178975 - What Is Taqiyyah?

the question

What is taqiyyah, and who are the people who practise it? In fatwa no. 101272 , you said that it is a term that is particular to the Shi‘ah, and that they are the only ones who practice it. But I talked with some people who said that Ahl as-Sunnah also practice it. Is this true?

Summary of answer

1- Taqiyyah, according to Ithna-`Ashri Rafidis, means presenting outwardly something that is different from what one believes inwardly, as an act of religious devotion.
2- Taqiyyah, according to Ahl as-Sunnah, is something to be resorted to when one has no other choice, and it is an extraordinary measure to be used only in times of extreme necessity. For more, see the detailed answer.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What is Taqiyyah?

Taqiyyah, in the usual and well-known sense, is one of the basic principles of the Ithna-`Ashri Rafidis ; Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jama‘ah differ from them concerning it and it is something that takes them beyond the boundaries of the straight path of Allah.

What is taqiyyah according to Ithna-`Ashri Rafidis?

Taqiyyah in their religion means presenting outwardly something that is different from what one believes inwardly, as an act of religious devotion. Thus they attributed lying and deceit to the religion of Allah, wrongfully and out of enmity.

This corrupt belief has nothing to do with the beliefs (‘aqeedah) of Ahl as-Sunnah. According to Ahl as-Sunnah , lying is one of the attributes of the hypocrites. A person may keep on lying and persist in lying until he is recorded with Allah as a liar. These people tell lies and persist in lying in all things, then they regard that as part of their beliefs and religion.

The way of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jama‘ah is based on truthfulness and justice; lying is not part of their religion, praise be to Allah.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“The Rafidis are the most ignorant and mendacious of sects, and the furthest removed from any knowledge of the texts or rational evidence. They regard taqiyyah as one of the basic principles of their religion, and they tell lies about Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet’s family), the extent of which is known only to Allah. They even narrated from Ja‘far as-Sadiq that he said: “Taqiyyah is my religion and the religion of my forefathers.” But taqiyyah is one of the signs of hypocrisy; in fact in their case, they say verbally that which is not in their hearts, and this is the essence of hypocrisy.” (Majmu‘ al-Fatawa, 13/263)

He also said:

“As for the Rafidis, the basis of their innovation is heresy and the deliberate lying that is widespread among them. They affirmed that when they said: Our religion is taqiyyah. This means that one of them says verbally something other than what is in his heart, and this is lying and hypocrisy. Yet despite that they claim that they are the (true) believers, to the exclusion of other Muslims, and they describe the earliest believers as apostates and hypocrites, when they are the ones who deserve this description. There are no people among those who outwardly profess to be Muslims who are closer to hypocrisy and apostasy than them, and there is no greater number of apostates and hypocrites in any other group than in theirs.” (Minhaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah, 1/30)

It says in al-Mawsu‘ah al-Muyassarah (1/54), which discusses the basic beliefs of the Shi‘ah :

“Taqiyyah: They – meaning the Imami Shi‘ah – regard it as one of the basic principles of their religion, and they regard the one who does not practise it as being the same as one who does not pray. It is obligatory and it is not permissible to refrain from it until the hidden imam appears. Whoever refrains from it before he appears has gone beyond the pale of the religion of Allah, may He be exalted, and the religion of the Imamis.”

Dr. Nasir ibn ‘Abdullah al-Qafari said:

“Al-Mufid defined taqiyyah for them as follows: Taqiyyah means concealing the truth, concealing belief in it, concealing one’s true beliefs from those who differ from one and not showing openly that which may lead to negative consequences in religious or worldly terms.

Thus al-Mufid defined taqiyyah as concealing beliefs for fear of harm from those who disagree with them – namely Ahl as-Sunnah, as is usually the case when they use this term. In other words, it means making an outward display of following the madhhab of Ahl as-Sunnah (which they regard as false), and concealing the Rafidi madhhab, which they believe is true. Hence some Sunnis think that those who adhere to this belief are worse than the hypocrites, because the hypocrites believe that what they are concealing of disbelief is falsehood, and they make an outward display of being Muslims out of fear. But in the case of these people, they think that what they are concealing is truth, and that their path is the way of the messengers and Imams.” (Usul Madhhab ash-Shi‘ah al-Imamiyyah, 2/805)

Taqiyyah according to Ahl as-Sunnah

Taqiyyah – as an idea or concession to be used in extreme circumstances, on a temporary basis – is known to Ahl as-Sunnah, but it is different from the taqiyyah practised by the Rafidis in both general and specific terms. According to Ahl as-Sunnah, it is something to be resorted to when one has no other choice, and it is an extraordinary measure to be used only in times of extreme necessity.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Taqiyyah means saying something contrary to what one believes, for fear of harm that may befall him if he does not resort to taqiyyah.” (Ahkam Ahl adh-Dhimmah, 2/1038)

The basis for it being permissible is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Awliya (supporters, helpers, etc.) instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them.” [Al ‘Imran 3:28]

The words “except if you indeed fear a danger from them” mean: except in the case of one who fears their evil in some countries or at some times. In that case, he may dissimulate (use taqiyyah) by changing his outward behaviour (to protect himself from their evil), without changing what he believes and intends in his heart. For example, al-Bukhari narrated that Abu’d-Darda said: We smile in the faces of some people when our hearts are cursing them (inwardly).” (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 2/30)

It says in al-Mawsu‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 13/186-187

“The view of the majority of Sunni scholars is that the basic principle concerning taqiyyah is that it is disallowed; it is only permissible in the case of necessity, and is permitted only to the extent that is necessary. Al-Qurtubi said: The basic principle concerning taqiyyah is that it is not permissible unless there is the fear of death, severing of a limb or extreme harm, and there is no report to the contrary as far as we know, except that which was reported from Mu‘adh ibn Jabal among the Sahabah and from Mujahid among the Tabi'in.”

