

## Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and the Foundational Principles of the Khārijite Renegades (E): Interpreting the Qur’ān With Opinions

In the various works of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (728H) is a very insightful, detailed and elaborate analysis of the Khārijite doctrine and the underlying reasons for its appearance. One of the traits of the Khārijites is interpreting the Qur’ān with their own opinions.

Ibn Taymiyyah explains this: “Also the Khārijites used to follow the Qur’ān upon the requirements of their own understanding but as for those [the Rāfiḍah Shī’ites], they follow the Infallible Imām [whom they believe in] who has no existence [in reality]. So the reference of the Khārijites is better than the reference of the [Shī’ites].”<sup>1</sup> He also said: “And also, the Khārijites assumed the approach of following the Qur’ān through their opinions and would leave [that from] the Sunnah which they claimed to oppose the Qur’ān. The Rāfiḍah assumed the approach of following the Household of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) and would claim that amongst them is the infallible one to whom nothing of knowledge is hidden, who does not err, neither deliberately, nor forgetfully, nor consciously.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (28/483). The intent here is that in their misguidance the Khārijites still refer to the Qur’ān as their primary source alongside their misunderstanding and misinterpretation and and this as the primary source is better than the claimed infallible imām of the Rāfiḍah. Thus in terms of reference, the Khārijites are in a better position than the Rāfiḍah.

<sup>2</sup> Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (28/491).

## Identification and Transmission of Khārijite Statements

Ibn Taymiyyah also said: “And the various statements of the Khārijites, we have come to know them through what people have transmitted from them, we have not come across any authored work by them as we have come across the works of the Mu‘tazilah, Rāfiḍah, Zaydiyyah, Karrāmiyyah, Ash‘ariyyah, Sālimiyyah, the Four Schools, Ṣāhiriyyah, the various schools of Ahl al-Ḥadīth, Philosophers, Ṣūfis and those like them.”<sup>3</sup>

With respect to this latter statement, the first Khārijites unlike other sects did not have a distinct body of writing within which they outlined their doctrines. Rather, they relied upon their opinions and intellects to interpret the Qur‘ān whenever they met circumstances in which justifications were needed for their activities and in applying judgements upon Muslims within those situations. For that reason, it was difficult to recognise and isolate them until and unless they congregated together in a specific land from where they would plan and organise their operations. This has been the case for a large part of their history. In contrast, all the other sects authored works which clearly outlined their beliefs and thus it was easy for Ahl al-Sunnah to recognise and distinguish them on the basis of their own writings.

During the 1980s and 1990s a large body of literature developed on the back of the basic ideas of Quṭb and Mawdūdī (jāhiliyyah, ḥākimiyyah, imāmah, takfīr), and also with the merging of Jihād

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<sup>3</sup> Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (13/49).

with Takfirī ideology in places like Afghanistan, leading to the crystallisation of the Khārijite ideology and their ideas being organised and committed to written form. When well-known callers who had received such a nurturing from Ikhwānī figureheads began to express some of the doctrines of the Khārijites after the Gulf War (1991) such as takfīr of persistent major sinners, the Salafī scholars recognised this and began to refute these ideas. From them Shaykh Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī and Shaykh Rabīʿ bin Hādī, and they were later followed by Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz bin Bāz and Shaykh al-Abānī. From that time till now, a large body of literature now exists critiquing their doctrines from their main source works. Shaykh Rabīʿ bin Hādī played a tremendous role in refuting the likes of Sayyid Quṭb, Muḥammad Surūr, Abū Aʿlā Mawdūdī and others who were reviving the ideology of the Khārijites in the name of daʿwah and rectification. As it stands, due to the efforts of Salafī scholars in promoting the Salafī creed and methodology through explanations and commentaries upon the books of the Salaf, it is very easy to recognise the Khārijites because their basic ideas, misconceptions, traits and modes of operation are now well known and defined.

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