

## Review phenomenon excommunication from the perspective of Sunni scholars

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### Abstract

*Despite the invitation of Islam to friendship and brotherhood among Muslims and censuring excommunication as meaning attributing excommunication to a Muslim, the sinister phenomenon of excommunication has occurred during our time and the advocates of this tide have not only insisted on the lawfulness of lives, properties and assets of Muslims, rather they have always rendered in bitter and frustrating eventualities. In this paper, the writer, after exploring the lexical and idiomatic meaning of excommunication, the perspectives of Sunni scholars with regard to blasphemy and excommunication are examined and it is conclude that all of the Sunni scholars have considered testimony to "Allah is the greatest" and "Mohamad is the messenger of Allah" as sufficient for the accomplish of Islam and hence they have pointed out that no one is entitled to excommunicate Muslims let alone to shed their blood.*

**Keywords:** Excommunication, Sunni scholars, Narratives (Hadith), The Koran.

## Introduction

One who has little familiarity with Islam and has spent short time of his life spending exploring in the Koran and the Tradition (Prophet Mohammad's Practice known as Tradition) shall find out that the Koran has commenced its own Sura (Chapters) with two divine characters of God, namely Compassionateness and Mercifulness. The presence of the Prophet the sublime is considered as Mercy for the Worlds and he has been frequently named as a the one enjoying full character of being a lovely, good temperate and a great man for all mankind and to all believers and meantime, the believers are described as being brothers, soul of each other supportive and caring for each other. The prophet, in spite of 80 wars a d conflicts and tolerating numerous physical and mental damages and ills and losing the best followers of him used to call for "Today as the day of Mercy", though we do not understand what befell of his community which has scattered and divided into 73 sects and have warred with each other, causing many fatalities. Unluckily, it is our period that despite the global call of blasphemy against Muslims and continued looting of their wealth, instead of observing empathy among them, we are now faced with the sinister phenomenon of Excommunication that has saddened the lives and mentalities of all people. Though we are hearing voices to fight with Takfiri followers no practical steps have been taken to counter them. Since the very foundation of Takfiri's thinking is to consider all Muslims as infidel instead of those advocating their dark thoughts the paper's author has examined the mindset of Sunni Scholars with regards to Excommunication and has shown that the category of Excommunication is already rejected and obsolete from their view.

### *Excommunication lexically and idiomatically*

Zobeidi and Johari has defined blasphemy as anti-faith; either someone has been assigned the trait of blasphemy or that he is told to have been infidel. Later, he says that those who are called Takfiri is because of the fact that this group are uncompromising people who accuse the sinful people of blasphemy and excommunicate a large number of people, and murder them (Adulhamid Omar, 2008). In defining the word Excommunication, Abdul Mon'am states: Excommunication is attributing blasphemy to a member of the so-called follower of Qible. From among these meanings, when blasphemy is brought as absolute, it is often meant as anti-faith, as Molla Ali Ghari has pointed this out.

Ibn Taymiyah Harani (1919) states blasphemy, as Iji has argued, is failure to acknowledge the Prophet and denial of one of the religious necessities. Ibn Huzm argues: blasphemy is a trait of that which God has obliged to faith in. Ibn Teymye also argues that blasphemy is lack of faith in God and His messenger. In somewhere else, he has regarded blasphemy as the necessary denial of the religion and successive provisions. In his other book, he keeps saying that: verily blasphemy is denial of the God's messenger of that which he has warned and prohibition of following the prophet in case they have knowledge of the prophet's truthfulness like Pharaoh and the Jews and the like.

Fakhre Razi says: blasphemy means lack of faith, i.e. non-verification of necessities and obligatory that prophet has brought about (Taftazani). Ibn Al-Vazir also says: the very word of blasphemy means intentional denial of something of the God's Book or one of His prophets or denial of something brought by the prophets; of course in case that thing is one of

the necessities of then religion (Ibn Vazir, 1987). Therefore, idiomatically, blasphemy means failure to believe in God, the prophet and denial of the religious necessities. Given the definition provided by the Sunni Scholars, the one does not deny God, Prophet Hood and religious necessities is out of the circle of blasphemy. Excommunication too means the one who considers other Muslims as infidel.

Excommunication from the view of The Koran and Narratives (Hadith)

In numerous verses, excessive Excommunication is rejected and some of which are mentioned:

1. God the sublime states: "Those who have opened their own chests for accepting Excommunication" (Nahl, 106).

In expressing excommunication, so-called inward acceptance and heart assurance is necessary.

