. Almost in all his works, he uses verses of the Qurʾān and/or sayings of the prophet to justify a theory or his position towards a specific theme.[16] As they do not give a detailed set of rules, he, thereby, supports the application of reason (*ʿaql*) by means of other methods such as analogy and public interest for the deduction of practical rules.[17] However, *ʿaql*, he said, must demonstrate the truth of the Qurʾān and the Sunna, though never permitted to go beyond these foundational sources.[18] In this regard, he fully recommends the adoption of the methods of the 'pious predecessors' (*minhaj as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ*) in dealing with the divine texts.[19] The adaptation of Islam to the modern world should be based upon the legacy of the past. Accordingly, contemporary scholars must have a broad picture of the knowledge of earlier generations, an immense wealth that illuminates the way. When dealing with divine texts, they should take note of ideas and legal methods which have been passed on by former generations. To remedy contemporary problems it is necessary for them to also take into consideration, the change of time, place, and living conditions.[20]

Al-Qaraḍāwī refuses the notion of *taqlīd* ("blind imitation") and points out the necessity of independent *ijtihād*[21] as the first and most important condition for Sharīʿa to be successfully reestablished. In this context, he continues to underscore the importance of the divine sources and the role of the Muslim scholars performing *ijtihād*.[22] A main characteristic of his thinking is his call for *at-taḥarrur al-madhhabī*, which translates into being free from any intellectual dependence upon a specific traditional school of law (*madhhab*).

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sh-Shaikh Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī. Dirāsa taḥlīlīya muqārina, Cairo 2006 (unpublished Master thesis at Dār al-ʿUlūm University), pp. 163-184.

[14] Al-Qaraḍāwī remarks in the introduction of this book that a part of this monograph was already published in the 1950s. Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida* tujaddid ad-dīn wa-tanhaḍ bi-d-dunīya, Cairo 2001 (1st edition 1987), p. 5.

[15] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn al-ladhī nanshuduh*, Cairo 2011.

[16] See for example al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Marǧaʿīya al-ʿulyā fī al-islām li-l-qurʾān wa-s-sunna*, Cairo 2001 (1st edition 1992) and idem., *Wājibunā naḥwa al-qurʾān al-karīm*, Cairo 2009.

[17] For more details see El-Wereny, Mahmud, "*'Islamic Law between Originality and Renewal': Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī's Theory of the Renewal of Islamic Law*", in: Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture (JISC), Vol. 4 No. 2, 2016, pp.1-12.

[18] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Marǧaʿīya*, pp. 341.

[19] This term is often used to refer to the first three generations of Muslims: the generation of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (*ṣaḥābah*), their successors (*tābiʿun*), and the successors of the successors (*tābiʿi at-tābiʿīn*).

[20] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Madkhal li-dirāsat ash-sharīʿa al-islāmīya*, Cairo 1993, pp. 242, Soage, Ana Belén, "*Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi: Portrait of a Leading Islamist Cleric*", in: MERIA Journal 12 (2008) 1, pp. 51-68 and for more details see fourth section of this article.

[21] See for example Schacht, J., "*Idjtihād*", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2.nd Edition, Vol. III, pp. 1026, Hallaq, Wael B., *An Introduction to Islamic Law,* Cambridge 2009, pp. 27, idem., "*On the origin of the Controversy about the Existence of **Mutahids** and the Gate of Ijtihad*", in: Studia Islamica, 63 (1986), pp. 129-141 and Kamali, Mohammad Hashim, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 389.

[22] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ijtihād fī aš-šarīʿa al-islāmīy maʿa naẓarāt taḥlīlīya fī al-ijtihād al-muʿāṣir*, Kuwait 2011, pp. 17.

His appeal for transcending the boundaries of the established schools of law is not only directed to the Sunni schools such as the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, and Ḥanbalī. It is aimed at all Muslim schools; Sunni, Shiʿī , Jaʿfarī, Ibāḍī and Ẓāhrī schools.[23] Not being bound to any particular *madhhab* makes it possible, according to Krämer, "to bridge the gap between the existing schools, sects and branches of Islam, and more specifically between Sunnis and Shiʿis (*taqrīb*)."[24] However, al-Qaraḍāwī fails to act upon his own claim for emancipation from a particular school of law into practice. When dealing with a legal opinion, he only refers to Sunni scholars.[25]

Al-Qaraḍāwī's thinking is furthermore guided by the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid ash-shariʿa*).[26] He insists that Shariʿa in all aspects is predicated on benefits and common good, as they pertain to the individual and the community. Its rulings are designed to protect these benefits and to facilitate the improvement and perfection of human living conditions. According to al-Qaraḍāṣwī, taking into account *maqāṣid ash-shariʿa* as well as living conditions, (*fiqh al-wāqiʿ*) is a prerequisite to solving new problems which are accompanied by modernity and globalization.[27]

Another main feature of al-Qaraḍāwī's thought is the concept of *Wasaṭīya*,[28] the middle course.[29] Salvatore describes him as "[...] the leading theorist of the centrality of values of moderation [...]".[30] *Wasaṭīya* means according to al-Qaraḍāwī steering away from both the radical, extremist and fundamental stream (*muzammitūn*) as well as the stream of neglect and looseness (*mutaḥallilūn*). It is a middle ground between Muslims who blindly follow traditions and refrain from independent and creative *ijtihād*, and Muslims who blindly imitate the West way of life (*al-gharb*).[31] Based upon this concept, he seeks to find practical and flexible solutions to daily questions faced by Muslims in order to make their life easier and to make Muslims fond of their religion. Accordingly, he usually tends in his fatwas to the easiest and most suitable answer, referring to *maqāṣid ash-shariʿa* and *at-taḥarrur al-madhhabī*. *Wasaṭīya* should not only be applied to juridical, but also to political, economical and social issues. It should simply be considered in all aspects of life.[32]

As has already been mentioned, from al-Qaraḍāwī's point of view, Islam can provide an all-encompassing system of life. Its teachings have a universal message for all human beings and have an absolute and universal validity, regardless of time and place.[33] Islam as a holistic, all-embracing system regulates all aspects of life, whether political, social, economic or intellectual, and must be considered as a way of life. The wellbeing of the Muslim society lies alone in the comprehensive application of the teachings of Islam.[34]

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[23] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fī fiqh al-aqalliyāt al-muslima. Ḥayāt al-muslimīn wasaṭ al-mujtamaʿāt al-ukhrā*, Cairo 2001, pp. 57. For more details see Hallaq, *An Introduction*, pp. 31.

