

# Kongress 2014

## Horizonte der Islamischen Theologie

### Abstract – Sektion 1, Panel 7

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**Thema** *The Devil is in the Detail – the significance of Iblis to Salafi performances of wudu'*

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The Devil, whose proper name is Iblis, plays a very minor role in Classical Islam's ritual purity law (fiqh al-taharah). In the accompanying hadith and tafsir traditions regarding purity, he is invariably outperformed by a chorus of mischievous jinn and his own offspring, the shayatin, both of whom share a predilection for filth and the places in which filth tends to be found. In contemporary Salafi discussions, by contrast, Iblis is pushed centre-stage, a potentially major obstacle to achieving the state of ritual purity in which it is necessary for believers to pray. Exploring the reasons behind his recent promotion in the field of ritual purity, this paper looks at modern Salafi treatments of Iblis specifically in relation to wudu', the minor ritual purification. In so doing, it draws attention to modern Salafis' attempts, on the one hand, to imbue Muslim ritual performance with ever more transparent moral meanings while, on the other hand, privileging their readings of the classical purity material above those of their non-Salafi (i.e. madhhabi) competitors.