CHAPTER III

TAQĪ AL DĪN AL-NABHĀNĪ: A BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

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3.1. Introduction

The overwhelming decadence and the fall of the Islamic Caliphate (Ottoman) during the 19th century impelled the Muslim scholars for revivification and rejuvenation of the universal teachings of Islam. With their unreserved determination and devotion to this cause, they highlighted the comprehensive and universal nature of the message of Islam that could redeem the Muslims (in particular) and the humanity (in general) from the overwhelming catastrophe besides enhancing the ways for achieving Falāḥ i.e., the welfare of this worldly life and the eternal bliss in the life Hereafter. Meanwhile they highlighted the significance of the concepts of “Sovereignty of Allah”, “man’s vicegerency on earth” and importance of religion in governing the mundane affairs.

One among such noted scholars and intellectual figures of 20th century was Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī, an Islamic scholar, thinker and a revivalist. He is highly revered for the foundation of his party, Ḥizb al-Tahrīr al-Islāmī (The Islamic Liberation Party), Islamic education, and professional background. Starting his career as an ‘Ālim (religious scholar), al-Nabhānī stood for the re-establishment of Caliphate which he believed as an appropriate response to the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the fragmentation of its territories into nation states and a response to the creation of Israel and the impotence of Muslim societies in the face of neo-imperialism. For the renaissance of the Muslim world, he began to organize a group—a political party with Islam as its ideology and the goal of resuming an Islamic way of life by establishing an Islamic state which would implement Islam and propagate it world-wide and thus had its ultimate goal “the creation of a new political and social order.” The current part of the ongoing work highlights his life, works, and thought.

3.2. Early Life and Education

Shaykh Muhammad Taqī al-Dīn bin Ibrāhīm bin Muṣṭafā bin Ismā‘īl bin Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, popularly known as Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī was a reputed Islamic scholar, a talented intellectual and a Jurist of the twentieth century. He belonged to the ancient Arab tribe of Banū Nabhān, from North Palestine. This tribe is believed to have traced its lineage with a famous companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), namely Ḥaḍrat Tamīm al-Dārī (رضي الله تعالى عنه).
Al-Nabhānī was born in the village of Ijzim, within the district of Haifa, in 1909. He opened his eyes into a family distinguished by its traditional scholarship in the Islamic religious sciences and famous for knowledge (‘Ilm), practice (‘Amal) of Dīn and piety (Taqwā). He was able to memorize and rehearse the whole Qur'ān by heart at 12 years of his age with the efforts of his pious parents. He was introduced to the then relatively sound world of politics of the Ottoman Khilāfah by his maternal grandfather, Shaykh Yūsuf al-Nabhānī who was not only known to have strong ties with high-ranking state personalities in Istanbul, Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon but was also acting as a prominent judge in the Ottoman state. In addition, he was in charge of judicial affairs in the Jenin area that belongs to the Nablus district in Palestine. In molding the personality of al-Nabhānī, his parents and grandparents played the primary and essential role. His early education was mostly supplemented with the efforts of his maternal grandfather and father, while the later was affiliated to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and was a teacher of Islamic legal sciences. These two personalities helped al-Nabhānī to acquaint himself with the Islamic Jurisprudence and contemporary political issues by encouraging him to be a part of their discussions.

Al-Nabhānī travelled to Egypt in 1928 and spent four years studying at al-Azhar University and Dār al-ʿUlūm College in Cairo, graduating in 1932 gaining a deep know-how of the legal matters and Islamic religious sciences. Returning to Palestine as a graduate four years later, he assumed a post within the ministry of education as a teacher in a High School in 1932 and spent his successive seven years in the service. In 1938, while abhorring the corruption in this field, he attempted to divert his career away from teaching. To him, the basis for education and all the hereto-related curricula were laid down by the Western colonialists and were therefore prone to corruption. He was allegedly well known in educational circles for his efforts to alert the students from the evils of imperialism and the west. Escaping from such a corrupt educational system, he shifted himself to the judiciary, which he felt was a safer haven, as it rested, according to him, in its entirety on Islamic jurisprudence and the Ottoman Islamic laws were still in application. He applied to the high court in Palestine, which consequently appointed him in different judicial areas in Bisan, Tiberias and later Haifa. He was not satisfied with the job of clerks for he was confident enough in his knowledge and understanding of the Islamic legal sciences. So, he submitted an application to the supreme Muslim Council to appoint him as a Judge. He also held the position of a legal Assessor from 1940 to 1945.
Finally, with the appointment as a judge in 1945, he held this high position at the court of Haifa until Palestine was occupied in 1948. After a brief period as a judge in the Islamic court in Jerusalem, al-Nabhānī was transferred to the court of appeals where he acted as Share‘ah judge or Qāḍī and remained on this position until his resignation in early 1950. Some sources reveal that Shah Abdullah removed him from the job for he exposed in his address at Nabula the king’s treason of retrieving Muslim army from Ramallah.

