

The Epiphany of Tafsir Ash-Sharawi with reference to the Contextualization of Takfir and Jihad by the Nigerian Muslim Scholars

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Abstract

Tafsīr remains an essential scholastic interpretation of the messages contained in the Glorious Qur'ān. It provides explicit meaning, explanation, interpretation, and commentary on the Quran. However, one of the significant characteristics of Tafsir is the fundamental approach derived from the prophetic and companions' legacies, which metamorphose into the classical and modern style of explication and commentary in the later 20th century. *Tafsir* Shaarawi is considered one of the modern pieces of exegeses of the Quran with the view of interpreting the creeds and legal rulings in the Glorious Qur'ān based on the scientific, socio-economic, political, and cultural context. Al-Imam Mutawalli Ash-Shacrāwi is a renowned Islamic scholar among the leading authors of modern Tafsīr in contemporary society. This study aims to explicate the manifestation of Tafsir Ash-Sharawi on the Contextualization of Takfir and Jihad by the Nigerian Muslim Scholars. Analyzing the exegetical approaches of sha'arawi theological interpretation of Takfir and socio-political conceptualization of Jihad in the modern era. This study demonstrates how Tafsīr Ash-Shacrāwi can be used in correcting the modern crises of Takfir and Jihad among Nigerian Muslim scholars. The study adopts exegetical and phenomenological analytical methods of research. The exegetical method explains the Qur'anic verses while phenomenological analysis explicates the views of Al-Imam Ash-Shacrāwi in his Tafsīr on the contemporary understanding and application of the concept of Takfir and Jihad to address the public interest of the Muslims and entire humanity. This work concludes by recommending the application of Quranic values in solving human challenges in contemporary society.

Keywords: Epiphany, Tafsir Ash-Sharawi, Contextualization Takfir, Jihad, Nigerian Muslim Scholars

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Introduction:

Islam is the genuine submission to the will of Allāh, the almighty God, with total compliance and obedience to the beneficial law of Allāh. The essence of the message of all God-chosen messengers of Allāh from Adam, Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa, and Muhammad is Islam. Muslims are expected to accept all the Prophets previous to Muhammad without any discrimination. Thus, the Islamic belief covers the fact that all the prophets of Allāh and their faithful follower were Muslims, and that their actual religion was Islam, the only truly universal religion of God. The Quran, the book of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, was the last book of Allāh revealed to the last of all his prophets to reinforce and immortalize His eternal message to mankind. The Quran contains the message of Allāh revealed to many prophets of different nations at different times, including Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismahil (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Da'ud (David), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus), and lastly Muhammad. Muslims believe in all these messengers of Allāh without discrimination against any (Asri, 2017).

Muslims are often considered as people of testimony (“Ahlu Shahada: أهل الشهادة The .(term *Shahada*” in Arabic, means “testimony” or “witness.” Shahada is the first pillar of Islam and is the Islamic creed “the testimony”; and the word as-sahādatān (الشهادتان, "the two testimonials") is also used instead of the word Shahada.⁸² This word is the most vital in Islam; this is because it is an Islamic creed declaring belief in the oneness of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's prophet. This declaration, in its shortest form, reads: *lā ilāha illā-llāh, muhammadun rasūlu-llāh*” meaning that “There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of Allāh.” (Asri, 2017).

Shahada is a proclamation that all non-Muslims must make before becoming Muslims, and anyone who cannot make this declaration cannot be considered a true Muslim. This confession, uttered before two Muslim witnesses, is all that is required to become a Muslim. The Shahada is repeated at each of the five daily prayer times that Islam requires. (Asri, 2017).

The first part of the Shahada confession affirms that Allāh is one thus, polytheism and the Christian doctrine of the Trinity are denied. The second part of the confession affirms that the primary communication from Allāh to mankind is through Mohammad; thus, Jesus and the Bible are positioned to a lesser status than Allāh. The declaration of this statement

virtually puts people into two groups: “Ahlu Shahada”, the people of Shahdah, who are the faithful, and the “Ahlul Kufr”, the infidels or non-believers, while the Jews and Christians are the two other groups. The position of “Ahlu al-Kitab,” the people of the Scriptures, among the Jews and Christians in Islam is further argued in Islamic theology and Jurisprudence. Faith, in a general sense, is a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof. It is a complete trust or confidence in someone or something (Asri, 2017).

