

The Foundational Statements Of Extremism In Contemporary Arab-Islamic Thought from The Perspective of Muhammad Emara

المقولات الأساسية للغلو في الفكر العربي الإسلامي المعاصر من منظور محمد عمارة

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ملخص:

ترمي هذه الورقة البحثية، من جهة إلى إبراز المقولات الأساسية التي يستند إليها مروجو الغلو في الفكر العربي والإسلامي، وهي ثلاث مقولات رئيسة: الأولى مقولة الحاكمية، والثانية مقولة الجاهلية، والثالثة مقولة التكفير، مع الإشارة إلى الترابط الوثيق بين المقولتين الثانية والثالثة.

ومن جهة ثانية، تهدف الورقة إلى الكشف عن المنهج العلمي الأنسب للتصدي لهذا الخطاب المتطرف، وذلك من منظور المفكر محمد عمارة. ويتحقق هذا الهدف من خلال محاولة الإجابة عن الإشكالية التالية: ما طبيعة المقولات التي يقوم عليها الغلو في الفكر العربي الحديث والمعاصر؟ وما المنهج العلمي الأمثل لمحاورة الغلاة وفق رؤية محمد عمارة؟

الكلمات المفتاحية:

المقولات، الأساسية، محمد عمارة، الغلو، التعامل.

Abstract:

This research paper aims, first, to highlight the basic propositions on which historians of extremism in Arab and Islamic thought have based their arguments, which can be summarized in three propositions: the first is the proposition of sovereignty, the second is the proposition of ignorance, and the third is the proposition of atonement, with reference to the interconnection between the second and third propositions. Secondly, it aims to reveal the appropriate scientific approach to countering these extremists from the perspective of the thinker Muhammad Amara. This is done by attempting to answer the following questions: What are the tenets of extremism in modern and contemporary Arab thought? What is the most appropriate scientific approach to countering extremists from Muhammad Amara's perspective.

Keywords:

Categories ; The Basic; Mohamed Amara; Extremism ; Confront.

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of extremism (al-ghuluww) in religion and thought is not a recent development; it existed among Christians in their monasticism and among Jews and their rabbis. It emerged in Islam with the Khawarij (Kharijites), as well as with some Sufi sects. This phenomenon has persisted into our present era. Numerous Western and secular thinkers have addressed this topic, labeling this phenomenon as fundamentalism, terrorism, extremism, etc.

It is noteworthy that the issue of extremism and radicalism resurfaces with every major event. Its prominence increased significantly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, which charged the entire world with the issue of terrorism and extremism. It was subsequently revisited after the 2004 Madrid train bombings (Atocha Station bombings), the 2005 Sharm El-Sheikh attacks, the Taba attacks in Egypt, the London bombings, and a series of successive events. Indeed, extremism has become, as the saying goes, the peg on which all these global events are hung.

Hence, we must not remain idle, content merely with condemnation and ridicule. Rather, we must work towards addressing this phenomenon and investigating its root causes. Within this framework falls this research paper, which attempts to highlight the most important foundational premises of extremism in contemporary Arab thought. These are represented by three core premises: the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah " (Divine Sovereignty), which is the foremost premise, and the premises of "Al-Jahiliyyah" (Pre-Islamic Ignorance/State of Ignorance) and Al-Takfir (Excommunication), along with the methodologies for engaging with them according to the opinion of Muhammad Imarah. **Dr Muhammad Imarah Mustafa Imarah (1931 _ 2020) Islamic thinker, author, and academic. He was a member of " the Islamic Research Academy" at Al-Azhar Al-Sharif. Among his most notable works are: "Milestones of the Islamic Methodology" "Our Modern Renaissance Between Seecularism and Islam" Islam and Politics, and The Islamic University and the Nationalist Idea. (Imara, 2004, pp. 126 , 129, 130, 131)**

Therefore, the central questions are: What are the most prominent premises of extremism in modern and contemporary Arab thought? And what is the most suitable scientific methodology for dialoguing with extremists from Muhammad Imarah's perspective?

To discuss this central problem, we have deemed it appropriate to address the following points:

1. The Concept of Extremism (Al-Ghuluww).
2. Types of Extremism.
3. The Fundamental Premises of Religious and Intellectual Extremism in Contemporary Arab Thought.
4. The Methodology for Engaging with These Premises.

2.The Etymology of the word Al-Ghuluww (Extremism) in Arabic

The term Al-Ghuluww (extremism) in language is derived from "ghala": "ghala al-si'ru yaghlu ghala'an" (the price became high/inflated), and "ghala al-nasu fi al-amr"

(the people exceeded the bounds in the matter), like the extremism of the Jews in their religion. It is said : "Aghlaytu al-shay'a" (I overpaid for something), and "Ghalaytu bihi" paid a high price for it). "Al-Ghali" (the one who overbids) "yaghlu bi al-sahm ghulwwan" (bids high with an arrow), meaning : it was raised by the air (Al-Farahidi, n.d., p. 446). Thus, Al-Ghuluww means elevation/excess in something and transgression of limits. It is said : Ghala fi al-din ghulwwan (he was extreme in religion), meaning he was strict and rigid until he exceeded the limit. This includes the saying of Allah the Almighty: "...do not exceed limits in your religion beyond the truth...". (Al-Azdi, n.d., p. 921). (International T. b., The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 5:77)

The word "Al-Ghuluww" was used in the Holy Quran in its linguistic sense, in the saying of Allah the Almighty" O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allàh except the truth... " (International T. b., The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 5 : 171) meaning do not add to the religion or transgress the limit set for you in the religion, thus saying about Allah something other than the truth.