3.3. Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī’s Thought

Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī, a great Islamic scholar and visionary, was highly impelled by the political calamity of his time to reformulate the Islamic Weltanschauung and reinvigorate the spirit of Islam within the Muslim community. “Liberation from the colonialism” and “re-establishment of an Islamic state” were the main concerns of the Muslim intelligentsia during that time and al-Nabhānī also directed his efforts and formulated his thought in this direction. His education, experiments, and attachment to the personalities, engaged in the then political activities helped him to deliberate in the discussions of contemporary Islamic thought. With a rigorous study of essential aspects of Islam and after having witnessed the decadence of Muslims, he tried to locate the basic causes of apathy, slumber, and degeneration that had overwhelmed the Muslim world. Like Muhammad Asad, al-Nabhānī too deduced the waywardness of Muslims (from the tenets of Islam) as the main cause of their multi-faceted decadence. Regarding the domination of West, he argued that the Muslims formerly succumbed to geographical subjugation and now the West manipulates them mentally and intellectually. To him, Muslims could regenerate their lost glory only by understanding and following the uncompromising clear-cut injunctions of Islam. Thus, it can be assumed that his thought and ideology revolved around “the Islamic principles” and “the rejection of the Western world-view.” He believed hat “man revives as per his thought (about man, life and the universe, and their relationship, as a whole, with what preceded this life and what comes after it)”’. So he laid vehement emphasis on the adoption of an ideology based on the true Islamic ‘Aqīdah, i.e., the belief in Oneness of Allah, His Prophet—Muhammad (ﷺ), and the life after death. According to al-Nabhānī, ‘Aqīdah serves as the necessary basis of everything and with sound arguments claimed that “since the thoughts are built on the ‘Aqīdah, then it is the criterion for the validity or invalidity of these thoughts, i.e. to decide the position towards them in terms of adoption or rejection.”' Thus, for him a correct and comprehensive ideology (that he called as Al-Fikriyyah Al-Kulliyah) is...
indispensable for the intellectual/rational basis (Al-‘Aqīdah al-Fikriyyah) upon which all the ideas about this life are built and a man could consequently solve the problems he faces.\textsuperscript{17} The correct and comprehensive ideology, he argued should be accompanied by spontaneity and intelligence—the quick sensation of the reality and quick linkage with the information stored in the mind.\textsuperscript{18} He stressed upon the importance of spontaneity in life, its relation with thinking and its effect at a collective level i.e. \textit{Ummah}. While differentiating between the reason from revelation, he subordinated reason to the revelation or \textit{Shar‘ī Ḥukm}, the Islamic opinion and claimed that reason is authentic only when it is governed in the paradigm of revelation.\textsuperscript{19} On such grounds, he criticised all the theories based on mere reason including the rational approach of capitalism. Al-Nabhānī argued that capitalism and other similar ideologies denied the presence of previous information as a necessity for the rational process to be accomplished.\textsuperscript{20} It does not mean that he denied the rational process in understanding the things but demanded for a real rational process based on—a reality, an appropriate brain, sensation and previous information. These elements are fruitful in understanding the reality as a whole and negation of any one of these leads man to err.\textsuperscript{21} On such arguments, he held that the capitalist and socialist thoughts are dangerous and their adoption yields no solution for the humanity in general and for the Muslim \textit{Ummah} in particular. The only thought and ideology that could bring peace and harmony must be based on the truth that could provide a holistic picture of the reality. This ideology, he believed is not other than Islam, which not only encourages intellectual thinking but also guides towards appropriate thought to be adopted for the betterment of humanity. Al-Nabhānī makes it the basis of the revolution and maintains that the people should encourage thinking rather than putting themselves into the physical activities such as demonstrations, strikes, and disturbances. He held that Muslim revival is not possible with mere uprisings or other acts such as revival by morals, worships, and economy. It is possible only by the encouragement of thoughts, thoughts that never distort the real message of Islam.\textsuperscript{22}

\section*{3.4. Al-Nabhānī’s Views on Islam and Ijtihād}

Al-Nabhānī was not against the rational approach in understanding Islam rather he criticised giving reason a free-hand to decide human affairs. While looking into his approach to Islam, he used rational arguments and logical methods to demonstrate that the fundamental truths of Islam are entirely rational. With a deep and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the legal matters and of the Islamic religious sciences,
he was able to depict the essence of Islam and the real purpose of humanity in this mortal world. He maintained that Islam is the religion of truth and argued that correctness of Islam lies in the fact that its doctrines are in harmony with human nature and reason. He demonstrated the rational character of Islamic fundamental doctrines by “laying out a series of rational proofs for the existence of a Creator—God, Muhammad (ﷺ)’s prophethood and the divine origin of the [Qurʾān] as the speech of God”.

In contrast to the notion that the gateways of Ijtihād are closed for Muslim Ummah, al-Nabhānī emphasized on utilizing one’s mental faculty in understanding Islam because he argued that Islam encourages intellectual study and adoption of thoughts with the only restriction that these should not contravene the Islamic ‘Aqīdah. He underscored the fact that the entire doctrine rests on the evidence that is definitive (Qaṭ’ī), and hence furnishes certainty, as opposed to conjectural evidence (Ẓannī) which issues only in speculative knowledge. He argued that Muslims, including sceptical Muslims, must “believe firmly what has been proven by reason or certain and definitive tradition (i.e. the Qurʾān and definitive Sunnah). They must not believe firmly something that has not been proven via reason or the Qurʾān and the definitive Sunnah, because tenets of faith must be adopted on the basis of certainty only.”

For any possible rational investigation, al-Nabhānī argued of four essential elements—(a) the brain, (b) the senses, (c) a reality under investigation which must be accessible to the senses and (d) accumulated data concerning it—the absence of any one of these makes rational investigation not only impossible but also forbidden. He limited the scope of reasoning by saying that the application of reason is permitted only in relation to what is perceptible to the senses. This he believed is the Qurʾānic method of investigation and the scholars who deviated from this method fell into the same trap as the Mu'tazila...making reason the basis [and giving it free rein] for debate concerning what it can and cannot grasp, and what people can and cannot perceive. He argued that for a best understanding of Islam one has to understand the relation between reason and revelation and held that reason should not be made the foundation of investigation but should be subordinated to the revelation by saying that “Qurʾān should be adopted as the basis of all investigations, and of reason.”