[24] Krämer, *Drawing Boundaries*, pp. 196.

[25] El-Wereny, *Mit Tradition*, pp. 225.

[26] For more details see for instance Auda, Jasser, *Maqāṣid Al-Shariʿah: A Beginner's Guide*, London 1429/2008, idem., *Maqāṣid al-Shariʿa as Philosophy of Islamic Law*, London 1428/2007 and Opwis, Felicitas, *Maṣlaḥa and the Purpose of the Law. Islamic Discourse on Legal Change from the 4th/10th to 8th/14th Century*, Leiden 2010.

[27] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsa fī fiqh maqāṣid aš-šariʿa. Baina al-maqāṣid al-kullīya wa-n-nuṣūṣ al-juzʾīya*, Cairo ¹2006, pp. 19 and Slavator, Armando, "*Qaraḍāwī's Maṣlaḥa: From Ideologue of the Islamic Awakening to Sponsor of Transnational Public Islam*", in: Gräf/Skovgaard-Petersen, *Global Mufti,* pp. 239-250 and El-Wereny, Mahmud, "*The Objectives of Sharia between Tradition and Modernity – A Comparative Study*", in: Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture (JISC), Vol. 5 No. 1, 2017 (forthcoming).

[28] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīya al-islāmīya wa-t-tajdīd. Maʿālim wa-manārāt*, Cairo 2010. For more information on his *wasaṭīya* understanding see Gräf, Bettina, "*The Concept of wasaṭiyya in the Work of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī*", in: idem./Skavogaard-Petersen, *Global Mufti*, pp. 213-239.

[29] See for example Gräf, *The Concept of wasaṭiyya*, pp. 213-239.

[30] Salvatore, *Qaraḍāwī's Maṣlaḥa,* p. 239.

[31] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *ath-Thaqāfa al-ʿarabīya al-islāmīya*, pp. 89-93.

[32] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīya al-islāmīya*, Cairo ¹2010. See for more details Gräf, *The Concept of wasaṭīya*, pp. 213-239.

[33] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Shariʿat al-islām ṣāliḥa li-t-taṭbīq fī kull zamān wa-makān*, Cairo 1997 (1st edition 1973).

[34] This conviction of al-Qaraḍāwī has been emphasized several times especially in his writings on *aṣ-ṣaḥwa al-islāmīy* ("Islamic awakening") and *al-ḥall al-islāmī* ("the Islamic solution"). See for example al-Qaraḍāwī, *aṣ-Ṣaḥwa al-islāmīya wa-humūm al-waṭan al-*

Al-Qaraḍāwī therefore proclaims relentlessly – strongly influenced by the Salafi movement of the reform theologians Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), Rashīd Riḍā (d. 1935), and Ḥasan al-Bannā (d. 1949) – Islam and life are completely suffused with Islamic law as the only solution (*al-islām huwa al-ḥall*) to the complex problems.[35] Due to internal decadence in the Islamic world and the increasing challenges of modernity coming from the West, particularly resulting from European colonialism, the Islamic community (*umma*) finds itself in a situation of deep crisis: on the one hand, external pressure, especially from the West, on the other hand, the decadence within the community and the unresolved challenges of dealing with modern age. For al-Qaraḍāwī, the reasons for this decay are not only certain phenomena in Muslim countries, such as authoritarianism, poverty, injustice and globalization. Rather, this decay stems from the lack of dynamic understanding of Islam and its law system in the modern world. Guided by this conviction, he dedicates himself to the renewing of the Islamic religion (*tajdīd ad-dīn*) in general and the Islamic law (*tajdīd al-fiqh*) in particular.[36] He considers *tajdīd* not only as a "demanding necessity", but also as "a religious obligation".[37] The following section is intended to present his understanding of renewal and the main features of his aspired renewal in order to answer the abovementioned questions.

3. The Debate on *Tajdīd ad-dīn*

Islamic renewal (*tajdīd*) or reform (*iṣlāḥ*) is a controversial theme running consistently through academic studies. Western and Muslim academics deal with the question whether Islamic teachings are compatible with modernity. They discuss aspects such as the meaning, history of *tajdīd* and whether the teachings of Islam can be reconciled with modernity, human rights, secularization or democracy.[38] As a result, we have a number of studies on the subject of *tajdīd*.[39] There is a sizeable body of Arabic literature which deals with this issue regarding the Islamic-religious renewal, its relation to tradition or theories of the main advocates of *tajdīd*.[40] An example of this genre is ʿAbd El-Mutaʿāl aṣ-Ṣaʿīdī's book *al-Mujaddidūn fī l-islām* ("The renewer of Islam"), in which he mentions the most prominent renewers in Islamic history and discusses their renewal approaches from the first to the fourteenth century (AH.).[41]

Western academics have also produced a large numbers of studies in which they discuss the meaning, roots, history, trends and characteristics of *tajdīd* in different periods of Islamic history. Here some examples of publications about *tajdīd*: "Voices of Resurgent Islam"[42], "New Directions in Islamic Thought: Exploring Reform and Muslim Tradition"[43] „*Tajdīd al-Dīn*: A Reconsideration of its Meaning, Roots, and Influence in Islam"[44] and „The ,Cyclical Reform': A Study of the *mujaddid* Tradition"[45] In these studies a number of preachers and scholars are described as *mujaddidūn* ("revivalist or reformer"). This is the case for ash-Shāfiʿī (d. 820), Ibn Taimīya (d. 1328), Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1729).

ʿarabī wa-l-islāmī, Cairo 1997 (1st edition 1988) and idem., *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida* tujaddid ad-dīn wa-tanhaḍ bi-d-dunīya, Cairo 2001 (1st edition 1988).

[35] Soage, *Shaykh Yusuf*, p. 56.

