

## A CRITIQUE OF *TAKFĪR TENDENCY* IN BARBAHĀRĪ'S *SHARĤ AS-SUNNAH*

Nafiu Ahmed Arikewuyo  
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria  
anarikewuyo@alhikmah.edu.ng

**Abstract:** *Takfīr (excommunicating Muslims from Islam) has recently attracted renewed attention among Muslim scholars due to its devastating effects on Muslims. Modern Salafism is mostly accused of the trend. Hence, the present research traces the genesis of Takfīr tendency to one of the most acceptable classical works among the modern Salafis, Sharĥ as-Sunnah of Imam Barbahārī (d. 329 A.H.). The paper is library-based and adopts the analytic method of research. The study reveals that Barbahārī is guilty of loose declaration of worthless matters as an act of apostasy. Some of the matters in which he displayed the Takfīr tendency are differing from the Companions in any religious matter, the beatific vision of Allah in this world, the consecration of his work, treating Muslims as non-believers, and sweeping declaration of his contemporaries as an apostate. It also found the Takfīr -laden approach of the author in his work was triggered by the nature of the heretic Jahmiyyah sect he targets. It will be out of context to apply his texts to the generality of non-Hanbali Muslims who don't share the grave and dangerous creeds of the Jahmiyyah. This is the point where many modern Salafis who hold the work in high esteem become guilty. They adopt the letters of Barbahārī's texts as a general guideline for relating with their opponents, even if their religious differences are not up to the standard of the heretic Jahmiyyah.*

**Keywords:** *Takfīr*; Barbahārī; Tendency; *Sharĥ as-Sunnah* and Critique.

### Introduction

*Takfīr*, otherwise known as an act of declaring a known Muslim to be out of the fold of Islam, is one of the gravest discourses among Muslim scholars. Its gravity emanates from the fact that *Takfīr* is tantamount to forfeiting a Muslim his guaranteed rights such as the right to Islamic brotherhood, the right to being a guide (*Walīy*) in marriage; the sanctity of blood; and other rights accorded by *Shari'ah* to a Muslim.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the Apostle of Allah was reported to have said that, 'he who accuses his fellow Muslim with committing a disbelieving act while the case is otherwise shall be subjected to same'.<sup>2</sup>

Ordinarily, Islam as a faith has some fundamental beliefs and practices which make one a Muslim; any contempt by a Muslim for them discredits his faith and adherence to Islam. Arising from this notion, it is feasible for an in-born Muslim to lose his faith by his action or inaction. The Qur'an asserts the possibility of turning pagans after being Muslims in Q4:137 and Q47: 25. Within this scope *Takfīr* is just an act of calling a spade by its appropriate name. Nevertheless, the

---

<sup>1</sup>Abdullahi Jibrīn, *Dawabiṭu Takfīr al-Mu'ayyan* (Riyadh: Matba'at Safir, 1425), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad bin Isma'īl Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2008), 816, no.6104.

concept becomes a complex religious discourse when it becomes a subject of manipulation and misconception by unauthorized individuals who are bent on threatening their fellow opponents with it in religious matters that do not constitute a fundamental teaching of the faith. The popularity enjoyed by the discourse through a large number of literature on it and through its appearance in religious preaching in contemporary times is prompted by the increasing tendency of unjustified and manipulated exercise of the act by some Muslim groups and individuals. Some of the implications of the tendency include legitimizing the killing of some Muslims and mutual distrust in the Muslim community.

Modern Salafism has been accused of nurturing the ideology of *Takfir* despite the large number of works by its scholars condemning the practice. Since *Takfir* is an ideology, it is necessary to research the sets of literature that promote it because any ideology will always emanate from selected theories documented in a book. This notion inspires the choice of Barbahāri's *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, which is a celebrated work that the teachings of modern Salafism strongly rely on. The testimony to the wide acceptability the work enjoys among the adherents of modern Salafism can be seen through the expository efforts on it by modern Salafī scholars including Ibn Uthaymin, Fawzan, Ḥājuri, Najmi, Madkhali, etc. The purpose of the study is to verify whether the work contains some elements of *Takfir* tendency, how it contains such tendency, and refute the position of the author.

Previous academic efforts on the discourse focused majorly on the trend of *Takfir* among contemporary Muslim youths, without giving attention to the connection of the trend with classical works on creeds such as the one under study. Qaradawi<sup>3</sup> studies the factors responsible for the upsurge of the ideology in contemporary times. Jibrīn gives the legal conditions and regulations of *Takfir*.<sup>4</sup> Qarni<sup>5</sup> argues that the exercise of *Takfir* is exclusively retained by *Shari'ah* for the elderly scholars, and as such the over-zealot youths should move far away from what does not fall within their jurisdiction. Arikewuyo<sup>6</sup> compares the practice of *Takfir* in the schools of modern Salafism and *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun* with a submission that although the two revivalist schools do not promote the trend; virtually all the groups perpetrating the evil of *Takfir* broke away from them. Kadivar<sup>7</sup> held Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb's writings and teachings

---

<sup>3</sup>Yusuf Qaradawi, *Zāhirat Al-Ghulmww Fi al-Takfir*. Cairo: Maktabat Wabbah. Qarni, Muhammad Abdullah (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1990).

<sup>4</sup>Abdullahi Jibrīn, *Dawabiṭu Takfir al-Mu'ayyan*, 7.

<sup>5</sup>Muhammad Abdullah Qarni, *Dawabiṭ At-Takfir* (Cairo: Muassasat Risalah, 1992).

<sup>6</sup>Nafiu Ahmad Arikewuyo, "A Comparative Study of the Revivalist Approach of Salafiyah and Muslim Brotherhood-Oriented Groups in Yorubaland" (Malet, Kwara State University, 2019).

<sup>7</sup>Jamileh Kadivar, "Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media," *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 3 (September 2020): 259–85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798920921706>.

responsible for the wave of *Takfīr* among the members of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in contemporary times. His submission was supported by Al-Yaqoubi<sup>8</sup> who argues that the problem of ISIS originally emanates from the non-recognition of the religious authority of the traditional four schools of thoughts as propagated by Ibn Abdul-Wahhāb and Ibn Taymiyah. However, Rasheed & Rabiū<sup>9</sup> disagree by connecting the extremist trend of *Takfīr* reigning among the Muslim insurgents, including the Boko-Haram in Nigeria, to the Khawārij sect. The aforementioned literature has not been able to link the *Takfīr* trend in contemporary times to the classical works on creeds including the Barbahāri's which the present research aims. It is worthy of note that some modern *Salafī* scholars have discovered the dangerous *Takfīr* tendency in the work under study but failed to highlight its gravity and implications. Among such scholars are Najmi<sup>10</sup>, Qaḥṭāni<sup>11</sup> and al-Hajūri<sup>12</sup> who have all admitted- despite regarding the work as an authoritative corpuson which *Salafīyyah* relies- that the work contains a few elements of extremist *Takfīr* ideology.