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Al-Nabhānī argued that the concepts maintained in the revelation can be known through reason and held that the task of the reason is simply to understand and accept. To quote him precisely:

> Although the faith in the Qur’ān as God’s speech is based exclusively on reason, once it has been established in the Qur’ān itself, and not reason, is the basis for faith in whatever the Qur’ān asserts. Reason doesn’t judge whether or not its verses are correct in meaning: its function is merely to understand.\(^{30}\)

Al-Nabhānī also argued that to understand the Qur’ān and return to original Islam, the approach adopted by Ṣuḥābah (رضي الله عنهم), the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), is imperative besides a correct understanding and precise definition of its intellectual perimeters.\(^{31}\) He also maintained that all foreign ideas must be evaluated on the basis of the Islamic doctrine, and rejected out-right if they contradict any aspect of it and thus urged Muslims to resort systematically to the Islamic doctrine in formulating a stance towards ideas of alien origin.\(^{32}\) In addition, he inspired on taking the advantage of the contemporary knowledge of science and technology to rise from the level of Taqlīd to Istīnbaṭ, so that the problems of life can be solved with the ordinances of Sharī’ah alone.\(^{33}\) Istīnbaṭ, according to him, “requires knowledge in three matters: [1] what are the words and the phrases, [2] the sharī thoughts and [3] the reality of the thoughts”.\(^{34}\) Likewise, he qualified a person for the task (of Istīnbaṭ/ijtihād) by arguing that he must be:

a) knowledgeable in Arabic language in terms of grammar (Naḥw), morphology (Ṣarf) and rhetoric (Balāghah) etc;

b) knowledgeable in Tafsīr (commentary), Ḥadīth and Usul al-Fiqh (foundations of Fiqh);

c) knowledgeable regarding the reality for which he wants to deduce a Ḥukm.\(^{35}\)

Al-Nabhānī admired the importance of Ijtihād by arguing that “the knowledge of the ḥukm al-shar‘ī is a personal duty, and the deduction of the ḥukm al-shar‘ī is a collective duty” but the changing circumstances “make this collective duty no less necessary than the personal duty”.\(^{36}\) So, he feels it necessary for the Ummah to have a multitude of those who would be qualified for carrying out Istīnbaṭ and Ijtihād.”\(^{37}\)

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3.5. Al-Nabhānī as a Political Activist

Just in his teens, al-Nabhānī was introduced to the world of politics by his maternal grandfather during the later years of Ottoman Caliphate. He used to, as mentioned earlier, be a part of the discussion between his father and maternal grandfather on the contemporary political issues that eventually matured his understanding of politics. He actively took part in the revolt against British colonial rule in the leadership of Shahīd ‘Izzu al-Dīn al-Qassām (1882-1935). Besides, he was engaged in an Islamic society known as Jam‘īyyat al-I‘tisām, established in 1941 in Haifah. This society addressed religious and social issues and organized popular festivities to commemorate significant events in Islamic history. Later, it provided secret military training for volunteers in the Palestine war. Al-Nabhānī served as deputy to its founder and head, Muḥammad Nimr al-Khaṭīb (1918-2010).

Before his resignation from the post of judge, al-Nabhānī was associated with a group of younger generation Palestinian intellectuals who were modern in their thoughts and were emerging as leaders of their community (for the nationalist aspirations) following the Annexation. This fraternity resented King Abdullah and the British and won the support of Jordanian Colonel Abdullah al-Tall—(1918-1973), the Commander of the Arab Legion and later the governor of Jerusalem. Al-Tall strengthened their conviction by facilitating protection and giving them a free hand to carry out their activities including the publication of a daily newspaper, Al-Ba‘ath, after which the group is generally named. The group’s central message was a call for revolutionary change in the Arab world and the unification of all Arab states (Arab Nationalism), which according to them was the only way to restore the honor of Palestine. In 1949, al-Nabhānī went to Damascus at the behest of Al-Tall to bring back a message from Husnī al-Za‘īm (1867-1949), whose coup succeeded in Syria and accordingly he purchased the papers for the publication of Al-Ba‘ath. This fortified al-Nabhānī’s relations with al-Tall thus became one of his closest associates in Jerusalem. His attachment with the Al-Ba‘ath party was on the reason that it stood against imperialism and foreign influence. However, due to the objective of achieving “the goals of Arabism”, he strongly opposed such objectives and claimed the Arab regimes as imperialist creations or agents. Al-Nabhānī was so self-determinant and even independent in his ideology that he spoke against the nationalist approach of the Al-Ba‘ath party that propagated Arab Message in the guise of Arab Nationalism. Contrary to the Ba‘athist ideology, he explicitly identified the eternal Arab
Message as Islam and contends that Arab nationalism can be rehabilitated only by restoring Islam to it as its fundamental principle and spirit. It was this fact that he wrote a letter, published as Risālah al-ʿArab (The Message of the Arabs), to the members of the Cultural Summit of the Arab League in Egypt, stressing that the real message of the Arabs was and should be Islam and he insisted on a dire need of political revival of whole Ummah. It is also believed that during his studies at al-ʿAẓhar University, he got associated with Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and became a leading figure in the local branch of the Muslim Brothers until the partition of Palestine in 1948.