[36] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Ḥiṭabunā l-islāmī fī ʿaṣr al-ʿaulama*, Cairo 2004, pp. 17 and idem., *al-Fiqh al-islāmī baina al-aṣāla wa-t-tajdīd*, Cairo 1999. More for his theory of *tajdīd al-fiqh* see El-Wereny, *Islamic Law*, pp. 1-12.

[37] Al-Qaraḍāwī, "*Reform according to Islam*", al-Jazeera, May 20, 2004, available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/05/2008410114555767536.html (last accessed: 16 March 2016).

[38] See for example Michel, Hoebink, "*Thinking about Renewal in Islam: Towards a History of Islamic Ideas on Modernization and Secularization*", in: Arabica tome XLVI, Leiden 1998, pp. 29-62.

[39] For more details see Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck et al., *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography*, London 1991.

[40] See for example Ḥanafī, Ḥasan, *at-Turāth wa-t-tajdīd. Mauqifunā min at-turāth al-qadīm*, Beirut [4]1992 and ʿImāra, Muḥammad, *al-Immām Muḥammad ʿAbduh. mujaddid ad-dunyā bi-tajdīd ad-dīn*, Cairo 1980.

[41] Aṣ-Ṣaʿīdī, ʿAbd El-Mutaʿāl, *al-Mujaddidūn fī al-islām min al-qarn al-aūl ilā ar-rābiʿ ʿashar*, Cairo 2006. Amīn al-Ḫūlī (d. 1966) had already in 1965 written a similar treatise with the same title. See al-Ḫūlī, Amīn, *al-Mujaddidūn fī al-islām*, Cairo 2001.

[42] Esposito, John L. (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford 1983.

[43] Vogt, Kari et al., *New Directions in Islamic Thought: Exploring Reform and Muslim Tradition*, New York 2008.

[44] Lazarus-Yafeh, Hava, „*Tagdid al-Din, A Reconsideration of its Meaning, Roots and Influence in Islam*", in: M. Brinner, William/ D. Ricks, Stephen (eds.), *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, Atlanta 1986, Vol. 1, pp. 99-109. See as well Voll, Jahn O, „*Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah*" in: Esposito, John L. (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, Oxford 1983, pp. 32-48, MacQueen, Benjamin, *Islam and the Question of Reform: Critical Voices from Muslim Communities*, Melbourne 2008 and Ramadan, Tariq, *Radical Reform Islamic Ethics and Liberation*, Oxford 2009.

[45] Landau-Tasseron, Ella, „*The 'Cyclical Reform', A Study of the mujaddid Tradition*", in, Studia Islamica, No. 70, 1989, pp. 79-117.

In the nineteenth and twentieth century many other thinkers and activists were referred to by their followers as *mujaddid* as well. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Abul ʿAlā Maudūdī (d. 1979) and Ruhollah Khomeini (d. 1989), among others, were described as such.[46] Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī is also one of the most admired and prominent representatives of Sunni Islam today. He has been called *mujaddid* as well.[47]

In his work on *tajdīd*, al-Qaraḍāwī establishes a strong connection between the *ṣaḥwa* movement and his approach of *tajdīd ad-dīn*. As a result of the encounter with modernity due to the European colonialism, many reformist Islamic scholars and Islamic movements advocate the renewal, i. e. reform of Islam in order to face the challenges coming up with modernity. Al-Qaraḍāwī understands 'The Islamic awakening' (*aṣ-Ṣaḥwa al-Islāmīya*) as one of the most important Islamic movements of the twentieth century, which seeks reconciliation between Islam and modernity.[48] From his point of view this resurgence signifies "a natural, healthy phenomenon which is clearly indicative of a return to inborn nature (*fiṭra*), to the roots which – for us in our Muslim homeland – is simply Islam: the beginning and the end, into which we seek refuge from difficulties, and from which we derive the strength of spirit, of hope, and of guidance".[49] His aspired *ṣaḥwa* should include all Muslims worldwide regardless of gender, social status or race. The primary purpose of *ṣaḥwa* is, in al-Qaraḍāwī's opinion, to bring back Islamic principles and teachings so that they guide the Islamic community, particularly after all non-Islamic solutions imported from either the West or the East have failed to solve the problems of Islamic societies.[50] Consequently, he strongly supports the *ṣaḥwa* movement and calls for its revival in Islam in order to rid Islamic societies of their ills.[51] The *ṣaḥwa* after which he strives should be able to "[…] renew Islam and to return with it to the guidance of life again […]. The thinking of the *ṣaḥwa*-movement believes in independent interpretation and adopts the renewal. It rejects imitation and dependency. It considers the inflexibility (*jumūd*) as a death. Rather, it accepts renewal in law, education, politics and all different areas."[52]

Making the case for *tajdīd*, al-Qaraḍāwī relies on Qurʾānic references, even if the term itself cannot be found in the Qurʾān. He refers to the following Qurʾānic verses 16:125, 39:55 and 67:2.[53] According to his interpretation, these verses include the meaning of renewal and require the change from one state to another.[54] In the quoted verses the comparative form *a ḥ s a n* ("better") of *ḥ a s a n* ("good") is used in different contexts. For example, it says in 16:125 "[…] and argue with them in a way that is best" (*wa-jādiluhum bi-l-latī hiya aḥsan*). By referring to this verse, al-Qaraḍāwī claims that Qurʾān itself calls on all Muslims to improve and change themselves and their life in all aspects. He defines *tajdīd* as "[…] a transformation from a low to a higher status."[55]

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[46] See for example Lapidus, Ira M., "*Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Historical Paradigms*", in: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 40 (4) (1997): pp. 444–460.

[47] At-Tarkāwī, , *Juhūd at-tajdīd ad-dīnī*, pp. 163-184, Riḍā, Akram, *ad-Duktūr Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī wa-taǧdīd ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, Cairo 2013. p. 31, 102 and 139 and Zarzūr, ʿAdnān M., "*Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī al-mujaddid al-muwaffaq .. faqīh al-ʿaṣr*", in: *Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī: Kalimāt fī takrīmih…wa-buḥūth fī fikrih wa-fiqhih. Muhdāt ilayih bi-munāsabat bulūǧih as-sabʿīn*, Cairo: Dār as-Salām (ed.), 2003, Vol. 1, pp. 482.

