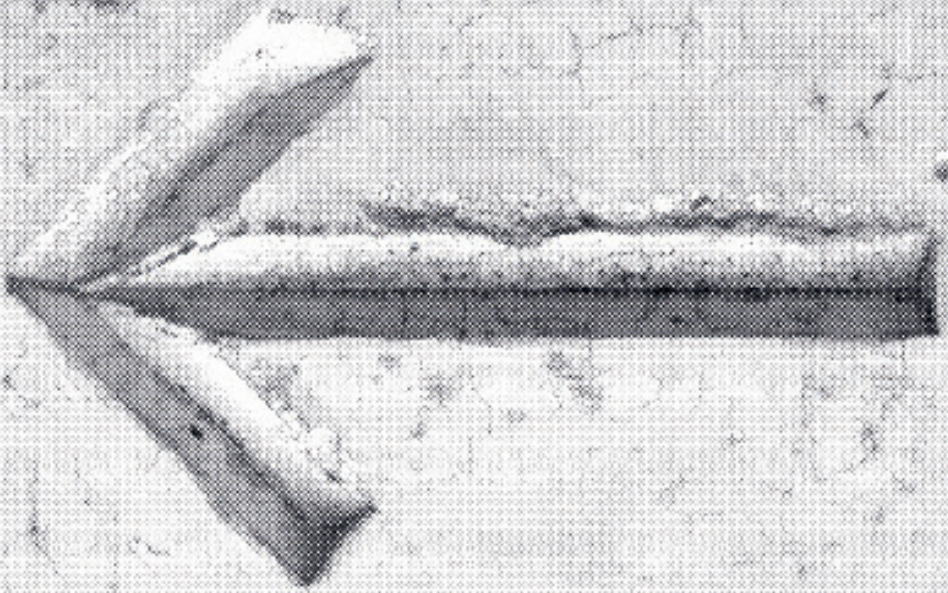




Series on the Seven Pillars of Extremist Thought

Second Pillar: The Concept of Jahiliyyah (Ignorance)



The Concept of Jahiliyyah (Ignorance)

En

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TABAH INITIATIVES
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◆ In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful ◆
All praise be to Allah. Salutations and peace be upon our
master, the Messenger of Allah, and upon his family, his
===== companions, and those who follow his guidance =====

A Reflective Pause !

What does 'jahiliyyah' mean in these verses?

"Is it the judgement of jahiliyyah they seek? Who could be
a better judge than Allah for people of sure faith?"

(Al-Ma'idah 5:50)

*"Settle in your homes, and do not flaunt your finery as they
used to in the former times of jahiliyyah..."*

(Al-Ahzab 33:33)

*"When the disbelievers had filled their hearts with pride—the
pride of jahiliyyah.*

(Al-Fath 48:26)

*"They entertained false thoughts about Allah—the thoughts of
jahiliyyah..."*

(Al-Imran 3:156)

.....
Do you think these verses imply the continuation and persis-
tence of the Jahiliyyah that the Prophet, peace and blessings
be upon him and his family, came to end?

Do these verses suggest that Muslims, who testify there is no
god but Allah, could fall into disbelief and be described with
the Jahiliyyah that existed before Islam?



How did the proponents of extremist

The theorists of extremist movements believe that ruling by anything other than what Allah has revealed is an act of disbelief that excludes one from the faith¹, and societies that accept such governance are also disbelieving societies! Consequently, they labelled these Muslim societies as Jahiliyyah for accepting rule by other than what Allah has revealed. They base this on the verse: "Is it the judgement of jahiliyyah they seek?."

They have distorted the true meaning of Jahiliyyah, which is a historical epoch before Islam or certain practices that Islam intended to change, into a doctrinal issue based on which they declared Muslim societies as disbelievers and legitimised the shedding of Muslim blood. They understood Jahiliyyah as a perpetual state, not as a specific historical era or certain actions and practices before Islam, and based on this, they judged Islamic societies as disbelieving. What resulted from this distortion of the meaning of Jahiliyyah?

