

INSIGHT

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta Combats Extremism

ISSUE # 8



FATWAS

AGAINST

JOINING TERROR GROUPS

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic history is replete with examples of movements and trends whose members have rebelled against their state authority, declaring an Islamic caliphate and accusing their rulers of disbelief and heresy. The Khaharjite group was one such movement that emerged early in Islam and rebelled against the Leader of the Believers Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may God be pleased with him) and excommunicated him. The Kharijites fought against Muslims and declared lawful their pure blood, property and honor. This was only due to their stubborn persistence in their erroneous beliefs, accusing Muslims of unbelief and declaring the spilling of their blood and wealth and honor lawful. History recounts how those groups have claimed to conform to Islamic law and to establish God's law and apply the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

The ideology of those groups is still extant it has neither desisted nor died out. Ideas do not die out with the death of their advocators insofar as there are those who believe in and try to resurrect and implement them. Terror groups founded on notions that are inconsistent with the venerable Islamic law and the Prophetic guidance, is one such group. It announced the establishment of an Islamic caliphate and declared their allegiance to one of their own, not only as their leader, but as the caliph of all Muslims. Its members do not only invite people from all corners of the earth to join it, but declare this to be obligatory. Islamic law has warned Muslims against joining such takfiri sects and against supporting them under any circumstances. The following is an exposition of the ruling for those sects in Islamic law.



ATTRIBUTES of TERROR GROUPS

Islamic law describes takfiri groups such as those which have established themselves in some parts of Iraq, Syria and other countries as al-bughah.

This is an exact term and one recognized in Islamic law. They are from the bughah whom a ruler is duty bound to fight after urging them to resubmit to authority.

The term bughah is derived from the noun al-baghy, meaning oppression and exceeding limits. It was precisely due to these meanings that ISIS are referred to as bughah. Imam Al-Shirbini, the Shafi'i scholar, defined baghy as oppression and transgression. He added that those groups are referred to as such due to their oppression and deviation from truth. Their injustice and transgression is manifested in their revolt against the legitimate ruler.

The term applies to all members because each one of them has revolted against the ruler of his country and joined the rebel group. The illustrious scholar Al-Bigirmi defined baghy as rebelling against al-imam al-a'zam, the greater imam [ruler of the Muslim community] who is established as the Prophet's successor with regard to the spiritual and political affairs of the community. State rulers are analogous to al-imam al-a'zam with regard to the duty of obedience and the impermissibility of revolting against the state authority. The needs of the people and protection of the land underlie the principal purpose of establishing a caliphate; this is true of the ruler of every country whose primary task is to safeguard his country and people, promote their interests and repel corruption.

Imam Al-Haramayn Al-Juwaini argued that in the absence of an authority, it becomes compulsory upon the residents of every city and village to bring forward from among the people of wisdom and reason one whose orders, whether sanctions or proscriptions, they are to follow or else they will fall prey to indecisiveness and become marked by passivity towards important matters and occurrences.

ISIS members kill Muslims and declare their blood, property and honor lawful on religious grounds when in fact, their actions have nothing to do with Islam. The Prophet's words on the khawarej of the end times is an apt description; he said "They will kill Muslims and spare idolaters."



Those bughah have encroached upon Muslim lands in Iraq, Syria and other countries, massacring Muslims and dhimmis alike. They entitle to themselves the right to fight without the permission of state authority. Even if they fight ahl al-harb [those fighting Muslims], this in itself is considered baghy.

The luminary Al-Bigirmi said: “As for their fighting independent of state authority and in opposition to the ruler, by so doing, they reject mandatory obedience [to their ruler] and are consequently deemed bughah.”

Is it right to describe ISIS as Kharijites?

It is proper to describe ISIS as a Kharijite faction as this designation is consistent with their depiction as bughah. ISIS shares many traits with the Kharijite faction which rebelled against the Leader of Believers, Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may God enoble his countenance), fought against him and declared him a disbeliever on specific grounds. If we look at the points of congruence between ISIS and the Kharijites, we will find that both:

- Have rebelled against the state authority and disobeyed the ruler.
- Have their own interpretation of primary texts, albeit an erroneous one.
- Have a force of arms.

- Have excommunicated the ruler.

