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Jahiliyyah Fanaticism from the Qur'anic Perspective: A Thematic Study of Verses on 'Aṣabiyyah and Extremism

Tontowi Johari [a,1,*], Muhammad Said, M.Ag [b,2], Siti Maryam, M. Ag [c,3] Mohieddin Masoud [d,4] Mohammad Farhan Zeb Khan [e,5]

[*a, b, c] STAI Darul Kamal NW Kembang Kerang NTB, Indonesia
[d] University of Zawia, Libya
[e] Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
[1]tontowijr35@gmail.com; [2]saidmoch1987@gmail.com; [3]Bintiruslan4@gmail.com; [4]m.masoud@zu.edu.ly; [5]mdfarhanzebkhan@gmail.com
*Correspondent Author; tontowijr35@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the prevalence of modern social problems, including political polarization, hate speech, echo chambers, and identity conflicts. It aims to analyze the meaning and contemporary relevance of the Qur'an's prohibition of Jahiliyyah fanaticism, 'aṣabiyyah, and extremism. Using a qualitative library-research approach and the thematic exegesis method (mauḍū'ī), the study examines primary data from the Qur'an and the commentaries Tafsir al-Mishbah, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, and Tafsīr al-Munīr. The findings specifically indicate that the Qur'an prohibits five forms of fanaticism: (1) blind adherence to tradition (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:170); (2) preference for Jahiliyyah law or personal desires (Al-Mā'idah [5]:50); (3) claims of personal or group purity (An-Najm [53]:32); (4) ḥamiyyah al-jāhiliyyah, or tribal fanaticism (Al-Fatḥ [48]:26); and (5) ghuluw, or going to excess in religion (An-Nisā' [4]:171 and Al-Mā'idah [5]:77). The study concludes that these Qur'anic values remain highly relevant as a response to social polarization. Prevention can be pursued by strengthening knowledge-based religious commitment, the principle of wasaṭiyyah (moderation), critical literacy, and a culture of dialogue.

Introduction

In human life generally, differences are an inevitable reality. Differences in ethnicity, culture, language, and belief have been part of social life since the earliest stages of human civilization (Qur'an, Al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13). In principle, such plurality can serve as social capital that enriches national life when approached inclusively. In contemporary contexts, however, differences are often dehumanized and escalate into destructive conflict when accompanied by a decline in mutual respect (Syed et al., 2021; Hefner, 2019).

One of the main factors that frequently triggers social disintegration is the emergence of fanaticism and the moral insulation of groups. Fanaticism is understood as an excessive emotional-cognitive attachment to a particular identity, viewpoint, or figure, leading to the systematic rejection of truths that originate outside one's own group (Cichocka et al., 2022). This phenomenon has intensified in the era of digital disruption, in which social-media algorithms facilitate the formation of echo chambers and filter bubbles (Törnberg, 2022). High-speed information flows that are not accompanied by critical literacy foster social clustering around exclusive narratives, claims to exclusive truth, stigmatization, and, at the extreme, radicalism and takfīr (Schmid, 2020; Woodward, 2021).

From a theoretical and sociological perspective, this concept is rooted in Ibn Khaldun's thought in the Muqaddimah concerning 'aṣabiyyah (social solidarity). Khaldun argued that 'aṣabiyyah is vital to the formation of civilization and political integration; however, when detached from moral values and revelation, it degenerates into 'aṣabiyyah jāhiliyyah that is, blind fanaticism that places group loyalty above justice and truth (Khaldūn, 2011; Baali, 2018). The Qur'an itself warns against the dangers of absolutizing group identity through its condemnation of ḥamiyyah al-jāhiliyyah (Qur'an, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26) and its firm prohibition of excess (ghuluw) in religion (Qur'an, An-Nisā' [4]:171) (Shihab, 2005; Zuhailī, 2009).