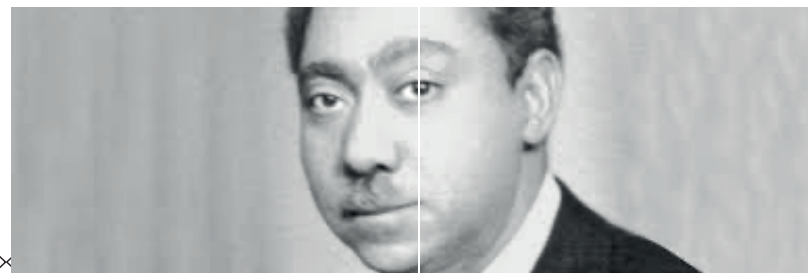
- Declaring the majority of the Islamic ummah as disbelievers and labelling it as Jahiliyyah.- Attempting to form non-Jahili societies according to their perspective.

- Establishing ideological and activist groups to achieve this goal.- Paving the way for secession from the Muslim community and isolation from society, believing themselves to be the only true Muslim group.- Justifying the killing of people and the shedding of blood under the pretext that these have become disbelieving societies based on their understanding of Jahiliyyah.

1- This is known as the theory of Sovereignty (Hakimiyyah), which can be explored through the "Sanad Network" website

2 "A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam," page 47.

3 In "In the Shade of the Qur'an" by Sayyid Qutb, interpretation of verse 50 "Is it the judgement of jahiliyyah they seek?" from Surah Al-Ma'idah (2/904).



Strange, Disconnected and Shocking Concepts:

- ◆ This skewed understanding of Jahiliyyah originates from Abul A'la Maududi, who said:²"As for the Jahiliyyah of polytheism, it leaped upon most people and deviated them from the path of monotheism to the myriad paths of misguidance. The Muslims have not reverted to outright paganism, but there is no form of polytheism that has not found popularity in their societies." Sayyid Qutb then adopted this erroneous understanding from Maududi and developed it into a full-blown theory, using the verse: "Is it the judgement of jahiliyyah they seek? Who could be a better judge than Allah for people of sure faith?" as evidence. In his book "In the Shade of the Quran" (2/904), he states: "The meaning of Jahiliyyah is defined by this text; Jahiliyyah - as described and defined by Allah in His Quran - is the governance of humans over humans because it entails the servitude of humans to humans, rejecting the servitude to Allah, denying the divinity of Allah, and in place of this rejection, acknowledging the divinity of some humans and servitude to them instead of Allah

4 "In the Shade of the Qur'an," interpretation of the verse "O humanity! If you are in doubt of my faith, then, know that, I do not worship those you worship instead of Allah" from Surah Yunus (3/1824).

5 "In the Shade of the Qur'an", an interpretation of verse 151 "Say, 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you'" from Surah Al-An'am (3/1230)

6 "Milestones", pages 17-19.

7 "Milestones", page 8.

ideologies interpret Jahiliyyah?

- ◆ Jahiliyyah, in the light of this text, is not a period of time. It is a set of circumstances, which existed yesterday, exist today and will exist tomorrow. They take on the characteristic of jahiliyyah, which is the exact opposite of Islam and in full contradiction to it."³
- ◆ Jahiliyyah, in the light of this text, is not a period of time. It is a set of circumstances, which existed yesterday, exist today and will exist tomorrow. They take on the characteristic of jahiliyyah, which is the exact opposite of Islam and in full contradiction to it."³ It is important to note that Sayyid Qutb introduced the concept of tawhid hakimiyyah (monotheistic governance) and shirk hakimiyyah (polytheistic governance). The danger of this understanding is that he judged people as engaging in polytheistic governance, which is polytheism in belief as he asserts. He says in "In the Shade of the Quran": "This is the end of the Surah that included discussions around the main issues of faith: the oneness of Lordship, Guardianship, and Sovereignty."⁴
- ◆ While interpreting the verse: "Say, 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you: do not associate anything with Him'", he said, "It refers to polytheism in belief, just as it is polytheism in governance."⁵ In his book "Milestones," he stated, "Today, we live in an era of ignorance as dark or even darker than the one Islam faced. Everything around us is Jahiliyyah—people's concepts and beliefs, their customs and traditions, their cultural sources, their arts and literature, their laws and legislation, and even much of what we consider Islamic culture, Islamic references, Islamic philosophy, and thinking are also products of Jahiliyyah."⁶
- ◆ And in the same book, he stated: "The Muslim Ummah ceased to exist centuries ago."⁷