- Have invited the Muslims to emigrate to territories under their control and declare anyone who does not share their views an unbeliever. This was precisely the position of the Azaraiqah, a subset of the Kharijites of whom the erudite scholar Abd Al-Qader Al-Baghdady said: “Those are the followers of Nafi’ Ibn Al-Azraq Al-Hanafi, known by the moniker of Abu Rashed. Among all the Kharijite sects, the Azariqah had the greatest number of followers and greatest military might. In relation to religion, they share in common with the Kharijites many beliefs, such as for instance the position that Muslims who do not agree with their views are mushriks [associate partners with God]”

These are but a few examples of the points of congruence between ISIS and the Kharijites. For this reason, coupled with the fact that their attributes are totally consistent with the Messenger’s characterization of the Kharijites of the end of time, it is both valid and legal to designate them as so. In spite of the existing points of differences between ISIS and the Kharijites (such as for instance the excommunication of those who commit major sins) the designation holds true.

Characteristics of ISIS and the rest of the takfiri groups in the Prophetic Sunnah

The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) referred to the Kharijites as “dogs of hellfire” and gave those who kill or fight against them or are killed by them the glad tidings of Paradise. It was reported that Abdullah Abu Ammar said: “I saw Abu Umamah Al-Bahili (may God be pleased with him) by the gate of Damascus while facing the Haruriyya [the Kharijites]. He was saying, ‘They are the dogs of hellfire.’ He repeated this thrice and then continued saying, ‘The best of those slain are those who are killed by them’, then he wept. A man asked him, ‘O Abu Umamah! Is this something you heard the Messenger of God say or is this your own opinion?’ He replied, ‘It would be audacious of me to say this if I had not heard the Messenger of God say it not once, twice, thrice but seven times ...’ “

Imam Al-Manawi (may God have mercy on him) said: “The dogs of hellfire are those who are misguided in their worldly pursuits and presume they are doing good. They misinterpreted the Quran and by doing so, deviated from the teachings of Islam after they had adhered to it. Consequently, they are described as the dogs of hellfire i.e. they will be in the image of dogs due to their deeds just as they attacked ahl al-sunnah like dogs.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “There will appear at the end of time a folk who will be young in age with reckless judgment. They will speak with the words of the best people, yet they will pass through Islam as an arrow passes through its target and their faith will not go past their throats. Wherever you find them, kill them for whoever kills them will be rewarded on the Day of Judgment.”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said: “There will arise among you a folk whose prayers, fasts and deeds will make you scorn your own. They will recite the Quran but its spirit will not go beyond their throats. They will pass through religion as an arrow passes through its target”

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said: “Dissension and division will befall my community. A folk will emerge with the speech of the best people but they will perpetuate evil. They will recite the Quran but it will not go past their clavicles. They will pass through religion as an arrow passes through its target and they will not return to it until the arrow returns to its nock. They are the most evil of creation. Blessed will be the one who kills them and is killed by them. They will call to the Book of God though they have nothing to do with it. Whoever fights them is nearer to God than they are.”



By looking at the takfiri sects (ISIS and those who share its ideology) we find that the Messenger's words and his description of the Kharijites of the end times fits their present day counterparts even if they manifest acts of worship and exhort good and forbid evil. Describing these groups from the time of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) until the Day of Judgment, Imam Ajuri said: "There is no contention between the scholars of both past and present that the Kharijites are an evil folk who disobey God, the Most High and Exalted, and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) even if they fast and pray and diligently attend to their acts of worship though this will not be of any benefit to them. Yes, despite making a show of enjoining good and forbidding evil, nothing of this will avail them because they are a folk who distort the Quran to suit their desires and deceive Muslims. God the Almighty and His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) warned us of them as did the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Prophet's Companions (may God be pleased with them and with those who have followed them in righteousness). The Kharijites are evil, vile, and despicable as are the other groups, past and present, that espouse their ideology and inherit their way. They rise against their rulers and deem lawful the murder of Muslims. The first of them to appear was during the Prophet's lifetime when a man challenged the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), accusing him of unjustly apportioning the spoils of war. He told the Prophet: "Be just O Muhammad for I do not see that you are distributing the booty fairly!" The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, 'Woe unto you! Who is

just if I am not just?' " Umar (may God be pleased with him) wanted to kill him but the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) prevented him and said, "This man and those who follow his way you will deem your prayers and fasting seem insignificant when you compare them with yours. They will leave religion." The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) ordered Muslims in more than one hadith to fight them and explained the excellence of the one who kills them or is killed by them.

Those Kharijites afterwards abandoned their various cities and joined forces, enjoining good and forbidding evil. Upon arriving at Medina, they murdered Uthman (may God be pleased with him). The Prophet's Companions who were in Medina at the time tried to protect Uthman but were unsuccessful. Those same Kharijites later rose against the Leader of the Believers, Ali Ibn Abu Talib (may God be pleased with him) because they rejected his judgment exclaiming: "There is no judgment but God's." When Ali heard this, he said: "A word of truth by which falsehood is intended." Ali fought against them and God honored him with eliminating them. Ali then narrated the Prophet's words on the virtue of the one who kills them or is killed by them. The Prophet's Companions fought alongside Ali, and so Ali's sword which he turned against the Kharijites, became the sword that defended truth until the Last Hour."