Although many studies have examined 'aṣabiyyah, fanaticism, and religious moderation (wasaṭiyyah), a fundamental research gap remains in the existing literature. Previous studies are largely divided into two main tendencies:

1. The purely sociological-historical approach analyzes 'aṣabiyyah merely as an instrument of political power or as a classical tribal dynamic in Ibn Khaldun's thought, without rereading its theological construction in the Qur'an through a textual-contextual approach (e.g., Al-Atas, 2017; Camps, 2020).
2. The partial or general exegetical approach discusses verses on tolerance and pluralism in broad terms but does not comprehensively map fanaticism's typology, word derivations, and structural taxonomy such as the intersections among taqlīd, 'aṣabiyyah, ḥamiyyah, and ghuluw within an integrated thematic (mauḍū'ī) framework (e.g., Subachi et al., 2022; Nurdin, 2021).

Consequently, an academic void remains regarding how the Qur'an systematically diagnoses the anatomy of fanaticism, from its epistemological roots (blind taqlīd) to its practical manifestations (ghuluw and ḥamiyyah). This study is needed to bridge that gap. Its specific novelty and contribution lie in deriving and integratively interpreting Qur'anic verses on fanaticism in order to formulate a theological taxonomy responsive to modern phenomena.

Specifically, this study offers two principal contributions:

- Academic contribution: It reconstructs a comprehensive Qur'anic taxonomy that maps the forms, cognitive-behavioral indicators, and psychosocial consequences of 'aṣabiyyah and ghuluw, thereby enriching Qur'anic studies addressing contemporary social issues.
- Practical contribution: It provides an applicable epistemological framework based on the Qur'anic value of wasaṭiyyah for conflict resolution, early detection of radicalism, and the prevention of political polarization and sectarian hate speech in public and digital spaces.

Results and Discussion

A. Inventory and Classification of Verses on Jahiliyyah Fanaticism

Based on a review of Qur'anic verses using keywords such as ḥamiyyah, jāhiliyyah, ghuluw, tafarruq, and taqlīd, this study selected seven verses related to Jahiliyyah fanaticism, 'aṣabiyyah, and extremism. The verses were selected on the basis of their meanings, keywords, and relevance to the research focus. The

review also considered verses with related meanings even when they did not contain the same keywords, ensuring that the analysis remained comprehensive. (al-Farmawi, 1977)

The seven verses were then classified by subtheme, Makkan or Madinan period, and function as primary or supporting verses. A primary verse is directly related to the concept under investigation, whereas a supporting verse broadens and strengthens understanding of the theme. This distinction is methodological and intended to facilitate analysis.

1. Classification of Verses by Subtheme

According to this classification, the seven verses examined in the study can be grouped into three subthemes. First are verses concerning the characteristics of Jahiliyyah fanaticism: Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:170; Al-Mā'idah [5]:50; and An-Najm [53]:32. These verses do not explicitly use the term fanaticism, but they describe attitudes that may characterize or contribute to its emergence. Al-Baqarah [2]:170 indicates an uncritical attachment to ancestral traditions; Al-Mā'idah [5]:50 points to the prioritization of particular laws or interests over God's guidance; and An-Najm [53]:32 prohibits considering oneself purer or better than others.

Second are verses concerning 'aṣabiyyah or group fanaticism: Qur'an, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26 and Āli 'Imrān [3]:103. Al-Fatḥ [48]:26 is the primary verse because it explicitly mentions ḥamiyyah al-jāhiliyyah, a term associated with fanaticism and arrogance that lead people to defend group interests excessively. Āli 'Imrān [3]:103 is a supporting verse because it establishes unity and prohibits division, values that counter the negative effects of group fanaticism. Third are verses concerning religious extremism or ghuluw: An-Nisā' [4]:171 and Al-Mā'idah [5]:77. Both explicitly prohibit excess in religion and therefore provide a basis for analyzing the relationship between religious excess and extremism.

2. Classification of Verses as Makkan and Madinan

Classifying verses by their Makkan or Madinan period provides context for their revelation before further interpretation. In the classification adopted in this study, An-Najm [53]:32 is Makkan, whereas Al-Baqarah [2]:170, Al-Mā'idah [5]:50, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26, Āli 'Imrān [3]:103, An-Nisā' [4]:171, and Al-Mā'idah [5]:77 are Madinan.

