

## The Transformation of Tribal Fanaticism: An Analysis of the Prophet's Hadith Response to the Practice of *'Ashabiyah* in the Jahiliyyah Era

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### Abstract:

Tribal fanaticism or *'ashabiyah* is a fundamental problem that has taken root in the social order of Arab society during the Jahiliyyah era. This phenomenon not only created division, but also gave rise to various forms of detrimental social discrimination. In addressing this issue, Islam emerged by offering transformative solutions through the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad. This study has several main objectives. *First*, to analyze in depth how the patterns of tribal fanaticism were formed within the social structure of pre-Islamic Arab society, as well as the impacts it produced. *Second*, to examine the responses and transformative approaches contained in the prophetic hadiths in overcoming this issue. *Third*, to identify various challenges in the effort to contextualize these hadiths within contemporary realities. The methodology applied in this study is library research, which involves collecting data from various comprehensive literature sources. These sources include hadith commentaries, reference books, scientific journals, academic articles, and various other written sources relevant to the research topic. The material object that becomes the focus of the study is the hadiths that specifically discuss tribal fanaticism. This research involves an in-depth examination of classical and contemporary literature on *'ashabiyah*, including textual and contextual analyses of the related hadiths. Through this approach, it is found that Islam offers a fundamental transformation from tribal fanaticism toward universal brotherhood based on faith (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*). The prophetic hadiths not only criticize the practice of *'ashabiyah*, but also provide ethical and social foundations for building a more inclusive and just society. This study contributes to expanding the understanding of Islamic solutions to tribal fanaticism and its relevance to contemporary social challenges.

**Keywords:** Tribal Fanaticism, Prophetic Hadiths, Social Transformation, Era

### Abstrak:

Fanatisme suku atau *'ashabiyah* merupakan masalah mendasar yang telah mengakar dalam tatanan sosial masyarakat Arab pada era Jahiliyyah. Fenomena ini tidak hanya menimbulkan perpecahan, tetapi juga melahirkan berbagai bentuk diskriminasi sosial yang merugikan. Dalam menangani masalah ini, Islam muncul dengan menawarkan solusi transformatif melalui hadis-hadis Nabi Muhammad. Penelitian ini memiliki beberapa tujuan utama. *Pertama*, menganalisis secara mendalam bagaimana pola fanatisme suku terbentuk dalam struktur sosial masyarakat Arab pra-Islam, serta dampak yang dihasilkannya. *Kedua*, mengkaji respons dan pendekatan transformatif yang terkandung dalam hadis-hadis Nabi dalam mengatasi masalah ini. *Ketiga*, mengidentifikasi berbagai tantangan dalam upaya mengkontekstualisasikan hadis-hadis tersebut dalam realitas kontemporer. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian perpustakaan, yang melibatkan pengumpulan data dari berbagai sumber literatur komprehensif. Sumber-sumber tersebut

meliputi tafsir hadis, buku referensi, jurnal ilmiah, artikel akademik, dan berbagai sumber tertulis lain yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Objek material yang menjadi fokus penelitian adalah hadis-hadis yang secara khusus membahas fanatisme suku. Penelitian ini melibatkan analisis mendalam terhadap literatur klasik dan kontemporer tentang *'ashabiyah*, termasuk analisis teks dan konteks hadis-hadis terkait. Melalui pendekatan ini, ditemukan bahwa Islam menawarkan transformasi fundamental dari fanatisme suku menuju persaudaraan universal berdasarkan iman (*ukhrawah Islamiyah*). Hadits-hadits nabawi tidak hanya mengkritik praktik *'ashabiyah*, tetapi juga menyediakan landasan etis dan sosial untuk membangun masyarakat yang lebih inklusif dan adil. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam memperluas pemahaman tentang solusi Islam terhadap fanatisme suku dan relevansinya terhadap tantangan sosial kontemporer.

**Kata kunci:** Fanatisme Suku, Hadis Nabi, Transformasi Sosial, Era

## Introduction

In the life of contemporary Muslims, the phenomenon of group fanaticism or *'ashabiyah* is still evidently present in various aspects, whether social, religious, or political.<sup>1</sup> On social media, for instance, polarization frequently emerges based on sentiments of particular groups, organizations, or sects, in which truth is often overshadowed by blind loyalty to one's own group.<sup>2</sup> In the political sphere, the practice of primordialism and tribalism continues to influence electoral dynamics in various Muslim-majority countries, where considerations of tribal affiliation and familial ties are sometimes prioritized over capability and integrity.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, in the religious realm, sectarian and doctrinal fanaticism often triggers social tensions, in which differences of opinion are no longer responded to maturely, but are instead confronted with exclusive and intolerant attitudes.<sup>4</sup>