A Moment of Verification How did the scholars of the ummah understand the meaning of Jahiliyyah?

Let us seek the correct understanding of the meaning of Jahiliyyah.

Al-Bukhari, in his Sahih (1,15), introduces a chapter with the title: "Chapter: Sins are from the matters of Jahiliyyah, but their doer does not become a disbeliever, except with Shirk, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'You are a man in whom there is Jahiliyyah,' and Allah's saying: **'Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but forgives anything else of whoever He wills'** [An-Nisa: 48]."

Al-Bukhari, through this classification, clarified that committing sins does not render one a disbeliever, does not label one as being in a state of Jahiliyyah, and does not make one a polytheist unless one engages in associating partners with Allah in worship.

Imam Tabari, as narrated by Hafiz Ibn Kathir, said:⁸

Ibn Zuhayr narrated to us, Musa bin Ismail narrated to us, Dawood⁹ bin Abi al-Furat narrated to us, Ali bin Ahmar narrated to us from Ikrimah from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, who said regarding the verse 'And do not flaunt your finery as they used to in the former times of jahiliyyah' [Al-Ahzab: 33], 'It was between Noah and 'Idris, and it lasted a thousand years

L'Imâm ar-Râzî⁹

Imam Al-Razi stated about the phrase "the former Jahiliyyah" that there are two interpretations; one is that it refers to the time of Noah, with the subsequent Jahiliyyah.

referring to those after him. The second interpretation is that this phrase does not necessitate a second Jahiliyyah, but rather it refers to the ancient Jahiliyyah.¹⁰ Thus, Imams Al-Tabari and Al-Razi explained that the term "former Jahiliyyah" could either refer to the Jahiliyyah during the time of our master Noah, with the second Jahiliyyah being the one before the advent of our master Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or, as Al-Razi mentioned, it refers to an ancient Jahiliyyah without necessarily implying a subsequent Jahiliyyah.

⁵ "In the Shade of the Qur'an", an interpretation of verse 151 "Say, 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you" from Surah Al-An'am (3/1230)

⁶ "Milestones", pages 17-19

⁷ "Milestones", page 8.

⁸ "Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim", interpretation of the verse "Do not flaunt your finery as they used to in the former times of jahiliyyah"

⁹ Tafsir Al-Tabari.

Did the majority of interpreters agree with this understanding of the meaning of Jahiliyyah?

The majority of exegetes converged on this understanding, mentioning either both meanings or one of them. None of them deemed a Muslim individual a disbeliever for having an aspect of Jahiliyyah, let alone declaring Muslim societies as disbelievers.

Among these exegetes, for example, are :