The Saying of Ali bin Abi Talib about the **TERROR** groups.

Nu'aym ibn Hammad narrates in Al-Fitan, that the 4th Caliph, Ali ibn Abi Talib said:

When you see the black flags, remain where you are and do not move your hands or your feet. Thereafter there shall appear a feeble insignificant folk. Their hearts will be like fragments of iron. They will have the state. They will fulfill neither covenant nor agreement. They will call to the truth, but they will not be people of the truth. Their names will be parental attributions, and their aliases will be derived from towns. Their hair will be free-flowing like that of women. This situation will remain until they differ among themselves. Thereafter, God will bring forth the Truth through whomever He wills.

People are asking: does this narration by Ali bin Abi Talib (k.) that is related by Al-Bukhari's teacher (Nu'aym bin Hamad) over one thousand two hundred years ago in his book Al-Fitan refer to the 'Islamic State'?

It is possible to understand the narration as follows:

'When you see the black flags': The flags of the 'Islamic State' are black.

'Remain where you are': i.e., stay where you are, O Muslims, and do not join them.

'And do not move your hands or your feet': i.e. do not help them financially or with equipment.

'Thereafter there shall appear a feeble insignificant folk': i.e. 'weak' and 'insignificant' in terms of understanding of religion, morality and religious practice.

'Their hearts will be like fragments of iron': i.e. they will ruthlessly kill prisoners of war and cruelly torture people.

'They will have the state': For almost a century, no one has claimed to be an Islamic caliphate other than the current 'Islamic State' in Iraq and the Levant.

'They will fulfill neither covenant nor agreement': The 'Islamic State' did not fulfil its agreement with the Sha'etat tribe after the tribe pledged allegiance to them; indeed the 'Islamic State' slaughtered them by the hundreds. They also killed journalists.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



‘They will call to the truth’: The ‘Islamic State’ calls to Islam.

‘But they will not be people of the truth’: The people of the truth are merciful. The Prophet Muhammad said:

‘Have mercy and you will be shown mercy.’

‘Their names will be parental attributions’: Like: ‘Abu Muthanna’, ‘Abu Muhammad’,

‘Abu Muslim’ and so on.

‘And their aliases will be derived from towns’: Like: ‘Al-Baghdadi’,

‘al-Zarqawi’, ‘al-Tunisi’ and so on.

‘Their hair will be free-flowing like that of women’:

‘Islamic State’ fighters have hair precisely like this.

‘Until they differ among themselves’: Like the differences between the ‘Islamic State’ and its parent, the al-Nusra Front (al-Qaeda in Syria). The fighting between these two has led to around ten thousand deaths in a single year.

‘Thereafter, God will bring forth the truth through whomever He wills’: through a clear and correct Islamic proclamation.





How MUSLIMS should deal with ISIS?

Muslim rulers are religiously bound to fight against ISIS and invite them to honor the obligation God has enjoined upon them towards their rulers. According to scholars, it is only permissible to fight them after trying to dissuade them from their ways. Imam Al-San'ani Al-Kasani said: "When a ruler learns that the Kharijites are wielding their weapons and readying for war, he must apprehend and detain them until they renounce their ways and repent. This is because if they are left free, they will sow corruption on earth. Hence, they should be prevented. However, the ruler must not to fight them unless they initiate hostilities ... but if he does not learn of this until they have encamped and are ready for war, he must invite them to observe justice and return to the congregation of Muslims in the hope that they will respond and accept the invitation as is the practice with ahl-al-harb."

Imam Al-Nawawi said: “The scholars maintain: ‘It is obligatory to fight the bughah; they are not deemed disbelievers on account of their baghy. If a baghi renounces his disobedience, his repentance is to be accepted and he is not to be killed. The Companions unanimously agreed that the bughah are to be fought.’” He (may God have mercy on him) quoted the words of Al-Qadi Iyad who said: “Scholars have agreed that when Kharijites and their likes from the people of innovation and rebellion rise against a ruler and go against the vast majority of Muslims, breaking with the community, it is obligatory to fight them after warning them [of impending fighting].’”

The goal of fighting the Kharijites

The main goal of fighting the Kharijites is to make them submit to their Muslim rulers. Al-Kasani the Hanafi scholar said: “This is because fighting them is for the sake of repelling their evil, not for the evil of their polytheism since they are Muslims. Provided they do not direct their evil at anyone, they are not to be fought.” Al-Khatib Al-Shirbini said: “This is because the purpose of fighting them is to return them to obedience. But if they persist, he [the ruler] is to advise and exhort them [to renounce their ways]. But if they stand their ground, he is to warn them of war because God the Almighty commanded us to first seek reformation before fighting.”