Hence, linguistically, "Al-Ghuluww" is transgression of limits. If we say "ghala al-ma" (the water boiled over), it means it exceeded its natural limit and began to spill. If we say "ghala' al-as'ar" (price inflation), it means prices have exceeded their natural limit. If we say "ghalwa' al-shabab" (the fervor of youth), we mean the boiling over and intensity characteristic of youth, as if the energy present in a young person overflows and exceeds its natural limit.

As for "Al-Ghuluww" in terminology, it does not differ much from its linguistic meaning. The Andalusian jurist and legal theorist Al-Shatibi (d. 1388 AH), author of "Al-I'tisam" and "Al-Muwafaqat", defined it as : exaggeration in a matter and transgressing its limit to the point of extravagance (Shatibi, 1419 AH, p. 392). It is also said : it is exceeding the limit by increasing praise or blame for something beyond what it deserves (Taymiyyah, 1999, p. 328). And it is said : it is severity in something and exaggeration in it by transgressing the limit, and it carries a meaning of excessive depth. (Asqalani, n.d., p. 278)

Furthermore, Imam Al-Qurtubi (d. 1273 CE), author of "Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an", defines "Al-Ghuluww" in religion as excess therein, as the Christians were excessive concerning Jesus, peace be upon him, in their saying that he is God . (Al-Qurtubi, 1964, p. 252)

What is notable here is the agreement of these definitions that "Al-Ghuluww" is transgressing the prescribed or commanded limit, or being strict in understanding or applying what is prescribed or commanded. On this basis, anyone who transgresses what Allah has commanded legislatively or exceeds the commanded limit is extreme or transgressing therein. The well-known jurist Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350 CE) said: "Allah did not command any command except that Satan has two approaches to it: either towards negligence and waste, or towards excess and extremism. The religion of Allah is a middle path between the one who is negligent towards it and the one who is extreme about it. Just as the negligent one concerning the command wastes it, the extreme one about it also wastes it ; this one through his shortcoming from the limit, and that one through his exceeding the limit" (Qayyim I. , 1996, p. 464).

3. Types of Extremism:

"Al-Ghuluww" is divided into two types : doctrinal extremism (ghuluww i'tiqadi) and practical extremism (ghuluww 'amali).

A/Doctrinal Extremism:

It is transgressing the limits of correct belief to other forms of deviation ("Uthman, 1414 AH, p. 144). The "doctrinal" may also refer to what is related to matters of creed, i.e., confined to the belief aspect. Examples of this include the extremism of the Christians concerning Jesus, son of Mary, peace be upon him, the extremism of the Rafidah (a Shiite sect) concerning the Imams, the extremism of the Khawarij in declaring Muslims who commit major sins as disbelievers, and the extremism of some Sufis who believe that purity of the heart is the entirety of religion, thereby nullifying the legislative and practical aspects of religion.

<i>Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers</i>					
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The extremists of every branch of religion make that branch the foundation and look with contempt and pity upon those who care about the other branches of religion. Imam Al-Shatibi referred to these two types of extremism in "Al-I'tisam", saying: "Included in comprehensive doctrinal extremism is extremism in many branches, as the opposition to the Shari'ah resulting from it is similar to the opposition resulting from extremism in a comprehensive matter. Comprehensive doctrinal extremism is more dangerous and has greater harm than practical extremism, as comprehensive doctrinal extremism is what leads to splintering and manifests sects and groups outside the straight path. This is because these sects only become sects by differing from the saved sect in a comprehensive meaning within the religion and a principle from the principles of the Shari'ah, not in a partial matter from the particulars, as a partial or branch matter is anomalous and does not give rise to a disagreement that causes division into sects. Division only arises from disagreement in comprehensive matters" (Al-Shatibi, 1419 AH, p. 200 and subsequent pages)

B/ Practical Extremism :

This refers to increasing acts of worship beyond the limit permitted by the Shari'ah to draw closer to Allah, thereby causing hardship to oneself. This means that practical extremism relates to detailed practical matters of statements, whether verbal or physical actions of the limbs, which do not entail a belief, such as throwing large stones during the stoning ritual (Ramy al-Jamarât), increasing acts of worship like continuous fasting without break (wisaal), and monasticism by abstaining from marriage. It also occurs when a person falls prey to their obsessive thoughts regarding their purity and ablution, and when they exceed in their worship the limit prescribed by Allah, thus abandoning their work and neglecting their family. This disrupts their balance and fails to achieve the objective of their religiosity. This means that practical extremism does not necessarily result from a corrupt belief.