The Concept of Takfir and Its Juristic Implications

In Islam, it is the belief in one God, and those who believe in multiple gods, or refuse to accept God as the creator of all that exists, and the universe are considered “Kufar” infidels or non-believers. However, there is a relationship between the word Kufr and *Takfir*. The word *Takfir* is an Arabic word that originates from the word Kufr. Both terms Kufr and *Takfir* come from the Arabic verb ka-fa-ra, which means to cover up, conceal, or deny. K-f-r, the three-letter root of both of these words, bears meanings that range from covering and hiding to disbelief, ingratitude, infidelity, and godlessness. The active participle is kafir, a term signifying unbelievers, infidels, ingrates, and atheists (Al-Ilory, 2022).

The terms kufr and takfir have been widely discussed among Islamic scholars for centuries. It is a complex term, embedded with ideological, religious, and social connotations. In a religious context Kufr, it refers to hiding or denying religious truth. More specifically, the term indicates disbelief in Allāh and His Messenger, Muhammad. Considered the opposite of Iman, which means faith, kufr is considered a grave sin in Islam, punishable in the hereafter by hellfire. The term Takfir is used to pronounce an individual, a group of individuals from a whole state who have professed the Islamic faith to be non-Muslims (Al-Shammari, n.d.).

Kufr may arise in a variety of forms, of which all faithful Muslims must be wary. Disbelief may arise from stubbornness to admit the truth, from pride and arrogance, ingratitude towards Allāh, disobedience or unwillingness to comply with any one of the principles of Islam, the mockery of Allāh's Prophets, signs, or teachings, or from the hypocrisy by those professing to believe while concealing unbelief (Al-Shammari, n.d.).

This ideology is significant in Islamic thought; the word kufr or one of its derivatives appears in the Quran 482. The revolves around the meaning of ingratitude,” the willful refusal to appreciate the benefits that

God has bestowed. Modern reform and revival movements vest the concept with new significance: current Muslim beliefs and practices have been so corrupted from true Islam that they constitute shirk (idolatry) or jahiliyyah (ignorance). Pre-modern reformers tended to see kufr in popular Islam, including Sufi practices; some modern reformers see the pervasive influence of the West as a cause of kufr (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Kamil-deen A. Al-Mubarak discussed extensively in his book about “Nawaqidul Islam” different issues relating to faith. He stated actions and characteristics that can nullify one, Islam, rendering the person a Kafr according to Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Abdul’ Wahabis principles. This means that a person can automatically become a kafir by principle, after being a Muslim. He established that there are two types of Nawaqid from his quotation from the author, al-Nawqidul ‘l nasaikha and al-Nawqidul gairul ‘l nasaikha. Shaykh Ibn Taimiyyah itemized ten characteristics of al-Nawqidul ‘l nasaikha in his Book titled al-Jamiul ‘l Farid (Al-Mubarak, 2001).

These are characteristics that he stated can expel someone from the circle of the religion of Islam and make one’s Islam null and void. And they are as follows;

1. Shirk
2. Shafaha
3. Relationship with the Kufar
4. Denial of the Prophet and his Prophethood
5. Detesting the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH)
6. Facetious behaviors against Islam
7. Magic
8. Appearance and cooperation with the Mushrikin
9. The belief that a certain group of people can contradict the Principle of Islamic law
10. Disagreement and Disobedience of the religion.⁹¹

Al-Mubarak based his analysis on the Salafiyyah/ Wahabiyyah ideology of *Takfir* tactically and meticulously, extracting from their literature. In Al-Shammari, (2013) work, the position of the Salafiyyah becomes apparent. The author of the book considered the act of takfir as “Legal judgment and the right of Allāh. Thus, it is not allowed in Islam to consider other Muslims as Kafir (infidels) only if such a person is called so

by Allāh and His Messenger, with evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. It should be noted that the Judgment of Kafir on any individual is directly or indirectly tantamount to death (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, the founder of the Wahabiyyah movement and a staunch conservative, preached an "absolutist ideology", in many of his books. He denounced most Muslim customs, such as listening to music, painting human figures, or praying while visiting shrines, as idolatry. He was against all forms of pluralism and loathed the traditional "elasticity of doctrine, ritual, and practice" that made Islam dynamic and vibrant. His theological position made him condemn much of the Islam of his own time". It was thus natural for Ibn Abd al-Wahhab to declare that following any school of Islamic jurisprudence, except his own Hanbali School, was indistinguishable from shirk, or polytheism. His view on the subject matter is being showcased by his students as follows:

ويقول الشيخ أنه لا خلاف بين العلماء كلهم أن الرجل إذا صدق رسول
الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في شيء وكذبه في شيء أنه كافر لم يدخل في
الإسلام، وكذلك إذا آمن ببعض القرآن وجحد بعضه . كمن أقر بالتوحيد
وجحد وجوب الصلاة، أو أقر بالتوحيد والصلاة وجحد وجوب الزكاة،
أو أقر بهذا كله وجحد الصوم أو أقر بهذا كله وجحد الحج.

ولما لم ينقد أناس في زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم للحج، أنزل الله في
حقهم { وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ } (آل عمران: 97).

ومن أقر بهذا كله وجحد البعث كفر بالاجماع ، وحل دمه وماله كما قال
تعالى : { إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا
* أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا }
النساء: 151، 150.

In consonant to this, the author of al-Aqidat al-Tha'awiyya also state:

"ولا نكفر أحد من أهل القبلة بذنب ما لم يستحلّه، ولا نقول لا يضر مع
الإيمان ذنب امن عمله"

Ibn Abd Wahhab and the Wahhabiyya movement are in a resilient position on the issue of takfir and accusing people of being infidels. The first and second generations of the followers of Ibn Abd Wahhab, who are prominent among the Wahhabi Scholars, stood firmly behind him. His position toward infidelity had been adopted by many Wahhabi scholars until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when revisions were made to his previous position.⁹⁴ In their revision, His students put an end to the ambivalent position toward takfir, emphasizing that warfare was a suitable means of interacting with religious and political opponents. To justify their approach, they reinterpreted not only the writings of the founder of Wahhabiyya but also those of Ibn Taymiyya and other Hanbali scholars. Their takfiri discourse remained alive among large segments of the masses and religious scholars in Sa'udi Arabia until today, though some Sa'udi kings and princes sometimes denounced it (Al-Ilory, 2022).

The term Takfir is radically applied by some extremist groups to describe other Muslims as infidels or non-believers. The practice of accusing another Muslim of apostasy or declaring another Muslim an infidel is called Takfirism. "A Muslim or a Muslim group is Takfiri if it declares another Muslim or a Muslim sect as an apostate. It is the action or practice of declaring that a fellow Muslim is guilty of apostasy (i.e., not believing in the essential tenets of Islam) and therefore no longer a Muslim. It is the pronouncement that someone is an unbeliever (kafir) and no longer Muslim. The term Takfiri is used by some extremist groups that see Islam through a narrow keyhole of self-righteousness and consider other Muslims or certain groups of Muslims as apostates. They use the term against those who may not agree with their ideology or refrain from pledging allegiance to them. Takfiris prescribe the death penalty to the apostates; this is because they are considered enemies and a threat to Islam (Badar, M., and Nagata, M., 2017).

The act of Takfir is used in this modern era for sanctioning violence against leaders of Islamic states who are deemed insufficiently religious. It has become a central ideology of political Islam and militant groups such

as those in Egypt, which reflect the ideas of Sayyid Qutb and Mawdudi.⁹⁷ Many contemporary Muslim Scholars opposed the concept as a doctrinal deviation. Moderate scholars such as Hasan al-Hudaybi (d. 1977) and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who preach “Wasatiyyah” and reject takfir as un-Islamic and marked by bigotry and zealotry. It is a position widely held and applied by jihadist organizations to varying degrees. At the same time, the concept is opposed by the religious establishment as an ostensible reason for violence. They hold that excommunication against those who profess their Islamic faith is not sanctioned by Islam, or an ill-founded takfir accusation is a major forbidden act (haram) (As-Shammari, 2013).