Creation of a separate homeland for the Jews, Israel, in the aftermath of Belfour Declaration, stirred al-Nabahānī’s political disposition. Considering the creation of Israel (1948) extremely harmful for the Muslims worldwide (especially for Palestinian Muslims), he believed it to be a reflection of the ‘Western hegemony’ and the ‘impotence of the Muslim world’. This supplemented his strict Islamic ideology through which he advocated of bringing back the Islamic spirit and power to withstand the ill-perceived ideologies of socialism, communism, and state capitalism. In support of Palestine, he wrote, “Inqādh Filasṭīn—Saving Palestine” (published in 1950) to criticise the illegal creation of Israel. Besides, he also contested elections to reverse the ongoing conditions of Muslims in Palestine. However, after his defeat in the elections in 1950 and 1951, he went for lecturer-ship in Islamic College in Amman where he continued to contact judges, scholars, and prominent personalities to establish an Islamic political party. He succeeded with the help of his three colleagues—Asʿad Rajjab, Buyyūd al-Tamīmī and ʿAbd al-Qadīm Zallūm—to establish an Islamic political party to liberate Palestine. In 1952, after many difficulties they finally established and registered a party in the name of Ḥizb al-Tahrīr al-Islāmī (The Islamic Liberation Party). This party, expanding from its Jordanian-ruled West Bank to Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey, made him to focus for deriving the possible means by which Islamic order in Palestine and throughout the Muslim world could be re-established. However, al-Nabahānī failed to convince the then Jordanian government to legalise this party like that of Muslim Brotherhood, owing to the regime’s sceptic outlook towards it and its incompatibility with the constitution of the regime. Despite the ban of government over the activities of the party, al-Nabahānī fervently dedicated himself in building up the movement’s cadres for which he took advantage of ready-made public gatherings on various religious occasions, addressing the people at large. He also conveyed his message by distributing

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leaflets and books and as a result, many people were attracted to his ideas and anticipated a sympathetic response toward the party.\textsuperscript{56} He managed to harness the support of ordinary masses but failed to seek support from the elite and ruling class of the society.\textsuperscript{57} Owing to his growing popularity among the masses, the government passed a law called the “Preaching and Guiding Law” in 1954 banning the members of the party from sermonising in any mosque.\textsuperscript{58} The activists of the party received a harsh treatment and were put on surveillance, sometimes imprisoned and even sentenced to death.\textsuperscript{59} Al-Nabhānī was treated severely and in November 1953, the official pressure forced him to leave the country for Syria until 1959.\textsuperscript{60} Though, he was not allowed to re-enter the Jordanian boundaries yet he continued to lead the party and activate its members throughout Jordan and the West Bank.\textsuperscript{61} In the mean time, al-Nabhānī and his party dealt with a significant blow, when he was accused of receiving a cheque for $150000 from American sources and people began to call him as ‘American Agent’ while some reports claimed him ‘Soviet Union Agent’.\textsuperscript{62} However, its credibility is fragile as his writings reflect that he often criticised the ill policies of the West and Russia against Muslim world and considered them the main sources of chaos and confusion in the world.\textsuperscript{63}

Despite such accusations, al-Nabhānī never let his confidence droop down and succeeded in the proliferation of his idea of re-establishing an Islamic state.\textsuperscript{64} He also highlighted and engaged activists in the activities that were often referred to as “gathering forces for the assumption of power”.\textsuperscript{65} For this, he issued a leaflet in May 1965 urging the members to target rulers, politicians and prominent personalities in their direct contact activities, and to focus on developing qualities of creative leadership. This leaflet was followed by another that served as a guiding message to improve their political profile in the society. Despite many severe hindrances and troubles, al-Nabhānī sustained his vigour and optimism\textsuperscript{66} and thus, argued that circumstances were growing more propitious by the day for Muslims to liberate themselves from the shackles of colonialism and to resume their mission of propagation of Islam worldwide.\textsuperscript{67} Nevertheless, al-Nabhānī and his movement had to face a detrimental shock in the form of the failure of their coup that was attempted in Amman and which he has referred to as ‘bungled operation’ in his last work, published in November, 1976 just six months prior to his death. The pages of this work bear eloquent witness to its author’s disappointment.\textsuperscript{68} In the aftermath of this unsuccessful uprising and the frustration of al-Nabhānī, the morale and enthusiasm of the members began to fade away gradually. Consequently, overall scale of activities steadily
declined and al-Nabhānī’s proposal in the form of his organization entered a period of complete stagnation that continued until his death on 20 June 1977 in Beirut. However, the party recovered of the misfortune and apathy when al-Nabhānī was succeeded by his colleague, ‘Abd al-Qadīm Zallūm as the leader of the party, Ḥizb al-Tahrīr.

3.6. Discontent with Modern (non-Islamic) Ideologies

With an unreserved determination, al-Nabhānī always advocated of the practice and propagation of Islamic ideology. Like his contemporaries such as al-Bannā and Mawdūdī, al-Nabhānī’s perspective was profoundly influenced with a disgusting approach towards the exploitative Western imperialism. Consequently, he determined and advocated of reversing its damaging impact on Muslim societies through a return to Islamic forms. The ideological acquiescence to the West, loss of Palestine, establishment of nation-states and the segregation of religion and politics were the harsh realities that al-Nabhānī felt as a big loss for the Muslims in particular and for the humanity in general. According to al-Nabhānī it is the colonialism and neo-colonialism that continue to impose the military, economic, political, and cultural domination over defeated peoples in order to exploit them. Accordingly, he held the consequences of the neo-colonialism as “the most dangerous cause of suffering for weak peoples, and the greatest threat to local and world stability.” The then major world powers (which al-Nabhānī counted as five colonial states—USA, Britain, Soviet Union, France and Germany) are continuing their manipulation through economic aid, loans, investments, agricultural and industrial projects and extend their control and influence over all parts of the world by installation of their puppet regimes. In addition to colonialism and neo-colonialism ideologies, he also denounced the ideology and methodology of socialism and capitalism and argued that such ideologies are the real causes of disorder and corruption in the world. The salvation of humanity from the sufferings caused by such ideologies lies in the eradication of such ideologies, al-Nabhānī argued. According to him:

As long as the world is unable to liberate itself from enslavement to this [capitalist] idea and from the domination of states with designs on it and deeply entrenched influence over it, there can be no hope for its salvation. The world’s sincere thinkers must liberate it from capitalism.