Against this backdrop, the research has been segmented into the following sections: an overview of *Takfīr*, a biography of Barbahāri, a synopsis of *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, a critique of *Takfīr* tendency in the work, and a conclusion.

## Method

This research has been conducted with the aim of critiquing the phenomenon of *Takfīr* within the context of Barbahāri's work, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, which is a significant piece of Islamic jurisprudence and theology. *Takfīr* has been a contentious issue within Islamic thought, often leading to intra-religious conflict and radicalization. This study seeks to explore how Barbahāri's interpretation of *Takfīr* tendencies may have influenced or contributed to extremist beliefs and actions within Islamic communities. Through a multidisciplinary research approach involving textual analysis, examination of historical context, and sociological perspectives, this article aims to provide an understanding of the implications of Barbahāri's teachings and their relevance in the context of religious extremism.

There are a number of steps used as a method in this article: First, textual analysis with Identification and analysis of relevant quotes within *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*

---

<sup>8</sup>Mohammad Al-Yaqoubi, *Refuting ISIS- A Rebuttal of Its Religious and Ideological Foundations* (USA: Sacred Knowledge, 2015).

<sup>9</sup>Abdulganiy Rasheed & Aliyu Rabiū, "The Nexus between the Khawārij Theological Misconception of *Imān* (Faith) and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria" *Journal of Usuluddin* 48, no. 1 (2020): 113-145, <https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol48no1.6>.

<sup>10</sup>Ahmad Yahya Najmi, *Irshād As-Sarī Bi Sharḥ Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Imām al- Barbahāri* (Damascus: Maktabah al Furqon, 2021).

<sup>11</sup>Muhammad Sa'īd Qaḥṭāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, (Cairo: Maktabat as-Sunnah, 1996).

<sup>12</sup>Yahyā al-Hajūri, *Fath al-Bārī 'Ala Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Barbahāri*, (n.p, 1433 A.H.)

related to Takfir, evaluation of the context in which Takfir is discussed in the work, and Assessment of the theological arguments presented by Barbahāri. Second, examination of historical context through researching the political and social background during Barbahāri's time, understanding how external factors may have influenced Barbahāri's theological stance. And Examining the impact of Takfir tendencies on the broader Muslim community. The research outcomes are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the historical and contemporary implications of Takfir tendencies in Islamic thought, with a specific focus on Barbahāri's influential work, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*.

### **The Concept of *Takfir*: An Overview**

From the literal point of view, *Takfir* is extracted from the verb *Kaffara*, which means to cover up, forgive and waive something.<sup>13</sup> The literal meaning has been supported by Q47:2 and Q48:5 where Allah used the word in its past and continuous verb form to mean overlooking a sin. However, from the technical point of view, the word is extracted from *Kufr*, i.e. disbelief. Using the word in the form of duplication of the letter *fa* gives the meaning of labeling a Muslim as a disbeliever. According to Kadivar, *Takfir* is about labeling other Muslims as *kaafir* (non-believers) and infidels and legitimizing violations against them.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* explains, “*Takfir* is used in the modern era for sanctioning violence against leaders of Islamic states who are deemed insufficiently religious.” However, the domain of *Takfir* has become widened in the last decade, and now includes different Islamic groups and ordinary Muslims. The aforementioned definitions captured the legitimization of violence as part of what *Takfir* entails. Though such an addition does not constitute the real meaning of the word it is indisputably agreed that *Takfir* paves way for violence. This has been the convention of its flag bearers from the past to the present time. Dadau<sup>15</sup> asserts that Islam differentiates between an in-born disbeliever from an apostate. The former is treated by Islam based on his attitude towards the Muslims, while the latter attracts the state punishment. *Takfir* applies to the latter, not the former. This submission further strengthens the involvement of *Takfir* in violence against its victims.

What makes the discourse over *Takfir* more sensitive are its far-reaching implications on legal and social ramifications. Qaradawi<sup>16</sup> gives an account of six implications of *Takfir* on its victim as follows: that the victim is no more legally the

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibn Mandhūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, n.d), Vol. 3, 1385.

<sup>14</sup>Jamileh Kadivar, “Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh’s Media,” 260.

<sup>15</sup>Muhammad al-Hasan Dadau, *At-Takfir* (Mauritania: Ministry of Endowment, 2015).

<sup>16</sup>Qaradawi, *Zābirat Al-Ghulumw Fi al-Takfir*. Cairo: Maktabat Wabbab. Qarni, Muhammad Abdullah.

husband of his wife; that he has lost the paternity over his children; that he is no more entitled to the privileges of brotherhood in Islam; that he deserves to be prosecuted for apostasy; that he will be denied the rights of Muslim during his death and that he will be adjudged dweller of hell if he passes on. It is noteworthy that the aforementioned implications apply to what is termed *At-Takfīr al-Mu'ayyan* (identified) as against *At-Takfīr al-Mutlaq* (general). The former means labeling an identified Muslim as a disbeliever while the latter refers to condemning some acts as constituting disbelieving acts without making a judgment on their perpetrators. Identified *Takfīr* becomes condemnable when it is pronounced by unauthorized individuals, or the necessary conditions for its pronouncement are yet to be fulfilled. In the same coin, the general *Takfīr* is not sanctioned when an act declared to have constituted an act of belief is not. The general *Takfīr* is less grave to the identified division but the former leads to the latter. Hence, whenever the word is used, the focus is always vested on identified *Takfīr* which is the terminal point of the general *Takfīr*. Be it as it may, Islam condemns the act of unregulated *Takfīr* in all its forms.

Some of the textual pieces of evidence warning against *Takfīr* include “O you who have believed, when you go forth (to fight) in the cause of Allah, investigate; and do not say to one who gives you (a greeting of) peace ‘You are not a believer’,” (Q4: 94). According to Ibn ‘Abbas, this verse was revealed to correct the decision of some Companions who killed a man that greeted them with Salam. They deemed the man was pretending<sup>17</sup>. Usamah bin Zayd was also threatened by the Prophet when he was informed about the killing of a man who uttered *Lailaha illallah* by Usamah saying: “What will you tell *Lailaha illallah* if you were asked on the Day of Judgement?”. In a hadith narrated by Ibn ‘Umar, the Prophet was reported to have said, “Anyone who calls his fellow Muslim a disbeliever shall become one if his brother is not guilty of the accusation”.<sup>18</sup>

“The history of *Takfīr* dates back to the early Khawārij who emerged in the mid-7th century, more specifically in a battle of Siffin (657 A.D.) which occurred due to the rebellion by Mu'āwiyah (the first Umayyad caliph) against the fourth pious caliph (first imam of Shi'a), Ali ibn Abi Talib. When Ali's armies were close to overcoming Muawiyah's troops, Muawiyah suggested arbitration. Several soldiers of Ali's army turned against him when he agreed with Muawiyah's arbitration”.<sup>19</sup> These fighters became famous as the Khawārij and believed that God alone has the right to judge; they suggested that Ali's agreement to arbitrate was a violation of the divine will and announced that Ali and his supporters were apostates. Their

---

<sup>17</sup>Ismā'il bin Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (Cairo: Darul Fikr, 1999), 382.