Challenges of the Interpretation of Takfir among Nigerian Scholars

In Nigeria and the Muslim world today, the application of the term is highly technical. Several Sunni extremist outfits in the world today, including the Wahhabi group, have used the term to describe other Muslim groups in Nigeria as being out of Islam or apostate. Similarly, certain groups, such as Jabata’s group in Ilorin, Kwara State, have also used the term for Sufi or certain Sufi groups in the state. Mainstream Sunni and Sufi leaders often refer to armed extremist groups like Boko Haram as Takfiris. The number of Takfiri groups in Nigeria, however, is very small (Al-Ilory, 2022).

According to Historical accounts, the takfiri are the generations of those who were outcasts from mainstream Muslims, by breaking into revolt against Khalifah Alī. Ibn Abi Tālib was a cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the fourth caliph of Islam, and this group later assassinated Alī ibn Abi Talib, as he did not agree with their war demands against another group of Muslims. This group is known in the History of Islam as the Khawarij (Kharijites) (Badar, M. and Nagata, M., 2017).

There have also been several Salafiyyah groups in the present day, like the Wahabis, that labeled their rivals as infidels. However, if declaring other Muslims apostates is Takfirism, then religious literature in the Wahabiyyah group provides materials that call its ideological opponents apostates. The followers of the top Takfiri leaders used different tactics, including suicide attacks against their rivals (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Even though Islam does not grant religious groups the authority to label other Muslim groups as infidels, certain Muslim religious groups in Nigeria have done so. Contrary to the principle of Islamic theology and jurisprudence stating that only God has sack authority, perhaps the states (The Islamic State) also have such an authority to declare which Muslim

groups are outcasts from the mainstream Muslims (Badar, M. and Nagata, M., 2017).

Most Muslim states officially passed a fatwa or created religious bodies known as “Darul Ifta” that are responsible for issuing final decrees about major religious issues that may arise in the country. Fatwa and Law are made based on deep knowledge of Islam and taking socio-economic and scientific evidence and logical, historic, and comparative perspectives, and contemporary conditions surrounding an issue into consideration (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Using Takfirism for the militant group against regional rivals is a common phenomenon in Nigeria. Takfirism is widely used for militant groups that have links with political movements or groups that challenge the might of the regime. Takfiri term not only used for Boko Haram and Islamic State in Syria, but it also describes all militant groups that are fighting the Syrian regime as “Takfiris supported by Western countries.” (Thurston, A., 2016).

The conceptualization of Takfir in modern Muslim history can be noted in the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria. The Boko Haram group considers its rival Muslims and all its ideological opponents apostates. That is their justification for suicide bombing. The followers of Boko Haram also believe in taking the properties of their enemies as war booty and taking their enemies’ women as concubines, a practice approved by Takfiri ideology (Thurston, 2016).

In today’s, modern days, the term ex-communication is a modern terminology synonymous with Takfirism. Generally, the term ex-communication is considered an institutional act of religious censure used to deprive, suspend, or limit membership in a religious community or to restrict certain rights within it, in particular receiving of the sacraments (Thurston, 2016). This is a universal term often used to refer to similar types of institutional religious exclusionary practices and shunning among other religious groups. This action officially excludes someone from participation in the sacraments and services of the religion. This concept is deduced from several pieces of literature of the Salafiyyah and Wahabiyyah groups, and this can be divided into two as follows:

- i -Excommunication against individuals:
- ii- Excommunication against groups and organizations:

In Nigeria, one group that faced ex-communication is the Ahmadiyya sect. The group has been subject to various forms of religious

persecution and discrimination since the movement's inception in 1889. The Ahmadiyya Muslim movement is believed to have emerged from the Sunni tradition of Islam, and its adherents believe in all five pillars and articles of faith required of Muslims. Ahmadis are considered non-Muslims by many Salafiyyah/ Wahabiyyah scholars since they consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the movement, to be the promised Mahdi and Messiah awaited by the Muslims. Thus, over the past decades, Ahmadiyah has been at the center of one of the most significant controversies within the Nigerian Muslim community, particularly after the emergence of the Wahabiyyah movement in Nigeria (Ahmad, 2016).