[48] For more details on *ṣaḥwa* from al-Qaraḍāwī's point of view, see Wardeh, Nadia: *Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and the "Islamic awakening" of the late 20ᵗʰ century*, Montreal: Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University 2001.

[49] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *aṣ-Ṣaḥwa al-islāmīya baina l-jumūd wa-t-taṭarruf*. Cairo 2001, p. 157. [Translation: Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism: International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon Virginia 1987]

[50] Ibid., pp. 157.

[51] Al-Qaraḍāwī supports this appeal with a number of books and treatises relating to the guidance (*tarshīd*) of *ṣaḥwa*. In this regard, he has written a "Series of Guidance of the *ṣaḥwa* Movement" (*silsilat tarshīd aṣ-ṣaḥwa*). This category includes for example *Aulawīyāt al-ḥaraka al-islāmīya fī l-marḥala al-qādima*, Cairo1990, p. 2, *Aulawīyāt al-ʿamal al-islāmī fī ḍill al-mutaghaiyirāt ad-daulīya ar-rāhina*, Cairo 2011 and *Bayyināt al-ḥall al-islāmī wa shubuhāt al-ʿalmānīyīn wa-l-mutagharribīn*, Cairo 2003 (1st edition 1987).

[52] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Aulawīyāt al-ḥarka,* p. 4 and 24.

[53] Qurʾān 16:125: "[…] and argue with them in a way that is best.", 39:55: "And follow the best of what was revealed to you from your Lord […]" and 67:2: "[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving".

[54] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīya al-islāmīya*, p. 186.

[55] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīya al-islāmīya*, p. 187.

Moreover, he refers to a well-known prophetic tradition which states that at the beginning of every century, God will raise for this community (*umma*) a blessed person to explain the facts of the religion according to the necessities of the time.[56] Additionally, he argues that the debate of renewal has traditionally been a constant occurrence throughout the Islamic world, stretching over centuries.[57] Generally speaking, there are three positions towards *tajdīd*: (1) the ultra-conservative position, which rejects any reform attempt and considers Islamic law and values immutable. Representatives of this position, the so-called Salafism, advocate a return to the Qur'an, Sunna, consensus of the companions and traditions of the ‚devout ancestors' (*as-salaf*). From their standpoint, any other sources of guidance beyond these and any effort aimed at reforming Islam constitute a *bidʿa* („undesirable innovation"), which will lead Muslims away from the straight path because they do not represent the original revelation or the prophetic model. The general view propagated by Salafists is that Sharia law is "divinely ordained" and is valid anytime and anywhere. They typify the fossilized Sharia literalism, which treats man-made laws as divine and unimpeachable. Followers of Salafism are more attentive to the appropriate religious and social behavior. This behavior is deduced from the Sunna and traditions of the *salaf*. Following this strategy, they do not pay attention to the ongoing changing circumstances of life in order to be able to treat new emerging problems.

Therefore, their legal opinions are usually out of touch with reality.[58] (2) By contrast, the second stream views the Islamic scripture as a message from God which requires interpretation and understanding before being put into practice. However, advocates of this approach draw a line, inasmuch as they distinguish between two categories of Islamic principles: those which are changeable according to time, place and condition and those which are ahistorical. The latter are holy and forever valid, as will be shown below.[59] (3) The third position exhibits different voices of reform. Scholars and activists who belong to this tendency in contemporary Islam are developing new concepts and paradigms dealing with the question of Islam and modernity.[60] Some do not take the aforementioned differentiation into account and argue for a shift from verses attributed to the Medina phase of the revelation of the Qurʾān (622–632) to those revealed during the Mecca period (610–622), as far as the social and political aspects of Shariʿa are concerned.[61] Other approaches by prominent authors extend the above consideration of historical conditions to what is called the 'historicisation' of Islamic scripture. A representative example of such is Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zaid (d. 2010). He claims that Qur'an will become a 'historic document'.[62] Jasser Auda speaks against this approach: This would lead to the complete abrogation of the 'authority' of the scripture. He further argues that such a 'historicist' approach connotes that "our ideas about texts, cultures and events are totally a function of their position in their original historical context as well as their later historical developments." Applying this method to the Qur'an implies from his point of view that the Qurʾanic text is a 'cultural product' of the culture which produced it and which is only helpful to those who wish to become acquainted with a specific historic community that existed in the prophetic era.[63] Al-Qaraḍāwī reflects on these schools of thought and positions himself in the middle.

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[56] "God will raise for this community (*umma*) at the beginning of every century someone who will renew its religion (*yujaddid*)." Abū Dāwūd, as-Sijistānī, *Sunan abī Dāwūd*. Al-Arnaʾūṭī, Shuʿaib (ed.). Damaskus 2009, Vol. 6, p. 349. Although this hadith does not exist in the six books containing collections of authoritative Ḥadith (*al-kutub as-sitta*), al-Qaraḍāwī considers this Ḥadith as authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*). He argues that this hadith was mentioned in many other collections of Ḥadith such as *Sunan* of Abū Daūd (d. 889) and *al-Mustadrak ʿalā aṣ-ṣaḥīḥayn* of al-Ḥākim (d. 1014). Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* p. 4 and idem., *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, pp. 188.

[57] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāšida*, pp. 9.

[58] For more details See for example Kamali, Mohammad Hashim, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic Principle of Wasatiyyah*, Oxford 2015, pp. 32, Ramadan, Tariq, *To Be a European Muslim. a Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context,* Markfield 2015, pp. 250, Roy, Olivier, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, London 2004 and Wiktorowicz, Quintan, "*Anatomy of the Salafi Movement*", in: Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 29 (2006), Nr. 3, pp. 207-239, Roel Meijer, *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, New York 2009 and Al Atawneh, Muhammad, *Wahhābī Islam Facing the Challenges of Modernity: Dār al-Iftāʾ in the Modern Saudi State*, Leiden 2010.

[59] See for more details the following section of this article.

[60] Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim*, pp. 249.

[61] An-Naʿīm, Abdallah, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shariʿa*. Cambridge u.a. 2008, pp. 134.

[62] Abū Zaid, Nāṣr Ḥāmid, *Mafhūm an-naṣṣ: Dirāsa fī ʿulūm al-qurʾān*, Casablanca 2014, p. 24. For more details see Abu Zaid, Nasr Hamid, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*, Amsterdam 2006 and idem, *Rethinking the Qur'an: Towards a Humanistic Hermeneutics*, Utrecht 2004.

