

Progressive Islam in Practice

Takfir Series: Part VIII

Takfir: A Violation of Human Rights

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Freedom of Religion

noun.

the right to practice whatever religion one chooses.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Article 18 | Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In the Qur'an - I

The Qur'an is quite explicit granting religious freedom to all people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In a number of Quranic verses, approval of both religious diversity and the freedom to choose one's religion is expressed and mandated as a right to all humans.

**There
is no
compulsion
in religion.**

Qur'an 2:256



“

I worship not that which you worship, nor will you worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which you have been wanted to worship, nor will you worship that which I worship. To you be your way, and to me mine.

Qur'an 109:2-6



”

In the Qur'an - II

Through the revelation of the Qur'an, God forbid Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), from compelling people to believe in God or Islam and in how they practice Islam.

Despite this clear command, directed at the Prophet and therefore all Muslims, Muslim governments and state religious authorities have taken it upon themselves to coerce their citizens into creating a religious identity defined by the state rather than the right of an individual to define their faith, and one's practices.

So, continue to remind all, O Prophet, for your duty is only to remind. You are not there to compel them to believe.

Qur'an 88:21-22

In Hadith

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his fellow Muslims were in the religious minority, persecuted for their religious beliefs, he of course advocated for the freedom to choose one's religion and practice beliefs associated with the religion, freely and safely.

As a political leader of the majority both in Medina and Mecca, Prophet Muhammad continued to advocate for these same freedoms, signing the Constitution of Medina to enshrine tolerance for religious minorities. In Mecca, after it was conquered by the Muslims, Prophet Muhammad said to his former oppressors "Go you are free men", declining the chance to force the Quraysh to accept Islam, manifesting the Qur'an's orders to permit religious freedom and acceptance of diversity of faith and non-faith.

How Can Muslim-Led Governments Promote Religious Freedom?

- 1** Repeal anti-apostasy, anti-blasphemy, & anti-heresy laws, policies, practices & fatwas that institutionalize the discrimination & persecution of individuals on the basis of religion, faith or non-faith.
- 2** Hold legal institutions & state authorities accountable to ensure they uphold & enforce the rule of law without selective bias of religion, or ethnicity & pursue diversity-sensitization initiatives for state-actors.
- 3** Support and engage with civil society campaigns that publicly advocate for & disseminate egalitarian, inclusive, non-violent & critical interpretations & analyses of theological literature & scripture.
- 4** Devise & implement social protection measures to ensure that religious minorities are granted fair, safe & equal access to social services & secular education without fear of physical or mental harm.
- 5** Gather statistical data on acts of violence committed in state jurisdiction, including those of religious motivations & as it relates to economic participation & the enjoyment of public services.

MPV's Stance



We at MPV believe freedom of personhood and conscience are not only essential to all human societies but integral to the Qur'anic view of humanity. All citizens of the world have every right to freely negotiate their faith without fear of threat, punishment, or torture, and to live a life with dignity and with freedom of conscience as the Qur'an demands. Accordingly, we affirm that separation of state and religion is the only way to achieve the Islamic ideal of freedom from compulsion in matters of faith, especially if we wish to see purposeful and all-inclusive global sustainable development.

We welcome and encourage all who are interested in engaging us in this discussion, and insist upon the facilitation of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Let us reclaim our faiths and our cultures and utilize them to strive for the realization of universal values that benefit all.

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