This type of extremism is also termed partial extremism (ghuluww juz'i), with "partial" meaning what is related to one or more particulars of Islamic law (Al-Kanhal, 1999, pp. 3 , 4) . Ibn al-Qayyim says: "Extremism is of two types: a type that takes its practitioner out of being obedient, such as one who adds a rak'ah to the prayer, or fasts the entire year including the prohibited days, or throws large rocks during the stoning ritual. And a type where there is fear of burnout and exhaustion, such as praying the entire night, fasting the entire year continuously without fasting the prohibited days, and being unjust to oneself in acts of worship and regular invocations" (Qayyim, 1392 AH, p. 496).

Finally, it remains to be noted that doctrinal extremism is the more dangerous, because its adherent does not retract from it, as he believes he is correct ; he does not know, and he does not know that he does not know.

4. The Foundational Premises of Religious and Intellectual Extremism in Contemporary Arab and Islamic Thought

In this section, we identify the most prominent premises from which Islamic extremism launched, namely :

4.1 The Premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah" (Divine Sovereignty) : Historically, this premise appeared in Islamic thought with the Khawarij. For them, it meant that divine sovereignty is a complete negation of any human sovereignty. It is notable that this idea receded from view for a long period and did not reappear until the arrival of the Pakistani thinker Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), despite the differences between al-Mawdudi and the Khawarij.

After its revival by this thinker, who wrote about it in an Indian and Hindu context with its specific political and civilizational circumstances—where Muslims constituted about one-fifth of India's population—human sovereignty at that time was either the authority of the English colonizer, who was inherently disbelieving, or the Hindu authority, which was also disbelieving. Both sovereignties aimed to crush the Islamic identity of Indian Muslims. In this reality, al-Mawdudi, in some of his texts, rejected human sovereignty, which he saw as the antithesis of divine sovereignty (Imarah, 2004, p. 14).

Here, Muhammad Imarah argues that the extremists in contemporary Arab and Islamic thought fell into two errors in understanding some of al-Mawdudi's statements:

The first error: It lies in stripping al-Mawdudi's statements of their specific political context from which they emerged and attempting to apply them to any place. Thus, extremists began employing al-Mawdudi's statements on "Al-Hakimiyyah" in the Arab reality, where Muslims constitute the overwhelming majority, estimated by Muhammad Imarah at 96% (Imarah, 2004, p. 14)

The second error: This error committed by the extremists of contemporary Islamic society lies in: "plucking ambiguous, misleading, and fragmented texts from al-Mawdudi's writings on "Al-Hakimiyyah" and neglecting the scientific methodology of a complete reading of al-Mawdudi's intellectual and political project" (Imarah, 2004, pp. 14 ,15). The intended scientific methodology for a complete reading of al-Mawdudi's political project is the reading that accurately

defines al-Mawdudi's concept of "Al-Hakimiyyah". It is a reading that does justice to the man, absolving him of responsibility for the thought and behavior of these extremists, and [exposes] the injustice of secular extremists who accepted attributing the calls of religious extremism to this man's thought. (Imarah, 2004, p. 15)

To counter the errors made by the extremists in understanding al-Mawdudi's intent, Muhammad Imarah presents to us the correct understanding of "Al-Hakimiyyah" according to al-Mawdudi. He sees that understanding al-Mawdudi's stance on "Al-Hakimiyyah", and understanding the injustice this thinker suffered from those who extracted some of his writings on "Al-Hakimiyyah" without the rest, and isolated the phrases discussing "Al-Hakimiyyah" from their circumstances and specificities, requires grasping a set of facts (Imarah, 2004, p. 16):

First Fact:

Al-Mawdudi formulated his thought on "Al-Hakimiyyah" in his principal works written between 1937 and 1941 CE, before the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state in 1947. At that time, Muslims in India alone were a minority not exceeding 25% of the population. Then, al-Mawdudi, under this demographic, civilizational, and political reality, saw that human sovereignty based on democracy and parliamentary elections was a disaster for Islam and Muslims. He thus prohibited elections at that time and viewed democracy as antithetical to Islam. This is what he wrote about it: "I say to Muslims plainly: nationalist secular democracy opposes the religion and creed you adhere to. The Islam you believe in, and on the basis of which you call yourselves Muslims, differs distinctly from this detestable system, resists its spirit, and fights its fundamental principles, indeed it fights every part of it. There is no harmony between them in any matter, however trivial, because they are at two opposite poles. Where this system exists, we do not consider Islam to exist, and where Islam exists, there is no place for this system". (Imarah, 2004, p. 16)

This democracy, according to al-Mawdudi, was nationalist and secular, based on Hindu sovereignty aiming to obliterate Islamic identity and civilizational character.