[63] Auda, *Maqāṣid Al-Shariʿah: A Beginner's Guide*, pp. 34. About Auda's biography see http://www.jasserauda.net/portal/biography/?lang=en (last accessed: 11 June 2017).

He differentiates between three ideal-type positions which are engaged in the debate of *tajdīd*: secular modernists, traditionalists and a middle position between both, which is called *wasaṭīya*. These groups widely differ from one another in terms of base, structure and further composition. Al-Qaraḍāwī identifies the first group as *duʿāt al-jumūd* ("the callers of solidification"), *aʿdāʾ at-tajdīd* ("enemies of renewal") or *al-mutazammitūn* ("the strictly-minded"). According to him, their advocates consider the return to the roots of Islam in their purest form as the one and only solution to the crisis and problems of Islamic societies. They do not see a need for a new reading or reinterpretation of the divine texts in order to consider the new issues of life and the changed necessities of humanity. Moreover, they venerate the traditional heritage of convictions and Islamic legal opinions. They want to retain all of it and to practice it regardless of time, place and modern life circumstances, which are liable to undergo changes.[64] Al-Qaraḍāwī divides the adherents of this group in two sub-groups: "imitators of the schools of law" (*muqallidī al-madhāhib*) and "literalists" (*ḥarfiyūn*). Both revere the sacred texts (Qurʾān and Sunna) and are fiercely opposed to any idea of development or renewal. The former group only relies upon the traditional opinions of law into and rejects a free, independent interpretation of the texts. The latter, literalists, are according to al-Qaraḍāwī very strict in adhering to the wording of the revelation texts and do not pay any attention neither to the higher objectives of Shariʿa (*maqāṣid ash-sharīʿa*) nor to current living conditions.[65]

The second trend undertakes an absolutely free renewal (*tajdīd muṭlaq*) and builds their renewal procedure on a strict secularist ideology. Their advocates do not call for modernization, according to al-Qaraḍāwī, but for Westernization. They strive after a renewal which accepts the culture, knowledge and all values from the West, without paying attention to Islam's cultural and religious pillars. Furthermore, their program of *tajdīd* is, according to al-Qaraḍāwī, based primarily upon the abolition of the Qurʾān and the Sunna of the prophet. This trend is represented especially by educated people who have gained knowledge and methods of modern sciences and western philosophy such as Mohammad Arkoun.[66] Al-Qaraḍāwī labels the representatives of this genre as *al-ghulā fī t-tajdīd* ("the exaggerators of renewal") and *duʿāt at-tajdīd aw at-taḥdīth* ("Callers of renewal or modernism").[67] He claims that they want a free life without Islamic faith (*ʿaqīda*), laws (*sharāʾiʿ*), morals (*akhlāq*) nor virtues (*faḍāʾil*).[68] Regardless of the cultural, political and economic differences between the East and the West, the representatives of this *tajdīd*-school intend to import European ideas and values in order to implement them within the Arab-Islamic societies.[69] However, al-Qaraḍāwī does not define explicitly what he means by "the West" in this context. In an interview, he speaks precisely of the US and claims that "the US government wants us [Muslims] to reform ourselves. There is no doubt, however, that a US-envisaged reform will only serve US championed interests. Is there any doubt that reforming according to the US way would guarantee us a role in the back of the caravan to always trail behind as a nation that is weak, ignorant and fragmented?"[70]

Al-Qaraḍāwī bitterly criticizes both groups which have been described above. On the one hand, the modernists who blindly imitate the West and ignore all of the teachings of Islam, and on the other hand, the literalists who blindly imitate earlier Muslim scholars, ignoring the new developments that Muslims are confronted with. Even if the first group does not exclude the religion and the value structure of Islam, as the latter group does, both fail to give adequate answers to numerous contemporary issues.[71] Considering these deficits, al-Qaraḍāwī has claimed to position himself in the middle and calls on others to follow his understanding of the middle way, *wasaṭīya*.

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[64] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 51.

[65] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Dirāsa fī fiqh maqāṣid*, pp. 45.

[66] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *ath-Thaqāfa al-ʿarabīya al-islāmīya baina al-aṣāla wa-l-muʿāṣara*, Cairo 2005, pp. 69.

[67] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Bayyināt al-ḥall*, pp, 127.

[68] Ibid., p. 101.

[69] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 52 and idem., *Bayyināt al-ḥall*, pp. 99.

[70] Al-Qaraḍāwī, "*Reform according to Islam*", al-Jazeera, May 20, 2004, available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/05/2008410114555767536.html (last accessed: 16 March 2016). In his treatise of minorities' law (*fiqh al-aqallīyāt*), he understands *al-gharb* (the West) as follows: Eastern and Western Europe, the United States of America and Canada. See al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fī fiqh al-aqallīyāt*, pp. 17.

[71] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tağdīd ad-dīn*, pp. 25 and idem, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, pp. 45.

Following this concept, he seeks a contemporary renewal, which balances between modernity including its emerging new questions, on the one hand, and the universal validity of the Shariʿa and its teachings by preserving its unchangeable elements, on the other hand. He strives after a middle way between the retrograde literalists and the fanatical devotees of the rigid adherence to the past on the one side, and the blind worshippers of the new teaching coming from the West on the other side.[72]

3. Al-Qaraḍāwī's Concept of *Tajdīd*

Al-Qaraḍāwī's desire for *tajdīd* is a reaction to both sides. He pleads for a compromise which consists in considering Qurʾān, Sunna and the inherited Islamic traditions besides being attentive to life changes and the development of various disciplines.[73] For this purpose, he appeals to Islamic scholars to release themselves from blind following of antecedent authorities and their imitation. Furthermore, they should reinterpret the divine texts in the light of *maqāṣid ash-shariʿa* and the new context of life. Only this way is, according to al-Qaraḍāwī, the authentic and right path to relieve the life of Muslims today. This procedure was – in his opinion – the practice of the prophet as well as the 'pious predecessors' (*as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ*). In this regard, he remarks: "[T]his recourse should not cause anxiety, as some people fear. It is in reality a return to facilitation, not to the difficulty, to the joyful proclamation (*tabshīr*) and not to the deterrence (*tanfīr*) […]."[74] This postulation should not be understood as a return to the forms and the life style of the *salaf*. Rather, it means the adoption of their method of dealing with the *naṣṣ*:

"Their method means – as it can be seen from their circumstances, words and actions – the concentration on the essence of the religion, not on its form, on the objectives of the Shariʿa, not on its letters, on the spirit of the acts not on their materiality, and the preference of the relief before the complication […]. Following the method of the *salaf* does not mean at all that we have to sit on the floor as they sat and that we eat as they ate […]. The compliance of the method of the *salaf* commits us to undertake endeavor (*najtahid*), as they did at their time, that we think with our mind about our life, as they did with their mind about their life. We should take our time, our milieu, our habits and our circumstances into account, when we give fatwas, judgments, make research, or even when we act with ourselves or with the other, as they [*salaf*] did […]."[75]

Although al-Qaraḍāwī is appealing to return to the method of the *salaf* he underlines at the same time that the bequeathed heritage of Islamic legal and theological opinions should be considered within this procedure. To renew *dīn* does not mean that Muslims must deny their legal heritage. Taking the requirements and questions of modernity into account is not equivalent to giving up all material and intellectual traditions of the former *salaf*. In his view, "the true renewal is such, which is building up based on the principles of Islam, remains with its roots in connection, inspires from its [intellectual] heritage (*turāth*) and, at the same time, it welcomes everything new as long as it is usable […]"[76] Therefore, for him, Muslims must have a broad picture of the knowledge of earlier generations and their traditions. They should take special note of the ideas and legal methods of the *salaf*. So, they will be able to know how this traditional knowledge can be applied to their problems today and how it can be used to achieve the goals of the Shariʿa:[77] "We can only reform the tools and strategies we use to achieve our objectives, but the objectives themselves must not be reformed."[78] The heritage of Islam, which he describes at this point as Islamic-Arabic, does not only comprise legal and theological sciences such as the law methodology of ash-Shāfiʿī, the theology of al-Ashʿarī, the Qurʾān interpretation of aṭ-Ṭabarī or the hadith traditions of al-Bukhārī and Muslim etc. But, it is offering also more richness and variety. It includes a whole range of other areas such as the medicine of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), the optics of Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040), the arithmetic of al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048), the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), the mysticism of al-Ghazālī, the asceticism of al-ʿAtāhīya (d. 825), the calligraphy of Ibn Muqla (d. 940) and the tunes of al-Mawṣlī (d. 867).[79] In this context, al-Qaraḍāwī remarks that not all bequeathed heritage is usable and of equal value.

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[72] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 52.

[73] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn*, p. 25.

[74] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 30 and idem., *Fiqh al-wasaṭīya al-islāmīya*, p. 198.

[75] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *ath-Thaqāfa al-ʿarabīya*, pp. 58.

[76] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, p. 185.

[77] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Madkhal*, pp. 240.

[78] Al-Qaraḍāwī, "*Reform according to Islam*", al-Jazeera, May 20, 2004,

http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/05/2008410114555767536.html ((last accessed: 16 March 2016).

[79] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Thaqāfatunā baina al-infitāḥ wa-l-inghilāq*, Cairo 2000, pp. 21.

Some could have been time-bound and, therefore, they are no longer suitable for present life. Others could be outdated due to the new circumstances of modernity. He argues that large authorities like al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taimīya could also have been wrong in one case or the other.[80] Consequently, he calls urgently for the "right understanding" (*al-fahm aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*) of this heritage. Criticizing all of the Islamic culture and heritage at the outset or having a negative attitude towards it can only be, in al-Qaraḍāwī's opinion, the result of ignorance. With the support of the reason (*ʿaql*), – at this point he calls it "the scale" (*al-mīzān*) – Muslims should take advantage of this heritage. To assess the standard of this procedure and the received heritage, he adduces a number of factors from the Qurʾān and the Sunna.[81]

Accordingly, al-Qaraḍāwī is seeking a method of renewal which takes all that is profitable from the past and welcomes anything new from the present provided that it is in accordance with the rules of the Qurʾān and the Sunna. His aspired renewal must be consistent with the conditions of modern life and with Islamic principles. Therefore, his appeal of renewal is much more about the change of method and about the understanding of religion and its sources. A new methodology of interpretation of the divine texts offers new perspectives of understanding which helps to face the challenges of the present age and enables the application of Sharīʿa law.[82] This method must be based upon the texts of revelation, must consider *maqāṣid ash-sharīʿa,* the traditional heritage, as a guide and must keep aloof from the abovementioned extreme literalist or secular modernists. Moreover, it should take into account the basic principles of Islam such as universality (*shumūl*), equilibrium (*iʿtidāl*) and facilitation (*taisīr*) and balance between time-related changeable regulations and time-independent, immutable regulations of Islam.[83] In this regard, he writes:

"Renewal does not mean at all that we have to bring a new revised version of Islam or to add changes in it according to the mood of the people, so that the Islam will be like a flexible dough which can be shaped at the discretion and inclination of the ruler on the one hand and of the people on the other […]. Moreover, [Renewal means] that we understand the religion in the shadow of the divine texts and in the shadow of the general objectives of the Shariʿa."[84]

This understanding requires learned and competent scholars to practice *ijtihād*. It is of fundamental importance for contemporary jurists to practice a new form of *ijtihād*, based upon the divine texts, *maqāṣid ash-sharīʿa,* and the traditional heritage. They must not think with the heads of the *salaf*, because today's problems and needs are different from theirs. The *salafs* and leaders of the schools of law often changed their personal opinions even within their lifetime. In this context, al-Qaraḍāwī points out the necessity to maintain the limits of what is renewable and what is not. He primarily distinguishes between three different categories of the teachings of Islam: "firm foundations" (*thawābit*), "variable" regulations (*mutaġayyirāt*) and the "free zone" (*al-minṭaqa al-ḥurra*):[85]

(1) The first category includes a series of doctrinal foundations and legal rules which are immutable. According to al-Qaraḍāwī, these do not hinge upon a local or temporal context. This category comprises provisions of "Islamic doctrine" (*ʿaqīda*), "worship" (*ʿibādāt*) and "moral obligations and prohibitions" (*akhlāq*).[86] Al-Qaraḍāwī adds to this category of unchangeable basic principles other elementary rules and considers them as unmodifiable and eternally valid as well. These rules encompass criminal law (*ḥudūd*), inheritance questions between men and women, and family law.[87] All of these listed genres constitute the principles of Islam which are fixed and unchangeable under whatever circumstances.[88] Principles based upon clear and definitive evidence constitute the "backbone of the dogmatic, intellectual and practical unity of the (Islamic) Community (*umma*)."[89]

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[80] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Bayyināt al-ḥall al-islāmī*, pp. 113-115.