Several negative impacts of the increasing use of social media have also affected the religious sphere, one of which is the strengthening of intolerance. This phenomenon is clearly noticeable in Indonesia, where the digital space is frequently filled with various posts highlighting sensitive issues surrounding religion and discrimination against minority groups.<sup>5</sup> Such content reflects fanaticism and the unwillingness to accept religious differences. On the one hand, social media enables rapid and direct global interaction, yet on

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<sup>1</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Cass R. Sunstein, *Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Greg Fealy and Sally White, "Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia," *ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute* (2008).

the other hand, these platforms are often misused as channels for disseminating intolerant ideologies and expressing radical views.<sup>6</sup>

Some arguments suggesting that tribal fanaticism was deeply rooted during the Jahiliyyah era—which underlies the discussion in this introduction—include the incident in which Abu Jahl and several Quraysh leaders, including Al-Akhnas bin Syuraiq and Abu Sufyan, secretly listened to the recitation of the Qur'an by the Prophet Muhammad for three consecutive nights without his knowledge. When Al-Akhnas asked Abu Jahl for his opinion about what he had heard, Abu Jahl expressed an attitude that reflected the profound tribal fanaticism within himself. He stated that the rivalry between his clan and Banu Abd Manaf had long endured in matters of honor, ranging from providing food to various other forms of generosity. However, when both had become equal in prestige, Banu Abd Manaf claimed to possess a prophet who received revelation from the heavens.

Although the Qur'an had touched their souls and left a profound impression, the deep-rooted tribal fanaticism compelled Abu Jahl and other Quraysh leaders to unanimously reject the truth and never believe in the Rasulullah.<sup>7</sup> The conversion of Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib in the sixth year of the Prophethood was initially motivated by family solidarity (*'ashabiyah nasab*). This event began when Abu Jahl insulted the Prophet Muhammad near the hill of Safa, which was witnessed by a female servant belonging to 'Abdullah ibn Jud'an. When Hamzah, who had just returned from hunting, heard of the insult from the servant, he became extremely angered and immediately confronted Abu Jahl in the mosque. Hamzah declared his Islam and struck Abu Jahl with his bow, causing severe injury. Although Banu Makhzum intended to defend Abu Jahl, he prevented them by admitting his fault. This incident became a turning point in the Islamic mission in Mecca, when the Quraysh began to reduce their harassment of the Rasulullah because a strong defender had emerged.

What is interesting is that although it was initially driven by family-based *'ashabiyah*, Hamzah's defense later transformed into sincere belief in Allah and His Messenger, until he became a devoted defender of Islam and earned the title *Sayyid Ash-Shuhada*, the Leader of the Martyrs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> R. P. D. Lesmana dan M. Syafiq, "Fanatisme Agama dan Intoleransi pada Pengguna Media Sosial," *Character: Jurnal Penelitian Psikologi* 9, no. 3 (2022): 36–49.

<sup>7</sup> M. Al-Saqqa, I. Al-Abyari, dan A. H. Shalabi, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah li-Ibn Hisham* (Kairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1955).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

The strong influence of kinship and blood ties was not only reflected in Hamzah's conversion to Islam, but was also evident in the protection provided by Abu Talib for the Messenger of Allah, in which he mobilized Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib to protect the Prophet Muhammad, even though he himself did not embrace Islam. The influence of this tribal system became even more apparent during the boycott of Banu Hashim, when the Quraysh decided to boycott all members of Banu Hashim, whether Muslim or unbeliever, by agreeing not to engage in any form of reconciliation and refusing to show compassion until Banu Hashim handed over Muhammad to be killed. For three years, Banu Hashim were confined in the valley of Abu Talib (*Shi'b Abi Talib*), demonstrating how powerful the influence of tribal traditions was in Arab society, where even in the face of hostility, tribal affiliation remained a determining factor in their attitudes and actions.<sup>9</sup>

Islam emerged as a revolutionary value system, carrying a mission of fundamental social transformation. Islamic teachings systematically abolished various forms of social discrimination deeply rooted in the traditions of Jahiliyyah. Through the verses of the Qur'an and the prophetic hadiths, Islam constructed a new paradigm that emphasized human equality, eliminated social hierarchies based on tribal affiliation, and elevated the dignity of marginalized groups, including slaves. Several previous studies have discussed the theme of fanaticism, such as the work of Ilyas, Muhammad, Nurlia Putri Darani, and Saila Salsabila, who examined "The Fanaticism in the Hadith Perspective: A Case Study on Fanaticism among Football Supporters" in *Integritas Terbuka: Peace and Interfaith Studies* 2.2 (2023): 139–148.<sup>10</sup> In addition, research by Qodriyah, Lailatul examined "The Implementation of Hadith on *Tashabbuh* in Responding to the Phenomenon of K-Pop Fans' Fanaticism in Indonesia," from the State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya (2019).<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Okta Pian together with Hedhri Nadhiran analyzed "The Understanding of the Hadith on *Israf* and Its Correlation with Netizen Fanaticism," published in *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam* 5.3 (2024): 1105–

<sup>9</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Mukhtaṣar Sirat al-Rasul* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Da'wah and Guidance, 1418 H).