This classification provides a basis for understanding the historical context, asbāb al-nuzūl, munāsabah, and interpretation of each verse. Thus, the inventory of verses serves not only as a data-collection process but also as a basis for identifying thematic relationships among Jahiliyyah fanaticism, 'aṣabiyyah, and extremism.

B. Interpretation and Analysis of Verses on Jahiliyyah Fanaticism, 'Aṣabiyyah, and Extremism

The discussion of the seven verses is divided into three parts: verses concerning the characteristics of Jahiliyyah fanaticism, verses concerning 'aṣabiyyah or group fanaticism, and verses concerning religious extremism or ghuluw.

1. Interpretation and Analysis of Verses on the Characteristics of Jahiliyyah Fanaticism

The first group comprises Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:170, Al-Mā'idah [5]:50, and An-Najm [53]:32. These verses do not explicitly mention fanaticism, but their content identifies several characteristics that may contribute to its emergence, including excessive attachment to tradition, the prioritization of particular interests over God's guidance, and the belief that oneself is superior to others.

a. Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:170

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ۗ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

"When it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they reply, 'No, we will follow what we found our forefathers following.' Even if their forefathers understood nothing and were not guided?"

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that this verse describes people who reject God's guidance on the grounds that they are following the practices of their forefathers. The criticism is not directed simply at following tradition, but at using tradition as a reason to reject the truth. This attitude reflects an unwillingness to use reason and God's guidance when determining what is true. Quraish Shihab also explains that following the traditions or customs of earlier generations is not always blameworthy. Good traditions that do not conflict with religious teachings may be preserved. However, a tradition should not be maintained merely because it was inherited from ancestors when it conflicts with the truth. (Shihab, 2005)

In Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, Ibn Kathīr interprets this verse by emphasizing that the polytheists' adherence to ancestral traditions is a form of ignorance (jahl). They choose to follow forefathers who possessed no knowledge (lā ya'qilūna shay'an) and were not guided (wa lā yahtadūn). Ibn Kathīr adds that the verse teaches the importance of using reason when accepting the truth rather than following tradition without a clear basis. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, explains that the verse criticizes the taqlīd (following without evidence) practiced by the polytheists. They treat ancestral tradition as the highest authority, even when it conflicts with reason and God's guidance. Al-Zuḥaylī adds that the verse teaches the principle of al-ittibā' (following on the basis of evidence), rather than al-taqlīd (following without evidence), when accepting the truth. Such blind taqlīd is one of the roots of Jahiliyyah fanaticism. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: Based on the interpretations of these three exegetes, Jahiliyyah fanaticism in this verse is evident in the absolute defense of tradition that prevents a person from accepting the truth. The problem is not love of tradition itself, but excessive and uncritical attachment to it. When tradition is placed above God's guidance, it ceases to be merely a cultural inheritance and becomes a standard of truth defended fanatically. This attitude exemplifies Jahiliyyah fanaticism. Thus, Al-Baqarah [2]:170 indicates that one characteristic of Jahiliyyah fanaticism is blind adherence to ancestral tradition, especially when it is maintained without considering God's guidance and the truth.

b. Qur'an, Al-Mā'idah [5]:50

أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

"Is it the judgment of the age of ignorance that they seek? And who is better in judgment than Allah for people who are certain?"