[81] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa*, pp. 30 and idem., *Thaqāfatunā*, p. 28.

[82] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* p. 25 and idem., *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, p. 199.

[83] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, pp. 199.

[84] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* pp. 23.

[85] Ibid., p. 26.

[86] See for more details El-Wereny*, Islamic Law*, pp. 8.

[87] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, pp. 44.

[88] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* p. 26 and idem., *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 28.

[89] "*ʿImād al-waḥda al-iʿtiqādīya wa-l-fikrīya wa-l-ʿamalīya li-l-umma."* Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ijtihād*, p. 91.

(2) The second category includes, in contrast to the one mentioned above, variable provisions which are interpretable depending on the context, i. e. they allow for changing living conditions. Al-Qaraḍāwī identifies this area as *ẓannīyāt*. He argues that their Qurʾanic or prophetic references are presumptive (*ẓannī*) in terms of authenticity (*thubūt*) and/or meaning (*dalāla*). They can be reinterpreted according to changes in time and place.[90] The interpretation and exploration of these pieces of evidence on the basis of *ijtihād* is supposed to be the task of the professional religious scholars. It is their duty to deduce from these references adequate solutions in compliance with the contemporary life circumstances.[91] Even if al-Qaraḍāwī is propagating a new reading of this kind of texts, he underlines the inviolability of the *qaṭʿīyāt* zone. Nevertheless, it remains in the dark who has set this boundaries and what criteria have been used.[92] It should be noted at this point that this differentiation between *thawābit* and *mutaghaiyyrāt* has already been performed by other scholars such as aBū ḤĀmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauzīya (d. 1350) and Abū Isḥāq ash-Shāṭibī (d. 1388). They differentiate between two categories of Sharīʿa norms: These which are immutable and eternally valid and those which are flexible and interpretable depending on location and time.[93] Accordingly, al-Qaraḍāwī consciously or unconsciously transfers the concept of medieval scholarship and presents it in today's world as valid without paying attention to the fact that times have changed.

(3) The third category of renewable teachings of Islam includes questions whose lawfulness or unlawfulness cannot be proved by Islamic sources. Al-Qaraḍāwī calls this area the "free zone" (*minṭaqa ḥurra*) or "the zone of mercy" (*minṭaqat al-ʿafw*). It comprises, as the *ẓannīyāt* field, cases whose interpretations are dependent on the time or the place. For such cases God had left the finding of appropriate solutions to the human mind, so that the competent scholars could deliver adequate judgments according to the permanent changes of life. According to al-Qaraḍāwī, God consciously left this zone opened in favor of mercy and indulgence of the human beings. Thereby, he refers to the following sayings of the prophet: "God has drawn borders, so do not exceed it, and He has prescribed certain rules, so do not neglect it, and He has forbidden things, so do not commit it, and He remained silent about certain things out of His mercy not from forgetfulness, so do not look for it."[94] Muḥammad shall also have said: "What God has allowed in His book that is allowed, what He has forbidden that is prohibited and what He has kept silent, that is a grace."[95] In quest of answers to questions related to this field al-Qaraḍāwī lists a number of methodological tools with which to find legal opinions, such as analogy (*qiyās*), legal preference (*istiḥsān*), common good (*maṣlaḥa*) and customary law (*ʿurf*).[96]

Al-Qaraḍāwī's approach of *tajdīd ad-dīn* does not only relate to Islamic religious issues (*al-ʿulūm ash-sharʿīya*). Renewal for him should simply cover all areas of life; spiritual, scientific and technical.[97] Indeed, he claims that Islam embraces scientific progress and research, for throughout Islamic history there has been no evidence of conflict between Islam and science. Therefore, he accepts to adopt the developments and achievements of different disciplines which originate from the West.[98] The West, in this case, offers a lot of advantages for the wellbeing of humanity as a whole.

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[90] Ibid., p. 108 and El-Wereny, *Islamic Law*, p. 9.

[91] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* pp. 26, and idem., *Sharīʿat al-islām ṣāliḥa*, pp. 111.

[92] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ijtihād*, p. 98 und idem., *Sharīʿat al-islām*, p. 107.

[93] Al-Ġazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*. Ḥāfiẓ, Zuhair (ed.), Medina 1413/1992, Vol. 4, pp. 18. and 30-34, Ibn Qaiyim al-Jauzīya, *Ighāthat al-lahfān fī maṣāʾid ash-shaiṭān*. Shams, Muḥammad ʿAzīz (ed.), Jidda 1432/2011, Vol. 1, pp. 570. For more details see El-Wereny, Mahmud, „*Scharianormen im Wandel: Zum Konzept der Fatwa-Wandelbarkeit zwischen Tradition und Moderne*", in: Elliesie, Hatem/ Scholz, Peter u.a. (Hrsg.), Zeitschrift für Recht und Islam (ZRI), 2017 (forthcoming).

[94] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* p. 26f. and idem, *Madkhal*, p. 152f.

[95] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Madkhal*, p. 152f.

[96] Ibid., pp. 153. See for mor details Kamali, *Principle*, passim, Khadduri, M., "*Maṣlaḥa*", in: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis u.a.: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, Vol., VI, p. 739, Paret, R., "*Istiḥsān and Istiṣlāḥ*", in P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, Vol. V, p. 253. und Libson, G. and Stewart, F.H.: "*ʿUrf*", in: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, Vol. X, p. 888.

[97] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, pp. 32-35.

[98] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *ath-Thaqāfa al-ʿarabīya al-islāmīya*, pp. 89-93.