The Ahmadis are active translators of the Qur'ān and proselytizers of the faith, yet the Ahmadis have faced strong resistance in many Muslim-majority nations. They have been continuously heretics and non-Muslims and subjected to persecution and systematic, sometimes state-sanctioned, oppression (Ahmad, 2016).

Lastly, communication against the state or society is a situation whereby a state or society is deemed as Jahiliyah (a state of ignorance and disbelief). The term Jahiliyyah is used in classical Arabic literature to refer to the period before the coming of the Prophet, also known as the Pre-Islamic period or "ignorance" of monotheism and divine law. The term is closely related to two things that are combined in this period: jahl (ignorance) and jahālah (foolishness). Thus, the word is a blameworthy word denoting ignorance and foolishness together. These are two attributes sufficient for a person, community, or state to disavow himself from, even if he has these attributes, and knowledge and guidance are sufficient for a person to feel proud of if he has these attributes, and even if he does not. Many acts that are considered as an act of Jahiliyyah, which include wailing, among others that inevitably continue to exist among the Muslim Nation, although it is something that belongs to the Jahiliyyah, either because of ignorance, which is the opposite of categorized knowledge, or because of foolishness, which is the opposite of wisdom. This is why the depth of Jahiliyyah is divided into two according to Ja'far, H: Jahiliyyat ul-fusuq wal Isyān (Ignorance of immorality and dis-obediency and "Jahiliyyat ul-^citiqad (ignorant of belief) (Jaifar, 2013).

Imam Sharawi's Interpretation of the Concept of Takfir and Implications

The idea of referring to societies after the time of the Prophet, whether they are kafir non-Muslims) or Muslim societies raised a question that requires decent answers in Islamic theology. This answer can be pictured with the coming of Prophet Muhammad with Islam (Allāh's guidance and the religion of truth). The world was filled with his light, and he brought people forth from darkness into light. Through the Prophet, Allāh dispelled the darkness of ignorance and kufr (disbelief). With his coming, the era of Jahiliyyah ended, but ignorance disappeared from all places and all eras.¹⁰⁹ (Ahmad, 2016).

However, the question of whether it is permissible to describe any societies as ignorant after his coming is another question that remains paramount, as many societies are yet free of ignorance, some societies are still living in the depths of Jahiliyyah, and so they are not free of this attribute. But the societies on which the light of Islam has shone cannot be described in these terms, and even if they are falling short in some aspects of Islam, they cannot be described as jahili (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Many Salafiyyah scholars agreed on the point that societies living in the depths of ignorance can be described as Jahiliyyah. Based on the fact that before the message of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), the people were in a state of Jahiliyyah or ignorance, their words and actions had neither been corrected for them by one who was sent to them nor had they realized their ignorance. Similarly, in light of this view, everything contrary to the message brought by the Messengers, namely Judaism and Christianity, was considered Jahiliyyah. Hence, any of these acts after the coming of Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) existing in one place or another – as it exists in the lands of the kuffar (non-Muslims) – may be considered as a state of Jahiliyyah until they become Muslim, even if they live in a Muslim land. In general terms of time, some scholars believe that there is no Jahiliyyah after the coming of Muhammad because among his ummah, there is a group that will continue to prevail and follow the truth until the Hour begins. This is what led to the question "Is Jahiliyyah an objective case or a historical period?" according to scholars of Islam (Al-Ilory, 2022).

In specific terms, Jahiliyyah may appear in some Muslim lands and in many Muslim individuals, according to the Hadith of the Prophet: "Four things among my ummah are of the Jahiliyyah," and his statement. "You are a man in whom there is some Jahiliyyah," and his statement: "Someone

who tries to follow a jahili way after becoming Muslim.”¹¹² The meaning of this in these Ahadith in general, is specific types of Jahiliyyah, Judaism, Christianity, Magianism, Sabianism, idolatry, or a combination of all or some of these or a way that has adopted some of these jahili religions, because all of them are innovated and were abrogated and became Jahiliyyah with the coming of Muhammad, although the word Jahiliyyah is usually used to refer to the Arabs and their former ways, the meaning is still the same (Muhammad Qutb, 1992).