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that this verse condemns those who seek or choose Jahiliyyah law that is, rules not grounded in God's guidance. The question afāhukma al-jāhiliyyati yabghūn condemns the

abandonment of God's rulings in favor of decisions based on particular interests or desires. According to Quraish Shihab, jāhiliyyah does not refer only to the period before Islam; it can also describe an attitude that emerges when people disregard God's guidance and follow their own desires or particular interests. (Shihab, 2005)

Ibn Kathīr explains that this verse repudiates those who prefer Jahiliyyah law to God's law. Jahiliyyah law is based on ignorance, arbitrariness, and group interests rather than truth and justice. Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that no judgment is better than God's judgment for those who believe in His truth. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, adds that the verse criticizes the People of the Book for preferring human-made laws based on group interests over God's just and wise law. Al-Zuḥaylī explains that "Jahiliyyah law" includes any rule that contradicts God's law, whether in worship, social transactions, or criminal penalties. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: In light of these interpretations, the Jahiliyyah characteristic in this verse appears when particular interests or desires are placed above God's guidance. In this study's context, this may be related to fanaticism when a person defends a rule or interest not because it is true, but because of attachment to a particular interest. Jahiliyyah fanaticism is therefore associated not only with attachment to tradition but also with excessive defense of particular interests or rules.

c. Qur'an, An-Najm [53]:32

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۖ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

> *"Those who avoid major sins and indecent acts, except for minor lapses your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He knows you best when He brought you into being from the earth and when you were embryos in your mothers' wombs. So do not declare yourselves pure; He knows best who is mindful of Him."*

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that the prohibition falā tuzakkū anfusakum means that people must not praise themselves or claim to be pure and morally superior. God knows human beings and their degree of piety better than they do. This prohibition teaches people not to assume easily that they are free of faults or better than others. Such an attitude can obscure awareness of one's own shortcomings and make self-examination difficult. (Shihab, 2005)

Ibn Kathīr explains that this verse prohibits a person from claiming purity (tazkiyah), because doing so involves arrogance (kibr), which Islam forbids. He adds that considering oneself pure can lead a person to feel superior to others and neglect the duty of self-examination. The verse teaches humility and recognition that only God knows the true nature of a person's piety. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, explains that the verse prohibits excessive tazkiyat al-nafs (self-purification). People must not claim purity for themselves because only God knows the true nature of piety. Al-Zuḥaylī adds that considering oneself the purest can produce 'ujub (self-admiration) and kibr (arrogance), roots of various spiritual diseases, including fanaticism. The verse teaches people to engage in continual self-examination and not to belittle others. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: In this study's context, the belief that one is better or purer than others is related to the emergence of a sense of superiority. This suggests that arrogance and feelings of superiority can accompany fanaticism. Fanaticism

develops not only from love of a group or tradition but can also be reinforced by the belief that one's own group is better than others.

2. Interpretation and Analysis of Verses on 'Aṣabiyyah (Group Fanaticism)

The second group comprises Qur'an, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26 and Āli 'Imrān [3]:103. These verses are used to analyze group fanaticism, collective arrogance, and the principle of unity as one means by which the Qur'an prevents division.

a. Qur'an, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا

"When the disbelievers harbored arrogance in their hearts the arrogance of the age of ignorance Allah sent down tranquility upon His Messenger and the believers and made them adhere to the word of piety. They were more entitled to it and worthy of it. Allah has knowledge of all things."

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that al-ḥamiyyah in this verse is associated with fanaticism and arrogance that lead people to defend their group's honor excessively. In the verse's context, this attitude relates to the Quraysh polytheists during the event of Hudaybiyyah. The phrase ḥamiyyah al-jāhiliyyah indicates that defending group honor becomes blameworthy when it is based on arrogance and no longer takes truth as its standard. Jahiliyyah fanaticism makes group interests and pride in the group the basis of defense. (Shihab, 2005)

In Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm, Ibn Kathīr explains that al-ḥamiyyah is excessive zeal (ghayrah) in defending a group. In this verse's context, it refers to the Quraysh, who rejected recognition of Muhammad's prophethood and refused to write "Bismillāhirraḥmānirraḥīm" and "Muḥammad Rasūlullāh" in the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that blameworthy ḥamiyyah is based on arrogance and blind fanaticism, not on the zeal to defend the truth. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, provides a more detailed analysis of the root of ḥamiyyah. Etymologically, ḥamiyyah derives from ḥamiya, meaning to become angry, burn intensely, or display excessive zeal. In the verse's context, it refers to excessive and arrogant zeal in defending a group. Al-Zuḥaylī adds that ḥamiyyah becomes blameworthy when rooted in tribal pride ('aṣabiyyah) that causes a person to reject the truth. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: Based on the interpretations of the three exegetes, Al-Fatḥ [48]:26 most clearly illustrates the concept of Jahiliyyah fanaticism in this study. The verse shows that love for or defense of a group is not inherently blameworthy. The problem arises when such affection becomes ḥamiyyah a form of defense accompanied by arrogance that no longer takes truth as its standard.

