

Who is a Khārijite and What is His Core Doctrine, and Must it Include Takfīr By Way of Major Sin?



Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-‘Afīfī (d. 1415H) (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) wrote:

“The speech of the scholars about the Khārijites as it concerns the Islāmic sects is about those who revolted against ‘Alī (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu) **on account of the issue of arbitration (taḥkīm)**. As for Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, Mu‘āwiyah and whoever followed them, they were not known by the scholars of the Muslims with this name. **Thereafter the word ‘Khārijite’ was applied to everyone who revolted against a ruler among the rulers of the Muslims whose leadership had been agreed upon by the body [jamā‘ah] in any age among the ages without that ruler having brought clear, open disbelief and for which he [the Khārijite] does not have any proof.** Hence, the first to introduce this innovation into this ummah is the group that revolted against ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib in 39H. The most severe of them in obstinacy and revolt were al-Ash‘at bin Qays, Mas‘ūd bin Fadakī al-Tamīmī, Zayd bin Ḥuṣayn al-Ṭā’ī. That which made called them to [revolt] was the issue of arbitration that is famous in history... alongside [the fact] that they are the ones who commanded him with it and compelled him towards it. Thereafter, they rejected it from him and said, ‘Why have you deferred

judgement to men, judgement belongs to none but Allāh'. Their heads are six: the Azāriqah, Najadāt, Şufriyyah, 'Ājāridah, 'Ibādiyyah and Thā'ālibah and their other sects branch off from them."¹

As a means of defending their Khārijite doctrine, the neo-Khārijites claim that a Khārijite is only the one who makes takfīr by way of major sin. This proves their ignorance of history, their ignorance of the statements of the Salaf, and their ignorance of the development of the Khārijite doctrine which underwent a number of stages: a) the core doctrine of rebelling against the rulers upon alleged grounds of injustice, b) then came the doctrine of takfīr by way of major sin among their factions, but not all of them, c) and also the development of their jurisprudence as to how to deal with Muslims they considered disbelievers and likewise, classification of abodes and so on. Not all factions of the Khārijites made takfīr by way of major sins as one can find documented in the books of heresiography, and this was a later development. We have known this as a tactic of the Khārijites going back to the 1990s, when they, the likes of Abu Qatādah and Abū Ḥamzah would try to avoid being labelled as Khārijites, by saying that "We do not make takfīr of the major sinners", "We do not make generalised takfīr" and so on. However, they were upon the core, central doctrine of the Khārijites. So this is one of their deceptions.

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¹ Mudhakkirat al-Tawḥīd (pp. 68-69).