

## CHAPTER 4

### APPROACHES TO OVERCOME THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF *TAKFIR*

#### 4.1 Introduction

In Islamic jurisprudence, the declaration of *takfir* carries profound implications, which required strict adherence to specific conditions to secure justice and prevent harm. Misunderstanding or misapplication of *takfir* can lead to division and discord within the Muslim community. This chapter delves into approaches that aim to overcome the misunderstanding of *takfir* by exploring the essential conditions under which it can be declared. By emphasizing clarity, evidence, intention, knowledge, and the role of qualified scholars, this accentuates the importance of upholding these principles to promote unity and preserve the integrity of Islamic teachings.

#### 4.2 Disseminate Accurate Information and Knowledge

The misunderstanding of *takfir* could be handle by spreading the right knowledge and information related to the issue. The main factor of the emergence of *takfir* is due to lack of knowledge and not understanding certain aspects in Islamic teaching and principles (Hamdani, 2024). There are some people interpret Qur'anic verses and Hadith by using its own perspective and understand it without referring to any reliable sources or Islamic scholars. This situation could lead them to see the verses by its literal meaning and not by its hidden meaning (Hamdani, 2024). There are many verses from Allah has its subtle and implicit meaning, therefore, we must look at the verses from different views and as a wide context, not as a narrow context.

Additionally, many principles and laws mentioned directly in the Qur'an has been replaced by another verses and Prophet Muhammad's P.B.U.H. Hadith which is known as *al-Nasikh* (revoking *Syari'ah* law with a subsequent *Syari'ah* evidence) and *al-Mansukh* (the revoked law) in Islamic principles (Rusli, 2016). There are several types of *al-Nasikh*, which are; ruling and the recitation; ruling without recitation; recitation without ruling; and *nasakh* Qur'an by Hadith (Rusli, 2016). For example, in Hadith by Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H:

هَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا

"I forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them" (Mishkat al-Masabih: 1762)

Based on the hadith, *nasikh* explicitly happened in the same sentence. The command to visit grave is *al-Nasikh* while the prohibition to visit grave is *al-Mansukh* (Rusli, 2016).

It is very crucial for knowledgeable individual to disseminate the right information to the public as it can help to correct the misunderstanding and prevent from the worst case scenario. This step is not only important to rectify publics' understanding but also can educate people which also contribute to a well-informed society about the current issue that already existed since long time ago. Muslim society needs to be educate about *takfir* issue and know about the dangerous of *takfir* so people will not underestimate its negative impact towards Islamic community (Malik, 2024).

In this globalization era, there are many techniques and methods we can use to circulate credible and reliable information related to *takfir* towards public. The first methods are through educational approach which by curriculum development,

workshops and seminars. University plays a pivotal role in shaping understanding of Islamic concept among Islamic youth group. Collaboration with Islamic scholars and educators mainly among lecturers and professors that have educational background related to Islamic religious concepts will help to influence students regarding this matter. This collaboration could create a new syllabus or subjects particularly for Islamic studies students which also available for other students in the university (Mokhtar, 2024).

University authorities should encourage students and academicians to increase research studies associated to this matter which can also contribute to publications of books and scholarly article published by the university (Malik, 2024). In this regard, university should give support through research grant, access to wide resources, platforms for publications, and many more. By granting this support, it will help to reduce challenges in order to conduct research and at the same time enhanced determination among researchers to do research studies regarding *takfir* issues. The results of the research could be published through journal articles or book writing under university publication which can also strengthen university's good reputation among public (Mokhtar, 2024).

Another easier method to share information and knowledge towards Muslim society is by using social media platforms which is through just one click (Ahmad Najaa', 2024). With the existence of internet speed and so many social media platforms that keeps evolve with the progression of time, we need to grab the opportunity to share the knowledge among public society. As Muslim preachers, it is important to know which platforms were most used by each age group among public. By recognizing this

matter, it will help to draft what type of information and how much of it is suitable for certain platforms.

As example, in Facebook platform, which is a type of social networking platform, people usually post their thoughts by using long sentences with formality (Team, 2023). It shows that Facebook is well-suited to disseminate information by lengthy and detail explanation regarding certain topic discussions. While Instagram primarily focus on sharing photos and short videos which also organized by hashtags and geographical tagging. As for this platform, it is highly recommended to use graphical poster contain concise but comprehensive information to attract audiences (Mokhtar, 2024). Multiple graphical posters can be combined and compiled which is able to create short videos and spread it through other social media platforms.

