



## ***Topic: Ignorance Concerning Matters of Aqeedah***

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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### **Question: Is ignorance an excuse when it concerns issues of Aqeedah?**

**Answer:** The difference of opinion concerning being excused because of ignorance in issues of Aqeedah is similar to other differences of opinion in Fiqh and Ijtihad. It may be that sometimes it is only a difference of opinion linguistically because of (the difficulties) in actually applying a ruling to a particular person. Meaning that it may be that all are in agreement that a certain statement is Kufr, or a certain action is Kufr, or the neglect of something is Kufr, but is the ruling appropriate upon a particular person because of the presence of a requirement (of Takfeer) or the absence of a Maani' (prohibitive measure). Or is it inapplicable because of the lack of some requirements or the presence of some Mawaani' (prohibitive measures).

And that is that ignorance regarding what is Mukaffir (a cause of disbelief) is of two categories.

First: The one who adheres to a religion other than Islaam or does not adhere to any religion and he is not aware that that there is a religion that contradicts what he is upon. Then this one is ruled by what is apparent in the Dunya, and as for in the hereafter, then his affair is with Allaah the most High. The most accepted opinion is that he will be tested in the hereafter with what Allaah wishes, and Allaah knows what they used to do, but we know that they will not enter the fire except through a sin because of his statement, ***“And your Lord treats no one with injustice.”*** [Soorah al Kahf: 49].

We said that he is ruled upon with what is apparent and that is the ruling of disbelief, because he does not attach himself to the religion of Islaam, so it is not possible for him to be ruled as a Muslim. And we said that he will be tested by Allaah in the hereafter because there are many narrations that have come in that regard that Ibn Qayyim rahimahullah mentions in his book Tareeq al Hijratayn when he writes about the eighth opinion regarding the children of the Mushrikeen.

Second: Is the individual that adheres to Islaam but he has lived upon this Mukaffir and it has never come to his mind that that it is in contradiction to Islaam, and none has brought that to his attention, so this one is ruled with the ruling of Islaam in what is apparent. As for

in the hereafter, then his affair is with Allaah, and the book and the Sunnah and the statements of the people of knowledge prove that.

So from the proofs of the Quraan is His statement, ***“And We never punish until We have sent a messenger.”*** [Soorah al Israa: 15]. And His statement, ***“And never will your Lord destroy the towns until He sends to their mother town a messenger reciting to them our verses. And never would We destroy the towns unless the people thereof are Thaalimoon.”*** [Soorah al Qasas: 59]. And His statement, ***“Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allaah after the (coming of) Messengers”*** [Soorah An Nisaa: 165]. And His statement, ***“And We sent not a messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the message) clear for them. Then Allaah misleads whom He wills and guides whom He wills.”*** [Soorah Ibraheem: 4]. And His statement, ***“And Allaah will never lead a people astray after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid.”*** [Soorah at Tawbah: 115]. And His statement, ***“And this is a blessed book which We have sent down, so follow it and fear Allaah, that you may receive mercy. Lest you should say, ‘The book was sent down only to two sects before us (Jews and Christians), and for our part, we were in fact unaware of what they studied.’ Or lest you should say, ‘If only the book had been sent down to us, we would surely have been better guided than they.’ So now has come unto you a clear proof (Quraan) from your Lord, and guidance and a mercy.”*** [Soorah al An’aam: 155-157], to other than that from the verses proving that the proof is not established until knowledge has been given and a clarification has been made.

Then from the Sunnah is what has come in the Saheeh of Imaam Muslim (V.1 P.134) on the authority of Abu Hurairah radiallaahu anhu, that the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam said, ***“I swear by the One in whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, there is no one that hears about me from these nations, meaning the nations of Da’wah, the Jews and the Christians, and then he dies and he does not believe in what I have been sent with, except that he is from the people of the fire.”***