2. God the sublime states: "In that time, they were closer to blasphemy than to belief" (Al- Imran, 167).

***Sheikh Mohamad Abde, regarding this verse states:***

God the sublime states: They were closer to blasphemy, while He did not say they were disbelievers, meanwhile, that He is aware of their states, this is for correcting and avoiding them to be excommunicating wrongly.

***Sheikh Mohamad Rashid, stating about this verse, states:***

The advocates of scholarship and jurisprudence must learn a lesson of pluck from this verse; those who hurry in excommunicating their own opponents due to their habits and imitations, though be followers of religion and virtues in practice, they lack any of the imitations and habits (Rashid Reza, 2014).

3. God the sublime states: " And do not denounce each other and express invective words against each other and do not call on each other with bad words, it is much worse for you to excommunicate someone who has just believed" (Hujurat, 1951).

### **Sunni scholars' views**

1. *Abu Hanife (death 150)*

Mir Seyed Sharuf Jorjani has quoted Abu Hanife as saying, he has never excommunicated anyone (Ibn Abdulbir, 2002).

2. *Anas Ibn Malik (death 179)*

Anas Ibn Malik says that the messenger of God states: Three things are Islam (or that three things constitute Islam)" Do not excommunicate the speaker of "There is no God but Allah" for sin and do not remove him out of Islam for his actions" (Abu Davoud, 1989). In his Book " Sahih", Bokhari quotes Meimoon Ibn Siagh as asking Anas Ibn Malik:

What prohibits the blood of man and his property? He answered: Testimony of the unity of God, facing the Qible; thus this human is a Muslim and has rights of Muslims (Bukhari, 1987). Abavai Ali has quoted Yazid Raghshi that told Anas Ibn Malik: O' Abu Hamze, some people give testimony of our blasphemy and infidelity; he said they are the worst people (Haythami, 1981).

3. *Shafe'ee (death 204)*

Imam Shafe'ee has expressed lack of excommunicating those seeking sensual joys and says "I do not excommunicating those who have sought senses, I never excommunicated anyone facing the Qible". In another narrative, he has been quoted as saying " I never excommunicate those who advocate the opposite interperation".

4. *Ahamd Ibn Hanbal (death 241)*

Ibn Hanbal states: We shall not testimony of the one who has done a great sin as being a follower of the hell, unless there is a hadith implying that. In addressing Sect Jahmye scholars, he states:" 5hatb which you believe in, If I accept them, I will become an infidel, however, I shall not excommunicate you, because you are ignorant from my view" (Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, 2008).

5. *Mohamad Ibn Ismael Bukhari (death 256)*

It has been stated in the Bukhari's Sahih: Whoever considers the latter as infidel or the enemy of God for no reason, [that attribute] will return to him (Bukhari, 1980). Quoting Usama Ibn Zaeid, he said" The messenger sent us to the lands of Hargha in the Jahinye. By the morning, we defeated the people there. I and one of the Ansar chased a man. Upon seizing him, he said "There is no God but Allah". In that time, the other Ansari man ceased killing him. But I killed him with a spear. Upon returning to the prophet. This news reached the prophet and he said to me:" Usama, Did you kill a man when he said "There is no God but Allah"? I said O ' the prophet, he recourse this sentence to save his life. The prophet said again, Usama, Did you kill a man when he said "There is no God but Allah"?. And the prophet repeated this sentence over and over again that I fell grieved and wished not to have killed that man (Bukhari, 1980).

6. *Muslem Ibn Hojaj Neishabouri (261)*

Quoting Meghdad Ibn Amr Kandi, Muslem says that the prophet was told: If I face with one of the disbelievers and war with each other and if he cuts one of my hands with a sword and if he recourses to a tree and says " There is no God but Allah" and I have faith in god, can I kill him while he states so? The messenger says "No, do not kill him". He said to the prophet, it is presumed that after cutting my hand off, he says this; the messenger of God stated: Do not kill him, if you kill him, you shall be in a position you had prior to killing him and you shall, have the same position prior to that sentence (Neishabouri, 1967).

**In somewhere else, Moslem says:**

Um Salma (one of the prophets' wives) has been quoted as saying the prophet has said: rulers will prevail upon you who will bio to good but do the forbidden. Whoever gets dissatisfied

with their indecent deeds, will be safe and immune and whoever protests then will be the follower of health and Magnanimity. However, whoever besoms satisfied with their acts and follow them (will be reattributed). The prophet was asked: Could we war against them? "As long as they say prayer, No". The prophet said. (Neishabouri, 1967).