Conditions of taqiyyah according to Ahl As-Sunnah

According to Ahl as-Sunnah, in order for taqiyyah to be permissible, there should be fear of harm and the individual should not have any other means of avoiding harm except by resorting to taqiyyah. It is also stipulated that the harm that is feared should be of a type that is extremely hard to bear. The one who resorts to taqiyyah should also note that if he has any other option that

does not involve committing a haram action, then he must choose it. He should also note that he should not indulge in the concession to such an extent that it goes beyond the limits of taqiyyah to the level of negligence by committing haram actions after achieving what is necessary. The basic principle concerning that is what Allah, may He be exalted, said concerning the one who is forced by necessity (interpretation of the meaning): **“But whosoever is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, (for him) certainly, your Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”** [al-An'am 6:145]

Allah, may He be exalted, referred to taqiyyah when He said (interpretation of the meaning):

“Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Awliya (supporters, helpers, etc.) instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself (His Punishment).” [Al ‘Imran 3:28]

Here, Allah warns of His punishment, lest the one who resorts to taqiyyah is tempted to persist in it.

He should also pay attention to his intention, and have the intention that he is only doing something haram out of necessity; he knows that it is haram, but he is availing himself of the concession granted by Allah. If he does it, taking the matter lightly and thinking that there is nothing wrong with it, then he will fall into sin.” (Al-Mawsu‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah, 191-200)

Dr. Nasir al-Qafari said:

“In Islam, taqiyyah is usually used with the disbelievers. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “except if you indeed fear a danger from them” [Al ‘Imran 3:28]. Ibn Jarir at-Tabari said: The taqiyyah mentioned by Allah in this verse is that which is resorted to in order to protect oneself from the disbelievers, not from anyone else. Hence some of the early generations thought that there is no taqiyyah after Allah caused Islam to prevail. Mu‘adh ibn Jabal and Mujahid said: Taqiyyah was practised during the early days of Islam, before the Muslims grew strong. But now Allah has caused the Muslims to prevail so there is no need for taqiyyah. But the

taqiyyah of the Shi'ah is practised with the Muslims, especially Ahl as-Sunnah, to the extent that they think that the best of eras was the era of taqiyyah, as was stated by their shaykh al-Mufid. This may also be noted in the texts that they attribute to the imams, because they regard Ahl as-Sunnah as being worse in disbelief than the Jews and Christians, because the one who rejects the twelve Imams is worse than one who rejects Prophethood.

Taqiyyah – according to Ahl as-Sunnah – is a concession to be used in times of necessity, hence Allah – may He be glorified – exempted it from the principle that prohibits taking the disbelievers as supporters and helpers. Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Awliya (supporters, helpers, etc.) instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself (His Punishment), and to Allah is the final return." [Al 'Imran 3:28]

Allah, may He be glorified, has forbidden taking the disbelievers as supporters and helpers, and has issued a stern warning concerning that, as He says, "and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way" i.e., and whoever transgresses the prohibition issued by Allah in this regard, has severed his connection with Allah. Then He, may He be glorified, says: "except if you indeed fear a danger from them" i.e., except for those who, in some countries or at some times, may fear their evil; in that case he may protect himself from them by his outward words and actions, not by his inward beliefs and intentions.

The scholars unanimously agreed that taqiyyah is a concession that is allowed in the case of necessity. Ibn al-Mundhir said: They are unanimously agreed that if a person is forced to say words of disbelief, to the extent that he fears for his life, and he speaks words of disbelief when his heart is content with faith, he is not to be deemed a disbeliever.

But the one who chooses to be steadfast in this situation is better. Ibn Battal said: And they unanimously agreed that the one who is forced to disbelieve but chooses to be killed will have the greatest reward with Allah.

But among the Shi‘ah, taqiyyah is something else altogether. For them it is not a concession; rather it is one of the pillars of their religion, like the prayer or greater.” (Usul Madhhab ash-Shi‘ah al-Imamiyyah, 2/806-807)

To sum up:

There is a great difference between taqiyyah in the religion of Allah and taqiyyah in the religion of the Rafidis. In Islam, it is a concession in cases of necessity, but for the Rafidis it is nine-tenths of religion, and the one who has no taqiyyah has no religion, according to them.

Ibn Babawayh (a Shi‘i scholar) said:

“Our belief concerning taqiyyah is that it is obligatory, and the one who gives it up is like one who gives up prayer.” (al-I‘tiqadat, p. 114)

As-Sadiq (one of their Imams) said:

“If you said that the one who gives up taqiyyah is like the one who gives up prayer, you would be right.” (Jami‘ al-Akhbar, p. 110; Bihar al-Anwar, 75/414, 412)

What a great difference there is between the two!

And Allah knows best.