<sup>18</sup>Bukhāri, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, 816, 6104.

<sup>19</sup>Jamileh Kadivar, “Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media,” 3-4.

position was that “Muslims who commit grave sins effectively reject their religion, entering the ranks of apostates, and therefore deserve capital punishment”<sup>20</sup>. The Khawārij later became a political doctrine that sought political power. They defined the concept of *takfīr* based on their specific understanding of who is not a believer or a Muslim. In this regard, Toshihiko Izutsu as cited by Timani argues, “They did not ask ‘What is belief?’ or even ‘What is unbelief?’ Rather they asked, ‘Who is an unbeliever or infidel?’” Furthermore, for them, a grave sin was determined based not only on belief or disbelief in God but also on acts and practices.<sup>21</sup> Through this *Takfīri* approach, they legitimized their views and condemned, de-legitimized, and eliminated others who they viewed as *kafīr*. These two approaches demonstrate the diverse similarities between *Takfīri* movements, such as Daesh and Khawārij.<sup>22</sup>

The emergence of *Takfīr* ideology in the contemporary world has been traced to the last writings of Sayyid Quṭb while in the prison. The contents of those works equalize the contemporary Muslim community to the *Jabilyyah* (pre-Islamic) community<sup>23</sup>. According to Quṭb, the last time there was a tangible Muslim *Ummah* was in the premier century of Islam when the *Shari’ah* dictated the conduct of the Muslims.<sup>24</sup> In another place, he condemns the advocacy for establishing an Islamic polity and system in a ‘society’ he describes as a staunch ignoramus of basic principles of Islam and tasks the Muslim scholars to better concentrate on beginner awareness programs on the basic creeds of Islam instead of wasting resources on the irrelevant clamor for the Islamic system. The following quotation expresses Quṭb’s *Takfīri* ideology:

Indeed, (the fact remains) that current Muslims do not need to (engage) in religious warfare, this is because there is no actual existence of Muslims at the current time. What defines the existence of Islam and Muslims in the current regime has not been resolved. The starting point today should be (invariably) the same in the premier stage of Islam; that is to put in place a community wherein some people profess the true religion. Thus, they believe that there is no deity worthy of worship save Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger. Then (it will be admitted) that they are (truly) worshipping Allah via (exclusively dedicating) supremacy, power, and right to legislate to Him and that they are implementing such to their life in reality.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Jamileh Kadivar, “Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh’s Media,” 4.

<sup>21</sup>H.S Timani, *Takfir in Islamic thought*, (Lexington Books, 2018), 32.

<sup>22</sup>Jamileh Kadivar, “Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh’s Media,” 5.

<sup>23</sup>Yusuf Qaradawi, *Al-Ijtihad al-Mu’ashir* (Cairo: Dar at-Tawzi’, 1994), 119.

<sup>24</sup>Sayyid Quṭb, *fi Dhilal al-Qur’an*, (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2004), Vol. III, 1633.

<sup>25</sup>Quṭb, *fi Dhilal al-Qur’an*, 1644.

The abundant examples for the foregoing texts in the works of Sayyid Quṭb have been taken by some youths of the *Ikhwān* (Muslim Brotherhood) who have passed through unjust and inhumane persecution meted out on them by the Nasser regime as a pointer to declaring the Muslims under the non-Islamic government as disbelievers<sup>26</sup>. Although, the leadership of the *Ikhwān* combated the virus which led to the repentance of many advocates of the ideology, those who were ultimately convinced by the notion later formed a group named: *Jamā'at al-Muslimīn* under the auspices of Shukri Mustapha in Egypt.<sup>27</sup> They declared the *Ikhwān* as infidels, for not declaring the Muslims as infidels, and for participating in what they described as an unIslamic system. Another trend produced by the thoughts of Sayyid Quṭb is the popular notion of declaring the Muslim leaders implementing the un-Islamic system of governance as disbelievers. This trend, which is the product of the *Ḥakīmīyah* concept of Sayyid Quṭb, has caused much instability in the Middle East region. Contemporary Muslim scholars have risen against the tempo reigning among the over-zealous youths.

Al-Albānī refutes the evidence relied upon by the advocates of this notion which is Q5:44 and concludes that merely operating an unislamic system of governance does not make the perpetrator a disbeliever except if he nurses preference of the system over the Islamic system.<sup>28</sup> Muhammad Imārah asserts that Quṭb was infected by this strange ideology via the works of Al-Mawdūdī who often negates the existence of Muslim *Ummah* in contemporary time and attaches over exaggerated focus on the *Khilāfah* by claiming that it was the final goal of preceding Prophets.<sup>29</sup> Qaradāwī<sup>30</sup> condemns the revolutionary spirit in the method of Sayyid Quṭb and establishes the peculiarity of Quṭb's thoughts among the scholars of the current Islamic movement. Madkhali also follows suit by claiming that the revolutionary style of Quṭb is responsible for the radicalization of unconscious youths in Arabia.<sup>31</sup> In sheer contrast to the aforementioned critics of Quṭb, some scholars have spared him from promoting the prevalent trend of *Takfīr*. Bahansāwī<sup>32</sup> defends that Quṭb never meant that all current individual Muslims should be regarded as disbelievers; this is because judging the Muslim community as un-Islamic does not indicate declaring the constituents as non-Muslims. He quoted

---

<sup>26</sup>Sālim Bahansāwī, *Shubuhātun Ḥawla Al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Mucaṣṣir*, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Darul Wafāi, 1989), 14.

<sup>27</sup>Bahansāwī, *Shubuhātun Ḥawla Al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Mucaṣṣir*, 19.

<sup>28</sup>Nāsirudeen Al-Albani, *Fitnat at-Takfīr* (Kano: Tsandari Islamic Bookshops, n.d), 6.

<sup>29</sup>Muhammad ḤImārah, *Ihyāu al-Khilāfat al-Islāmīyah*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Cairo: Darus Salam, 2011), 24.

<sup>30</sup>Qaradawī, *Zābirat Al-Ghulumw Fī al-Takfīr*. Cairo: Maktabat Wabbah. Qarni, Muhammad Abdullab.

<sup>31</sup>Rabī' u al-Madkhali, *Manhaj al-Anbiyāi*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Hadiy al-Muhammadi, 2007), 8.

<sup>32</sup>Bahansāwī, *Shubuhātun Ḥawla Al-Fikr al-Islāmī al-Mucaṣṣir* 43

from one of the works of Quṭb wherein the latter affirms that Muslim individuals could be found in an Islamic community. Bahansāwi, however, accuses Muhammad Quṭb, the junior brother to Sayyid, of promoting the *Takfir* ideology and deceiving the youths that the notion is the continuation of the thoughts of Senior Quṭb.<sup>33</sup> Ubayd<sup>34</sup> has also defended Sayyid Quṭb with his rejoinder against the allegation of Qaradāwi. According to him, apart from the fact that virtually all the closest associates of Quṭb, never acknowledged the accusation fingered at him, the texts in his work have been misconceived and taken out of context. He maintains that the argument of Quṭb in declaring the contemporary Muslim community as un-Islamic is a reality that cannot be disputed, and the thrust of that declaration is to prompt Muslims into re-introducing the missing Islamic system into the community populated by Muslims but is being governed by an un-Islamic system.

