

A Summary of the Core Tenets and Features of the 20th Century Takfirī-Jihādī Khārijite Ideology

The methodology of the 20th century Khārijite movements and their interpretations of ‘tawḥīd’, ‘jihād’, ‘enjoining good and prohibiting evil’ and ‘loyalty and disloyalty’ have a specific frame of reference identical to that of the very first Khārijites. We can broadly summarise it as follows:

Both Mawdūdī and Quṭb - the latter being strongly influenced by the former’s writings - gave **a narrow, political explanation** of the basic declaration of Islām, (*lā ilāha illallāh*). They gave the word *ilāh* (deity) a meaning centred almost exclusively around the concept of “lawgiver” (*ḥākimiyyah*) and “political authority” (*sulṭah*), thereby opposing what was well known and established with the scholars of the Salaf, past and present including Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and others (رحمهم الله).

Built upon this distortion, they considered all contemporary Muslim rulers (perceived and presented as “lawgivers” wielders of political authority) to have usurped the authority of Allāh and essentially declared them polytheists, apostates and enemies of Allāh. Because of oppression (*zulm*), self-indulgence (*isti’tḥār*), and disadvantaging the subjects for their own benefit, the rulers were considered to have not judged by justice. The stories of the Prophets and Messengers in the Qur’ān were then misinterpreted as being nothing but a struggle against despotic tyrants who had usurped the authority of Allāh by becoming lawgivers. The goal of the Prophets was presented as dismantling the thrones of the tyrants and establishing political authority.

Thus, establishing **political authority** became the primary goal of the religion in this ideology. This required Islām and the matter of Tawḥīd to be focused on one thing alone: **Takfir** of the Muslim rulers,

disbelieving in these rulers (*kufṛ bil-tāghūt*), declaring disloyalty (*barā'*) for them, striving to remove them and establishing a legitimate Muslim authority (*khilāfah, imāmah*) which returns political authority (*ḥākimiyyah*) to Allāh that had been formerly 'snatched' and 'usurped' by the rulers.

Jihād and **enjoining good and prohibiting evil** were then reframed as the struggle against apostate regimes (*tawāghūt*) in order to establish this narrow, restricted, politically-interpreted understanding of Tawḥīd. Because of the absence of a legitimate Muslim political authority, a genuine Muslim state or society no longer existed - all lands inhabited by Muslims were **lands of disbelief** (*dār kufr*), and thus the greatest obligation was to create, a genuine Muslim state and to bring about a *jamā'ah*, an *ummah*, that had long been “**absent**” (*al-ummah al-ghāibah*).

From here, developing a **new body of jurisprudence** was embarked upon so that the propounders of this ideology who saw themselves as the only true “monotheists” could determine how to behave with these societies of pre-Islāmic disbelief (*jāhiliyyah*) whose inhabitants had become completely ignorant of the Tawḥīd of the Messengers which they portrayed as “There is no lawgiver but Allāh (*ḥākimiyyah*)”.

Because these societies had become ignorant of what they saw as the quintessential, most crucial meaning of Tawḥīd (*ḥākimiyyah*), they had to be called afresh to Islām and taught Tawḥīd once again. Whoever renewed his faith would then realise that his validation and actualisation of this new restricted politically-charged understanding of Tawḥīd was in announcing disloyalty (*barā'*) from all contemporary rulers and governments, 'enjoining good and forbidding evil' and making *jihād*, against the rulers, the false deities (*tawāghūt*) and their helpers who constituted the 'near enemy' (*al-'aduw al-qarīb*). The distinguishing line of faith (*īmān*) and disbelief (*kufṛ*) was drawn on the basis of this ideology and the principle of loyalty (*walā'*) and disloyalty (*barā'*) was founded upon it. Whoever explicitly supported this ideology

and its proponents was a believer and anyone who did not explicitly take the required stance towards the rulers and appeared to support or excuse them was a disbeliever (because he had not actualised “rejection of the *ṭāghūt*”) and whoever was neither here nor there was suspected of hypocrisy (*nifāq*) or labelled as one of ‘unknown status’ (*majhūl al-ḥāl*). Thus, the entire subject of Tawḥīd was focused around takfīr of the rulers and jihād against them.

This is a broad outline of the basic elements of this ideology. This ideology infected the minds and hearts of many during the 80s and 90s due to many factors, one of which was the spread of this ideology amongst the participants in the Afghānī Jihād in the 1980s through the spread of the writings of Quṭb and Mawdūdī.