#### **4.3 Addressing Doctrinal Matters**

The issue of *takfir* will not being able to settle if the root causes of the matter not being handle effectively. *Takfir* is an extreme ideology that being held by extremist group in Islam which already existed since the time of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. (Hamdani, 2024). This ideology has spread widely, keep evolving through the changes of time, and had been develop in multiple form of current streams and use various names such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS (Hamdani, 2024). Al-Qaeda and ISIS are the most well-known extremist groups that existed in this current time, that used *takfir* as an approach to support their ideology, punish other Muslims that against them, and commit violence towards another Muslims.

The most dangerous impact of *takfir* is it could lead to murder and genocide against others that differ in terms of ideology from them (Mokhtar, 2024). There are

three matters and issues that could affect *takfir* greatly which are; justifying the killing of Muslims; opposing Muslims; and waging war against Muslims (Mokhtar, 2024). Misguided ideology of Islam could potentially contribute and lead to these three serious matters and if all of these occur, it can be considered as a significant world crisis. The fundamental cause of erroneous belief is they adhere to teachings other than *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah*. Any beliefs other than *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* will facilitates the path for an individuals or groups to declare others as *kafir* (Mokhtar, 2024).

Therefore, as long as the issue of ideology remains unsolved, the issue of *takfir* will still be persist even though the extremist group is no longer existed in the future (Mokhtar, 2024). Even if in the future, current extremist group had successfully been eradicated, there is possibility that another new extremist group will be develop (Mokhtar, 2024). *Aqidah* is the forms of foundational ideology of Islam. Hence, it is important for all Muslims to have a great understanding and practice according to the Islamic principles. A proper grasp and understanding of *Aqidah* based on the teaching of *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* will contribute to foster solidarity and enhance clarity in the theological principles among Muslims (Mokhtar, 2024).

With the attention of handling doctrinal matters, any misunderstanding or misinterpretations of *Aqidah* situation need to be address in more depth. If any heated debate arises concerning *Aqidah* topic surrounding the public, it need to be discuss and investigate with deeper analysis from the responsible parties. Other than that, modern challenges in relation to doctrinal theme which posed by societal changes or other external elements need to be tackle professionally in order to ensure it remains relevant and applicable. These circumstances can be effectively handle by authorized entities such as Mufti of the Federal Territory, and Islamic Religious Department (Malik, 2024).

#### 4.4 Tighten Current Regulation

When it comes to the implications of *takfir*, Malaysia is identified as a peaceful country compared to another Muslim country. The situation in other foreign nation regarding this issue is very concerning especially in Middle East country (Malik, 2024). One of the reason is because of the existence of the extremist group in certain country were quite uncontrolled. Extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda are highly prevalent in their countries, and they can easily recruit the public to join their troops without being prohibited by any responsible party. While the situation in Malaysia is totally contrast because Malaysia has its own regulation to combat the issue from getting escalate which other countries do not have (Malik, 2024).

When there are any evidence and inclination prove that an individual is involved in a terrorist movement, they can be charged under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) (Mokhtar, 2024). The main purpose of the establishment of SOSMA is to provide authorities to investigate and prevent security offenses especially those related to terrorism and subversion. Specific offenses that could be classified as security offenses include acts of terrorism, sabotage, and involvement in organized crime threatening national security. This act allows for preventive detention of suspects without trial up to 28 days. Due to this, there are rumors that this act may be abolished as it violates human rights (Affairs, 2024).

The Malaysian Minister of Home Affairs, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (2023), state that the security laws under the responsibility of ministry particularly SOSMA, is very important to preserve and ensure national security which is why it is still relevant to be used until this day (Ngah, 2023). The Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM)

still require SOSMA to take immediate action in preventing any public disturbance and threats to national sovereignty and the well-being of the citizens (Ngah, 2023). Due to this reason, rather than abolished the act, the government determined to improve current act. To carry out these improvements, internal discussions and workshops with non-governmental organizations, academicians, and other experts need to be done to review proposed enhancements (Ngah, 2023).

In this regard, SOSMA is seen as a favorable idea as it enhances regional cooperation with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This collaborative approach aims to improve the detection and exchange information and intelligence on cross-border criminal activities. ASEAN countries can strengthen their efforts to combat transnational crime by working together which can contribute to regional security and stability (Affairs, 2024). This initiative highlights the significance of regional solidarity in addressing complex security challenges that impact multiple Southeast Asian nations.