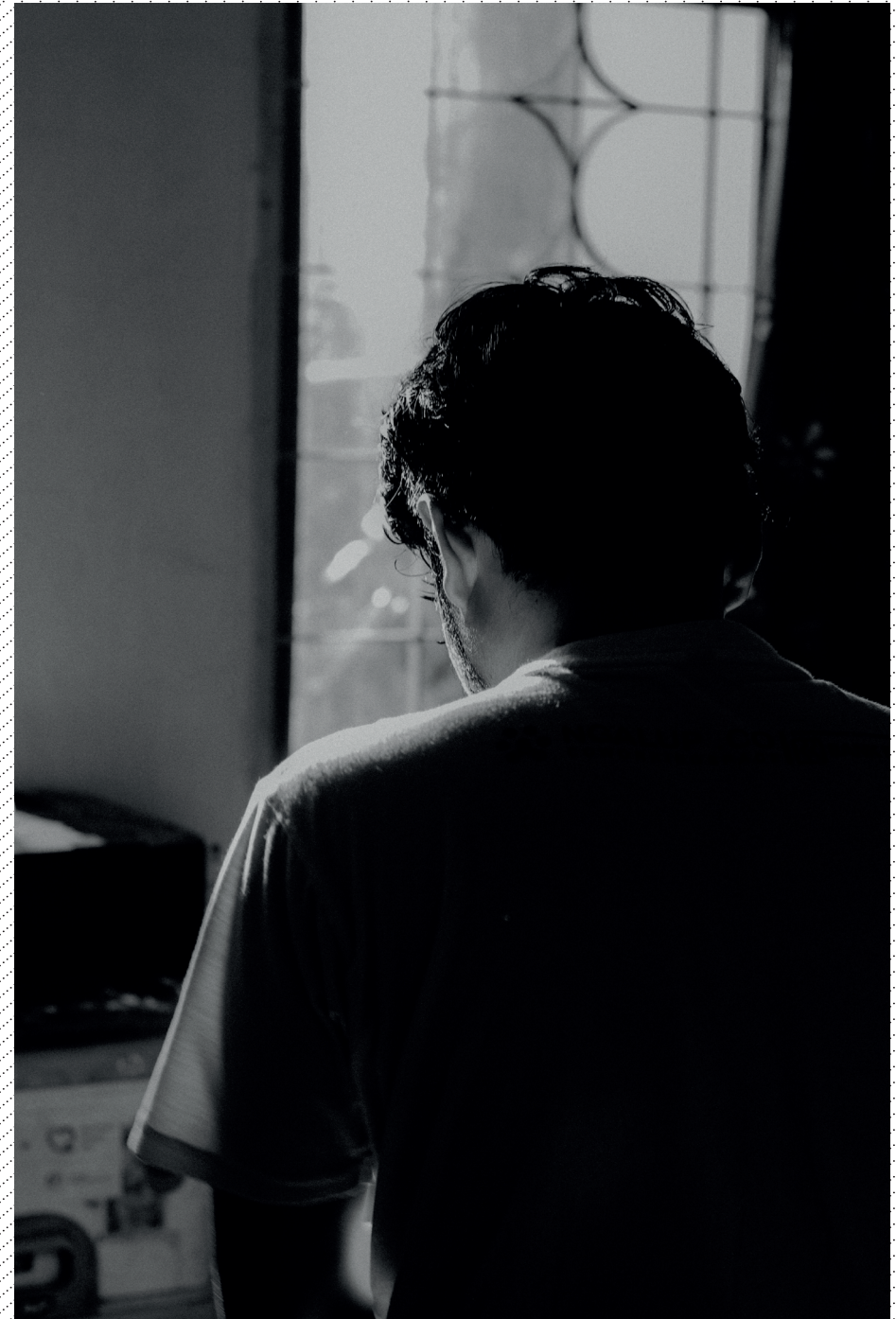
Exegete	Year of Passing	Reference
L'imâm ach-Châfi' ¹¹	204 H	Al Oum- Ach-Châfi'
At-Tabarî	310 H	Exégèse at-Tabarî : Jâmi' al Bayân 'an ta'wîl al qor'ân
Ibn 'Abî Hâtim	327 H	Tafsîr al Qor'ân al 'Adhîm d'Ibn 'Âbî Hâtim
At-Tabarî	360 H	At-Tafsîr al 'Kabîr
Al Qouchairî	465 H	Latâif al 'ichârât
Al Wâhidî	468 H	Al Wasît fî tafsîr al Qor'ân al Majîd
As-Sam'ânî	489 H	Exégèse du Coran
ar-Râghib al 'Asfahânî	502 H	Exégèse ar-Râghib
Az-Zamakharî	548 H	al Kachchâf 'an haqâ'iq ghawâmidh at-tanzîl
Ibn al Jawzî	597 H	Zâd al masîr fî 'ilm at-tafsîr
Ar-Râzî	606 H	Mafâtih al ghaib
Al Qortoubî	671 H	Al Jâmi' li'ahkâm al Qor'ân
Al Baydhâwî	685 H	Anwâr at-Tanzîl wa asrâr at-ta'wîl
An-Nasafî	710 H	Madârik at-tanzîl wa haqâ'iq at-ta'wîl
Ibn Kathîr	774 H	Tafsîr al Qor'ân al 'Adhîm
Jalel al Mahallî	864 H	TAFSÎR AL JALÂLAIN
Al Biqâ'î	886 H	Nadhm ad-Dourar fî tanâsob al 'âyât wa-s-souar
Jalêl as-Souyoufî	911 H	Ad-Dorr al manthouûr
Isma'il Haqqî	1127 H	Roûh al Bayân
Ach-Chawkânî	1173 H	Fath al Qadîr
Al Marâghî	1317 H	Tafsîr al Marâghî
At-Tâhir bin 'Âchoûr	1393 H	At-Tahrîr wa-t-Tanwîr
Ach-Cha'râwî	1418 H	Tafsîr ach-Cha'râwî