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Ilyas, Muhammad, Nurlia Putri Darani, and Saila Salsabila, "The Fanaticism in the Hadith Perspective: A Case Study on Fanaticism among Football Supporters," *Integritas Terbuka: Peace and Interfaith Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 139–148.

<sup>11</sup> Lailatul Qodriyah, "The Implementation of Hadith on *Tashabbuh* in Responding to the Phenomenon of K-Pop Fans' Fanaticism in Indonesia" (Undergraduate thesis, State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019).

1116.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Al Wasim, Arif examined “Madhhab Fanaticism and Its Implications on Qur’anic Interpretation,” published in *Syariati: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur’an dan Hukum* 4.01 (2018): 13–22.<sup>13</sup> Lastly, Ayma, Syahratul and Abdul Wahid Haddade studied “Sectarian Fanaticism among the Muslim Community in Makassar City,” published in *Shautuna: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Perbandingan Mazhab* (2023): 717–735, along with other relevant studies.<sup>14</sup>

After reviewing various literature and academic research, it reveals a significant gap in the studies concerning tribal fanaticism in pre-Islamic Arab society and the prophetic response to it. There has been no research that specifically and comprehensively analyzes how the hadiths of the Prophet responded to and transformed the deeply rooted phenomenon of tribal fanaticism within that society.

## Results and Discussion

### Tribal Fanaticism in Pre-Islamic Arab Society

*‘ashabiyah* linguistically (etymologically) means defense or protection. It is like when people say, “they have *‘ashabiyah* against another group,” which means they gather to confront another group. According to Al-Azhari in *Tahdzib Al-Lughah*: *Ashabiyyah* is when a person calls for defending his group and uniting with them, whether they are in a position of wrongdoing or being wronged.<sup>15</sup> Another definition refers to excessive fanaticism in defending one’s own group, even when that group is in the wrong or unjust.<sup>16</sup>

Tribal fanaticism (*‘ashabiyah qabiliyyah*) is a form of nationalism-based fanaticism that is strongly condemned in Islam. This attitude encompasses various forms of arrogance based on primordial aspects, such as boasting about lineage or social status, belittling the lineage of others, glorifying birthplace and origin, and taking pride in race, skin color, tribe, and territorial region. All such forms of fanaticism fall under the category of *Jahiliyyah* arrogance (*hamiyyah al-jahiliyyah*), which is severely condemned because it contradicts the principles of

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<sup>12</sup> Okta Pian and Hedhri Nadhiran, “The Understanding of the Hadith on Israf and Its Correlation with Netizen Fanaticism,” *Ta’wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an, Tafsir dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 3 (2024): 1105–1116.

<sup>13</sup> Arif Al Wasim, “Madhhab Fanaticism and Its Implications on Qur’anic Interpretation,” *Syariati: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur’an dan Hukum* 4, no. 1 (2018): 13–22.

<sup>14</sup> Syahratul Ayma and Abdul Wahid Haddade, “Sectarian Fanaticism among the Muslim Community in Makassar City,” *Shautuna: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Perbandingan Mazhab* (2023): 717–735.

<sup>15</sup> Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Harawi, *Tahdzib al-Lughah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs–Kuwait, *Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah* (Kuwait: Dar al-Salasil dan Dar al-Safwah, 1404–1427 H).

egalitarianism and universal brotherhood taught by Islam, in which a person's virtue is not measured by such external factors, but rather by piety and righteous deeds.<sup>17</sup>

This discussion begins with a hadith of the Prophet narrated by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (HR. Ahmad 7224):

حَدَّثَنَا رُبَيْعُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ يَعْنِي ابْنَ إِسْحَقَ عَنْ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ثَلَاثٌ مِنْ عَمَلٍ أَهْلِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُهُنَّ أَهْلُ الْإِسْلَامِ النَّيَاحَةُ وَالْإِسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالْأَنْوَاءِ وَكَذَا قُلْتُ لِسَعِيدٍ وَمَا هُوَ قَالَ دَعَا الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَا آلَ فُلَانٍ يَا آلَ فُلَانٍ يَا آلَ فُلَانٍ

*Narrated by Rib'i ibn Ibrahim, from Abdurrahman, namely Ibn Ishaq, from Sa'id, from Abu Hurairah, that the Rasulullah said: "Three practices from the deeds of Jahiliyyah that Muslims still continue: lamenting the dead, and seeking rain through the stars." I said this to Sa'id, then he asked, "What is the third?" It was answered, "The call of Jahiliyyah; O descendants of so-and-so, O descendants of so-and-so, O descendants of so-and-so."*<sup>18</sup>

