

(4) Status of the Sunnis in Shi'a Fiqh

[By the Grand Ayatullah Sayyid 'Ali Sistani](#)

Question:

As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

An independent [television] channel has repeatedly claimed that Sayyid Sistani (may Allah protect him) has given the fatwa of *kufr* (infidelity) for one who does not believe in Imamate [of the Ahlul Bayt], and among such people are the Sunni brethren. This is based on what has been quoted from Al-Abqathu 'l-'Aqidiyyah website which is under the patronage of the respected Sayyid as claimed in the beginning of the "al-Hiwār aq-Sarīf" program of the channel.

What is your response on their specific claims since they are repeating that almost every day since the beginning of the present month of Ramadhan [1431].

With thanks.

Answer:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

The respected Sayyid Sistani in the manual of his fatwas, *Minhajju 'l-Saliḥin*, vol. 1 (1st edition) p. 138 has clearly stated that a *kāfir* (infidel) is one who

1. does not have a religion
2. or follows a religion other than Islam
3. or follows Islam but rejects what is known as an essential part of the Islamic faith (i.e., what has come from the Prophet [a.s.]) in a way that his rejection leads to belying the Prophet (a.s.) in what he has

conveyed from Almighty Allāh.

By considering the fact that most of our brethren from Ahlus Sunnat wal Jamā'at who deny the Imamate of the Twelve Imams (a.s.) believe that Imamate is not part of [the faith] that was brought by the Prophet (s.a.w.), therefore their rejection does not harm their Islam based on the view of the respected Sayyid.

This is [also] clear from his other fatwas such as:

1. His verdict on obligation of doing the funeral prayer on a Muslim even if he is of a different sect (*madhhab*). (*Minhāju 'āli'n*, vol. 1, p. 106)

2. And his verdict on validity of a Shī'a lady marrying a Muslim from other *madhhab*. (*Minhāju 'āli'n*, vol. 3, p. 70)

3. And his verdict that the Muslims can inherit from one another even if they differ in their *madhhab*, principals and beliefs. (*Minhāju 'āli'n*, vol. 3, p. 323)

In short, whoever is aware of the fatwas of the respected Sayyid knows that **he considers the general Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamā'at as Muslims whose lives are to be preserved, whose properties are sacrosanct, and all rules specific to Muslims would apply on them...**

May Allāh grant you success. Was-salaamu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh.

12 Holy Ramadhan 1431 AH

[Seal of the Office of As-Sayyid as-Sistāni, an-Najaf al-Ashraf]

[By the Grand Ayatullah Wahid Khurasani](#)

Question:

In the name of the Almighty

We are a group who reside in a Sunni neighbourhood, and they call us '*kāfir*' (infidel) and say that Shi'as are *kāfir*. In such a situation, can we retort in kind and treat them as *kāfirs*? Please clarify our religious duty in face of such confrontations.

A group of mu'mineen.

Answer:

In the name of Allāh, the Kind, the Merciful

Whosoever bears witness to the unity of Almighty God and the prophethood of the Last Prophet (s.a.w.) is a Muslim. His life, honour and property is as sacrosanct as the life, honour and

property of a follower of the Ja'fari sect.

Your religious duty towards one who believes in God's unity and the Prophet's messengership, ***even if*** he calls you a kāfir, is cordial association with him. And if they behave wrongly with you, you should not deviate from the right path of truth and justice.

If anyone of them becomes ill, go and visit him; if he passes away, participate in his funeral; if he needs something from you, fulfill it. Accept Allāh's command, ***“And let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably Act equitably, that is nearer to piety;”***[5:8] and follow the Almighty's injunction, ***“And do not say to anyone who offers you peace: You are not a believer..”***[4:94]

Was-salaam 'alaykum wa rahmatullāh.

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