7. *Abu-Bakr Mohamad Ibn Manzar(318)*

In the book " Al-Ejma", Ibn Manzar says that Islam Scholars have unanimously stated that whoever states we testify that there is no God except for Allah and testify Mahamad is the messenger of Allah.....he is a Muslim.

8. *Abolhasan Ash'ari (324)*

Abolhasan Ash'ari, the founder of Ashaere religion writes: after the dear prophet, differences arose among Muslims s to many of the affairs, such that some of them called them as misled and resented them and despite the fact that were scattered to numerous sects, however Islam will prevail them and include all of whom (Ash'ari, 1984).

Zaher Ibn Ahmad Sarkhasi (389), one of the closest friends of Abolhasan Ash'ari says that Abolhasan Ash'ari ordered me to gather all the followers by the time of death and said to them:

Be aware we never excommunicate none of the followers of Qible for the sin they have committed, because all of them have faith in the single Allah and Islam includes all of them (Sharani, 2001).

9. *Abu Hamed Mohamad Ghazali (505)*

Abu Hamed Mohamad Ghazali says: Get your [invective] language away from the members of the Qible as much a as can as long as they repeat saying There is no God but Allah and Mohamad is the messenger of Allah and have not violated this; its violation is a denial of God's messenger, because there is a great danger in blasphemy and there is no danger in silence

10. *Ghazi Ezzad Aldin Iji (756)*

Ghazi Ezzad Aldin Iji writes: All of speakers and scholars maintain that none of the followers of Qible can be excommunicated..... The prophet has stated that never question from the beliefs of someone who has come to faith and the practice of the Ashab was like this; thus, doctrinal error and mistake of a Muslim will never damage his truth of Islam.

11. *Taghi Aldin Sabki (756)*

Taghi Aldin Sabki writes: It is seriously difficult to act upon excommunicating others and whoever has a heart faith will consider excommunicating others as difficult, because they testify to "There is no God but Allah"; excommunication is a major issue and is a great sin (Sharani, 2001).

12. *Sa'ad Al-din Taftazani (791)*

He says: The follower of Qible cannot be considered as infidel unless religious necessities are denied by him. Because, the holy prophet and his Sahabe did not use to inquire others' opinions and accepted from people that which was apparently right (Taftazani, 1980).

*13. Abdulla Ababatin (1901)*

He says whoever monitions his own soul and speak with nothing except for divine arguments and does not remove anyone from the circle of ISLAM, this is among the most important affairs of religion and in this regard, he has tolerated suffering in thus way. This is one of the clearest cases of religious provisions and our duty is to follow and forsake innovation in religion.

*14. Seyed Mohamad Rashid Reza (1965)*

Seyed Mohamad Rashid Reza states that of the greatest suffering and blights with which Islamic sects are affected is the attribution of hypocrisy and blasphemy to each other, with the intention that all have the right to reach the Right (Rashid Reza, 2014).

*15. Mohamad Ibn Alavi (1425)*

**In opposition to excommunicating by Wahhabi, he says:**

We have faced with people who have expertise in disseminating blasphemy and issuing rules with incorrect traits, traits which do not deserve the Muslims testifying Divinity and prophet hood of Islam; such that they label their own proponents as distorters, magicians, infidel and disbeliever (Alavi Maleki, 2010).

We have heard from some ignorant people how they have applied such invective words; yet they have gone beyond this and have labeled their enemies as inviting to disbelief, and misleading.

**Conclusion**

Though some people have excommunicated the followers of some religious sects at some points in the history, with referenced prevailing views of Sunni scholars, we will find out that they have never allowed for the excommunication of the followers of Qible and have considered it as contradictory with a mass of verse and narratives suggesting valuing the position and status of Muslims and censuring excommunicating him and forbidding it. Totally, it can be stated that according to the views of the great Sunni leaders and scholars and the criteria accepted by them, whoever admits to the unity of God and Mission of the prophet and does not deny the fundamental pillars and necessities of Islam like prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and haj, being agreed upon by all Muslims is a Muslim and all Islamic rules are applicable to him. Therefore, based on criteria accepted by the Sunni scholars, Shia is Muslim and all Islamic rules are applicable to them. The issue of Imamate "caliphate" being a major difference between Sunnis and Shiites is a secondary issue from the view of Sunnis and opposition with that cannot render in blasphemy or excommunication.



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