The strong association between tribal fanaticism (*ashabiyah*) and the period of Jahiliyyah should be sufficient reason for human beings to abandon and avoid such an attitude. Nevertheless, in reality this kind of fanaticism still remains rooted in human nature, and this confirms the truth conveyed in the hadith.<sup>19</sup>

The condition of Arab society before the Prophethood of Muhammad, before the revelation of the Qur'an, and before the emergence of the light of Islam, was extremely concerning. They lived in division and hostility, where hatred, conflict, and vengeance colored their social life. In such a social structure, the strong oppressed the weak, while the rich enslaved the poor. Conflicts and wars frequently occurred over trivial matters, such as disputes over water for goats and camels, or even due to the killing of a dog. Such wars could last for years, as in the War of Dahis and Ghabra, or in the wars between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj.<sup>20</sup>

When Islamic teachings emerged, the religion succeeded in uniting human hearts, harmonizing their speech, and aligning their ranks, so that by the grace of Allah SWT they became true brothers. This is in accordance with the words of Allah in the Qur'an: *"It is He (Allah) who united their hearts. If you had spent all that is on earth, you could not have united their hearts,*

<sup>17</sup> Šālih ibn Ibrāhīm al-Lahim, *Maraqī al-'Izzah wa Muqanwīmat al-Sa'adah* (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> Khālīd ibn 'Alī al-Juraisi, *Al-'Ashabiyyah al-Qabaliyyah min al-Manẓur al-Islami: al-Nās Kulluhum Banū Adam wa Adam min Turāb* (Riyadh: Supreme Council of Scholars and Permanent Committee for Fatwa, t.t.).

<sup>20</sup> Šālih ibn Ibrāhīm al-Lahim, *Maraqī al-'Izzah wa Muqanwīmat al-Sa'adah* (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2021).



*but Allah united their hearts. Indeed, He is the Almighty, the All-Wise*” (QS. Al-Anfal: 63). Allah SWT also says: “*And hold firmly to the rope (religion) of Allah all together, and do not be divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you when you were enemies (during the Jahiliyyah era), then Allah united your hearts, and you became, by His favor, brothers*” (QS. Ali Imran: 103).

Then, in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim in his *Sahih*, number 934:

أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُوهُنَّ: الْفَخْرُ فِي الْأَحْسَابِ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ، وَالْاِسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ، وَالنِّيَاحَةُ. وَقَالَ: النَّائِحَةُ إِذَا لَمْ تَتُبْ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهَا، تُقَامُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَعَلَيْهَا سِرْبَالٌ مِنْ قَطْرَانٍ وَدِرْعٌ مِنْ جَرَبٍ

*The Prophet said: “There are four practices from the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah) that remain among my people and they do not abandon them: boasting of social status, insulting one’s lineage, seeking rain by means of the stars, and the practice of lamentation.” He also said: “A woman who laments, if she does not repent before her death, will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment wearing a garment of molten pitch and an armor of scabs.”*

Boasting (*al-fakhr*) in the context of *hasab* (prestige) carries two understandings: first, pride in personal achievements such as bravery and eloquence; second, boasting of the achievements of one’s ancestors. Islam emphasizes that a person’s honor rests on three things: religion, personal achievement (*hasab*), and character—not on pride in ancestral achievements as practiced in the Jahiliyyah society. Arrogance that elevates oneself by belittling others is strictly prohibited in Islam.<sup>21</sup>

The practice of tribal fanaticism was deeply rooted during the Jahiliyyah, and even after the coming of Islam some traces of it still appeared among the Companions, as illustrated in the hadith recorded by Imam Muslim no. 1661:

عَنْ الْمَعْرُورِ بْنِ سُوَيْدٍ قَالَ مَرَرْنَا بِأَبِي ذَرٍّ بِالرَّبَذَةِ وَعَلَيْهِ بُزْدٌ وَعَلَى غُلَامِهِ مِثْلُهُ فَقُلْنَا يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ لَوْ جَمَعْتَ بَيْنَهُمَا كَانَتْ حُلَّةً فَقَالَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ رَجُلٍ مِنْ إِخْوَانِي كَلَامٌ وَكَانَتْ أُمُّهُ أَعْجَمِيَّةً فَعَبَّرْتُهُ بِأُمِّهِ فَشَكَانِي إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَقِيتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ إِنَّكَ أَمَرُؤُ فِيكَ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ

*From al-Ma‘rur ibn Suwayd, he said: “We once passed by Abu Dharr in the region of al-Rabadzah. He was wearing a cloak, and his servant was wearing the same. We said, ‘O Abu Dharr, if you combined the two cloaks, it would make a fine garment.’ Abu Dharr replied: ‘There was once a dispute between me and one of my brothers (in faith). His mother was a non-Arab, so I insulted him because of his mother. He then reported me to the Prophet Muhammad. When I met*

<sup>21</sup> Abū al-‘Ula Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mubarakfuri, *Mir’at al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*, vol. 5 (India: Department of Scientific Research, Da‘wah and Ifta’ – The Salafi University, 1984).