And as for the sayings of the people of knowledge, then it is said in Al Mughni (V.8 P.131), ***“So if he is from those that do not know the obligations such as a newcomer to Islaam, or the one who lives outside the lands of Islaam, or the Bedouins who live far from the population and the people of knowledge, then he is not ruled upon by Kufr.”*** Shaykhul Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah says in his Fatawaa (V.3 P.229), ***“I am always, and the one who sits with me knows this, the strictest of people forbidding Takfeer upon a particular person, or Tafseeq, or sins, unless it is known that the prophetic proofs have been established upon him, that if someone contradicts it he is either a Kaaafir, or a Faasiq, or a sinner. Indeed I have iterated that Allaah has forgiven the Ummah its sins, and that includes the sins in statements and sins in actions, and the Salaf differed in many of these affairs, and none of them claimed upon another Kufr, or Fisq, or sinfulness.”*** To his statement, ***“And I used to clarify what was narrated upon the Salaf and the Aimmah regarding a general statement of Takfeer upon the one who says such and such statement and that is correct, but it is mandatory to separate between a general ruling and a specific ruling.”*** To his statement, ***“And Takfeer, it is a warning and even if his statement rejects a statement of the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam, but it may be that he is new to the religion of Islaam, or he lives at a far distance in the desert, so one like this does not disbelieve with his denial until the***

proof is established upon him, and it may be that this individual has not heard the texts, or he has heard them but they were not authentic with him, or he opposes it for some other reason which causes him to distort the meaning of it, even if it is wrong.

Shaykhul Islaam Muhammad bin Abdil Wahhaab rahimahullah says in *Durur As Sinniyyah* (V.1 P.56), “As for Takfeer, then I make Takfeer of the one who knows the religion of the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam, then after he knows it, he insults it, and he turns the people away from it, and shows hostility to one who practices it, then that is the one that I may Takfeer of.” And he says on page 66, “And as for lies and falsehood, then it is their statement that we make Takfeer of (all of) them and we obligate Hijrah to us upon those who are capable of making their religion known, then all of this is lies and falsity that repels the people from the religion of Allaah and His Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam, and if we do not make Takfeer of those who worship the tomb which is upon Abdul Qaadir, or the tomb which is upon Ahmad Al Badawi, or the likes of these tombs because of their ignorance, and a lack of those who would advise them, so how would we make Takfeer of those that do not commit Shirk with Allaah if they do not make Hijrah to us and they do not disbelieve or fight.”

If this is the requirement of the texts of the Quraan and the Sunnah and the statements of the people of knowledge, then indeed it is a requirement from the wisdom, kindness, and mercy of Allaah the most High, so he will not punish anyone until their excuses have taken away, and the intellects are incapable of understanding the rights of Allaah, and if they were incapable. The human intellect can not know by itself the rights that Allaah has upon us, and if they were capable of understanding this, then the proof would not have been settled by the sending of the Messengers.

So the origin is that someone who is Muslim, remains upon that until it is established that he is no longer upon that by requirement of establishing upon him proof from the Sharee’ah. It is not allowed to be lenient in making Takfeer of him because in that is two great dangers.

Firstly, fabricating a lie upon Allaah in the ruling, and secondly fabricating a lie upon the person by the attribute he is insulted with. As for the first, then it is apparent when someone makes Takfeer of an individual that Allaah does not make Takfeer of. It is like the one who prohibits what Allaah has allowed because the ruling of Takfeer or the absence of it is for Allaah just like the Tahreem (prohibition) of something or the absence of it.

Secondly (fabricating a lie upon the person), is because he is attributing to the Muslim the opposite of what he is, so he says that he is Kaafir when he is far removed from that, and it is befitting that the attribute of disbelief returns to him because what has been authenticated in Saheeh Muslim on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar radiallaahu anhu that the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam said, “If a man claims disbelief for his brother, then that returns to one of them.”<sup>1</sup> And in another narration, “Either he is as he was called, or that returns to him.”<sup>2</sup> And regarding that has come in the Hadeeth of Abu Dhar radiallaahu

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<sup>1</sup> Reported by Imaam Bukhari in *Kitaabul Adab* (H.6104) and by Imaam Muslim in *Kitabul Emaan* (H.60).