The phrase "The Jahiliyyah of the twentieth century" is used in recent times to qualify modern states involved in the practice of Jahiliyyah. The phrase involves exaggeration and overlooking the fact that Islam prevailed over all other religions.

Sayyid Qutub used the phrase “The Jahiliyyah of the twentieth century,” often repeated in some Islamic schools of thought, of which he is the figurehead. This phrase is coined into the term "Modern Jahiliyyah" in comparison with the classical concept of Jahiliyyah. The question of how precise and correct this phrase is and to what extent it corresponds to the Jahiliyyah of ancient times in the scholar's opinion (Al-Ilory, 2022).

However, the fact that Islam is still vibrantly alive in this century, even though it has been infiltrated by things that are not part of it, means that we cannot compare this century with the first Jahiliyyah of the early Arabs. The first Jahiliyyah of the Arabs was idolaters; they were misguided, and it applies to the religions that existed around the Arabs, namely Judaism and Christianity, which are distorted religions. Therefore, at that time, there was no pure religion left without the touch of change and alteration. Undoubtedly, describing that era as Jahiliyyah is correct according to some scholars. But that is not the case in the present era, because Allāh blessed the Arabs first, then the rest of mankind, by sending Prophet Muhammad to them as the Seal of the Prophets, to whom He revealed the religion of Islam, which is the final religion, and Allāh has promised to preserve this religion as He said in the Glorious Qur’ān that: “Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the Dhikr and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)”(Muhammad Qutb, 1992).

Hence, using the word “Jahiliyyah” by Sayyid Qutb to refer to the twentieth century is considered by some scholars an exaggeration, because this will only give the impression that all of Islam has deviated completely from Tawhid (maintaining the Oneness of Allāh) and sincerity in worshipping Allāh alone. Therefore, if this century – the twentieth century – is being compared to the time of Jahiliyyah in which Prophet Muhammad

was sent to bring them forth from darkness into light, then this usage in general terms should be limited to the kuffar (non-Muslims) first, those of whom Allāh says: “Fight against those who believe not in Allāh, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allāh and His Messenger (Muhammad), and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah (a tax) with willing submission, and feel subdued” (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Describing the twentieth century as Jahiliyyah according to this group of scholars should only be applied to non-Muslims who do not follow the Quran and Sunnah. But using it in general terms may imply that there is no goodness left in the Muslims, and this is contrary to the message of the Qur'an and Hadith.

However, it is not allowed to use this description (Jahiliyyah) in general terms to refer to the current era, because in the current era, some good ones still adhere to the guidance of the Prophet and his Sunnah, and it will continue like that until the Hour begins. Moreover, there is a difference between ignorance in behavior (Jahiliyyah al-Suluk) and ignorance of belief (Jahiliyyat ul Itiqad). The behavior of individuals in a society is not as dangerous as ignorance of belief, which has to do with Kufur. Any individual, society, or institution may be impudent and immoral that doesn't eliminate them from the sphere of faith (Al-Ilory, 2022).

Furthermore, the views of Sayyid Qutb in some of his books are somewhat overzealous in the way in which he explained Islam to people, according to some writers. Perhaps his excuse for doing so may be due to his style of writing, which is a literary style. In relation to some matters of fiqh (jurisprudence), such as when he spoke about workers in his book al-'Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah (Social Justice), he went ahead to write about Tawheed, and with phrases all of which are strongly worded and instill in the hearts of believers confidence in their religion and faith. In that sense, he did dawah renew (Islamic propagation) of Islam in the hearts of the youth. Even if many scholars felt that Qutb said some things which specify that he did not have the time to examine thoroughly some of the fiqh (jurisprudence) issues that he wrote about, in brief, using this word (Jahiliyyah) to describe the modern age in sweeping terms is evidence to some element of exaggeration which leads to undermining the group that is still prevailing and adhering to the truth (Jaafar, H., 21).

Hence, it is in the case of Jahiliyyah in society that some scholars call for Jihad as social reform. Jihad in Arabic simply means: “struggle” or

“effort” in a specific cause or a meritorious struggle or effort on something. The exact meaning of the term “jihad” in Islam depends on context; it has often been erroneously translated in the West as “holy war.” Jihad, particularly in the Islamic religion and ethical realm, primarily refers to the human struggle to promote what is right and to prevent what is wrong (Sayyid Qutb, 1995).