*the Prophet Muhammad, he said, 'O Abu Dharr, indeed there remains in you a characteristic of Jahiliyyah.'*<sup>22</sup>

This hadith clearly illustrates how deeply entrenched tribal fanaticism and pride in lineage were in Arab society during the Jahiliyyah. Abu Dharr's attitude towards his servant reflects how this mindset persisted, even in a Companion renowned for his piety. This reflects the dismantling of primordial barriers—there is no difference between Arabs, Persians, Romans, or others in the sight of Islam. As depicted in the hadith in *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn*, no. 6541:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حَطَّ الْخَنْدَقَ عَامَ حَرْبِ الْأَحْزَابِ حَتَّى بَلَغَ الْمَذَاجِجَ، فَقَطَعَ لِكُلِّ عَشْرَةٍ أَرْبَعِينَ ذِرَاعًا فَأَخْتَجَّ الْمُهَاجِرُونَ سَلْمَانَ مِنَّا، وَقَالَتِ الْأَنْصَارُ: سَلْمَانُ مِنَّا، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «سَلْمَانُ مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ».

*When the Rasulallah Muhammad was digging the trench (Khandaq) during the Battle of the Confederates and reached the area of al-Madhabij, he assigned forty cubits to every group of ten. The Muhajirun claimed: "Salman is one of us." The Ansar also claimed: "Salman is one of us." The Rasulallah Muhammad responded: "Salman is one of us, the People of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt)."*<sup>23</sup>

This hadith powerfully demonstrates how the Prophet Muhammad actively dismantled tribal fanaticism (*a'sabiyyah*) that was deeply rooted in Arab society during the period of *Jahiliyyah*. Lineage, ethnic origin, and tribal affiliation functioned as primary markers of honor and social hierarchy. Even after the advent of Islam, traces of this mindset could still surface, as reflected in the attitude of some Companions, including figures noted for their piety such as Abu Dharr. This indicates that the eradication of primordial loyalties was not instantaneous but required continuous moral and spiritual reform.

The Prophet's response in the incident involving Salman al-Farisi during the Battle of the Confederates illustrates a decisive ethical intervention. When both the Muhajirun and the Ansar attempted to claim Salman based on group affiliation, the Prophet rejected tribal categorization altogether and elevated Salman beyond ethnic or migratory identities by declaring, "Salman is one of us, the People of the Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*)."

This statement does not merely honor Salman personally; rather, it establishes a foundational Islamic

<sup>22</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, t.t.).

<sup>23</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥakim al-Naysaburi, *Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥiḥayn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990).



principle that human dignity and spiritual worth are not determined by race, lineage, or ethnicity, but by faith, loyalty, and moral contribution.

By placing Salman—a Persian and former outsider—within the symbolic core of the Prophet’s household, Islam decisively subverted Arab ethnocentrism and reconfigured social identity around spiritual kinship instead of blood ties. The hadith thus serves as a concrete example of Islam’s universalist ethos, affirming that Arabs, Persians, Romans, and others stand equally before God. In this sense, the Prophet’s declaration functions as a radical critique of *‘aṣabiyyah*, transforming the basis of social belonging from primordial identity to shared ethical and religious commitment.

Consequently, this prophetic model remains highly relevant for contemporary Muslim societies facing sectarianism, ethnic exclusivism, and identity-based polarization. The hadith underscores that Islam’s moral vision seeks not merely to regulate religious practice but to reconstruct social relations on the foundations of justice, equality, and human dignity.

### The Hadith’s Response to Fanaticism

Fanaticism, which often leads to intolerance and conflict, poses significant challenges in religious life. In this context, the Prophet’s hadiths offer guidance and principles that promote moderation, mutual respect, and openness. The following analysis explores various hadiths to demonstrate how the Prophet dealt with tribal fanaticism prevalent in the Jahiliyyah era.

حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ يَعْنِي ابْنَ حَازِمٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غَيْلَانُ بْنُ جَرِيرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي قَيْسٍ بْنِ رِيَّاحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: «مَنْ خَرَجَ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ، وَفَارَقَ الْجُمَاعَةَ فَمَاتَ، مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً، وَمَنْ قَاتَلَ تَحْتَ رَايَةٍ عِمِّيَّةٍ يَغْضِبُ لِعَصَبَةٍ، أَوْ يَدْعُو إِلَى عَصَبَةٍ، أَوْ يَنْصُرُ عَصَبَةً، فَقُتِلَ، فَقَتْلُهُ جَاهِلِيَّةٌ، وَمَنْ خَرَجَ عَلَى أُمَّتِي، يَضْرِبُ بَرَّهَا وَفَاجِرَهَا، وَلَا يَتَحَاشَى مِنْ مُؤْمِنِهَا، وَلَا يَفِي لِذِي عَهْدٍ عَهْدَهُ، فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَلَسْتُ مِنْهُ

*Shayban ibn Farrukh narrated to us, Jarir—meaning Ibn Hizam—narrated to us, Ghailan ibn Jarir narrated to us, from Abu Qays ibn Riah, from Abu Hurayrah, that the Rasulullah Muhammad said: “Whoever breaks away from obedience and separates himself from the community, then dies in that state, his death is the death of Jahiliyyah. And whoever fights under a banner whose direction is unclear, becoming angry for the sake of a group, or calling towards a group, or supporting a group, and is then killed, then his killing is the killing of Jahiliyyah. And whoever rebels against my community, attacking both the righteous and the wicked among them, making no distinction*

*between a believer and others, and does not keep his covenant with those who have a covenant, then he is not from me and I am not from him.” (Muslim)*

Imam al-Nawawi, in his commentary on Sahih Muslim, explains the meaning of “Whoever dies in a state of blind fanaticism (‘ammiyyah)” mentioned in the hadith as referring to groups who fight for an unclear purpose, driven by excessive and baseless partisanship towards misguided causes. He further elaborates that the expression “becoming angry for the sake of fanaticism, calling towards fanaticism, or supporting fanaticism” in the context of the hadith describes a form of tribal fanaticism that is not guided by sound judgement, but rather compelled by base desires and temporary interests, whether personal or communal.<sup>24</sup>

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا زِيَادُ بْنُ الرَّيِّعِ الْيَحْمِدِيُّ، عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ كَثِيرٍ الشَّامِيِّ، عَنْ امْرَأَةٍ مِنْهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهَا فُسَيْلَةُ، قَالَتْ: سَمِعْتُ أَبِي يَقُولُ، سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَمِنْ الْعَصِيَّةِ أَنْ يُحِبَّ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ؟ قَالَ: «لَا، وَلَكِنْ مِنَ الْعَصِيَّةِ أَنْ يُعِينَ الرَّجُلُ قَوْمَهُ عَلَى الظُّلْمِ».

*Abu Baker ibn Abi Shaybah narrated to us, he said: Ziyad ibn al-Rabi' al-Yahmudi narrated to us, from 'Abbad ibn Kathir al-Shami, from a woman among them named Fusaylah. She said: 'I heard my father say: I asked the Prophet Muhammad and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, is it considered fanaticism if a man loves his own people?' He replied: 'No. What constitutes fanaticism is when a man helps his people in wrongdoing.'” (Ibn Majah)<sup>25</sup>*

Abu Dawud also mentioned the hadith from Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' who asked the Prophet Muhammad about ‘asabiyyah (fanaticism). The Prophet ﷺ explained that fanaticism is when a person helps his people in committing injustice, supporting them even when they are in the wrong. Such an act resembles defending one’s tribe without right, like a camel that struggles to rise from its tail. In essence, one should help the oppressed, whereas the oppressor must be restrained from wrongdoing, not supported in their injustice.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Yahyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Al-Minhaj: Sharh Sahih Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj*, vol. 1–9 (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1392 H).

<sup>25</sup> Muḥammad ibn Yazid Ibn Majah al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, ed. Muḥammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi (Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, t.t.).

<sup>26</sup> 'Abd al-Muhsin ibn Ḥamad al-'Abbad, *Al-Kitab: Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud*, accessed via the Islamic Network website.

عَنْ أَبِي نَضْرَةَ، حَدَّثَنِي مَنْ سَمِعَ خُطْبَةَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي وَسْطِ أَيَّامِ التَّشْرِيقِ فَقَالَ: «يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّ آبَاءَكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ، وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا أَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ، وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ، إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى أَبْلَغْتُ» ، قَالُوا: بَلَّغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَيُّ يَوْمٍ هَذَا؟» ، قَالُوا: يَوْمٌ حَرَامٌ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَيُّ شَهْرٍ هَذَا؟» ، قَالُوا: شَهْرٌ حَرَامٌ، قَالَ: ثُمَّ قَالَ: «أَيُّ بَلَدٍ هَذَا؟» ، قَالُوا بَلَدٌ حَرَامٌ، قَالَ: «فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ بَيْنَكُمْ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ» . قَالَ: وَلَا أَدْرِي قَالَ: أَوْ أَعْرَاضَكُمْ، أَمْ لَا . كَحَزْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا أَبْلَغْتُ ، قَالُوا: بَلَّغَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: «لِيُبَلِّغَ الشَّاهِدُ الْعَائِبَ» .