The extent of the permissibility of joining ISIS and similar groups

From the above, it becomes evident that ISIS and similar groups are from the Kharijites against whom the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) warned us and ordered that they be fought. According to Islamic law, it is not permissible to join them or any other takfiri sect because they are transgressors and seceders. How can it be permissible to join them after rulers have been commanded to fight them and after the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) described them as the dogs of hellfire.



The fighting
VERSES
in the Quran:
Are they a
hotbed for
Extremism?



The fighting verses in the Quran are found in Chapter 9 in the Quran titled "al- Tawbah" or repentance. We will have a closer look at the fighting verses and examine the leading exegesis of renowned Muslim scholars to have an over-arching look at the context, circumstances, methods, regulating rules, results and amnesties which these fighting verses contained.

The Prophet during his encounter with Quraysh and other tribes which strove to destroy the newly born Islamic state in Madinah suffered immensely from their continuous treachery, breaking vows, betraying trust, breaching pacts and numerously dishonoring peace treaties that they had with the Prophet. The growing powers of the new Islamic state with its popular influence on people's hearts posed a huge threat to Quraysh's economic interests and jeopardize their prestigious position as custodians of the holy site of Ka'ba.

Historical records show that the Prophet was a firm believer in the importance of peace in order to advocate for his divine message and for this reason he conducted the peace treaty of Hdaybiya with the tribe of Quraysh though the terms of the treaty was unfair for Muslims and its conditions were inclined towards favoring Quraysh over them.

The Prophet had a foresight and considered this pact as a blessing start which will work for the favor of the advocacy of the Islamic message. The reasons for initiating the treaty were that the Prophet and around 1400 companions embarked on a journey to perform

the smaller pilgrimage ('umrah) in Makkah in the sixth year of Hijrah.

The Prophet and his companions were not bearing arms but only light weapons customarily necessary to protect themselves from the dangers of the desert roads. The Prophet meant no harm and had no intention of waging a war against Quraysh as he only wanted to perform 'umrah but he learned that Quraysh is raising arms and preparing for a war to prevent him from entering the holy site of Ka'ba.

He thus agreed on conducting a peace treaty as he wanted to avoid waging wars at all costs. Although this treaty prevented Muslims from performing 'Umrah on that year and did not allow them to enter the holy site of Ka'bah, the treaty indicated a 10 year truce between the two parties during which safety and security are granted for both of them. Muslims' disappointment were aggravated by the term which stated that Muslims were not to receive any Muslim convert from Quraysh and must return him or her to the tribe of Quraysh whereas Muslims who wanted to go back to Quraysh are welcomed and won't be returned to Muslims.

When the Prophet and his companions were on their way back to Madinah, a Quranic verse was revealed and it described the peace pact of Hdaybiya as a victory and the Quranic chapter which contained these verses was titled (al-Fath) or the Victory. God says, "Indeed, We have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear victory.

That God may forgive for you what preceded of your sin and what will follow and complete His favor upon you and guide you to a straight path. And [that] God may aid you with a mighty victory." (1,2,3:48) The Prophet's companions were consoled with these verses and embraced the goodness of this pact. This incident reveals that Muslims are neither war mongers nor eager to wage wars at all costs to seek some personal interests or achieve mere private gains.

After making the Hudaibiya peace pact, Quraysh breached the pact and waged attacks on the Muslims. Due to these offensive acts, God revealed some Quranic verses prescribing on Muslims the just methods of engaging in a war with those who did not honor their agreement. The verse says, "So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months..." (2:9) and this means that those who breached the pact by attacking Muslims had four months of safety after which a war will take place as a response for such breach.

Al-Tabari (d. 310 H.) in his renowned exegesis *Jami' al-Bayan* stated that the four month waiting period was only for those who waged an offensive attacks against Muslims and thus breached the peace pact. As for those who did not breach their pact with Muslims and honored their agreement, they were safe and secured. God says { Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, God loves the righteous [who fear Him]} (4:9)

As for the famous verse exploited by extremists and terrorist as a free-killing pass and always quoted to justify their heinous killings of non-Muslims was actually designated to non-Muslims who breached their peace pact by attacking or conspiring with others to attack Muslims. Therefore God in the verse says, "And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful" (5:9)

This verse does not bear multiple interpretations as there is no room to say that this verse meant all non-Muslims regardless whether they kept their pact intact or not because there are multiple prophetic traditions which state that Ali ibn Abi Talib went to all the tribes which kept their pacts with the Prophet intact and assured them that the pacts will be honored until its due time. This means that Muslims were not killing people indiscriminately and without a legally binding cause. The punishment of waging war if any breaching occurred in the peace treaty between two belligerent parties is an integrated part of the terms of peace treaties in our modern times and approved by the international law.