#### **4.5 Play Significant Role**

There are a few ideologies that are contradict from the principle of *Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* existed in Malaysia such as Kasim Ahmad, Sisters in Islam, and many more. These sets of principles totally differ from what has been outlined in Islamic law. The doctrine held by Kasim Ahmad completely rejects the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. and totally against Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. (Ahmad, 2014). While Sister in Islam is a non-governmental organization advocates for the rights of Muslim women which they adopted liberal approach in their beliefs, permitting women to lead prayers as *imams* even in the presence of men (Zuraidah Kamaruddin, 2018).

Malaysian citizens, highly aware of deviant teachings that deviate from the mainstream Islamic principles, have collectively opposed these ideologies, prompting the authorities to take decisive legal actions. Citizens of Malaysia did not turn a blind eye but unanimously urging the responsible parties to fulfill their duties so that this deviant teaching does not spread among the community. Unlike Malaysia's approach, where public awareness and legal measures are the main key, a similar situation in the Middle East country might lead to more extreme reactions, such as violent protest due to the region's distinct cultural, political, and social contexts (Malik, 2024).

In this regard, not everyone has the authority to declare someone else as an infidel. This right is reserved solely for the court or the Fatwa Committee. These bodies are not composed of individuals acting alone but operate as groups consist of members who are highly knowledgeable and experienced in Islamic law (Malik, 2024). When an issue of *takfir* arises within the community, the appropriate authorities will do thorough investigation to ensure justice and fairness. For example, if an individual is accused of infidel because they expressed disbelief in God, the responsible parties will conduct investigation to determine whether the person's statement was made out of ignorance of the implications of such declaration or under coercion.

The process involves meticulous scrutiny to understand the context and the intention behind the statement, ensuring that any declaration of *takfir* is based on solid grounds and not on misunderstandings or external pressures (Malik, 2024). The investigation might include interviews, gathering testimonies, and examining evidence to get a full picture of the situation. The goal is to avoid wrongful accusations and ensure that any decision made upholds the principles of justice and Islamic law (Malik, 2024).

This rigid process highlights the importance of due process and the serious nature of

declaring someone as an infidel, which is not a decision to be taken lightly or made without substantial and compelling evidence.

If, by following a comprehensive investigation into an individual or an issue related to *takfir*, the court or Fatwa Committee concludes that the person has indeed been declared an infidel, it becomes mandatory for the leaders or authorities to take legal action against that individual. The government must assume responsibility for enforcing the appropriate punishment, as neglecting to do so could result in significant issue within the community. The process involves several critical steps to ensure that justice is served and that the decision is based on thorough and fair discussion. This might include gathering evidence, consulting with various Islamic scholars, and reviewing all aspects of the case meticulously with the aim to ensure that the ruling reflects a deep understanding of Islamic law and principles.

Once the decision is made, the authorities must act swiftly and decisively. This could involve legal proceedings, public announcements, and ensuring that the punishment aligns with Islamic law and the country's legal framework (Malik, 2024). The government must communicate clearly with the public to explain the reasons behind the decision and the necessity of the actions taken. Failing to address such a serious matter appropriately can lead to confusion and potential violence within the community (Malik, 2024). Therefore, it is the duty of the authorities to maintain order and uphold the principles of justice to prevent any form of societal disruption or chaos.

The importance of this process cannot be overstated, as it preserves the integrity of the legal and religious system and assure community's stability and harmony. In the Middle East, there are established institutional frameworks such as the Fatwa Committee and the courts specifically designed to address matters concerning the

declaration of someone as an infidel. Despite these structures, difficulties arise when governmental authorities opt to defend individuals who have been labeled as such (Malik, 2024). This stance, seen as a failure to uphold judicial decisions and deteriorate trust in the state's commitment to legal and religious principles.

Consequently, it may spur public unrest and acts of vigilante justice as citizens perceive an inequality between official mandates and their implementation in safeguarding societal norms and order. This underscores the critical role that governments, courts, and all stakeholders must play significant role in addressing this issue effectively.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The exploration of the conditions for declaring *takfir* reveals the intricate balance that required between justice, knowledge, and responsibility in Islamic jurisprudence. By adhering strictly to the criteria of clear evidence, sincere intention, comprehensive knowledge, deliberate judgement, and the supervision of qualified scholars, could reduce the risks of misunderstanding and misuse. These conditions not only safeguard the integrity of Islamic teachings but also uphold the unity and dignity of Muslim community. By moving forward, continual education, open to dialogue, and ethical application of these principles remain essential in ensuring that *takfir* serves its intended purpose of preserving religious harmony and justice in society.