

# Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah on the Prophetic Command to Fight and Kill the Khārijites Yet Show Patience With the Sinners and the Tyranny and Injustice of the Rulers



From the greatest of what distinguishes a Sunnī from a Bid‘iyy and the rightly-guided from a misguided wandering strayer are a person’s positions on: **a)** the Khārijites in all their various forms, shades and manifestations and **b)** the sinners and oppressive rulers. And this is because the Sharī‘ah of Islām came with affairs that the mind of no man can produce. In fact, which the minds of men would reject at once and tend to their exact opposites. And for this reason these issues distinguish the people of true intellect and wisdom from the ignoramuses and followers of desires. And they have been very beautifully summarised by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمة الله). Let us cite from him and then make some important observations.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“And that is what the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) passed upon wherein he ordered with fighting against the Khārijites who depart from the Sunnah, but ordered patience upon the tyranny and oppression of the rulers, and to pray behind them, despite their sins. [At the same time] he testified for some among his Companions who were persistent in some of the sins, that they love Allāh and His Messenger. And he prohibited from cursing such a one. [In contrast], he informed about Dhul-Khuwayṣarah and his associates, despite their worship and awe (wara’), that they will leave Islām as the arrow passes through its target.”<sup>1</sup>

And he also said: “And the leaders of the people of innovation are more harmful to the ummah than the people of sins, and for this reason, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) ordered with the killing of the Khārijites yet prohibited from fighting against the oppressive rulers.”<sup>2</sup>

### Notes:

1. As we have mentioned, the intellects of men would tend to the exact opposite and it is for this reason that you find among the

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<sup>1</sup> Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (28/470-471).

<sup>2</sup> Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (7/284).

disbelieving nations, in their histories, they call to revolutions in the name of social justice and removal of tyranny and ending abuse of capital and so on, and likewise they encourage the same in the lands of the Muslims, as a means of weakening and undermining them, and this provides the environment in which the extremists Khārijites make their appearance and find the opportunity to congregate and organise, and create further turmoil. And the law of Islām—which is Allāh’s knowledge of His servants and what is better for them and what is harmful for them in this life and the next—came with what the instincts and deficient intellects would oppose and reject. And it is here where the Sunni, Salafi, Athari—a person of Tawḥīd who has a sound understanding in the topics of the Ṣifāt, Qadar and Īmān—would be distinguished from others, in that his beliefs, methodologies and behaviours are in agreement with and in compliance with this affair that the Creator of the heavens and the earth legislated. He does not challenge that with raī (opinion) or hawā’ (desire) or ‘aql (intellect), because it is pure maṣlaḥah that has been legislated by the Lord of the Worlds. So this is a clear point of distinction between the guided Sunnī and the misguided Bid’iyy.

2. Once that is clear, then look at how the two parties are treated oppositely. As for the Khārijites, they are ordered to be fought and killed, despite their extreme display of overt piety, even excelling the Companions in acts of worship. And despite their lofty slogans of wanting to establish the religion of Allāh and establishing justice and removal of oppression and so on. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated that the Qur’ān would not pass their throats and collarbones, indicating that his ummah should not be deceived by them and their overt piety.

Today, due to the widespread and evil effects of the nurturing of the teachings of al-Ikhwān (the Muslim Brotherhood), who have affected and poisoned the minds of whole nations and tens of millions of Muslims if not more, then the Muslim nation today is unable to recognise the doctrine and methodology of the Khārijites, because of ignorance and because of nurturing upon false principles and ideologies whose intent is to lay waste to the Sunnah and to the manhaj of the Salaf and to simply gather people upon a fake, artificial type of unity.

3. Ibn Taymiyyah said: “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.**”<sup>3</sup> People only recognise the Khārijites when they appear as a force in a region. Look at how the Muslim nation as a whole, all of its innovated sects, groups and parties, came out and declared ISIS to be Khārijites. They only did so when they appeared as a force and began slaughtering Muslims. But as for the Salafīs, when were they calling these people Khārijites and warning against them with a severe warning? Decades earlier! This is because of their deep rooted knowledge of the Sunnah and traversing the methodology of the Salaf. And one will recognise from this, the simple truth that true rectification lies in returning back to the creed and methodology of the Righteous Salaf, because in that is an end to those deviations and innovations which are the immediate and direct causes of the calamities that have befallen this nation.

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<sup>3</sup> Kitāb al-Nubuwwāt (Aḍwā’ al-Salaf, 1420H) 1/564.