Al-Nabhānī further argued that these states deliberately create problems to promote solutions enabling them to implement their exploitative policies in the name of

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spreading peace and justice in the world. The real world order on peace and justice is impossible unless the world unleashes the capitalistic and the like ideologies and introduces a correct doctrine of universal significance. He maintains, “if there is no nation or people who embrace a basic idea, live according to it and convey it worldwide there can be no hope for the world’s welfare or salvation”\textsuperscript{76}

Accordingly, al-Nabhānī presented “Islam (with its universal divine code)” as the redeeming and appropriate doctrine for the welfare of whole humanity. The logical evidence for the genuineness and correctness of Islam, according to al-Nabhānī, lies in the fact that its doctrine(s) is/are in harmony with human nature. Al-Nabhānī emphasized on the self-sufficiency of Islam and tried to convince skeptical Muslims that Islam guides humanity in totality and state and its organization is an intrinsic part of Islam. He argued that Islam provides a blueprint for a distinct system of governance, divinely prescribed in the Qur’ān and Sunnah and practically endorsed by the Ṣaḥābah/Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Unfortunately, argued al-Nabhānī, Muslim societies are now accustomed to the political system of unbelief and think and practice likewise and they need to transcend such situations and should construct Islamic system of governance to restore their lost glory. He maintained:

It is imperative that we overcome our habitation to these forms of government. We must transcend our current situation together with systems of government the world over. Our choice must be Islamic government as a distinctive political system. we must no compare it with other systems of government, nor interpret it as we like to bring it into conformity with another system or to make it resemble anything else.\textsuperscript{77}

To achieve this end, al-Nabhānī believed in the transformation of existing systems of government into Islamic form. He maintains:

The Islamic world today is a domain of unbelief, having abandoned Islamic government. Consequently, most Muslims view it as corrupted, and hold that it is in need of reform. However, reform signifies eliminating corruption from the prevailing situation. This is inappropriate because the Islamic world really needs a comprehensive and radical transformation (inqilāb shāmil) that will eradicate the rule of unbelief and strive to establish Islamic government: reform actually perpetuates the corruption.\textsuperscript{78}
3.7. Foundation of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr

Al-Nabhānī considered the existence of an Islamic organization inevitable for the realization of Muslim renaissance and the re-establishment of an Islamic state (Khilāfah). He denounced the transformation of domain of unbelief by power rather preferred to induce the Ummah to convey the call of Islam so that the entire Ummah becomes a party. It is the party that could facilitate the ways for establishment of “Islamic state that would embody and implement society’s new Islamic ideas and precepts and export these to the rest of the humanity, restoring the Ummah to its former glory as the dominant world power and spearheading a mission to liberate the globe from the evils of capitalist hegemony.”

Al-Nabhānī successfully endeavored to establish an Islamic party (that he succeeded in 1952 in the name of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī) to revolutionize the Muslim world for the restoration of its position of global power. It was a period when Arab nationalism was the talk of the day and appeals of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr were ignored. With the opposition of Jordanian government, the party moved to underground strategies and at the same time, it began to establish its foothold in other Arab countries. In Turkey and Middle East and Asia the group’s activities have been well documented during the first decade of its existence. The structure and organization of the group is well arranged in a series of hierarchical committees. An Amīr (leader) heads the party, which is having the divisions for an effective administration as:

1. A five-ten member committee headed by a regional leader (Muʿtamad);
2. A committee headed by a Naqīb (local head);
3. A neighbourhood study circles headed by a Mushrif (study circle guide).

In the regions or countries were the activities of the party are banned, a secret cell structure is followed to practice and propagate the mission of the party. In addition, some activities and the identities of the group’s leadership are highly secretive. It is pertinent to note that while organizing the group and the training of its members, Al-Nabhānī tried to adopt the strategy as adopted by Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). Suha Taj-Farouki, a specialist in modern Islamic thought, presented a detailed account of party’s strategy under four heading in her book, A Fundamental Quest; a brief description of which is as under:
a) The Starting Point and Phase of Indoctrination (*Nuqtat al-Ibtidā’; Dawr al-Tathqīf*)\(^8^4\)

This is the first stage of the movement wherein the objectives and cadres of the movement are defined while introducing the correct concepts and beliefs based on the Islamic ideology into society. The stage focuses on disseminating the message of Islam, the purpose of the party, utilizing the energies on the intensive indoctrination of new recruits in study circles, producing new generation of educators of the mission. In this respect, the movement is like a school and its circles and local communities functioning as classrooms. This stage is helpful in establishing a group on sound belief and conviction.

b) The Takeoff Point (*Nuqtat al-Intilāq*)\(^8^5\)

Once the ideology had been successfully embodied in the individuals, the group so formed would address the people with confidence. In this stage, the instructed persons would interact with different people, elites and those who are engaged in the state services and try to manage their interest and to oversee their direction, in order to Islamize this. During this period, the members should assess the obstacles in the way of party’s mission and their solutions accordingly.

c) The Phase of Interaction (*Dawr al-Tafa’ul*)\(^8^6\)

Next step to ‘open the society’s door’ is by interacting with the members of the society, which paves a way for intellectual struggle. This stage for al-Nabhānī was very critical because the purpose of this stage is to communicate the Islamic ideology to society in such a way that it understands it, and ultimately embraces it as its own. Moreover, al-Nabhānī argued having emerged from the society; the party should work as a vehicle for expressing society’s feeling. That is why he described the members of party as ‘the Umma’s tongue, expressing its ideas, opinions and feelings.’ The objectives of the stage include to win over new recruits and party supporters and to create a public opinion in support of the ideology throughout the society. To achieve such objectives, al-Nabhānī himself insisted to approach the members/masses either as groups as the Prophet had done, or through individual representatives as Mus‘ab had done in Madinah. The members so approached, for al-Nabhānī, must be Muslims and must agree to attend the
study circles to acquire a thorough understanding of the ideology of the party and to become an intrinsic part of the movement.

d) The Consolidation Point (Nuqtat al-Irtikāz)\(^87\)

The success in the third stage helps in the consolidation of the party to achieve its objectives. The consolidation point, according to al-Nabhānī, could only be constructed when a society has been so influenced by the ideology that this dominates its intellectual milieu. It is from this consolidation point, the re-establishment of Caliphate/Khilāfah is possible. He also maintained that it is the people’s general perceptiveness and their response to movement’s ideas that are responsible for the location of this stage. According to him:

The establishment of the Caliphate is not like building a house, measuring, and judging according to the material possibilities. In contrast, the Caliphate is a political entity resting on an intellectual basis. Wherever this entity matures, it will arise naturally and inevitably, regardless of the site or the material conditions of the location.\(^88\)

Once the location is identified, then the stage would be effective, according to Al-Nabhānī for the assumption of the power and the installation of a Caliph/Khalīfah.