<sup>2</sup> Reported by Imaam Muslim in *Kitaabul Emaan* (H.60)

anhu, that the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam said, “And whosoever calls someone by disbelief, or he calls him the enemy of Allaah and it is not as he said, except that it goes back to him.”<sup>3</sup> Meaning (it is not like that) by the ruling of Allaah, and the same in the Hadeeth of Abu Dhar radiallaahu anhu, “And it is not like that”, meaning by the rulings of Allaah the most High.

And this is the second warning; I mean the returning of this attribute of disbelief upon him if his brother is distant from that. And this is a great danger that he should fear falling into, because in most cases, the one who is quick to attribute someone with disbelief is impressed with his own actions and is disdainful of others. So he is impressed with his own actions that may lead him to his own failure, and has pride that calls for the punishment of Allaah the most High in the fire as has come in the Hadeeth that Imaam Ahmad and Abu Dawud have narrated on Abu Hurairah radiallaahu anhu that the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam said, “Allaah says, ‘Pride is my cloak, and Greatness is my Izaar, so who ever contends with me in it, I will throw him in the fire.’”

So it is obligatory that two matters are considered before a ruling of disbelief is made:

Firstly, evidence from the Quraan and the Sunnah that this issue causes disbelief so that he does not invent a lie upon Allaah.

Secondly, the application of this ruling upon this particular person is correct that the requirements of Takfeer are fulfilled and all issues preventing Takfeer are absent.

And from the most important conditions is that this person has knowledge regarding this sin that has obligated his Takfeer because of the statement of Allaah, “**And whosoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in hell; what an evil destination.**” [Soorah An Nisaa: 115]. It is a condition that before they are punished by the fire, they must contradict the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam after the right path has been shown to them.

But, is it a condition to know what his disobedience leads to from disbelief or other than it, or is it sufficient to know only the sin that lead to disbelief even if he is ignorant regarding what it leads to.

The answer: What is apparent is the latter. It is sufficient to only have knowledge of the sin to pass the required ruling (of disbelief etc.) because the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam obligated the Kaffarah upon the person who has sex during the days of Ramadaan because of his knowledge of the sin even though he was ignorant regarding the Kaffarah, and because the married fornicator who knows the forbiddance of fornication is stoned even if he is ignorant of what his fornication leads to, and it may be that if he knew what it lead to, he would have not committed fornication.

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<sup>3</sup> Reported by Imaam Muslim in the Kitaabul Emaan (H.61)

From those matters that would prohibit (Takfeer etc.) is being forced upon the Mukaffir because of the statement of Allaah the most High, **“Whoever disbelieved in Allaah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto whose heart is at rest with faith; but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allaah, and theirs will be a great torment.”** [Soorah An Nahl: 106].

And from those matters that would prohibit (Takfeer etc.) is ones intellect and intent closing on him because he does not know what he is saying because of extreme happiness, or grievance, or anger, or fear, or the likeness of it because of the saying of Allaah, **“And there is no sin on you concerning that in which in you made a mistake, except in regard to what you deliberately intend. And Allaah is Ever Oft-forgiving , Most Merciful.”** [Soorah Al Ahzaab: 5].

And in the Saheeh of Imaam Muslim on the Authority of Anas bin Maalik radiallaahu anhu that the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam, “Allaah is extremely pleased with the repentance of His slave when he turns to Him in repentance than one of you who is upon his camel in the waterless desert and he loses it and upon it was his food and drink, and he has lost all hope, so he comes to a tree and lies down in its shadow losing all hope in finding his camel, and as he is like that, he finds his camel standing in front of him, so he takes it reins, and then he says from extreme happiness, ‘O Allaah, You are my slave, ad I am you lord; he makes a mistake because of his extreme happiness.’”<sup>4</sup>