b. Qur'an, Āli 'Imrān [3]:103

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"Hold firmly, all together, to the rope of Allah and do not become divided. Remember Allah's favor upon you when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace you became brothers. You

were on the edge of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to you so that you may be guided."

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that the command to hold firmly to the rope of Allah means holding fast to God's teachings and guidance. This command is accompanied by the prohibition wa lā tafarraqū, meaning not to become divided. Unity does not mean eliminating all differences; rather, it means making divine values a shared foundation so that differences do not develop into hostility and division. (Shihab, Tafsir Al-Misbah vol. 2)

Ibn Kathīr explains that the "rope of Allah" (ḥabl Allāh) refers to the Qur'an and Islamic teachings that unite the community. The verse recalls the pre-Islamic Arab society, which was marked by hostility and division, and how God united its people through Islam. Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that division is a major sin that can destroy the unity of the community. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, adds that this verse establishes the principles of unity (al-waḥdah) and brotherhood (ukhuwah) as foundations of Muslim society. Division (al-tafarruq) is a Jahiliyyah characteristic that contradicts Islamic teachings. Al-Zuḥaylī explains that the command i'tiṣām (holding firmly) indicates that unity does not arise automatically; it requires collective effort and commitment. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: Based on these interpretations, Āli 'Imrān [3]:103 offers a Qur'anic principle opposed to group fanaticism. Whereas fanaticism makes group identity the basis of defense and can generate hostility, the Qur'an directs people to make God's guidance and brotherhood the foundation of their relationships with one another.

3. Interpretation and Analysis of Verses on Extremism (Ghuluw)

The third group comprises Qur'an, An-Nisā' [4]:171 and Al-Mā'idah [5]:77. Both verses explicitly prohibit going beyond limits in religious matters. In context, the prohibition is directed at the People of the Book, who went to excess in their understanding of Jesus, peace be upon him, assigning him a status inconsistent with his actual position as a messenger of God. Ghuluw occurs when a person exceeds established limits and assigns excessive status or treatment to something regarded as sacred. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2005)

a. Qur'an, An-Nisā' [4]:171

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ
أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۘ لَهُ مَا
فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا

"O People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion, and say nothing about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, His word conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and do not say, 'Three.' Desist; that is better for you. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him; far exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and Allah is sufficient as a Trustee."

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that this verse prohibits ghuluw, or going beyond limits in understanding and practicing religion. In context, the prohibition is directed at the People of the Book, who went to excess in their understanding of Jesus, peace be upon him, assigning him a status inconsistent

with his position as a messenger of God. Ghuluw occurs when a person exceeds established limits and assigns excessive status or treatment to something regarded as sacred. (M. Quraish Shihab, 2005)

Ibn Kathīr explains that ghuluw means exceeding limits (al-mujāwazah fī al-ṣifah) in describing something. In this verse's context, ghuluw occurs when the People of the Book elevate Jesus beyond his status as God's servant and messenger. Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that religious excess is a deviation that occurred among earlier communities and is prohibited in Islam. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, provides a more comprehensive analysis of ghuluw. Etymologically, ghuluw derives from ghalā, meaning to exceed limits or be excessive. In a religious context, ghuluw means excessive religiosity that goes beyond the limits established by Islamic law. Al-Zuḥaylī divides ghuluw into two forms: ghuluw fī al-i'tiqād (excess in belief) and ghuluw fī al-'amal (excess in deeds). Both are prohibited in Islam because they can lead a person away from the right path. (al-Zuhailī, 2009)