¹⁰ "Tafsir Mafatih Al-Ghayb", "Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir," interpretation of the verse "Do not flaunt your finery as they used to in the former times of jahiliyyah".

¹¹ Al-Shafi'i, may God have mercy on him, mentioned after recounting the story of Kulayb and the retribution for his blood: This ruling, which I describe after this, is among those they judged during the Jahiliyyah; Allah Almighty ordained justice, equalising in His judgement among His servants, both noble and humble

Summary

Extremists understood Jahiliyyah as an on- -going state rather than a specific historical period or actions and customs before Islam. Based on this distorted understanding, they -.declared Islamic societies as disbelievers Jahiliyyah is a name for a specific pre-Islamic era.- When an action or a moral is described as Jahiliyyah, it means that the act was part of Jahiliyyah, and Islam rejected it. It does not imply the polytheism of the doer, nor does it mean that Jahiliyyah can return again.- Sayyid Qutb's theory on Jahiliyyah implies the disbelief of Islamic societies.- This premise led to the rest of the seven principles of takfir (excommunication of all Muslims), such as al-usba al-mu'minah (the Band of Believers), al-wala wa al-bara (Loyalty and Disavowal), al-isti'la bi al-iman) (Superiority through Faith), hatmiyyah al-sad-am (the Inevitability of Conflict), leading to al-tamkin (Complete Hegemony) and .(al-khilafah (Caliphate



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Introducing the Deviance Series

The Messenger of God said:

‘This knowledge will be transmitted from every generation by its upright; they negate from it the distortions of the extreme, the false claims of the falsifiers, and interpretations of the ignorant.’

This is a mashhūr hadith, which was authenticated by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, and it has been reported from Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that he said: ‘it is an authentic hadith’.

Some of those that possess misapprehensions have understood the discourse of God in a manner which does not agree with the academic methodology inherited from the pious predecessors (alsalaf al-ṣāliḥ), and does not harmonize with the objectives and greater values of the divine revelation...

They have taken some verses of the noble Qur’ān which were revealed in regard to the non-Muslims, and made them applicable to the Muslims...

They have adopted verses which came as exceptions and applied to them general rulings...

They have distorted the meanings of the words of God in a manner that has led to the establishment or formation of grave erroneous concepts within the minds of the general Muslim populace, a result of which are mannerisms and actions that have no correlation with the true intrinsic religion of Islam...

We shall become acquainted through the parts of this continuous series about the distortions of the meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur’ān which the adherents of these distorted ideas have fallen within, and the extent of their departure from understanding the remarkable Prophet and their distance from comprehending his companions and the splendid Sacred law in general...