After emulating these four stages of revolution from the Sīrah of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ), Al-Nabhānī held it a divinely prescribed course which the movement was obliged to follow. It is analyzed that the original blueprint for the movement focuses overwhelmingly on the first two stages—the phases of indoctrination and interaction. Little attention is paid towards the takeoff point, and the consolidation point.\(^89\) However, Farouki maintains: “In 1969 al-Nabhānī described these two stages as interfaces between two consecutive phases in the party’s programme. The takeoff point joins the phases of indoctrination and interaction, while the consolidation point joins the phase of interaction with the phase of government.”\(^90\)

Peter Mandaville (b. 1971)\(^91\) has reduced the above four stages into three—Culturing, Interaction, and Seeking Power. To quote him:

During the first of these, the “culturing” phase, the basic structure of the party is assembled and members are socialized into its beliefs, agenda, and worldview. Once it is on firm footing, the party can then move on to phase two, “interaction,” which involves going out into society to explain the

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necessity of Khilāfah and to call Muslims to support or join the party. The third and final phase, “seeking power,” is where the most concerted use of Ṯuṣrah is made in order to actually establish Khilāfah.\textsuperscript{92}

Notwithstanding the availability of an effective \textit{modus operandi} for its operation, the movement, however, could not succeed in establishing Khilāfah, neither in the lifetime of its founder, nor under the leadership of ‘Abd al-Qādīm Zallūm (leader from 1977 to 2003) and ‘Aṭā Abū Rashtā (present leader from 2003). The movement is still working on its radical but non-violent strategies to convince the Muslim populace about the necessity of a global Islamic state, Khilāfah. The misconceptions about the movement’s involvement and willingness to use violence could not mature because “no solid evidence exists to suggest that the party has ever employed militant tactics.”\textsuperscript{93}

3.8. Works/Writings of Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī

Al-Nabhānī being a scholar and a proficient writer disseminated his message through his writings to illuminate the people with his idea of restoring the caliphate. Among his works, some are pertinently mentioned below:

3.8.1. \textit{Saving Palestine—1950}\textsuperscript{94}

The first book written by al-Nabhānī is \textit{Inqādh Filastīn}, or Saving Palestine in which he presents the history of Palestine to explain the tactics responsible for the establishment of Jewish there. It also provides an introduction to the \textit{Ba’thist} nationalist concepts that were later to introduce in his own party, \textit{Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr}. In this work, al-Nabhānī categorizes Arabs as a single nation and calls for a revolutionary vanguard to regenerate Arab unity which he believed is possible only by implementation of Islam. However, al-Nabhānī does not call for the establishment of an Islamic state in this early writing which occurs frequently in his later works. The last part of the book presents his ideas and methods on the ways and means of liberating Palestine.

3.8.2. \textit{The Message of the Arabs—1950}\textsuperscript{95}

This is actually a letter which al-Nabhānī wrote in August 1950 in order to address the members of the Cultural Summit of the Arab League in Egypt. This letter was later published as \textit{Risālah al-Arab}, or \textit{The Message of the Arabs} by his party, for it disseminates the message which was meant to unify the Muslims under one ideology,
Islam. In this piece, al-Nabhānī stressed that the real message of the Arabs was Islam and nationalism and patriotism is in no way the solution of political malady of Muslims.

3.8.3. The System of Islam – 1953

Originally Niẓām al-Islām, the book has been translated into English, as The System of Islam published by Al-Khilafah Publications, London in 2002 comprising not more than 177 pages. The author starts logically the discussion on one of the fundamentals of Islam, that is, Belief. It also discusses fundamental concepts in the party (Ḥizb al-Tahrīr) ideology, emulating the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ), elaborating the views concerning constitution and canon followed by the party’s draft constitution for the Islamic state. The last portion of the book deals with concept of morals in Islam and their importance in the society.

3.8.4. The Ruling System in Islam—1953

Niẓām al-Ḥukm fī al-Islām (The Ruling System in Islam) is a comprehensive work of the author in which he discusses the ruling system of Islam including the concept of Islamic state, principles of ruling, structure of the state including other organs of the state. By providing the detailed guidelines for contracting/electing Khalīfah, the assistants of the Khalīfah, governors, army, judiciary, council of Ummah etc., the book therefore evinced a complete and comprehensive governing system designed for mankind, obligatory on Muslims to be implemented and executed in a state that takes a specific shape and is represented by the system of Khilāfah.

3.8.5. The Economic System in Islam—1953

This book is very precious and important contribution for it explains the Islamic view of the economy and its objective, ways/methods for owning property/wealth, increasing, spending, disposing and distributing it amongst the citizens to establish a balance within the society. The book comparatively introduces the reality of the capitalist and socialist, including (communist) economic systems and their refutation, explaining their defects and contradiction with the economic system of Islam.