The proof that this statement of his is not general but specific to a particular political and civilizational situation is that after the partition of India and al-Mawdudi's move to Pakistan with its Muslim majority, he nominated himself in elections based on democracy, which relies on majority rules and the parliamentary system, because human sovereignty here, in his opinion, would be Islamic, governed by the limits and constants of Islamic Shari'ah and its objectives. Here also, al-Mawdudi spoke about Islamic democracy, and what he called ancient Islamic democracy, and even believed that no rational person would oppose this democracy.

<i>Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers</i>					
ISSN : 9577-1112	EISSN : 2602-5388	Volume: (17)	Number : (03)	year: 2025	Pages: 491-509

Second Fact:

Those who plucked al-Mawdudi's speech on "Al-Hakimiyyah" out of its context and employed it in other political contexts did not pay attention to its specific meaning for him, as al-Mawdudi saw that "Al-Hakimiyyah" is synonymous with divinity (Uluhiyyah). The word "Ilah" (deity) and the term "Al-Hakimiyyah" according to al-Mawdudi, are two names for a single reality. (Imarah, 2004, p. 19) It is the absolute authority of Allah, who "is not questioned about what He does." Al-Mawdudi says: "Al-Hakimiyyah denotes supreme authority and absolute power. There is no meaning to an individual – or a group of individuals, or an assembly composed of them – being a ruler... possessing complete competencies and unlimited total powers, being absolutely powerful in himself, and it is not permissible to question him about the judgments he issues concerning good and evil or right and wrong. Everything he does is right, and it is not permissible for any of those who obey him to consider it evil and reject it, and everything he does is correct, and it is not permissible for any of those who obey him to see any error in it. Everyone must acknowledge him as holy, pure, and free from error, regardless of whether he is or is not. This is the conception of legal sovereignty (al-hakimiyyah al-qanuniyyah)... And He, exalted, alone possesses this "Hakimiyyah". He is the Absolute Overcomer, the Most High"... Lord is an effector of what He intends. "(International S. , The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 11: 107) and he alone is responsible for His actions" "He is not questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned " (International S. , The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 21 : 23) And He is the Omnipotent, the Strong, the Mighty"...In whose hand is the realm of all things... " (International S. , The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 23:88). And He alone whose power is not limited by any force ", the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection..." (International S. , The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 59 : 23). (Imarah, 2004, pp. 19,20)

This "Al-Hakimiyyah", with these meanings and these authorities defined by al-Mawdudi, can only be purely for Allah alone, to the exclusion of others. But the religious extremists who relied on al-Mawdudi's thought did not alert to this specific concept of "Al-Hakimiyyah" he held; rather, they contented themselves with citing phrases that deny Islam's acceptance of any human sovereignty, individual or collective, in legislation. (Imarah, 2004, p. 20).

Third Fact:

The extremists overlooked intellectual formulations by al-Mawdudi where he was more precise and balanced when he saw that in Islam there is a human sovereignty restricted by the frameworks and constants of Islamic Shari'ah. And the field of human sovereignty is the broadest in constitutional, legal, and administrative legislation in Islamic societies. Hence, the Islamic Caliphate is a democratic caliphate based on human sovereignty restricted by the constants of Islamic Shari'ah. On this basis, no rational person rejects democracy with these Islamic restrictions. (Imara, 2004, p. 20)

Thus, according to Muhammad Imarah, the extremists ignored the precise and balanced texts in which al-Mawdudi clearly and evidently states that man is a vicegerent of Allah, the Exalted, to be a ruler on earth. (Imara, 2004, p. 22)

We note in this context that this premise—"Al-Hakimiyyah"—representing the primary roots of religious extremism in contemporary Islamic thought, has no trace in the writings of the pioneers of the modern Islamic awakening, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, and Hassan al-Banna.

4.2 The Premises of "Al-Jahiliyyah" (Pre-Islamic Ignorance) and "Al-Takfir" (Excommunication):

"Al-Jahiliyyah" in Arab-Islamic terminology refers to the period of interval without Islam. They said "Al-Jahiliyyah al-Jahla" (the intense ignorance), exaggerating. "Al-Majhal" is a desert with no landmarks; it is said: "rakibtuha 'ala majhuliha" (I traversed its unknown parts) with the firmness of the earth therein is courage. Their saying: "That was in "Al-Jahiliyyah al-Jahla " " is an emphasis on the first, deriving from its name what emphasizes it, just as it is said "watad" (tent peg) and "awatid" (firm pegs), "hamaj" (rabble) and "hawamij" (mobs), "layl" (night) and "layla" (intense night), "yawm" (day) and "ayyam" (intense days). In the hadith, "You are a man in whom there is "Jahiliyyah"," it refers to the state the Arabs were upon before Islam: ignorance of Allah Almighty and His Messenger, the statutes of the religion, boasting about lineages, arrogance, tyranny, and other such things. (Manzur, 1972, p. 714).

Among those who described contemporary Islamic societies, their civilization, their states, and their governments as "Jahili" was al-Mawdudi, based on the idea that "Jahiliyyah" is a state, not a time period.