From the foregoing, there is a likelihood that the statements of Quṭb are taken out of context by his critics and the advocates of *Takfir* respectively. That the current Muslim community thrives on an un-Islamic pattern is incontrovertible by all, extending that judgment to the Muslim individuals by the aforementioned texts of Sayyid Quṭb is obscure as some texts therein leave the impression that an un-Islamic society can only be sustained by nominal Muslims who have breached the basic principles of Islam. It is believed that such an impression is not out of place but the accusation of declaring all Muslims as disbelievers by the author needs to be proven beyond doubt before it can hold water. Hence, Quṭb should be credited for revitalizing the contemporary *Ummah* from the slumber of the inferiority complex to the waking call of Islamic supremacy which was on the verge of collapse. Although the advocacy is responsible for the current political instability in Arabia, it is my humble submission that the heeding of the Arab rulers to the majority voice of their citizens by returning to the Islamic system remains the only available means of charting everlasting resolution to the hullabaloo. The political antecedents in Egypt, Algeria, and other Arabia countries have testified to the fact that the majority of Muslims in contemporary times have resorted to subjecting their nations to the Islamic system.

From the *Salafi* School, the *Haddādiyah* group bears the front burner of *Takfir*. The dissented *Salafi* group is attributed to Maḥmūd Al-Ḥaddād, an Egyptian, who once lived in Saudi Arabia and had interacted with Shaykh Rabīʿu Al-Madkhalī and Muhammad al-Amān Al-Jāmiy in Madinah before they fell out with one another<sup>35</sup>. The group has declared preceding *Salafi* scholars such as An-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar, and Shawkānī as sheer heretics whose books should be set ablaze for the virus they

---

<sup>33</sup>Bahansāwi, *Shubuhātun Ḥawla Al-Fikr al-Islāmi al-Mucāṣir*, 44.

<sup>34</sup>Ibrahim Ubayd, *Adwān Cala Shīcar Al-Islām Huwa al-Hillu* (Alexandria: Ibda, 2006).

<sup>35</sup>Abu ‘Ammar Al-Hudhayfi, “Fitnat al-Haddādiyah,” 2018, www.subulhuda.com.

contain. Adherents of the ideology have also condemned all current *Salafī* scholars such as Ibn Bāz, Al-Albāni, Al-Madkhali, Ibn' Uthaymīn, and hosts of others by describing them as new *Murjiat* (the sect that refuses to declare erring Muslims as disbelievers). It is worthy of note that virtually all modern *Salafī* scholars are against *Ḥaddādiyah* because it utilizes mockery, abuse, fabrication, and disintegration as the basic methodology of calling to Islam.

The upsurge of the trend of *Takfīr* among contemporary Muslim youths has been traced by Qaradawi to four major factors, namely the conspicuous manifestation and propagation of unbelief in the Muslim society, the lackadaisical attitude of a large number of Muslim scholars towards the practice of *Kufr*, the state-launched molestation and harassment of the peaceful Islamists in Arabia nations, and half-baked knowledge being displayed by many youths whose zeal supersedes their erudition.<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that the aforementioned factors are majorly responsible for the perpetuation of unregulated *Takfīr* in the contemporary world. In a bid to address this phenomenon, scholars have emphasized the need to inculcate the ethics and regulations of identified *Takfīr*.

Albāni argues the usage of *Kufr* does not have the permanent meaning of denouncing faith; rather the word has been used in the Qur'an and hadith for any act that is unIslamic. He supported his argument with the explanation by Ibn 'Abbās of the word: *Kāfirun*, i.e. unbelievers which were mentioned in Q5:44 as rendering the meaning of lesser un-believing.<sup>37</sup> Ibn Taymiyah<sup>38</sup> establishes that not all perpetrators of an unbelieving act would become a non-believer except after which the conditions and barriers to doing so are well established. Among the conditions that need to be fulfilled before one can be identified as renouncing his faith include that he should be fully aware of the legal implication of his action, the disbelieving act allegedly committed should not have been done through exercising juristic interpretation (*Ta'nīl*), and evidence must have been established against his action in a manner that does not accommodate further excuse for his action.<sup>39</sup> The compliance to these conditions will no doubt subject the exercise of *Takfīr* to its barest minimum.

### **Biography of Imam Barbahāri**

By name he is Abū Muḥammad, Al-Ḥasan bin 'Ali bin Khalaf al-Barbahāri, born in Baghdad in the year 226 A.H. He was a prominent scholar in the Hanbali School of law, who received training from prominent students of Imam Aḥmad such as al-Marrūzi (d. 294 A.H.) and at-Tustariyy (d. 1131 C.E.). Most of the sets of

---

<sup>36</sup>Qaradawi, *Zāhirat Al-Ghulūm Fi al-Takfīr*, 23.

<sup>37</sup>Al-Albani, *Fitnat at-Takfīr*, 7.

<sup>38</sup>Aḥmad Abdul-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū'at al-Fatāwā* (Cairo: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 2006).

<sup>39</sup>Jibrīn, *Ḍawābiṭu Takfīr al-Mu'ayyan*, 11.

information about his life were reported in the biographic works made by his fellow *Hanābilahs* such as adh-Dhabi, Ibn al-‘Imād, and Ibn Abi Ya’lā. It is worthy of note that the aforementioned works are highly characterized by much bias in favor of Barbahāri. However, from the available records given by his Hanbali biographers, a critical mind will still have much ground for proper identification of his lifestyle.

He has been reported of being a sheer ascetic. He rejected his legal share from the estate of his father, which was an estimated 70,000 dirham<sup>40</sup>. All his biographers kept mute on the reason for his decision but used the incident as a testimonial to his asceticism. His opponent may argue that his attitude here should not be taken as a mark of asceticism rather it is a sign of religious extremism since he should accept what is given to him by law and then redistribute after to the needy among his adherents.