3.8.6. The Social System in Islam—1953

Originally Al-Niẓām al-Ijtima‘īyyah fī’l-Islām, the book has been translated into The Social System in Islam published by Al-Khilafah Publication London in 1990. This is

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a profound work by al-Nabhānī to eradicate much confusion of the Muslims about the social system of Islam. He has provided a comprehensive detail of Islamic social system from creation of man and women, their relationship with one another, keeping of good and friendly relations within the Islamic community, maintenance of good relations and co-operation among relatives. The author highlights the Islamic social system as the best system regarding social norms.

3.8.7. The Party Structure—1953

Al-Takattul al-Ḥizbī is also available in English titled “Structuring of a Party” published by al-Khilafah Publications London in 2001. This work outlines a philosophy of revival and modes of its operation and a critique of attempts at revival in the modern Arab East. He also talked about the failure of many Islamic movements which according to him was due to the lack of a definite and correct idea (Fikrah), undefined method (Tarīqah) to implement their idea; lack of full awareness among the activists and lack of a correct bond amongst themselves. He thus tried to provide a brief but comprehensive methodology to shape a party on a correct and universal ideology making the party and its members vital, progressive, dynamic and sensitive which include structuring the party, the instructions and training of its members, implementing the idea into practice, gaining the authority and lastly propagating Islam to the whole world.

3.8.8. The Concepts of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr—1953

Mafāhīm Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr (The Concepts of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr) is about to direct and guide the party members how to achieve their established goals. Al-Nabhānī started this work by discussing the general weakness, especially political backwardness, of Muslim Ummah and the causes of the failure of the Muslim revivalists. This work presents an understanding of Islam plus its importance and the responsibilities of those, especially his own political party, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, working to establish the Islamic state.

3.8.9. The Islamic State—1953

The Islamic State is the English version of Al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyyah published by Al-Khilafah Publications London in 1998. Al-Nabhānī, instead of al-Khilāfah used al-Dawlah to describe the Islamic concept of state in this book. This is the main work of al-Nabhānī, which traces the historical rise, decline, and demise of the Islamic state and identifies the ways to restore it. This work is not meant to narrate its history but to explain
how the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) established the Islamic State, and to demonstrate how the disbelieving colonialists destroyed it. It also demonstrates how Muslims should re-establish their State so that the light that guided the world in the darkest of ages returns to enlighten humanity once again. The work also contains the party’s draft constitution for the Islamic state.

3.8.10. *The Islamic Personality (in three volumes)—1960* 103

*Al-Shakhsiyyah al-Islamiyyah* (The Islamic Personality) is a voluminous treatise of the scholars. The first Volume this work puts down firm foundations for belief and the fundamentals of Islamic thought. It deals with the crucial issue of the basis and formation of the Islamic personality (*Shakhsiya*), the correct understanding of the widely debated yet vague subject of *Al Qada wal Qadr*, the Qur'an, its revelation and its compilation, the Sunnah, Ḥadith, its sciences and the classification of *Ahādīth*, Fiqh and its principles (*Uṣūl Al-Fiqh*), *Tafsīr* (Exegesis)-in the past and present and the correct method of carrying out *Tafsīr*. In the second volume, al-Nabhānī has discussed the concept of *Khilāfah*, its religious importance, contracting a Khalīfah, method of appointment, and other departments related to the contemporary system of Islamic state. Volume third of this three-part work is an elaborate exposition of the party’s views concerning the sources and mechanisms of jurisprudence.

3.8.11. *A Warm Call from Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr to the Muslims—1962* 104

In this booklet, al-Nabhānī addresses the Muslim *Ummah*, argues that Islam is, and has been in a constant struggle since its birth and it is for the *Ummah* to live up with the tenets of Islam instead of following the concepts of West. He also urges the *Ummah* not to separate religion from the politics and show confidence in the suitability of Islam as a system of life in the modern age, for separation of Islam from the affairs of life is a sort of disbelief/ *Kufr*.


This is the translation of the original book, *Mafāhīm al-Siyāsiyyah li Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr*. In this book-let, the author provides a detailed statement of the party’s analysis of international politics. This is a brief and comprehensive account, which provides valuable information about the political policies and international policies of the then five major
world powers including their relations with allied countries. After commenting thoroughly on the existing regimes, he then discusses the role of an Islamic state in national and international politics. He vehemently talks about importance and essence of political education and awareness among the *Ummah*. He further discusses in the booklet that political awareness not only ‘mean to be aware of the political situations, the international position, the political events or to follow up the international politics and the political actions’ rather, the political awareness is to ‘view the world from a special angle/perspective, and for Muslims the special angle is the Islamic *Aqīdah*’.


The *Presence of Mind* is a very interesting and thought provoking piece of work of al-Nabhānī in which he discusses the importance of spontaneity, its relation with thinking, intelligence and pursuance and its effect on Muslim *Ummah* with full and suitable use of examples. Al-Nabhānī profoundly demonstrates how lack of spontaneity in *Ummah* helped the West to colonize them and how it could be helpful to rejuvenate their strength and lost glory.


*Thinking*, originally *Tafkīr*, is a thought provoking book by al-Nabhānī in which he discusses profoundly the importance of thinking in the life of human beings in general and for Muslim *Ummah* in particular. He presents that it is the intellect and the ability to think which makes a human superior to all other creatures. He claims that a scientific method is not a basis in thinking rather a constant style of thinking. He, intensely yet interestingly, discusses how the mind (*‘Aql*), or thought (*Fikr*), or comprehension (*Idrak*) is transferring the sensation of the reality (object) by the senses to the brain in the presence of previous information, by which this reality is understood. He highlights that it is the lack of thinking that results in the decline of a nation. Later, as a ray of hope, al-Nabhānī maintains how the Islamic *Ummah* could regenerate its lost glory and become a thinking *Ummah* and restore its prestige.