Muhammad Imarah believes that Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi and those who followed his path were mistaken, as they did not distinguish between the existence of "Jahili" impurities in contemporary Islamic societies and the totality of "Jahiliyyah" in these societies.

The totality of "Jahiliyyah" means the absence of Islam and the dominance of polytheism and idolatry over the prevailing creed, which none but the extremists claim. (Imarah, 2004, p. 23) In this framework, it should be noted that the era in which the Messenger, peace be upon him, lived, or the society of Prophethood—if this designation is correct—was not free from impurities of "Jahiliyyah". It is reported in the hadith of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari: "That he insulted a man during the time of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and reproached him about his mother. The man came to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and mentioned that to him. The Prophet said: "You are a man in whom there is « Jahiliyyah »" (Hajjaj, 1991, p. 1282). This incident indicates the persistence of some "Jahili" impurities in some Companions, yet one cannot say that the Prophetic society was a "Jahili" society. The presence of some "Jahiliyyah" in the Companion Abu Dharr al-Ghifari does not mean he was "Jahili" in any way.

But al-Mawdudi, according to Muhammad Imarah, made the absence of divine sovereignty (Al-Hakimiyyah al-Ilahiyyah) in Islamic societies and states, as well as the societies of Western civilization, evidence for his judgment that all Islamic societies and their states are "Jahili". However, he did not excommunicate individuals or the nation (Ummah). (Imarah, 2004, p. 24)

This means that al-Mawdudi started from the first premise, the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah": when divine sovereignty is absent from Islamic or Western societies and states, according to him, these societies are "Jahili", like the "Jahili" society, not judging by what Allah has revealed. This means that the premise of excommunication (Al-Takfir) stems from the premise of "Jahiliyyah".

In this context, we mention that al-Mawdudi ruled that "Jahiliyyah" prevailed in Islamic history and civilization since the late caliphate of 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, may Allah be pleased with him (577-656 CE). He says in this regard: "The goals achieved by the Prophet - peace be upon him - were followed by Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (573-634 CE) and the second Caliph, 'Umar (584-644 CE)... Then the matter passed after them

<i>Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers</i>					
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to our master 'Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, and he remained upon what the Prophet established for several years in the early part of that era... But the third Caliph was not characterized by those qualities possessed by the first and second Caliphs who preceded him... He lacked some of those necessary qualities for rule and command, which were complete in Abu Bakr and 'Umar... So "Jahiliyyah" found its way into the Islamic social system, and its sweeping tide, although 'Uthman tried to repel it by sacrificing himself and his life, it could not be turned back. Then he was succeeded by the fourth Caliph, 'Ali, may Allah honor his face (600-661 CE), who exerted his utmost effort to prevent this sedition and protect political authority in Islam from being overtaken by "Jahiliyyah", but he could not repel this reversed reaction even by sacrificing himself. Thus ended the era of the Caliphate upon the method of Prophethood, and it was replaced by the tyrannical kingdom (al-mulk al-'adud), and rule and authority began to be based on the principles of "Jahiliyyah" instead of the principles of Islam (Imarah, 2004, pp. 24,25).

Then al-Mawdudi moves from this era to rule that "Jahiliyyah", its misguidance and falsehoods, prevailed in Islamic life, civilization, and culture after the time of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (681-720 CE), saying : "After 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, the crisis of politics and government passed into the hands of "Jahiliyyah" forever. The power of the Umayyads, then the Abbasids, then the Turkish kings arose. What these governments brought of works and services boils down to them importing the philosophies of the Greeks, Romans, and Persians and disseminating them among Muslims in their original form, and on another front, they spread, by the power of rule and state funds, the misguidances and falsehoods of the first "Jahiliyyah" in all sciences, arts, and social civilization". (Imarah, 2004, p. 25)

Then al-Mawdudi continues the same idea, applying the same ruling—even apostasy—to the governments of the subsequent ages, including Islamic civilization in Andalusia. He says in his book "Tarikh Tajdid al-Din wa-l-hyaihi" (History of Religious Renewal and Revival): "It was natural that accompanying all this was the circulation of the philosophy, literature, and arts of "Jahiliyyah", so sciences and knowledge were recorded in its mold". (Imarah, 2004, p. 25) And in his book "Al-Hukumat al-Islamiyyah" (Islamic Government), he says: "The civilization that flourished in Cordoba, Baghdad, Delhi, and Cairo has no connection to Islam... and its history is not Islamic". (Imarah, 2004, p. 25).

