



Imaam Ibn Baz on Imaan, Kufr, Irjaa' and the Murji'ah

Taken from "Hiwaar Hawla Masaa'il at-Takfir", from a lecture given by the Shaykh (rahimahullaah) in 1418H. Prepared by Khalid al-Kharraaz and published by Maktabah al-Imaam adh-Dhahabee, Kuwait, 1420H (2000CE).

Question: There are some people who say that the saying – and it is the saying of the Salaf – “We do not declare anyone from the people of this religion to be a disbeliever on account of a sin that he commits, so long as he does not declare it to be lawful”, so he says, “This is the saying of the Murji'ah”. So what are your remarks?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: This is an error. This is actually the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah. A person does not become a disbeliever on account of a sin he commits so long as he does not declare it to be lawful. The fornicator does not become a disbeliever, the drinker of intoxicants does not become a disbeliever, he is disobedient. Unless he declares that to be lawful. This is the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah in opposition to the Khawaaarij.

The Khawaaarij are the ones who make takfir by way of sins. As for Ahl us-Sunnah, they say, “a disobedient one, and the hadd punishment is to be meted out to him, and repentance is obligatory upon him, however he does not become a disbeliever, so long as he does not declare the sin to be lawful”. So he fornicated but did not declare this to be lawful, or he drank intoxicants but did not declare this to be lawful, and whatever resembles that. He consumed ribaa (interest) but did not declare this to be lawful, hence he is not a disbeliever. He is a sinner, with deficient Imaan, weak in Imaan. And this is in opposition to the Khawaaarij and the Murji'ah.

This is actually the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. As for when he declares this lawful and says, “fornication is halaal (lawful)”, then he becomes a disbeliever. Or if he says, “intoxicants are lawful” he becomes a disbeliever in the view of all of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah. Or if he says, “usury is lawful” he becomes a disbeliever. Or he says that “splitting off from the parents is lawful” then he becomes a disbeliever. However when he does any of that without belief (i'tiqaad), and he knows that it is unlawful (haraam) to cut off from his parents, so he knows it is unlawful, or he fornicates and knows that it is unlawful, or drinks intoxicants and knows it is unlawful, then such a one is a disobedient one, with deficient Imaan. He is weak in Imaan in the view of Ahl us-Sunnah, but he does not become a disbeliever. However he is deserving of the hadd punishment for drinking being established upon him, or the punishment for fornication, or he is to be reprimanded for his cutting of ties, and he is reprimanded for taking usury.”

Question: “Are the scholars who speak with the absence of takfir of the one who leaves all of the actions of the limbs while at the same time professing the two testimonies with his tongue and having the basis of Imaan present in his heart from amongst the Murji'ah?”

Imaam Ibn Baaz: “**No. This one is from Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah.** Whoever speaks with the absence of takfir of the one who leaves fasting or zakaat or hajj – this one (i.e. the one who leaves these matters) is not a kaafir. However, he has committed a great sin. In the view of some scholars he is a kaafir, however the correct view is that he does not become a disbeliever with the major kufr. As for the one who leaves the prayer then the most correct view (al-arjah) is that this is major kufr when it is abandoned deliberately. As

for when he abandons zakat, fasting or hajj, then this is the lesser kufr (kufr doona kufr), and a major sin from amongst the major sins. And the evidence for this is the saying of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) concerning the one who withheld the zakat, "He will be brought on the day of Judgement and be punished by his wealth..." just as the Qur'aan has also indicated, "**On the day when that (Al-Kanz: money, gold and silver, etc., the Zakât of which has not been paid) will be heated in the Fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, (and it will be said unto them):-"This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard".**" (Tawbah 9:35). So the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) informed that he will be punished on account of his wealth, his camels, his sheep, his herd (of cows), his gold and his silver (that he hoarded). Then after this he will see his path, either to Paradise or to Hellfire, after that. This shows that he does not become a disbeliever (by withholding zakat), and that he will be shown his path, either to Paradise, or to Hellfire. So this shows that he is threatened, he may enter the Hellfire, or he may just be punished in the Barzakh alone, and not enter the Fire. And he could be in Paradise after having the punishment which is in the Barzakh."

