

Ibn Taymiyyah (728H) on the Affair of the Khārijites Being Hidden to Most People

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (728H) said: “Some factions are greater in their opposition to the Messenger than others, and others are more apparent in their opposition [than others]. However, the apparentness [of such opposition] is a relative matter. The opposition of the one who opposes the Sunnah will be clear to the one who knows the Sunnah. In some cases, the opposition of some of them to the Sunnah is apparent to some of the people due to their knowledge of the Sunnah as opposed to others who do not know of [the Sunnah] what those people know. And sometimes the Sunnah in that matter is known to all of the ummah and thus the opposition of the one who opposed it is readily apparent - just as the opposition of the Rāfiḍah [Shī‘ites] to the Sunnah has become apparent to the majority. In the view of the majority, they are opposers to the Sunnah, and thus it is said, ‘Are you a Sunnī or a Rāfiḍī?’ Likewise the **Khārijites**, when they were people of the sword and of fighting, their opposition to the jamā‘ah (those united behind a ruler) became apparent when they would fight against the people, **but as for today, most people do not recognize them.**”

Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt (Aḍwā’ al-Salaf, 1420H) 1/564.

Translated by Abu ‘Iyaad Amjad Rafiq ♦ kharijites.com ♦ @abuiyaadsp
4 Muharram 1438 / 5 October 2016

Notes

The affair of the Khārijites has numerous stages and for most people the first stages are largely hidden. The affair of their leaders and ideologues starts with jealousy, envy and resentment in the hearts with respect to wealth and positions of authority. From here they start looking for the faults of the rulers in matters of competence in management of wealth, authority and rule. They also

cast doubt upon the people of knowledge who hold fast to the Prophetic guidance and enjoining it upon others, because people of knowledge upon the Sunnah are a barrier to their personal goals. Further, through their perception of what the rulers do in matters of wealth and authority, they lay down the ideological foundation of rulership and judgement (ḥākimiyyah) being the most important, special and crucial element of Tawḥīd, singling it out above all else. From here, they justify takfīr wherein they promote what are not sins to be sins and what are sins and oppression to be disbelief and shirk. Once, disbelief has been attributed to the ruling authorities, it is from the foundations of the Khārijites that the banner of the rulers is the banner of the ruled and thus the judgement of takfīr starts to apply to government institutions and bodies, eventually filtering down to the entire society – anyone who does not subscribe to them and their views. Once entire nations and societies are judged as apostates, the Khārijites isolate themselves, they abandon the congregational prayers, and organise themselves in secret, they make permissible stealing and looting from the ‘apostates’ and keep their vision fixed on all the circumstances that will allow them to grow, split and organise as a separate body. They develop resentment and hatred of Muslim societies and are eventually led by Satan, their leader and guide, to justify killing and slaughtering them whilst seeing this as an act of piety and nearness to Allāh. At the top are those motivated by wealth and authority who use the cloak of religion and beautified speech to invite others. They are followed by the young, foolish, ignorant, gullible and naive who are mere footsoldiers and pawns. It is not until they come out as a distinct movement and body that people begin to recognise them for their Khārijite traits. However, this may take many long years if not decades in some instances. In modern history, it took 50 years from the time that the basic doctrines of the Khārijites were expounded by Sayyid Qutb in his writings to the emergence of a distinct and organised body of Khārijites in Syria and Irāq. It was not until their actual emergence that many Muslims – of various sects, backgrounds and orientations – identified them as Khārijites. However, Salafī scholars and those upon the Salafī way had been refuting them and warning against them for decades prior due to their recognition of all the traits and signs of the Khārijite ideology and methodology that are mentioned in the Prophetic traditions and works of the Salaf.