From the above, it should be clear that the inner core of this ideology is centred around the subject of **ruling by other than Allāh’s law**, on the basis of a purely political explanation of *lā ilāha illallāh*. Muslim rulers are accused of usurping the right of Allāh by not judging by Allāh’s law completely and in its entirety (100%) or by making themselves “lawgivers” alongside Allāh by ruling with laws they brought from themselves or from others.¹ They are then pronounced as “*ṭāghūts*” (false deities) and judged with apostasy. The lands they rule over are then judged as lands of disbelief (*dār kufr*). As this applies to all contemporary Muslim rulers, then no land of Islām exists and no Islāmic jamā‘ah (a true Muslim society) is in existence. This demands a reframing of jihād as a struggle (of insurgents and revolutionaries) against all existing structures of rule in Muslim lands.

¹ From the ignorance of the Khārijites is that the laws instituted by rulers to facilitate matters of broad public interest, public safety and security are treated by them as competing with Allāh in His sole right of lawgiving. Thus, by setting up border controls, customs regulations, driving regulations, employment legislation and so on, the rulers have usurped the right of Allāh and have become false deities (*ṭawāghīt*) who are worshipped by the subjects who give obedience to them by abiding by these laws. From the deranged ignorant dogs and donkeys who ascribe apostasy to rulers and governments on account of matters like these is Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī who authored on the Khārijite ideology during the late 80s and 90s.

This is the central idea behind the writings of Sayyid Quṭb,² Abū A'lā Mawdūdī and Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī, the founder of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr. It is simply a revival of the ideology of the very first Khārijites, coupled with Marxist, Leninist, Communist revolutionary influences that came upon some of these thinkers. They acquired it from the books of Quṭb and Mawdūdī and not from the books of the Salafi scholars, past or present. It is nowhere to be found in the books of Ibn Taymiyyah or Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, rather this concept is extensively refuted in the books and writings of these two scholars.³

² One of the proponents of this ideology, the misguided extremist Ikhwānī known as **Ṣalāh al-Ṣawī**, a follower of Quṭb's ideology himself, one who promotes the use of Machiavellian politics in his writings as part of the Ikhwānī agenda of acquiring power, he says: "As for the **Quṭbists**, then their **methodology** is based primarily upon **the issue of legislation (tashrīf)**, explaining its link with the foundation of the religion and explaining that the various flaws that have engulfed the legal structures in our contemporary societies nullify the contract of Islām and demolish the very basis of Tawḥīd. It is also known that the books that represent this particular orientation and which outline its methodology **are the books of the teacher, Sayyid Quṭb** – may Allāh have mercy upon him – in the field of da'wah and public speeches." Madā Shar'iyat al-Intimā' ilal Aḥzāb wal-Jamā'āt al-Islāmiyyah (p.171).

³ This heretical doctrine is nowhere to be found in the Qur'ān, nowhere to be found in the Prophetic traditions – rather the revealed texts clash with it. It is not found with the Companions, rather it was found with those who made takfīr of them and waged war against them – and they were ignoramuses who did not understand the Qur'ān. It is nowhere to be found with the Salaf, rather they refuted it. It is nowhere to be found in the writings of Imām Aḥmad or any well-known scholar from the era of the Salaf. It is not found in the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah, rather it is refuted extensively and in detail in his writings. It is nowhere to be found in the writings of any of his students. It is nowhere to be found in the works of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and his offspring. Rather, they refuted individuals and groups who emerged with these ideas in their times, those who try to promote views exactly the same as Quṭb, Mawdūdī, al-Zawāhirī, Bin Lādin, Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī, Abū Qatādah and other Khārijites. It is nowhere to be found in the writings of contemporary Salafi scholars. It is an alien doctrine whose true roots lie in a merger between modern European materialist philosophy combined with early Khārijite doctrine. Its proponents such as Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī tried to read this heretical Quṭbo-Mawdūdian Khārijite doctrine into the writings of Salafi scholars, and they are free and innocent of it.

Shaykh Rabī bin Hādī said: “The exaggeration of the Khārijites of our time in al-Ḥākimiyyah has been inherited by them from their leader, Dhul-Khuwayṣarah and whoever appeared from his school of doctrine. The slogans of today are the very slogans of Dhul-Khuwayṣarah and whoever came after him. Dhul-Khuwayṣarah criticised the Messenger (ﷺ) with respect to wealth. His followers who appeared later criticised ‘Alī on grounds of rulership and wealth. And the Khārijites of today have distorted the religion and have restricted it to al-Ḥākimiyyah... by Allāh, the methodology of Sayyid Quṭb, al-Bannā and al-Mawdūdī does not unite with the methodology of the Salaf, ever. They do not unite, ever. Misguidance does not unite with guidance.”⁴

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⁴ Al-Dharī‘ah ilā Bayān Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah (1434H) 1/97.