Analysis: Based on these interpretations, religious extremism in this verse can be understood as a religious attitude that exceeds the limits set by God. Religious zeal is not, in itself, a measure of truth. If it is not guided by God's instructions, it can develop into ghuluw. The verse emphasizes that sound religious practice remains within the limits established by God, neither excessive nor deficient.

b. Qur'an, Al-Mā'idah [5]:77

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَ تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَ ۡقِ وَلَ تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

"Say, 'O People of the Book, do not go to excess in your religion unjustly, and do not follow the desires of people who went astray before, led many others astray, and themselves strayed from the straight path.'"

M. Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir al-Mishbah, explains that this verse again warns the People of the Book against ghuluw, or going beyond limits in understanding and practicing religion. Such excess can lead a person away from the right path if it is not grounded in God's guidance. The verse also prohibits following ahwā', or desires and caprice, which can lead people astray. (al-Zuhailī, Tafsīr al-Munīr, Juz V., 2009)

Ibn Kathīr emphasizes that the verse contains two prohibitions: against ghuluw and against following desires (ittibā' al-ahwā'). These prohibitions are related because ghuluw is often driven by caprice and excessive desires. Ibn Kathīr adds that those who previously went astray were people who followed their desires and abandoned God's guidance. (Katsīr, 1999)

Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī, in Tafsīr al-Munīr, explains that this verse strongly warns the People of the Book not to repeat the mistakes of earlier communities that went astray because of ghuluw and the pursuit of desires. Al-Zuḥaylī emphasizes that ghuluw and ittibā' al-hawā are interrelated maladies that can lead a person away from the straight path (sawā' al-sabīl). Moderation (i'tidāl) is the path taught by Islam. (al-Zuhailī, Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-'Aqīdah wa al-Syarī'ah wa al-Manhaj, Juz I, 2009)

Analysis: Based on these interpretations, ghuluw is related to fanaticism because both can arise when a person follows a particular inclination or desire

excessively. Fanaticism becomes dangerous when a person no longer takes truth as the standard but instead bases their conduct on caprice, opinion, or group interests.

Conclusion

Based on the thematic analysis of Qur'anic verses and their relevance to contemporary life, as discussed in the preceding sections, this study draws the following conclusions.

First, the three concepts form an interconnected chain of errors. Jahiliyyah fanaticism originates in blind taqlīd of ancestral traditions (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]:170) and the prioritization of group interests over truth (Al-Mā'idah [5]:50). This attitude develops into 'aṣabiyyah, or group fanaticism accompanied by arrogance (ḥamiyyah al-jāhiliyyah), as depicted in Al-Fatḥ [48]:26. If left unchecked, this tendency can exceed proper limits (ghuluw) in religion (An-Nisā' [4]:171 and Al-Mā'idah [5]:77), which lies at the core of extremism. The Qur'an explicitly prohibits these attitudes and restores God's guidance and the principle of unity (Āli 'Imrān [3]:103) as the standards of truth.

Second, the phenomena criticized by the Qur'an did not end in the age of Jahiliyyah but have been transformed in modern life. Blind taqlīd has evolved into dependence on unverified information on social media and fanaticism toward public figures. Modern 'aṣabiyyah appears in political polarization, identity-based fanaticism, and echo chambers. Meanwhile, ghuluw appears as religious extremism, anarchic acts committed in the name of religion, and the spread of hate speech in digital spaces. This demonstrates the continuing relevance of Qur'anic prohibitions against fanaticism to contemporary problems.

Third, preventing fanaticism and extremism requires strengthening two areas. Internally, in religious life, Muslims are expected to cultivate an informed and proportionate religious outlook and avoid claims to exclusive truth. Externally, in social life, communities should prioritize wasaṭiyyah (moderation), critical literacy, and a culture of dialogue amid diversity. Truth and justice must therefore be placed above blind loyalty to a group, tradition, or public figure.

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