4. So look at how the Prophet spoke of the Khārijites and you will then understand the behaviour of the Salaf towards people who manifested something of the doctrines and opinions of the Khārijites, even if they did not call to them or act upon them—such as what they did with **al-Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ bin Ḥayy** (d. 169H).<sup>4</sup> This is because they recognised what can emerge of turmoil and mass murder on account of these doctrines. Similar to how the doctrine of the Khārijites existed only as a small band of discontented people in the era of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), who recognised them and was notified by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) as to what would take place in his ummah after him at their hands. So then they appeared in the time of ‘Uthmān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) and revolted against him, accusing him of oppression and disbelief, and then they appeared in the time of ‘Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) and declared him a polytheist in the issue of ruling by Allāh’s law. And out of this came the ideologies and sects of the Khārijites and Rāfiḍah, and the splitting of the Muslim nation and the turmoils that followed thereafter. And these two evil doctrines remain today, as well as the many splinter groups that emanated out of them. So this is the nature of such doctrines and opinions, if left alone, they fester and over decades lead to turmoil and chaos. And today, the Salafīs do not even do a fraction of what the Salaf did with innovators such as al-Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ, seeking by that to remove innovation and misguidance from the ummah and to unite the people around truth and upon that in which true benefit (maṣlaḥah) lies, and they are vilified and mocked and abused for that. This is a sign of the degree of ignorance that Muslims have fallen into in their religion.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to: <http://www.kharijites.com/kj/?cjcckljas> for a treatment of his case.

5. The Khārijites were described by the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) as people who recite the Qurʾān without it going past their throats or collarbones, as is established in the authentic traditions. This means they do not have understanding of the religion, and they depart from it due to their ignorance. They are the ones who treat what is not a sin to be a sin and what is a sin to be disbelief, as Ibn Taymiyyah has explained in numerous places. Then they rebel and call the people to rebel on the basis of oppressive and incorrect judgements of takfir.

Thus, we see these misguided individuals treating what some of the rulers enter into of permitted affairs—such as diplomatic relations, trade agreements, and so on with non-Muslims—and they treat this as major kufr. Likewise, they see some rulers committing sins related to desires. So they are taken by their ignorance, Shayṭān takes them by their ignorance and also because they have desires too. So they depart from Islām through their doctrines and actions and bring turmoil upon the people of Islām by abandoning the guidance that came to them from their Lord through the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So this shows these people had little understanding of religion, and this is also the great affliction with Muslims today, and in fact for the greater part of their history. They are ignorant of these realities because they have been misguided by sects, groups, parties and individuals who have nurtured their hearts upon misguidances of various types, causing their hearts to become rusted, unable to see the truth, and so when someone calls to the way of the Salaf and acts in accordance with it, they see it as falsehood and as bidʿah and as innovation and injustice. So the Prophet ordered with the killing of these Khārijites because of what they would introduce and bring to

this nation of death and destruction, despite their overt piety and beautified alluring slogans about “Sharīah”, “Justice” and “Jihād” and so on.

6. In contrast to the Khārijites, look at how the sinners were treated in the Sunnah and likewise the oppressive rulers. As for the habitual drinker of alcohol in the time of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then he prohibited the Companions from cursing him and affirmed that he, “loves Allāh and His Messenger”. And as for the rulers, then he mentioned that there would appear among them men with hearts of devils in the bodies of men who would not follow his guidance and not follow his Sunnah and that would confiscate wealth and beat people. He mentioned that they will not fulfil people’s rights but demand their own. He mentioned that they would engage in monopoly and selfish rule (atharah, isti’tihār), and alongside all of this, he ordered the Companions, if they witnessed this, to hear and obey and remain patient till they meet him at the Ḥawd on the Day of Judgement. He forbade rebelling and raising the sword, except when there is clear, manifest, disbelief done in the open about which there is no ambiguity. Then he also explained in other authentic traditions, that the reason for tyrannical rulers returns back to the sins and transgressions of the servants and that tyranny appears from rulers upon their subjects when subjects engage in transgression between themselves, such as cheating in the weights and measures. So the People of the Sunnah, the followers of the Salaf understand and know these affairs, and they are vilified and abused for holding on to these truths and these understandings which are in accordance with

intellect and wisdom, and so they call to that in which lies true rectification and true unity.

7. These are tremendous and insightful statements from Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah and show the difference between those who follow what Allāh revealed and judge to it and submit to it and those who judge to their intellects and opinions and desires from the Innovators and misguided deviants, those who rouse the people with emotions and sentiments and preoccupy them with the rulers and in politics and make them far removed from gaining genuine understanding of their religion and of creed and methodology and that in which lies true rectification of the servant and the land. Just as this speech of Shaykh al-Islām also indicates the great importance of warning against the Khārijites in every time and place, warning against their doctrines, warning against them as individuals, in the mosques, from the pulpits, in the lessons and through every means possible, in order to protect the Muslim nation from their evil, filthy, rotten and retarded ideas.

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