Question: Our Shaykh, in relation to the first question (i.e. the previous) some of the people have understood from your words that when a man utters the Shahaadatayn (the two testimonials of faith), but does not act, then he is deficient in his Imaan. Is this understanding correct?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: "Yes. Whoever performed the Tawheed of Allaah (wahhada) and held worship uniquely for Him (alone), and believed in the Messenger of Allaah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), however he did not give the zakat, or fast in Ramadan, or did not perform the hajj whilst having the ability to do so, then his a sinner, and has committed a mighty major sin, and he is threatened with the Hellfire. However, he does not become a disbeliever in the correct view. As for the one who abandoned the prayer deliberately, then he becomes a disbeliever in the correct view."

Question: May Allaah be benevolent to you, is it possible for the kufr of action that expels from the religion to occur during the various states (al-ahwaal at-tabee'iyah, i.e. conditions) that humans undergo)?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: The kufr of action expels from the religion, such as prostrating to other than Allaah, and sacrificing to other than Allaah is the kufr of action that expels from the religion. Hence, sacrificing to the idols, or the stars, or to the Jinn, is the major kufr of action. Likewise if he was to pray to them, if he was to prostrate to them, he would become a disbeliever with the major kufr of action – and refuge is with Allaah. Similarly, if he was to revile the religion, or revile the Messenger, or if he were to mock Allaah, or the Messenger, this is the major kufr of action in the view of all of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah."

Question: Respected Shaykh, what is the meaning of the kufr of action that occurs in the various states (al-ahwaal at-tabee'iyah, i.e. conditions) that humans undergo)?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: Such as prostrating to other than Allaah, sacrificing to other than Allaah, such as reviling the religion, or mocking the religion, this is kufr of action – we seek pardon from Allaah – this is kufr akbar (major kufr)".

Question: Prostrating and sacrificing (to other than Allaah), when it is done in ignorance, is there to be a differentiation between ignorance, and wilful intent (i.e. with knowledge)?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: There is no ignorance in this matter. This is from the matters that are not unknown amongst the Muslims, he sacrifices to other than Allaah, and hence he becomes a disbeliever, and upon him is repentance. And if he was truthful, upon him is repentance, and whoever repents to Allaah, Allaah turns to him. The Mushriks repented and Allaah turned to them on the day of al-Fath (the conquest). And their disbelief and misguidance is known. And so when Allaah opened up Makkah (for the Muslims) and they (the Mushriks) entered into the religion of Allaah, Allaah accepted that from them.

Question: However O Shaykh, by the mere action! Such as the prostration of Mu'aadh to the Prophet (alaih-salaatu was-salaam), by the mere action?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: This person made ta'weel (muta'awwil), and he can be considered to be ignorant. The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) explained (the matter) to him. Then the Sharee'ah was firmly established and it was known that prostration is to Allaah alone, **"So prostrate to Allaah and worship Him"** (Najm 53:62), and the affair was concluded. Mu'aadh was ignorant, and so the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) taught him. Now, the Sharee'ah is established (in the minds and hearts of people), and it is known that prostration is for Allaah, **"So prostrate to Allaah and worship Him"**, and that sacrifice is for Allaah alone, **"Say, verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allaah the Lord of the Worlds, He has no partner..."** (An'aam 6:162-163). Hence, the one who is amongst the Muslims and who prostrates to other than Allaah, he is a disbeliever and upon him is repentance."

Question: "Is replacement (of the Shari'ah) with the secular laws (tabdeel ul-qawaaneen) considered to be major kufr that expels from the religion?"

Imaam Ibn Baaz: "When he makes it permissible (istibaaha). When he makes it permissible to judge with a law other than the Shari'ah he becomes a disbeliever with the major kufr – if he makes that permissible. As for when he does that for specific reasons, out of disobedience to Allaah, for the sake of bribery, or pleasing somebody, and knows that this is haraam, then this is kufr doona kufr (the minor kufr).

As for when he does it while declaring it lawful (mustahillan lahu), then this is major kufr. As Ibn 'Abbaas said concerning the saying of Allaah the Most High, "And whosoever does not judge by what Allâh has revealed, such are the Kâfirûn (i.e. disbelievers - of a lesser degree as they do not act on Allâh's Laws)". (Al-Ma'idah 5:44) – so he said, "This is not like the one who disbelieves in Allaah, but it is the minor kufr (kufr doona kufr)".