From these ideas, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966 CE) launched in his book "Ma'alim fi al-Tariq" (Milestones), where he said: "Included in the framework of the "Jahili" society are those societies that claim to be 'Muslim'... These societies do not enter this framework because they believe in the divinity of someone other than Allah, nor because they offer acts of worship to other than Allah as well, but they enter this framework because they do not submit to the worship of Allah alone in their system of life. So they—even if they do not believe in the divinity of anyone other than Allah—give the characteristics of divinity to other than Allah, thus submitting to the sovereignty of other than Allah. They receive from this sovereignty their system, their laws, their values, their scales, their customs, and their traditions, and almost all the components of their life... The stance of Islam towards all these societies is defined in one phrase: It refuses to recognize the Islamicity of all these societies". (Imarah, 2004, p. 26)

The Islam of these societies, according to Sayyid Qutb in Muhammad Imarah's view, is merely a claim, because these societies, even if they do not worship other than Allah, have submitted to a sovereignty other than divine sovereignty in all aspects of their lives . (Imarah, 2004, p. 26)

Sayyid Qutb did not stop at judging the "Jahiliyyah" of Islamic societies; he declared the severance of the Islamic nation from existence for centuries, and hence his goal was to re-establish this nation anew. (Imara, 2004, p. 26)

5. The Methodology for Dealing with the Premises of Extremism in Islamic Thought from Muhammad Imarah's Perspective

After identifying the most prominent premises of religious and intellectual extremism in our Arab and Islamic society, we will now identify the scientific methodology that Muhammad Imarah deems appropriate for engaging with extremists and distinguishing truth from falsehood. He says in this regard: "In the beginning... we must abandon the methodology of merely rejecting... condemning, and ridiculing these premises—the premises of extremism". (Imara, 2004, p. 30)

These premises, according to him, produced practices that came at a high cost, as they cost Islamic societies internally and externally many losses, even tragedies and crises, and to this day these societies are still paying the price. If the Islamic mind, whether juristic, intellectual, or media, does not deal with these premises and other premises of extremism, this phenomenon will continue to eat away at our Arab and Islamic society. (Imara, 2004, p. 30) On this basis, Muhammad Imarah proposes dealing with the extremists who rely on these premises as follows:

5.1. Methodology for Dealing with the Premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah" (Sovereignty):

Muhammad Imarah points to the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah", whether in the thought of the ancient Khawarij or in al-Mawdudi's writings, considering it political thought within the "ijtihad" (independent legal reasoning) of its proponents. It is not binding on others; it is not established religion. It is not, as he says : "Quranic proclamation (balagh), nor is it the Prophetic clarification (bayân) of the Quranic proclamation—rather, it is political jurisprudence (fiqh), which can be accepted or rejected, taken from or refuted" (Imara, 2004, p. 31)

Hence, the recourse of Arab-Islamic societies to human sovereignty, according to Muhammad Imarah, does not necessarily mean rejecting divine sovereignty, and thus does not mean reverting to "Jahiliyyah" and disbelief, as the extremists claim—unless this type of sovereignty is accompanied by disbelief, denial, and rejection of the constants of the creed of divine sovereignty and its rulings on which the texts are definitive in meaning and transmission (qat'i al-dalalah wal-thubut), i.e., in which the decisive verses of the Quran (muhkamat al-Qur'an) and the "mutawatir" (massively transmitted) Sunnah of the Prophet are found. (Imara, 2004, p. 31) Al-Mawdudi himself, whom the extremists take as a reference for their extremist thought, has explicit texts affirming the existence of a human sovereignty governed by divine sovereignty... He acknowledges the existence of the authority of the nation (Ummah), represented by the scholars of "ijtihad"... those in authority ("uli al-amr")... and the people of loosening and binding (ahl al-hal wal-'aqd).and primary legislation, governed by the framework of the permissible and the prohibited (al-halal wal-haram), defined by the sovereignty of Allah, which is the fixed divine decree and the supremacy of primary divine legislation. (Imara, 2004, p. 33)

In this context, Muhammad Imarah cites Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltut (1893-1963), the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, who spoke about ruling by other than what Allah has revealed. He distinguished in his interpretation of Allah's saying in Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 44: "And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the disbelievers. " He distinguished between one compelled to judge by other than what Allah revealed or one who interprets (mutawwil) judging by other than what Allah revealed, and a ruler who legislates or adjudicates by other than what Allah revealed out of disbelief, denial, and rejection of what Allah revealed. The second, the denier and rejecter, is the disbeliever. As for the first, the compelled one, he is a sinner, not a disbeliever. (Imara, 2004, p. 34)

<i>Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers</i>					
ISSN : 9577-1112	EISSN : 2602-5388	Volume: (17)	Number : (03)	year: 2025	Pages: 491-509

Here, Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltut distinguishes between two types of rulers: one is compelled to judge by other than what Allah revealed, who interprets the texts concerning judgment according to his "ijtihad", but he is not a denier or rejecter of what Allah revealed. This type of ruler, in Sheikh Shaltut's opinion, is Muslim but sinful. The second ruler, in the Sheikh's opinion, is the judge who judges by other than what Allah revealed while being a denier and rejecter of what Allah revealed. This is the one we can judge to be a disbeliever.

