Progressive Islam in Practice

Takfir Series: Part IV

Takfir Case Studies Part I

Minority Groups

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In Pakistan, in 1974, the Federal Constitution was amended to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslims. In 1984, the federal government of Pakistan issued an ordinance declaring that Ahmadis could not call themselves Muslims, stripping them of their rights to religious freedom. As a result, Ahmadiyya are forbidden from calling their mosques 'masjids' and professing the Islamic creed in public. They are also forbidden from quoting the Qur'an, preaching in public, and disseminating religious information. The ordinance also prohibited Ahmadis from praying in non-Ahmadiyya mosques, using public prayer rooms, and performing the call to prayer.
Found in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, and the Golan Heights, the Alawites or the Nusayris, are a minority group with origins in Shi'a Islam. Although the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem issued a fatwa recognizing Alawites as Muslims, a number of Sunni and Shi'a scholars across the world have condemned Alawites as *kafir*.

Sunni scholars, like Ibn Taymiyya, criticized them as enemies of Islam and called them more "infidels than Jews or Christians".

The Syrian scholar Ibn Kathir called Alawites *mushrikeen* (polytheists) in his writings.

Twelver Shi'a Scholars are also critical of the Alawites, refusing to acknowledge them as Shi'a Muslims and calling their beliefs heretical.
The Hazaras, a large minority group in Afghanistan, numbering about 8 million are primarily located in central Afghanistan. They have long been targets of the Sunni majority in Afghanistan but in 1998, the Taliban began systemically murdering Shi'a Hazaras, claiming that, as Shi'as, they were not Muslims. As a result of the 1998 attack, about 8,000 Hazara civilians were slaughtered. The commander of the attack, Mullah Niazi was quoted as saying "They are kufr (infidels). You either accept to be Muslims or leave Afghanistan." The Taliban has since been criticized by ISIS for their acceptance of Shi'a sects in the country.
In the 13th CE, the majority of Western Khanates Mongols converted to Islam, leaving behind their traditional Shamanism religious beliefs.

Despite their conversion to Islam, they continued to observe Yassa code, the traditional legal code of the Mongol Empire that had been transmitted orally through their society for decades.

In the 14th CE, Ibn Taymiyyah issued a fatwa against them, calling on Muslims to "combat... those that place themselves outside the Shari'a", specifically targeting the Mongols for their practice of Yassa code rather than Shari'a.

In issuing the fatwa, Ibn Taymiyyah effectively takfired the Mongol Muslims, rendering them apostates as a way to call for and justify a violent jihad against them.
A number of terrorist groups affiliated with ISIS have declared Shi'a Muslims to be *kafir* and have declared an all out war against this population.

Over an eight year period, these groups were responsible for 27,947 deaths, many who were Muslims who the groups claimed to be *kafir* as they were Shi'a.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the jihadist group, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad called for an all out war on the sects of apostasy, referring to the Shi'a Muslims in Iraq and surrounding areas.

Articles featured in the IS magazine, Dabiq, often call for attacks and the systemic murder of Shi'a Muslims on the premise that they are *kafir*.
In Saudi Arabia, Shi'a Muslims are referred to as *rafidha* (rejectors), a derogatory term used to refer to Shi'as, condemning them as 'rejectors' of the first two successors of Prophet Muhammad. Until 1993, statewide school textbooks openly denounced Shi'as, referring to them as *rafidha*. In 1988, the leading cleric, Abdul-Aziz ibn Baz denounced Shi'a Muslims as apostates. Six years later, one of the members of the Higher Council of Ulama sanctioned the killing of Shi'a Muslims, calling them "vicious enemies of Islam". Numerous attacks on Shi'a religious centers have taken place over the years and in 2016, Sheikh Nimr, the prominent Shiite cleric was executed by the State.
Since the rise of the Islamic State, a number of Sufi Muslims have been violently attacked or killed, using the justification that Sufis are not Muslims but *kafir*.

In 2017, ISIL gunmen attacked the al-Rawda mosque, a Sufi mosque in Egypt, during Friday prayers, killing 311 people and injuring 122.

ISIL has condemned Sufi practices as *kafir* and claims that the Sufi saints and shrines are against the Islamic belief of monotheism.

In the Islamic State magazine, Rumiyah, an article written by a commander of ISIL identified districts within the Sinai peninsula that have significant Sufi populations, as districts the Islamic State hoped to eradicate.
An offshoot of the Mahdavia sect, the Zikris are found in Western Pakistan.

After the establishment of the official state of Pakistan, Zikri were subjected to forced conversion by the Sunni majority.

During the military dictatorship, they were harassed and killed.

Ulamas (religious authrotieis) in Pakistan have declared Zikris *kafir*.

In 1978, the local ulama started a movement calling for the government of Pakistan to **takfir** the Zikris, similar to the declaration against the Ahmadis.

Since 2014, with the rise of militancy in Pakistan, the Zikris face additional persecution at the hands of the Taliban and the Lashkar-i-Jhangji, a Sunni supremacist militant group.
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