Another point being emphasized in Barbahāri’s biography is his fanaticism toward the school of Imam Ahmad, which major feature is ultra-conservatism and literalism towards the texts of religion. He became a hero in the Hanbali School because of his sheer attack and antagonism with the non-Hanbalis of his time. When al-Ash’ari (d.936 C.E.) entered Baghdad, he visited Barbahāri to show him his efforts in the refutations of the non-Hanbalis such as al-Jubāī and Abū Hāshim. Barbahāri responded him he was not aware of any effort other than that of Aḥmad. Al-Ash’ari came back to him with his new release titled: “*Al-‘Ibānah*” on the creed of Aḥmad, Barbahāri shunned him and the former never came to Baghdad again until the latter was expelled from it by the establishment<sup>41</sup>. The above-mentioned display of over-addiction to the Hanbali school was echoed by one of his followers when a non-Hanbali Muslim tagged him as a follower of the Hanbali school. He faced him and said: “the followers of Hanbali School are of three categories, namely those who are used to fasting and praying, those who are used to seeking knowledge, and those who are used to slapping their opponents such as you”. He then came closer to him with a hot slap on his face<sup>42</sup>. This story was not seen by Barbahāri’s biographers as a negative account of his lifestyle rather it was reported with all vigor to establish how he was very hostile to the heretics. A perusal of his thought about fellow Muslim opponents will neutralize any amazement from the above action of his follower.

Barbahāri is popular with exaggerated hatred and grudge against non-Hanbali Muslims of his time. He regarded every Muslim outside the thought of Hanbalism-no matter his piety and contribution to Islam- as a heretic and

---

<sup>40</sup>Muhammad bin Ahmad Adh-Dhabi, *Siyar A‘alām an-Nubalāi* (Cairo: Darul Hadith, 2006), 395.

<sup>41</sup>Muhammad bin Muhammad Ibn Abī Ya’lā, *Ṭabaqāt Al-Hanābilah* (Beirut: Darul Ma’rifah, 2008), 56.

<sup>42</sup>Abdul-Hayy bin Aḥmad Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt Adh-Dhabab Fi Akbbār Man Dhababa* (Beirut: Daru Ibn Kathir, 1986), 67.

innovator who must be avoided, detested, boycotted, and shunned. His biographers attributed to him the following statements as his description of his opponents: “scorpion is the quintessence of the innovators; because it used to bury its head and arms in the sand while its tale is displayed. It bites at any given opportunity. The innovators also conceal their identity until they become accepted by the society they now strike”.<sup>43</sup> Hedoes not accept any debate with his opponents, as evident in his statement: “sitting with the innovators for the sake of admonishing them is key to benefit, while for the sake of debate is a padlock to benefit”. Qaḥṭāni gives a background to the exaggerated hatred of the so-called innovators by Barbahāri. He argues that his timewas characterized by a high presence of various ideological sects such as the Qarāmitah, Jahmiyyah, Mu'tazilah, and Karrāmiyyah, etc. Because of the influencethe aforementioned innovative sects enjoyed in the Muslim community, there was a need for a counter-religious group that would demolish their structures.<sup>44</sup> This argument may not hold water because countering a particular sect needs intellectual polemicsthan resorting to assault and abuse as the work of Barbahāri is heavily characterized.

The interface between Barbahāri and the establishment of his time is another area that attracts the attention of his biographers. His harsh treatment of his opponents triggered a conspiracy against him through the channel of the state authority. He and his followers were banned from public appearances during the regime of Abbasid ruler, al-Qāhir. The persecution was implemented by the ruler's minister in Baghdad, Ibn Muqlah, who forced Barbahāri to exile and terminated many of his followers.<sup>45</sup> The Hanbali scholars claimed that the minister due to his action secured the wrath of Allah by passing through the most traumatic stage in his life. They alleged that the ruler later fell out with Ibn Muqlah, and ordered his home to be set ablaze. The latter was jailed and became blind because of the unremitting weeping<sup>46</sup>. It is interesting that after the relief experienced by Barbahāri consequent upon the trial of Ibn Muqlah, he and his followers became the victims of a more threatening persecution, this time around from Khalifah ar-Radi whose declaration against them forced Barbahāri to die in the secret exile where no one witnessed his funeral except one slave.<sup>47</sup> His biographers differ as to his exact age when he died. Some of them claimed 96 while others claimed 77.

Generally speaking, Barbahāri was a great scholar who enjoys the respect of adherents of Hanbalism. He produced other prominent scholars in the school, such as Ibn Battah al-'Ukbari, Ibn Sam'un, Muhammad bin 'Uthmān, etc. Many of

---

<sup>43</sup>Adh-Dhabi, *Siyar A'alam an-Nubalāi*, 396.

<sup>44</sup>Qaḥṭāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 11.

<sup>45</sup>Ismā'il bin Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah Wan Nihāyah* (Damascus: Darul Fikr, 1986), 155.

<sup>46</sup>Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt Al-Ḥanābilah*.

<sup>47</sup>Adh-Dhabi, *Siyar A'alam an-Nubalāi*, 397.

his students followed his pattern, which is summarily focused on displaying hatred and grudge against non-Hanbali Muslims, advocating for ultra-conservatism and literalism towards religious texts and launching an attack on what they termed religious innovations.

### Synopsis of *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*

The book, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah* has been attributed to Barbahāri by many scholars. Ibn Abī Yaʿlā when giving an account of the biography of Barbahāri quoted all the texts of *Sharḥ as-Sunnah* and considered the work as the only surviving academic legacy of the author.<sup>48</sup> Other scholars such as Ibn al-ʿImād<sup>49</sup> quoted some texts from *Sharḥ as-Sunnah* and referred to Barbahāri as the author. However, in one of the manuscript versions of *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, reference was made to one Ghulam Khalil (d. 275 A.H.) as the author. Qaḥṭāni refutes this confusion by establishing Khalil as a notorious fabricator, as attested to by his contemporaries. Thus, attributing *Sharḥ as-Sunnah* to him should be regarded as one of his fabrications.<sup>50</sup>

The work which renders the meaning of *Explanation of the Prophetic Path* is a booklet that takes after the pattern of the previous works of the author's mentors in the Hanbali School. It is noteworthy that the propounder of the School, Imam Ahmad, his son and strong adherent, Abdullah, had previously authored works with the title of *Usul as-Sunnah* and *as-Sunnah* respectively. These works intended to assert the creed of the *Ablus Sunnah*, refute the creed of the Jahmiyyah, Qadariyyah, and other heretic sects in Islam, and condemn religious heresies.

*Sharḥ as-Sunnah* of Barbahāri has to a large extent succeeded in accounting for the major creed of the orthodox Muslims, most especially at a time when the creed was facing a serious threat from the rationalistic pattern of the Jahmiyyah sect. It is noticed that the selected creedal matters addressed by the work were those that have been challenged by the heretic sects of the day. Such matters include the position of Sunnah in Islam, the companion as the yardstick of guidance, leadership, and followership, the requirement of *Īmān* (faith), the beatific vision, physical punishment and enjoyment in the grave, status of the Glorious Qur'an, predestination, etc.

In all the aforementioned matters, the Jahmiyyah sect was the target. Hence, a fair portion of the work targets the opposing sects. The author did not mince words in declaring the sects by their names, as he did in the following statements: "Observing prayers behind anyone is accepted except if the Imam is of Jahmiyyah

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt Al-Ḥanābilah*, 32.

<sup>49</sup>Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt Aḍb-Dhabab Fi Akhbār Man Dhababa*, 45.