Also from those things that will prohibit (Takfeer etc.) is that he may have a doubt regarding the interpretation of the Mukaffir so that he thinks that he is upon the truth. Because he does not intend a sin or disobedience so he included in the statement of Allaah, **“And there is no sin on you concerning that in which in you made a mistake, except in regard to what you deliberately intend.”** [Soorah Al Ahzaab” 5]. And because it is the utmost limit of his endeavor, he is included in the statement of Allaah, **“Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope.”** [Soorah al Baqarah: 286]. It is said in Al Mughni, “And if he allows the killing of the innocent, and the taking of their wealth without any doubt and any distorting, then he is also (a Kaafir), but if he does it through distorting (the proofs) like the Khawaarij, then we have mentioned that many of the Fuqaha do not judge them to be Kufaar even though they allow the killing of Muslims and taking their wealth, and they do that in attempt to get closer to Allaah.” Until he says, “And it is known that from the Madh-hab of the Khawaarij was that they made Takfeer of many of the companions of the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam and those who followed them, and they made the spilling of their blood and taking their wealth lawful, and they believed that this will bring them closer to Allaah; regardless of this, many of the Fuqaha do not make Takfeer of them because of their distorting (of the proofs), and also included in this is every forbidden thing that has been allowed because of distorting of proofs such as this.” It comes in the Fatawaa of Shaykhul Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah rahimahullah, “The Bida’ah of the Khawaarij occurs because of their incorrect understanding of the Quraan. They did not intend to contradict it, but they understood from it what it was not a proof of, so they thought it was obligatory to make Takfeer of sinners.” And he says on page 210, “So the Khawaarij contradicted the Sunnah which the Quraan orders us to follow, so they made Takfeer of the believers whom

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<sup>4</sup> Kitaabut Tawbaah [H.2747]

the Quraan orders us to support...and they began to follow the ambiguous verses of the Quraan and the began to change their meanings without knowing its correct interpretation and without being established in knowledge, and without following the Sunnah, and without returning to the group of Muslims that understood the Quraan.” He also says in Majmoo’al Fatawaa, “So indeed the A’immah are united upon the sin of the Khawaarij and their astray ness, and they differed regarding their Takfeer into two well known opinions.” But he mentions, “But there were none from the Sahaabah that made Takfeer of them; not Ali bin Abi Taalib, and not other than him, but rather they ruled upon them as oppressive and aggressive Muslims as narrations have been mentioned upon them in other than this place.” And he says, “And these are the texts upon the A’immah such as Ahmad and other than him.” And he says, “And the deserting Khawaarij whom the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam ordered to fight, and Ameerul Mu’mineen Ali bin Abi Taalib, one of the rightly guided Khulafaa fought them, and the A’immah of the religion from the Sahaaba were united upon fighting them, and the Taabi’een, and those who followed them, and Ali bin Abi Taalib never made Takfeer of them, nor Sad bin Abi Waqqaas, or other then them from the Sahaaba, rather they made them Muslims whose blood was lawful, and Ali did not fight them until they spilled unlawful blood and they attacked the property of Muslims, so he fought them to defend against their oppression and injustice, and not because they were Kufaar. Because of this they did not capture their women, nor take their wealth as booty. Even though these people whose astray ness is established in the texts and by consensus, they did not make Takfeer of them even with the order of Allaah and His Messenger’s sallallaahu alaihi wa sallaam to fight them, so what of those groups who were unclear regarding the truth in matters that those more knowledgeable than them erred in. So it is not allowed for anyone from these groups to make Takfeer of another, and their blood and wealth is not lawful. Even if it is confirmed that they have innovations with them, then how is it when the one making Takfeer also has with them innovation, and it may be that their innovation is worse, and most likely all of them are ignorant regarding the reality of the matter regarding which they differ.” To his statement, “And the scholars are divided into three opinions in the Madhab of Imaam Ahmad and other than him concerning the rulings of Allaah and the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam, if it is established upon the slave before it reaches them. And what is correct is what the Quraan points to in the statement of Allaah the most High, **“And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger.”** [Soorah Al Israa: 15]. And His statement, **“Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allaah after the (coming of) Messengers”** [Soorah An Nisaa: 165].

In the two Saheehs, it has been reported upon the Messenger sallallaahu alaihi wa sallam that he said, “None loves excuses more than Allaah, and because of that he sent Messengers as bearers of good news and warnings.”

So the ignorant one is excused for what he says or what he does from what is disbelief, as he is excused for he says or does which is Fisq, and that is because of proof from the Quraan and Sunnah, and consensus, and the statements of the scholars.