This means that Islamic judgment is of two types: The first is a judgment on which there is no Quran or Sunnah, or which is mentioned in one of them but not in a definitive manner—rather, it is probable, open to it and to other interpretations, and thus subject to the "ijtihad" of jurists and legislators. They exercised "ijtihad" in it, and each "mujtahid" had a perspective or opinion. Most Islamic rulings are of this type, called "ijtihadi". If a judgment in this type of "ijtihad" contradicts all Islamic opinions and schools, Islam does not despise it or prohibit it, nor did it consider it an apostasy that takes the judge out of Islam. This is because Islam does not have a specific ruling on this type; rather, its ruling is what the "mujtahid" arrives at through his "ijtihad" based on pursuing justice and benefit (maslahah), and the presence of justice and benefit is linked to Allah's law and ruling.

As for the second type of Islamic judgment: it is a judgment on matters definitively stated in the Book and the established Sunnah of His Messenger, peace be upon him, in which no specificity of time or circumstance is apparent. Ruling by other than it, if based on the belief that other than it is better, and that it does not achieve justice and benefit, is an apostasy that takes the judge out of Islam. However, if the judge who ruled by other than it is a believer in Allah's ruling, knowing that it is justice and benefit without any other, but he is in a non-Islamic country or an Islamic country overwhelmed in its affairs of rule and legislation, and he was compelled to judge by other. However, if the judge who ruled by other than it is a believer in Allah's ruling, knowing that it is justice and benefit without any other, but he is in a non-Islamic country or an Islamic powerless country in its affairs of rule and legislation, and he was compelled to judge by other than what Allah revealed for a reason other than denial and rejection, then the ruling in that case is not disbelief, but rather a sin, like one who consumes wine while believing in its prohibition. (Imara, 2004, pp. 34,35).

These were the most prominent features of the Islamic methodology for dealing with the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah", which was the starting point for extremist religious thought and one of the main reasons that led some factions to take up arms to save divine sovereignty from human sovereignty.

5.2 Methodology for Dealing with the Premise of "Al-Jahiliyyah" (State of Ignorance):

We indicated earlier that the implication of this premise is the reversion of Islamic societies and their rulers to "Jahiliyyah", and for this reason, these societies, their states, and their rulers were judged as disbelievers.

Dealing with the extremists who rely on this premise in their extremism lies in stating that Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi's claim of the return of "Jahiliyyah" to the Islamic social system since the time of the third Caliph, 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and that the system of rule in Islam was based on the principles of "Jahiliyyah" and not the principles of Islam, has absolutely no connection to "Jahiliyyah". Rather, it pertains to the political conflict centered on the Caliphate, i.e., the state, and methods of managing its affairs. The state, in the view of Ahl al-Sunnah (and al-Mawdudi is one of them), is among the branches (furu). Disagreement and conflict over it, even deviation from its Islamic path, is not considered apostasy from the creeds, pillars, and religious fundamentals of Islam, nor can it be apostasy from monotheism (Tawhid), nor does it fall into the realm of polytheistic idolatry, which is the criterion distinguishing between "Jahiliyyah" and Islam. (Imara, 2004, p. 36 and subsequent pages) Nothing proves this more than the fact that the Companions differed and even fought over the Caliphate and methods of managing the Islamic state at that time. Yet, their creed was monotheism; their God was one, their Prophet was one, their Quran was one, uniting them, they prayed towards one Qiblah, and behind one Imam. And this Imam, 'Ali, may Allah honor his face, at the height of the conflict between him and Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan in the Battle of Siffin in 657 CE, was asked about his opinion regarding the fate of the dead from both sides in this strife. He said: "I hope that anyone with a pure heart from us and them who is killed will be entered into Paradise by Allah... We met, and our Lord is one, our Prophet is one, our call in Islam is one. We do not ask them for more in faith in Allah and belief in His Messenger, nor do they ask us for more. The matter is one, except for what we differed over regarding the blood of 'Uthman... By Allah, we did not fight the people of Syria (ahl al-Sham) over excommunication (takfir) and separation in religion. We only fought them to bring them back to the

community (jama'ah)... They are our brothers in religion; our Qiblah is one, and we believe we are upon the truth, not them.". (Imara, 2004, p. 40)

Therefore, this is a political conflict that occurred among Muslims, falling under the category of branches (furu'), not a return to "Jahiliyyah", and it does not rise to the level of creeds and fundamentals upon which an individual is judged to have apostatized or disbelieved.

5.3 Methodology for Dealing with the Premise of "Al-Takfir " (Excommunication):

The premise of "Al-Takfir" is a result of the premise of "Jahiliyyah", and they cannot be separated. This is because the apostasy of Islamic societies, past and present, resulted from their return to "Jahiliyyah", and hence comes the judgment of disbelief upon these societies. As for dealing with this premise according to Muhammad Imarah, it lies in reviving our Islamic heritage that criticizes and rejects hastening to excommunicate and [the necessity of] knowing what is in people's hearts and intentions. Here, Muhammad Imarah cites the hadith narrated by Usamah ibn Zayd, who said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent us on an expedition to Al-Huraqat. They were alerted to our presence and fled. We caught up with a man. When we surrounded him, he said: 'La ilaha illa Allah' (There is no deity but Allah). We struck him until we killed him. Something about that troubled me, so I mentioned it to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. He said: 'Who will be there for you with "La ilaha illa Allah" on the Day of Resurrection?' I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, he only said it out of fear of the weapon and being killed.' He said: 'Did you split open his heart to know whether it was for that reason or not? Who will be there for you with "La ilaha illa Allah" on the Day of Resurrection?' He kept repeating that until I wished I had not embraced Islam until that day." Narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, and Imam Ahmad. (Imarah, 2004, p. 45)