<sup>50</sup>Qaḥṭāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 16.

sect, then you will need to re-observe the prayer”.<sup>51</sup> In another instance, the author remarked, “If you heard the tag of *Nāṣibi* from anyone, then bear witness such a person is of Shi’ah sect. And if you heard someone labeling others as *Mushabbihu* then, bear witness he is of the Jahmiyyah sect. You can identify someone belonging to the Mu’tazilite sect with the usage of the word: *Tawḥīd*, likewise anyone labeling others as *Mujbir* is of the Qadariyyah sect”.<sup>52</sup>

It should be noted that the attack of Barbahāri on the *Jahmiyyah* was much more severe than other sects. This can be confirmed by the number of times he mentioned the sect in his work. Probably the attack might be prompted by the gravity of political persecution meted out by the Jahmiyyah-led regime against the Hanabilah. Imam Ahmad and others were jailed for not abdicating to the creed of Jahmiyyah. Barbahāri alluded to this when he accounted for how the orthodoxy became unpopular after being the status-quo, through using the power of establishment against the orthodox scholars.<sup>53</sup> The gravest atrocity by the Jahmiyyah, according to Barbahāri, includes giving priority to the reason above text, rejecting the meaning of the attribute of Allah such that the Creator, according to their description, is akin to a non-living abstract, regarding the Qur’an as a creature, adopting logic and theology, discouraging from Jihad and congregational prayer and philosophizing the textual provisions. The mentioned atrocities of the Jahmiyyah invited the sheer approach adopted by Barbahāri in his work. The incessant declaration of some acts as a sign of disbelief, as his work is replete with, targets the Jahmiyyah who are apostates according to the author.

Another feature of *Sharḥ as-Sunnab*, as it obtains in other Hanbali works, is advocacy for literalism and textualism and condemning the essence of reason and intelligence in the proper contextualization of religious texts. Barbahāri in many places has always emphasized *Taqīd* (indoctrination) as a mark of the orthodox Muslims, as evident in the following statement of his: “Be informed that analogy is not accepted in *Sunnab*, rather the Prophetic way is built on blind followership of the Prophetic actions, without asking questions concerning how or why”.<sup>54</sup> In a bid to sustain the indoctrinated methodology, Barbahāri forbids any interaction, dialogue, or debate with his opponents. He even warns against anyone having a peaceful interaction with them.<sup>55</sup>

Another point of interest in *Sharḥ as-Sunnab* is the consecration and over-hyping accorded by its author to it in two conspicuous places. One such place reads: "Anyone who accepts and believes in the content of this work is a perfect adherent

---

<sup>51</sup>Ali bin Khalaf Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnab* (Cairo: Maktabat Sunnah, 1996), 56.

<sup>52</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnab*, 61.

<sup>53</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnab*, 47.

<sup>54</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnab*, 28.

<sup>55</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnab*, 63.

of *Sunnah*; whereas anyone who disbelieves or he is skeptical about even a letter of the content of this work has been possessed by his whims”.<sup>56</sup> Qahtani disapproves of this statement and dismissed it as a manifestation of extremism by the author.<sup>57</sup> Najmi<sup>58</sup> condemns Barbahāri and describes his statement as tantamount to equalizing the Glorious Qur’an with his work. Hajuri follows suit by condemning the author for over-hyping his work to the level of sacred scriptures.<sup>59</sup> That all those who condemned the author’s consecration of his work share the same *Salafi* and Hanbali creed with him is a testimonial to the fact that the author goofed in his submission.

### ***Takfīr Tendency in Sharḥ as-Sunnah: A Critique***

A regimented sojourn into the book under consideration shows that the work is replete with a plethora of careless usage and declaration of apostasy on unworthy acts. This observation has been noticed by Najmi<sup>60</sup>. However, the present effort will attempt to highlight those areas that the author unjustifiably labels as an act of disbelief and subject them to academic discussion. It is noteworthy that we are not concerned with the aspect of *Takfīr* that is unanimously accepted by Muslims, such as where the author declares: “anyone that negates the eternal knowledge from Allah has become a disbeliever”.<sup>61</sup> areas such as this are not condemnable, but are too infinitesimal compared to the ones this research decides to analyze.

Barbahāri declares that "anyone that differs with the Companion of the Prophet in any religious matter has become an apostate".<sup>62</sup> This statement presupposes the Companion's position as a sacred source of the Islamic faith. There is no doubt over the fact that the Companion as individuals are extolled by the provisions of Qur’an and *Sunnah*, as obvious in Q48:29 and 18, however, that does not place their religious position to the rank of unequivocal provision of the Qur'an. It is a known fact that even a contravention of equivocal texts of the Qur'an does not render one an apostate, as postulated by Ibn Taymiyah<sup>63</sup>, invoking such a declaration on contravening the position of the Companion, without further clarification is too loose. The scholars of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence) have discussed the place of the statement or action of a Companion in the sources of *Shari’ah*, with a consensus made over the validity of the agreement

---

<sup>56</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 68.

<sup>57</sup>Qahtāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 68.

<sup>58</sup>Najmi, *Irshād As-Sāri Bi Sharḥ Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Imām al- Barbahāri.*, 78.

<sup>59</sup>Hajūri, *Fath al-Bāri ‘Ala Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Barbahāri*, 63.

<sup>60</sup>Najmi, *Irshād As-Sāri Bi Sharḥ Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Imām al- Barbahāri.*, 79.

<sup>61</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 68.

<sup>62</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 26.

<sup>63</sup>Ibn Taymiyah, *Majmū’at al-Fatāwā.*, vol.4, 234.

of *Ṣaḥābah* as religious evidence, while polemics continue over their positions.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the religious matters in which the Companions had a position can be classified into two, namely those that enjoyed a clear-cut textual legitimacy and those that lacked such. In the former, the *Ṣaḥābah* were able to formulate an agreement due to the non-equivocality of the texts; emulating them in this context is an emulation of what is clear in the faith. However, in the latter, one is at liberty to follow what is more convincing to him even if it contravenes the position of some Companions. Conclusively, Barbahāri is too myopic in his submission of this discourse.

Another issue in which Barbahāri carelessly pronounces apostasy is the beatific vision of Allah in this world other than the hereafter which is the meeting point of all Ahlus Sunnah scholars.<sup>65</sup> Qahtani suggests he is referring to some extremist Sufis who used to claim to see Allah while alive.<sup>66</sup> It should be clarified that even the said Sufis only claimed that in the dream. Ibn Taymiyah<sup>67</sup> despite being a prominent adherent of the Hanbali school, as Barbahāri was, asserted the possibility of sighting Allah in the dream, and even justified the statement attributed to their Imam, Ahmad, regarding sighting Allah hundred times. An issue with this kind of complexity and diversity even in the School of a scholar should have enjoyed a little consideration of respect, other than jumping into a blank declaration of it as an element of apostasy.