The merciful nature of war in Islam is even more emphasized in the very next verse in which God says, " And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of God . Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know". Al- Tabari commented on this verse by saying that this verse proves that Prophet Muhammad and Muslims were not asked to kill polytheists randomly as even after giving those who broke their pacts and launched offensive attacks against Muslims about four months safety period, God instructed the Prophet that even after this safety period if polytheists asked for extension of safety to inquire about the message of Islam and to contemplate on the nature of the Islamic faith, safety should be granted to them and if they were not convinced of the Islamic faith, they should be escorted back to their homes to secure their safety.

These above verses prove that Muslims are not war-mongers and that they don't engage in war fares except for legally binding reasons and with strict principles and clear guidelines of moral conduct. The current horrific images of killing, slaughtering, torturing and mutilating people are nothing but mere deviation from the Islamic faith both in letter and spirit. We call all sensible people whether Muslims or non-Muslims not to be lured by the extremist interpretation of the fighting verses of the Quran because a religion which was sent only as a mercy to the worlds cannot in any way, shape or form condone such horrific massacres which are totally condemned not only by Islam but by humanity at large.



Condemnation by Fatwa Authorities and Scholars

More than 120 Muslim scholars around the world have rejected Al-Baghdadi's caliphate and condemned the atrocities committed by ISIS in an open letter in late September 2014.

The scholars ruled that the concept of a caliphate is not legitimate unless it is established by consensus from the Islamic community. The letter, addressed to Al-Baghdadi, also detailed the many transgressions ISIS has made which are against Islamic principles.

These transgressions include how ISIS has over-simplified matters related to the Sharia, ignored established Islamic sciences and principles in issuing rulings, used violence to achieve their goals and failed to follow procedures, show mercy and ensure justice when meeting out punishments.

ISIS has corrupted Islamic teachings, values and principles. Islam promotes peace, moderation and mercy among others. It acknowledges the importance of education, justice and truth.

Egypt's Dar Al Iftaa has declared joining ISIS to be haram (illicit). It has released many media statements condemning the terrorist acts of ISIS. Dar Al-iftaa also stressed that the Muslim community Worldwide should neither support nor sympathise with ISIS or the group's cause.

THE COMING OF **EXTREMISTS** – WHAT PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) SAID



Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) had mentioned in his hadiths the coming of such extremists:

- From Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said, “...there shall come men who swindle the world with religion, deceiving the people in soft skins of sheep, their tongues are sweeter than sugar and their hearts are the hearts of wolves.

Allah [Mighty and Sublime is He] says: ‘Is it me you try to delude or is it against me whom you conspire? By Me, I swear to send upon these people, among them, a Fitnah that leaves them utterly devoid of reason.’ [Tirmidhi].

“I heard the Messenger of Allah said, pointing his hand towards the direction of Iraq, “It will be out of there, those who read the Quran but just past the throat alone, they quickly leave Islam like an arrow out of the bow.”

The hadith refers to the righteous and pious people who must be wondering how something that is wrong can be made to sound right and apparently looked good, when it is the biggest slander in our me.

The Prophet said that they will come to an age where the killer will not know why he killed, and those killed will not know why they lost their lives. [Muslim]

From Abdullah bin Mas’ud, the Prophet said, “...there will come a people young in years and foolish in minds, reciting the Qur’an which will not go beyond their throats, uttering sayings from the best of creations, going through the religion as an arrow goes through the target.” [Tirmidhi]

Imam al-Tirmidhi had said, “It has been narrated by many traditions other than this hadith, that those who read the Qur’an just beyond the esophagus and those who leave religion as fast as arrows out of the bow are the Khawarij Haruriyah (extremists/rebels)”.

- Yusair bin Amr said, “I asked Sahal bin Hunaif, have you ever heard the Prophet said something about the Khawarij?” He said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah said, pointing his hand towards the direction of Iraq, “It will be out of there, those who read the Qur’an but just past the throat alone, they quickly leave Islam like an arrow out of the bow.” [Bukhari]

As what the hadiths suggest, there will come a time when extremists will rise. There have been various extremist groups in the past, and we see it in the form of ISIS today. It is thus critical that YOU become more cautious when reading about what ISIS promotes and believes in, lest you become influenced by their extremist ideas

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