This hadith, through which the Messenger, peace be upon him, rebuked the Companion Usamah ibn Zayd for hastily killing the Bedouin who uttered the testimony of faith, is an explanation of Allah's saying:" O you who have believed• when you go forth [to fight] in the cause of Allàh, investigate; and do not say to one who gives you [a greeting of] peace, "You are not a believer," aspiring for the goods of worldly life; for with Allàh are many acquisitions.You [yourselves] were like that before; then Allàh conferred his favor [i.e., guidance] upon you, so investigate. Indeed Allàh is ever, with what you do, Acquainted." (International S. , The Quran, 2004, p. Quran 4: 94)

Based on this approach derived from this hadith, which expresses the Prophetic methodology and is essentially an expression of the Quranic stance, one should respond to the extremists in Arab and Islamic thought.

Furthermore, surveying the heritage of the Ummah reveals that its scholars rejected the premise of hasty excommunication. For example, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111 CE) rejected and criticized excommunication, as we discern from his saying: "Hastening to excommunication is predominant only in the nature of those dominated by ignorance... Know that the reality of disbelief and faith, and the truth and falsehood and their secret, are not revealed to hearts soiled by the pursuit of status and wealth and the love for them. Rather, this is only revealed to hearts that were first purified from the filth of the dregs of the world, then polished through complete spiritual exercise secondly, then illuminated by pure remembrance thirdly, then nourished by sound thought fourthly, then adorned by adhering to the limits of the Shari'ah fifthly, until light from the niche of Prophethood overflowed upon them. They became like a polished niche, and the lamp of faith within the glass of his heart shone with lights, its oil almost glowing even if untouched by fire..." (Imarah, 2004, p. 46)

As for Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905 CE), he says: "It is well-known among Muslims and established from the principles of their religion that if a statement is issued by a speaker that could potentially imply disbelief from a hundred angles, but could imply faith from one angle, it is interpreted as faith, and it is not permissible to interpret it as disbelief." (Imarah, 2004, p. 49)

These were some examples presented by Muhammad Imarah, from which he believes it is possible to derive how to deal with extremists who excommunicate Islamic societies without justification.

6. Conclusion

The most important results that can be drawn from this research paper are:

1 _The most prominent premises of extremism in contemporary Arab thought lie in three premises: the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah" (Sovereignty), and the premises of "Al-Jahiliyyah" (State of Ignorance) and "Al-Takfir"(Excommunication)

The first appeared in Islamic thought with the Khawarij and means, for them, that divine sovereignty is a complete negation of any human sovereignty.

<i>Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers</i>					
ISSN : 9577-1112	EISSN : 2602-5388	Volume: (17)	Number : (03)	year: 2025	Pages: 491-509

The second and third are linked: their implication is that contemporary societies, including Islamic societies and their states, resort to human sovereignty to varying degrees, meaning they have reverted to a "Jahiliyyah" more severe and darker than the first "Jahiliyyah" that witnessed the emergence of Islam. This implies the disbelief of Arab and Islamic societies, even if they continue to call themselves Islamic and Muslim for no reason other than their recourse to human sovereignty.

2_The scientific methodology for dealing with the premises of extremism in Arab and Islamic thought lies in the following:

- The scientific methodology for dealing with the premise of "Al-Hakimiyyah":

Distinguishing between two types of rulers : one is compelled to judge by other than what Allah revealed, who interprets the texts concerning judgment according to his "ijtihad", but he is not a denier or rejecter of what Allah revealed. This type of ruler is Muslim but sinful. The second ruler is the judge who judges by other than what Allah revealed while being a denier and rejecter of what Allah revealed. This is the one we can judge to be a disbeliever.

- The scientific methodology for dealing with the premise of "Al-Jahiliyyah":

The extremists' reliance on Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi's claim of the return of "Jahiliyyah" to the Islamic social system since the time of the third Caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, and that the system of rule in Islam was based on the principles of "Jahiliyyah" and not the principles of Islam, has absolutely no connection to "Jahiliyyah". Rather, it pertains to the political conflict centered on the Caliphate, i.e., the state, and methods of managing its affairs.

- The scientific methodology for dealing with the premise of "Al-Takfir":

It lies in reviving our Islamic heritage that criticizes and rejects hastening to excommunicate and [emphasizes] knowing what is in people's hearts and intentions.

Review EL'BAHITH - ENS - Bouzareah - Algiers					
ISSN : 9577-1112	EISSN : 2602-5388	Volume: (17)	Number : (03)	year: 2025	Pages: 491-509

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