*From Abu Nadr, from a man who heard the sermon of the Rasulullah Muhammad during the middle days of Tasbriq. He said: "O people! Your Lord is One and your father is one. Surely there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab; nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by piety. Have I delivered (the message)?" They replied: "Yes, the Rasulullah has delivered (it)." Then he said: "What day is this?" They replied: "A sacred day." He said: "What month is this?" They replied: "A sacred month." He asked: "What land is this?" They replied: "A sacred land." He then said: "Indeed Allah has made your blood and your property sacred among you"—and I (Abu Nadr) am not certain whether he also said 'and your honor'—"just as this day, this month, and this land are sacred. Have I delivered?" They replied: "Yes, the Rasulullah has delivered." He said: "Let those who are present convey it to those who are absent."<sup>27</sup>*

In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ emphasizes that all human beings are equal, regardless of ethnicity, race, or tribal background. No one is superior to another. The only factor that distinguishes them before Allah is piety.

Hadith	Status	Description
First	Sahih	Indicates a general prohibition of fanaticism
Second	Da'if	Provides the boundaries of the prohibited form of fanaticism
Third	Sahih	Directs toward the objective of piety

### Contextualization of the Hadiths with Contemporary Reality

In Indonesia, group fanaticism or *'ashabiyah* has undergone a transformation from traditional tribalism into modern forms that are equally rigid. Several manifestations can be observed as follows:

<sup>27</sup> Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, 'Adil Murshid, et al. (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Risalah, 2001).

*First*, Identity Politics Fanaticism: The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election became an obvious example of how primordial sentiments in the form of identity politics were massively utilized. Black campaigns based on ethnic and religious issues were used to mobilize the masses and to delegitimize political opponents. *Second*, Religious Organization Fanaticism: Excessive loyalty toward certain Islamic organizations often gives rise to attitudes of ta‘asshub (fanaticism). For instance, the phenomenon of mutual accusations of heresy or disbelief between different groups, or the assumption that only their own group is correct in practicing religion. *Third*, Sectarian Fanaticism: The widespread presence of certain splinter groups that reject mainstream religious authority while claiming exclusive truth for their own group, such as the Wahhabi group and others.

It is not surprising that tribalism exists or spreads in many Muslim societies, especially among Arab societies, and particularly in the Arabian Peninsula, where Arabism originated and was born. The Rasulullah ﷺ informed us about this fourteen centuries ago. He conveyed that four characteristics of the Arab tribal customs of the pre-Islamic era would remain among his community and would not be abandoned, namely: boasting about lineage and attacking lineage. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Four traits among my ummah are from the affairs of Jahiliyyah; they do not abandon them: boasting about lineage, slandering lineage, seeking rain from the stars, and wailing.”*<sup>28</sup>

Tribal fanaticism is not a problem nor a source of disgrace for a person if it is merely preserved to maintain lineage and ancestry. However, the mistake lies in considering it as a criterion that distinguishes one human being from another, or using it as a reason for arrogance and pride over others, or discriminating among the servants of Allah and classifying them. (Ahmad (11000), al-Tirmidhi (3148) and (3615), and Ibn Majah (4308), from Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri).

Tribalism remains a common phenomenon in various Muslim societies, particularly among the Arabs, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, which is the birthplace of Arabism. The Rasulullah ﷺ has delivered a warning about this since fourteen centuries ago. He emphasized that there are four characteristics from the era of Jahiliyyah that will continue to exist among Muslims and are difficult to abandon. One of them is pride over lineage and insulting the lineage of others. It is explained in a hadith, “The Prophet ﷺ said that there are

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<sup>28</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, t.t.).

four matters from the Jahiliyyah era that are still upheld by his community, namely boasting about lineage, attacking lineage, believing in the influence of stars in bringing rain, and excessive wailing.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, even though tribal fanaticism is a persistent characteristic of the Muslim community, as the Prophet ﷺ declared, its persistence does not imply that it is an acceptable matter, nor an unavoidable reality that can be excused for a Muslim who follows or engages in it. This is not the intention of the prophetic hadith, but rather a warning for the Muslim community not to adopt the customs of the Jahiliyyah era and not to be deceived by its false claims. Instead, this hadith stands as a reminder for us to observe how many people today remain influenced by tribal fanaticism at the end of times.