The worst instance where Barbahāri pronounces *Takfīr* on a worthless matter is when he states, “Anyone who legalizes what contravenes the content of this work is not practicing the faith. His case is akin to the one that disbelieves in a letter in the Qur’an; he becomes an apostate despite believing in other words of the Qur’an”.<sup>68</sup> This statement, though has been condemned by many contemporary scholars of modern Salafism who shared the same ideology with Barbahāri, it is observed that they failed to offer a befitting castigation commensurate with the gravity of the statement. The statement is bereft of the consecration of human interpretation of the religious text. This attitude has been the convention of extremist groups in Islam from the past to the present time. They tried to accord sacredness to their religious interpretation which is a product of a fallible source<sup>69</sup>. It is worthy of note that many castigators of the quoted statement failed to figure out the theological implication of equalizing a human work with the divine scripture, as it is inherent in

---

<sup>64</sup>Abdulkareem Zidan, *Al-Wajūz fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, (Cairo: Muassasat Risalah, 1996), 261.

<sup>65</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 28.

<sup>66</sup>Qaḥṭāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 28.

<sup>67</sup>Ibn Taymiyah. *Majmū’at al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, 235

<sup>68</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 51.

<sup>69</sup>Qaradawi, *Zābirat Al-Ghulūm Fi al-Takfīr*. Cairo: Maktabat Wabbab. Qarni, Muhammad Abdullah.

Barbahāri's declaration. The consecration arrogated by the author to his work has been widely accepted by a large number of modern *Salafis* who have adopted its content as the perfect representation of the comprehensive message of Prophet Muhammad as handed down from one generation to another.<sup>70</sup>

The failure of Barbahāri in some places in his work to differentiate between the religious heresies that make one seize to be Muslim and lesser ones has created the impression that he regards every heretic Muslim as an apostate. His following statement supports this allegation: "Many innovations in Islam started in small sizes. Many people embraced them and became carried away until they couldn't forsake them. Thereafter, the innovations became the convention and their perpetrators later abandoned Islam".<sup>71</sup> Though the author asserts the existence of lesser innovations, he stylishly presents every lesser innovation as capable of leading out of Islam, especially when it is well established among the people. This connotation has much inclination to *Takefīr* because the author fails to acknowledge the long-time debate over the permissibility of some sets of religious innovations and their roles in uplifting the purposes of *Shari'ah*.<sup>72</sup> The fallacy inherent in the statement emanates from the author's conviction that every innovation is a window to apostasy. While we agree that this notion may be true in selected cases of religious innovation, it is too sweeping for Barbahāri to resort to generalization in this complex issue.

In many places, Barbahāri is seen to have made a blank declaration of his contemporaries as an apostate. He states, "Beware of your contemporaries and be cautious of whom you relate with, this is because people are likely to have become apostate in this time".<sup>73</sup> The author lived in the third century of the Islamic Calendar during the Abbasid regime. The era was characterized by the flourishing of intellectual outputs and theological polemics among Muslims due to the contact of the Muslim community with foreign civilizations. The challenge of reacting to the new developments emanating from external contact gave birth to the emergence of Muslim Philosophers and theologians mainly from the Mu'tazilite and Ashā'irah. These new groups defended the creed of Islam against the castigation of the atheists of the day through the adoption of the viable weapon being used by the foes of Islam—power of reason. These new Muslim defenders had to review some sets of the orthodox creed which are only premised on indoctrination and are not appealing to a modern sophisticated mode of reasoning and rationalization. This would be the genesis of unending conflict between the orthodox as represented by Hanābilah to

---

<sup>70</sup>Arikewuyo, "A Comparative Study of the Revivalist Approach of Salafiyah and Muslim Brotherhood-Oriented Groups in Yorubaland."

<sup>71</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharh as-Sunnah*, 27.

<sup>72</sup>Abdul-Kabir Yunus, *At-Ta'rif Bil Bid'ah* (Cairo: Darus Sahwah, 2007).

<sup>73</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharh as-Sunnah*, 64.

which Barbahāri belonged and the theologians who dominated the era in which Barbahāri lived. Barbahāri has warned against learning *Kalām* (theology) in many places in his work. However, from his incessant attack on the Muslim theologians who have also contributed to the development of Islam against the castigation of the non-Muslim philosophers, it is glaring that Barbahāri belongs to the extremist Hanābilah as against the fair ones such as Ibn Taymiyah. Ibn Taymiyah, despite being opposed to the methodology of the Muslim theologians and rationalists, commends their roles in defending the fundamentals of the Islamic faith in the face of the attack of the non-Muslim philosophers.<sup>74</sup>

Another form of *Takfīr* tendency in Barbahāri's work is his advocacy for treating non-Hanbali Muslims whom he described as people of *Bid'ah* in a worse manner than the original disbelievers. He narrated some unauthentic statements to previous scholars concerning the importance of harassing and intimidating heretic Muslims. Some of the narrations read, "Anyone who listens to a people of heresies is out of Allah's caring".<sup>75</sup> He also narrates that, "Anyone that loves people of heresies, Allah will render his deed non-rewardable and the light of Islam would be removed from his heart".<sup>76</sup> "Anyone that respects people of heresies has invariably aided the destruction of Islam. Anyone that laughs at people of heresies has looked down upon the Qur'an, and anyone that gives the hand of his daughter in marriage to people of heresies has broken the womb of her daughter, and anyone that attends the funeral of people of heresies will be in the wrath of Allah till he returns".<sup>77</sup> The aforementioned traditions were quoted by Barbahāri to support his stern and hostile position against non-Hanbali Muslims, despite the judgment of experts of hadith on them as being unauthentic.<sup>78</sup> The narrations imply that people of heresies are to be treated in a worse manner than Christians and Jews whom Allah permits Muslims to get married with, smiled at, respect, and attend their funeral.<sup>79</sup> It should also be noted that the narrations obviously contradict the provisions of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* that preach brotherhood and mutual love among fellow Muslims. One is inclined to accept that Barbahāri doesn't regard people of heresies as true Muslims because of his exaggerated hatred against them. This trend has been emulated by his students such as Ibn Baṭṭāh who also copied these narrations in his work.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibn Taymiyah. *Majmū'at al-Fatāwā*, vol.4, 230.

<sup>75</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 71.

<sup>76</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 70.

<sup>77</sup>Barbahāri, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 77.

<sup>78</sup>Qaḥṭāni (ed.), *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, 77.

<sup>79</sup>Da'wah Institute of Nigeria, *Muslim Relations with Christians, Jews and Others*, (Minna, Islamic Education Trust, 2018), 95.

<sup>80</sup>Ubaydullah Ibn Baṭṭāh, *Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā*, (Riyadh: Dar Rayah, 2005).

## Conclusion

*Takfir* becomes a condemnable act in two forms, namely when it is *Mu'ayyan* (identified) targeted at a particular individual by someone who is not sanctioned to do so by the *Shari'ah*, and when it is directed at a particular act without substantive and clear-cut evidence from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Many textual provisions warning against the condemnable act of *Takfir* as quoted in the main body of this research. Hence, *Takfir*'s tendency is blame-worthy in Islam.