3.9.  An Estimation

Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī (1909-77) was a distinctive thinker, a revivalist, a reputed Islamic scholar, intellectual and a Jurist of the twentieth century. Formerly a *Ba’th*ist, he had affiliations with Muslim Brotherhood, and later founded and formulated
the Islamic organization, *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr* (1953). A graduate of *Al-Azhar University* and *Dar al-Ulum* in Egypt, he worked on different educational and administrative positions. He worked as a judge in the Islamic courts of Baysan, Hebron, Ramla till 1948. He was serious about the Muslim conditions of the time and strongly emphasised on the adoption of the ideology based on the true Islamic ‘*Aqīdah*—the belief in Oneness of Allah, His Prophet (ﷺ) and the life after death. To him, ‘*Aqīdah* serves as the necessary basis of everything and ‘since the thoughts are built on the ‘*Aqīdah*, it is therefore a criterion for the validity or invalidity of these thoughts, i.e. to decide the position towards them in terms of adoption or rejection’.

Besides, Al-Nabhānī argued to understand the *Qur’ān* and return to original Islam, it is required to utilize the approach adopted by *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله تعالى عنهم أجمعين) the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and a correct understanding and precise definition of its intellectual parameters. He also maintained that all foreign ideas must be evaluated on the basis of the Islamic doctrine, and reject out-right if they contradict any aspect of it and thus urged Muslims to resort systematically to the Islamic doctrine in formulating a stance towards ideas of alien origin. He was influenced by the political calamity of his time. He deliberated himself into the debate of Islamic political thought and Muslim revivalism. He emphasized on the strong subscription of the Muslims to the teachings of Islam and be united against the conspiracies of the neo-colonial elements.

Since the beginning of 1930s, he became politically active and was deeply concerned with the Palestinian problem. He abandoned his early affiliations, took independent course, and established *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr* in 1952 in Jerusalem, which advocated pan-Islamic vision and anti-Western struggle for liberating Palestine. He devoted himself for the renaissance of Muslim Ummah, produced literature to disseminate the ideology of Islam, aims of his party, and tried to win the confidence of the people to change the existing political systems into Islamic form, under the banner of universal institution of *Khilāfah* headed by a single leader (*Amīr*). Despite facing many challenges, he remained firm in the struggle of Muslim renaissance and establishment of *Khilāfah*. The mission is still continued by the members of the movement in various parts of the world even after a significant period of slumber followed by his death.

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4 Ustadh Kamal Abu Zahra, “The Life of Shaikh Taqiudeen An-Nabhānī”. It is an audio lecture retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDGETkxng9E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDGETkxng9E) on 05/12/2014


7 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 2


9 Ibid.

10 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., pp. 1-3

11 Cf. *Hizb ut-Tahrir - A Global Political Leadership (A Complete Documentary - URDU)* retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO6wXDfdI74](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO6wXDfdI74) on 13/02/2015


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17 Nabhānī, *The System of Islam*, op. cit., p. 6


19 Ibid.

20 Nabhānī, *Thinking*, op. cit., p. 19

21 Ibid., pp. 19-20

22 Ibid., p. 64


24 Nabhānī, *Thinking*, op. cit., p. 101


26 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., pp. 47-48

27 Ibid., p. 48


29 Ibid., p. 47

30 Ibid., p. 48

31 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., pp. 50-51

32 Ibid., p. 52

33 Nabhānī, *Thinking*, op. cit., p. 105

34 Ibid., p. 104


36 Ibid., p. 105

37 Ibid.

38 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 2

39 Izz ad-Dīn bin ‘Abd al-Qādir bin Muṣṭafā bin Yusuf bin Muḥammad al-Qassām was a Syrian-born Palestinian Muslim preacher and political activist who was a leader in the

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fight against British and was killed on 20 November, 1935 in a clash with British Patrol near the village of Ya’abad. He was the first political activist to bear witness for his faith and Palestine cause consequently he attained the status of cult hero. See Gudrun Krämer, A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 259-265

40 Muḥsin Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, Al-Ṭayyar al-Islāmī fī Filāštīn wa atharūhā fī Harakat al-jīhād. (Kuwait: Maktabah al-Falah, 1988), pp. 430,431,444

41 Farouki, A Fundamental Quest, op. cit., p. 3


43 Ibid., p. 134

44 Farouki, A Fundamental Quest, op. cit., p. 4

45 Ibid.


47 Anjum, “Nabhani, Taqi al-Din Al-” op. cit., p. 157

48 On November 2, 1917, Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour writes a letter to Britain’s most illustrious Jewish citizen, Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild, expressing the British government’s support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The letter is known as the “Balfour Declaration”. For details, see The Balfour Declaration on the following link: http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-balfour-declaration last accessed on 24/03/2014.


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53 Ibid., pp. 5-6

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57 Ibid., p. 25

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60 Anjum, “Nabhani, Taqi al-Din Al-“ op. cit., p. 157


62 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 14

63 Nabhānī, *The Presence of Mind*, op. cit., p. 32

64 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 26


67 *Ibid.*, p. 28


70 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 30


75 *Ibid.*, p. 78

76 *Ibid.*, p. 73


79 Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest*, op. cit., p. 77


82 Ibid.

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84 Farouki, A Fundamental Quest, op. cit., pp. 90-91

85 Ibid., pp. 91-94

86 Ibid., pp. 94-102

87 Ibid., pp. 102-105

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91 Peter Mandaville (b. 1971 is a Professor of Government and Politics and Director of the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University, USA. He has authored many books on politics which include: Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma (London: Routledge, 2001), The Zen of International Relations (London: Palgrave/St. Martin's Press 2001), Meaning and International Relations (London: Routledge, 2003), Global Political Islam (London: Routledge, 2007) Globalizing Religions (London: SAGE Publications, 2010 Paul James) and Islam and Politics, op. cit.

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93 Ibid., p. 358