Tribal fanaticism was the very cause of the death of Abu Talib, the uncle of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, in a state of disbelief, although he played a major role in protecting the Rasulullah ﷺ, defending him, and preventing the polytheists from harming him during his lifetime. Abu Talib once expressed in his poetic verses: “Indeed, I know that the religion of Muhammad Is the best of all religions among mankind. If it were not for fear of reproach or blame, You would have seen me openly embracing it.” He also said: “*Indeed, they know that our son is no liar, Before us and we do not heed false words. By Allah, if not for my fear of disgrace That will befall our forefathers in gatherings, We would surely follow him in every matter, From time to time in earnest, not in play.*”

These verses show that Abu Talib actually acknowledged the truth of the message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the superiority of Islam over other religions. However, tribal fanaticism and pride in ancestral tradition became the barrier that prevented him from believing. He feared being censured by his tribe if he abandoned the religion of his ancestors.<sup>30</sup> Hypochondria of pride and the fuel of happiness: Qur’anic verses, commands, benefits, scientific and educational advantages, wisdom, and poetic meaning.)

Imam Ibn Kathir in his work *Al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah* describes how division caused by ‘*asabiyyah*’ harmed Arab society before Islam. Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmu‘ al-Fatawa* discusses the dangers of fanaticism and how Islam teaches unity upon the truth. (Majmu‘ al-Fatawa: 1980, 28 p. 422) (*Al-Bidayah wa an-Nihayah* 3, 65-94). Al-Mawardi in *Adab al-Dunya wa al-Din*

<sup>29</sup> Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, t.t.), 2: 644, no. 934

<sup>30</sup> Ṣāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm al-Lahim, *Maraḥiq al-‘Izzah wa Muqanwimat al-Sa‘adah* (Riyadh: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2021).

explains how blind fanaticism hinders civilizational progress. (*Adab al-Dunya wa al-Din*, 1986M). Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* mentions that fanaticism originates from desires and the lack of correct religious understanding. (*Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, 1096-1102M). Ibn Khaldun in *Muqaddimah* highlights how fanaticism can be a major factor in the collapse of civilizations.<sup>31</sup>

The hadiths above are highly relevant to the current situation in Indonesia. Boasting about one's own group and disparaging others—whether based on religious organizations, sects, or political identity—is essentially *al-fakhr fi al-ansab* (boasting about lineage) in its modern form. And the consequences remain the same: just as in the era of Jahiliyyah, modern fanaticism also gives rise to division, hostility, and prevents objectivity in assessing the truth. Islamic Solutions to Overcome Fanaticism Affirming the Principle of *al-Musawah* (Equality), Islam asserts that all humans are equal before Allah, and what differentiates them is only piety.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

Furthermore, Islam must prioritize *Ukhuwah Islamiyah*. The Rasulullah (peace be upon him) said:

المسلم أخو المسلم لا يظلمه ولا يُسلمه من كان في حاجة أخيه كان الله في حاجته ومن فرّج عن  
مسلم كربة فرّج الله بها عنه كربة من كربة يوم القيامة ومن ستر مسلماً ستره الله يوم القيامة. أخرجه  
البخاري 2442.

“A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim” (HR. al-Bukhari and Muslim).

The brotherhood of faith must transcend all forms of primordial ties. Then, establishing a Culture of Courteous Dialogue. Allah says:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction.”

The phenomenon of group fanaticism in Indonesia proves that the disease of “*ashabiyah*” which was warned by the Prophet fourteen centuries ago remains relevant today.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldun* (Damaskus: Dar Ya‘rub, 2004).



The solution lies in the consistency of practicing the true teachings of Islam, which emphasize unity, tolerance, and prioritizing truth over group loyalty. Thus, the Muslim society in Indonesia can become a concrete example of transformation from a modern *jahiliyyah* society towards the envisioned society of *Ukhuwah Islamiyah*.

## Conclusion

Based on the study of the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it can be concluded that Islam firmly rejects all forms of group fanaticism (*‘ashabiyyah*) that are rooted in primordial bonds, whether tribal, organizational, political, or sectarian. The hadith responses to this phenomenon are comprehensive, including: first, a strict prohibition of blind fanaticism that neglects the principles of truth and justice, as reflected in the hadith stating that those who fight, die, or call upon the basis of *‘ashabiyyah* are not among the followers of the Prophet. Second, a clear distinction between legitimate affection towards one’s group and reprehensible fanaticism, in which what is prohibited is defending a group in falsehood and injustice. Third, an alternative paradigm in the form of universal brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) that is based on piety, not on tribal or group identity. And fourth, the principle of human equality that negates superiority based on ethnic, social, or genealogical background. In the context of Indonesia, the hadiths on *‘ashabiyyah* provide a normative framework for analyzing and responding to the phenomenon of contemporary fanaticism in its various manifestations, while simultaneously offering transformative solutions towards a more inclusive and civilized society.

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