Furthermore, it has nowadays a strong influence on the Islamic world in terms of military, political and economical strength.[99] Even if it is obvious here that al-Qaraḍāwī is open to ideas from the West, one ought not to be mistaken into thinking that he accepts everything coming from it. He insists that Islamic societies should not adopt everything useful in the name of renewal and modernity. The prerequisite to adopting new issues in general and from the West in particular remains fidelity to the teachings of Islam. Al-Qaraḍāwī concludes, a renewal in any form, which comes from other cultures, but bears the danger of Muslims losing their identity and culture, should not be accepted. Under no circumstances should Muslims be steered towards or be dependent on other cultures.[100]

Since the acceptance of achievements and renewals from the West can only take place within an Islamic framework, al-Qaraḍāwī assigns the Muslim scholars a special role within the renewal process. They are those who guide the community to the right path and call upon them to follow the divine commandments. The responsibility to lead the renewal process by using their knowledge and skills belongs to them. Only they are able to provide the community with wisdom on the way of God.[101] In this regard, he notes that the Islamic universities and academic institutions play an important part as well. They have to develop their curricula and learning materials, in order to educate highly qualified scholars in the different fields of research and to enable them to perform the religious renewal.[102] Over and above, he claims that it is not a specific person or a scholar who should implement the process of renewal alone. The term "whoever" (*man*) in the above mentioned hadith could refer to many people appearing in different places at once. Each Muslim may be active in his own field, whether it is theoretical or practical. Nothing speaks against the idea of a group or several groups of scholars working together on behalf of Islam and assuming the responsibility for the renewal.[103] He writes: "[…] We all shall participate in the movement of renewal, because it is not going to take place by only one person, but by a mobile group to which each one can contribute […]."[104] If the opinion is right that only one person is going to perform the renewal, then Muslims would have to wait passively for a savior to appear, al-Qaraḍāwī argues.[105]

4. Conclusion

The essential character of al-Qaraḍāwī's thought is his vision of an Islamic community in which Muslims can live according to Shariʿa rulings regardless of time and place. Since he argues that Shariʿa regulations have universal validity, he considers its renewal as an inevitable issue in order to face the new challenges of modern times. His approach of renewal is aimed at establishing a connection between the *ṣaḥwa* movement and renewal. In his point of view, *ḥarakat ṣaḥwa al-islāmīya* is the one which will realize the Islamic solution. He looks at this movement as the only way to overcome the crisis of the Islamic world.

Al-Qaraḍāwī's main objective behind the renewal is to present Islam as a religion compatible with modernity and Islamic law; as an applicable system beyond political and geographical boundaries. Hence, his effort of *tajdīd* does not only relate to Islamic religious issues, but it includes all spiritual, scientific and technical areas. In this perspective, he welcomes the adoption of material and intellectual values and accomplishments from the West, on condition that they not run counter to the basic principles of Islam. Thus, his intended renewal should be able to deal with new issues and offer appropriate answers in accordance with Shariʿa.

In his understanding of *tajdīd*, there are two groups dealing with this issue: (1) a secular position, which wants to change all teachings of Islam and adopt everything from the West irrespective of the basic teachings and values of Islam and (2) a conservative position, which declines any kind of renewal attempt and adheres precisely to the reference texts, interpret them literally and follow blindly the opinions and the traditions of previous generations, ignoring contemporary living conditions.

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[99] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Thaqāfatunā baina al-infitāḥ*, pp. 30.
[100] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Min ajl ṣaḥwa rāshida*, p. 56.
[101] Ibid., pp. 32.
[102] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, p. 202.
[103] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Tajdīd ad-dīn,* pp. 12-18.
[104] Ibid., p. 15.
[105] Al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-wasaṭīy al-islāmīya*, p. 193.

As a scholar of *wasaṭīya*, al-Qaraḍāwī takes a position in between; he advocates a renewal which accepts new issues emerging from modern life and takes the teachings and values of Islam into account, considering all Islamic principles and regulations. Therefore, *tajdīd ad-dīn*, for which he strives, does not entail a change in the sources and principles of Islam, but only in the way the religion is understood and lived according to the circumstances of life. A new reading and understanding of the divine sources by competent scholars and thinkers helps to find solutions to problems with which Muslims are faced today. Within this process, the reference texts of the Qurʾān and the Sunna play a vital role in evaluating all new issues as well. These sources are, for al-Qaraḍāwī, the assessment scale which decides about acceptance or rejection of new matters. His model in this respect is the *salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ*. The recourse to the *salaf* does not mean a blind transfer of their statements or traditions. Rather, it implies a contemporary interpretation of the Islamic sources as the *salaf* proceeded according to their time. As a framework of this process, he postulates the objectives of the Shariʿa (*maqāṣid ash-shariʿa*), the common good (*maṣlaḥat al-khalq*) and facilitation (*taysīr*).

While al-Qaraḍāwī seeks to offer a modern concept of renewal and calls for a new reading of the Islamic sources, he draws a clear line between changeable (*mutaghaiyrāt*) and constant (*thawābit*) provisions of Shariʿa. Referring to the first category – the so-called *al-minṭaqa al-maftūḥa* ("opened zone") and *minṭaqat al-ʿafw* ("the zone of mercy") – he endeavors to show the flexibility and adaptability of the Sharīʿa, because this era includes issues which are interpretable and *ijtihād*-accessible in compliance with time or local conditions. The second field, however, encompasses a specific number of principles and provisions of the Islamic religion which remain from his point of view immutable and *ijtihād*-inaccessible regardless of time and place. Hence, his dealing with various questions which belong in his view to the latter category such as the *ḥudūd* penalties and inheritance between men and women are contrary to the values of modernity and are incompatible with the current age. Against this background, al-Qaraḍāwī's image as a renewer of Islam who tries to reconcile Islam with modernity, as he is perceived by his fans, remains utterly questionable, especially when comparing his concept of *tajdīd* with the concepts of other authors such as Naʿim and Abū Zaid. However, when compared with the views of the so-called Salafists, his approach appears to be one step ahead. For one thing, he strives for a certain dynamic interpretation of the sources of the text; for another thing, he remains ultimately eclectic and largely conservative.

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