It is in line of this meaning that Ash-Sharawi remarked:

"إذن حركة الحياة كلما جهاب وإباك أن تقصر فكرة الجهاد عندك على
ساحة المعركة، ولكن أعدّ نفسك للمعركة؛ إنك إن أعددت نفسك جيداً
وعلم خصمك إنك أعددت له، ربما امتسع غن أن يحاربك. والذي يمنع
المالم الآن من معركة ساخنة تدمره هو الخوف من قبل الكتل المتوازنة لأن
كل دولة تعد نفسها للحرب".¹²⁰

In the Qur’ān, jihad is a term with multiple meanings. There is an internal dimension of jihad termed *ṣabr*, which refers to the practice of “patient forbearance” by Muslims in the face of life’s vicissitudes and toward those who wish them harm. There is also a verbal and discursive struggle against those who reject the message of Islam. This is known as “Jihad ul-Hujah” (Jihad of argument) according to Ash-Sharawi. And lastly, a new dimension of jihad emerged, which is fighting in self-defense against the aggression of the Meccan persecutors, termed *qitāl*. In the later literature-comprising book of Hadith, different mystical commentaries on the Qur’ān; and more general mystical and edifying writings, these two main dimensions of jihad, *ṣabr* and *qitāl*, were renamed *jihād al-nafs* (the internal, spiritual struggle against the lower self) and *jihād al-sayf* (the physical combat with the sword), respectively. They were also respectively described as *al-jihād al-akbar* (the greater jihad) and *al-jihād al-asghar* (the lesser jihad) (Amit, 2017).

Hence, military jihad in Islam could be proclaimed only by the legitimate leader of the Muslim polity, usually the caliph. Furthermore, the jurists forbade attacks on civilians and destruction of property, according to the statements of the Prophet Muhammad (Amit, 2017).

Wars against non-Muslims, as recorded through the pages of history books, were motivated by political and secular concerns and termed jihads to grant their actors religious legitimacy.

Similarly, in modern days, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Muslims in the North/ South Sahara of Africa, where religiopolitical conquests were seen as jihads, most notably the jihad of Usman dan Fodio, which established the Sokoto caliphate (1804) in what is now northern Nigeria.¹²² In parallel to this, the Afghan wars of the late 20th and early 21st centuries were also perceived by many participants as jihads, first against the Soviet Union and Afghanistan's Marxist government and later against the United States. During and since that time, Islamist extremists have utilized the rubric of jihad to justify violent attacks against Muslims and non-Muslims whom they accuse of apostasy (Al-Ilory, 2022).

In contrast to these, several modern and contemporary Muslim thinkers insist on a holistic reading of the Qur'ān, assigning great importance to the Qur'ān's restriction of military activity to self-defense in response to external aggression. This reading further leads them to discount many classical rulings on warfare by pre-modern Muslim jurists as historically contingent and inapplicable in the modern period (Amit, 2017).

Conclusion

Tafsīr Asharawi observes the classical methods of interpretation of the Quran based on primary textual sources of the Quran, Hadith, and other secondary approaches. Sharawi's extensive approach of thoughtful skills demonstrates his competent mastery and understanding of the sources and intent of shariah evidence and its implications. This study found that the concept of Takfir and Jihad are some of the issues Imam Sharawi explicates in his work as they affect the religious and socio-political realities of contemporary society. The study demonstrates the sect tendencies and implications in the interpretation of the Takfir and Jihad. Although the interpretation of the concept of Takfir and Jihad among Nigerian scholars has generated tensions in recent times, nevertheless, the study found that the contributions of Imam Sharawi to the understanding of the subject matter and its implications, as inherent in his work, should be an applicable ethos for sustainable peaceful co-existence among Muslims and others. The study suggests the need for further research into the methods of teaching and propagating the methods of Sharawi's exegetical interpretation of various religious, social, and political issues in Nigeria.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no competing interests, such as financial or personal relationships, regarding the writing of this article.

Authors' Contributions

The author designed the research, gathered the literature, analysed the information, and wrote the article.

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