The subject of *Takfir* in the contemporary world has always rallied around the rulers operating non-Islamic systems in Muslim countries. Sayyid Quṭb is seen as the lead advocate for this tendency through his famous two logos of *Hakimiyyah* and *Jahiliyyah* concepts. There is a lot of debate concerning whether him being guilty of, or not, promoting the tempo of *Takfir* in the contemporary world. It is our conviction that there is a likelihood that the statements of Quṭb are taken out of context by his critics and the advocates of *Takfir* respectively. That the current Muslim community thrives on an un-Islamic pattern is incontrovertible by all, extending that judgment to the Muslim individuals by the aforementioned texts of Sayyid Quṭb is obscure as some texts therein leave the impression that an un-Islamic society can only be sustained by nominal Muslims who have breached the basic principles of Islam. It is believed that such an impression is not out of place but the accusation of declaring all Muslims as disbelievers by the author needs to be proven beyond doubt before it can hold water. Hence, Quṭb should be credited for revitalizing the contemporary *Ummah* from the slumber of the inferiority complex to the waking call of Islamic supremacy which was on the verge of collapse.

From the study of Barbahāri's *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, it is asserted that his target was the rationalist Jahmiyyah sect. The harsh confrontation by the author against this sect was prompted by the heterodox and anti-textual position of the sect, coupled with the political persecution of the orthodox scholars by the rulers who had been negatively influenced by the Jahmiyyah teachings. Considering this notable peculiarity, one is convinced that the *Takfir*-laden approach of the author in his work was triggered by the nature of those he targets. It will be out of context to apply his texts to the generality of non-Hanbali Muslims who don't share the grave and dangerous creeds of the Jahmiyyah. This is the point where many modern *Salafis* who hold the work in high esteem become guilty. They adopt the letters of Barbahāri's texts as a general guideline for relating with their opponents, even if their religious differences are not up to the standard of the heretic Jahmiyyah.

The study reveals that Barbahāri is guilty of loose declaration of worthless matters as an act of apostasy. Some of the matters in which he displayed the *Takfir* tendency are differing from the Companions in any religious matter, the beatific vision of Allah in this world, consecration of his work, treating Muslims as non-believers, and sweeping declaration of his contemporaries as apostates. In all the

mentioned, Barbahāri is guilty of loose pronouncement of disbelief on worthless issues.

## References

- Adh-Dhabi, Muhammad bin Ahmad. *Siyar A'alām an-Nubalāi*. Cairo: Darul Hadith, 2006.
- Al-Albanī, Nasirudeen. *Fitnat at-Takfir*. Kano: Tsandari Islamic Bookshops, n.d.
- Al-Bukhāri, Muhammad bin 'Ismā'il. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri*. Cairo: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2008.
- Al-Hudhayfi, Abu 'Ammar. "Fitnat al-Haddādiyah," 2018. www.subulhuda.com.
- Al-Yaqoubi, Mohammad. *Refuting ISIS- A Rebuttal of Its Religious and Ideological Foundations*. USA: Sacred Knowledge, 2015.
- Arikewuyo, Nafiu Ahmad. "A Comparative Study of the Revivalist Approach of Salafiyah and Muslim Brotherhood-Oriented Groups in Yorubaland." Kwara State University, 2019.
- Bahansāwi, Sālim. *Shubuhātun Ḥawla Al-Fiker al-Islāmi al-Mucāṣir*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Darul Wafāi, 1989.
- Barbahāri, Ali bin Khalaf . *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*. Cairo: Maktabat Sunnah, 1996.
- Bukhāri, Muhammad bin Isma'īl . *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*. Cairo: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2008.
- Dadau, Muhammad al-Hasan. *At-Takfīr*. Mauritania: Ministry of Endowment, 2015.
- Da'wah Institute of Nigeria, Muslim Relations with Christians, Jews and Others. Minna, Islamic Education Trust, 2018.
- Ḥajūri, Yahyā. *Fath al-Bārī 'Ala Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Barbahāri*, n.p, 1433 A.H.
- Ibn Abī Ya'lā, Muhammad bin Muhammad. *Ṭabaqāt Al-Hanābilah*. Beirut: Darul Ma'rifah, 2008.
- Ibn al-'Imād, Abdul-Hayy bin Aḥmad. *Shadharāt Adh-Dhabab Fi Akhbār Man Dhahaba*. Beirut: Darul Ibn Kathir, 1986.
- Ibn Baṭṭāh, Ubaydullah . *Al-Ibānah al-Kubrā*. Riyadh: Dar Rayah, 2005.
- Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'il bin Umar. *Al-Bidāyah Wan Nihāyah*. Damascus: Darul Fikr, 1986.
- . *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*. Cairo: Darul Fikr, 1999.
- Ibn Mandhūr, M. *Lisān al-ʿArab*. Cairo: Dār al-Mʿārif, n.d.
- Ibn Taymiyah, Aḥmad Abdul-Ḥalīm. *Majmū'at al-Fatāwā*. Cairo: Al-Maktab al-Islami, 2006.
- ʿImārah, Muhammad. *Ihyāu al-Khilāfat al-Islāmiyyah*. Cairo: Darus Salam, 2011.
- Kadivar, Jamileh. "Exploring Takfir, Its Origins and Contemporary Use: The Case of Takfiri Approach in Daesh's Media." *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 7, no. 3 (September 2020): 259–85.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2347798920921706>.
- Madkhalī, Rabi'u. *Manhaj al-Anbiyāi*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Hadiy al-Muhammadi, 2007.
- Najmi, Ahmad Yahya. *Irshād As-Sāri Bi Sharḥ Sharḥ as-Sunnah Lil Imām al-Barbahāri*. Damascus: Maktabah al Furqon, 2021.

- Qaradawi, Yusuf. *Al-Ijtihād al-Mu'āṣir*. Cairo: Dar at-Tawzi', 1994.
- . *Zabirat Al-Ghulm Fi al-Takfir*. Cairo: Maktabat Wabbah. Qarni, Muhammad Abdullah. Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 1990.
- Qarni, Muhammad Abdullah. *Ḍawābiṭ At-Takfir*. Cairo: Muassasat Risalah, 1992.
- Qutb, Sayyid. *fi Dhilāl al-Qur'an*. Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2004.
- Rasheed, Abdulganiy & Rabi'u, Aliyu, "The Nexus between the Khawārij Theological Misconception of Īmān (Faith) and Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria" *Journal of Usuluddin* 48, no. 1 (2020): 113-145, <https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol48no1.6>. Timani, H.S. *Takfir in Islamic thought*. Lexington Books, 2018.
- Ubayd, Ibrahim. *Adwān Cala Shīcar Al-Islām Huwa al-Hillu*. Alexandria: Ibda, 2006.
- Yunus, Abdul-Kabir. *At-Ta'rīf Bil Bid'ah*. Cairo: Darus Sahwah, 2007.
- Zidan, Abdulkareem. *Al-Wajīz fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. Cairo: Muassasat Risalah, 1996.