Meaning, when he declares it lawful (istahalla) to judge by the secular law, or declares it lawful to judge with such and such, and likewise, [when he makes it lawful] to judge with such and such Sharee'ah, then he is a kaafir. As for when he does it for a bribe, or due to animosity that exists between him and the one in whose case he is judging, or in order to please some of the society, or whatever resembles that, then this is the minor kufr (kufr doona kufr).

Question: "Is there a difference between replacement (tabdeel) and between ruling in a particular issue? Tabdeel O Shaikh?"

Imaam Ibn Baaz: "If he does not desire (lam yaqsud) Istihlaal (making it lawful) by that, but did it due to some other reasons, then this is kufra doona kufr (the minor kufr). As for when he says, 'There is no harm in judging by what Allaah has revealed', even if he said that the Sharee'ah is better, however, he says, 'there is no harm in this, it is permissible', he is declared a disbeliever on account of that with the major kufr, regardless

of whether he says that the Sharee'ah is still better, or it is equal to the Sharee'ah, or that it is better than the Sharee'ah, then all of this is (major) disbelief."

Question: "Meaning, this ruling (that you have explained) encompasses both tabdeel (replacement of the Sharee'ah) and other than tabdeel. It covers all of the types?"

Imaam Ibn Baaz: "It encompasses all of the forms, it is in all of the forms. However it is obligatory that he should withhold, and that it is prevented, and it is the lesser kufr. And if he was to say "I do not intend it" or "I do not make it lawful, between me and so and so is enmity, or there is a bribe", then it is obligatory for him to be prevented. Hence, it is not permissible for anyone to judge by other than what Allaah has revealed, absolutely, and if there was between him and the one in whose case he is judging, enmity, or other causes, then it is obligatory to withhold from that. It is obligatory upon the Wali ul-Amr to prevent him from that, and that he judge by the Sharee'ah.

Question: What do you say concerning the one who describes Ahl us-Sunnah, those who do not declare someone a disbeliever on account of sin, that they are Murji'ah?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: "This is compound ignorance, and it is obligatory that he is taught. This person is an ignoramus from amongst the ignorants, and it is obligatory that he is taught. The Murji'ah are the ones who consider the one who does not pray, give zakah or fast to be perfect in his iman (faith). As for the Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah, they say that the one who abandons giving zakah is a sinner, deficient in his faith. It is likewise for the one who does not fast and the one who does not perform Hajj while having the ability to do so, he is deficient in his faith. Likewise, the one who commits fornication, he is deficient in his faith. However, he does not become a disbeliever, like the Khawarij state. And nor does he abide forever in the Hellfire, as the Mu'tazilah state. However, he is in great danger and is faced with a threat [of punishment]. So amongst them are those who will enter the fire on account of their sins, then he will be interceded for on the day of intercession. [However] none will enter the Hellfire, except the disbelievers who associated partners with Allaah, or who declared lawful those things that Allaah had forbidden.

As for the fornicator, he will not remain in the Hellfire forever, even if he died while committing fornication. Likewise, the one who takes intoxicants, he will not abide in the fire forever and similarly the one who breaks the ties of kinship with his parents – when such a one enters the fire, it will not be forever. And the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), will make intercession numerous times for the sinners. On account of this intercession Allaah will remove them from the Hellfire. After this there will remain some sinners who will be brought out of the Hellfire after having been burnt, but without his (the Prophet's) intercession. Then Allaah will permit them to enter Paradise, and none shall remain in the Hellfire save the disbelievers. They are the ones who will abide therein forever. As for the sinners, then no... This is the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah and is not the saying of the Murji'ah.

The problem is this ignorance (jahl).

*The enemies do not reach from that ignoramus
What the ignoramus reaches from himself*

Question: O Shaykh, the one who says that this is the saying of the Murji'ah, what shall we say about him?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: “We say to him that you do not know the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah, that he should refer to the statement of Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, the statement of al-Ash’ari in his Maqaalaat and others from Ahl us-Sunnah. Likewise, Fath ul-Majid, Sharh ut-Tahawiyah and Kitab ut-Tawhid until he becomes acquainted with the saying of Ahl us-Sunnah. But when is a compound ignoramus (jaahil murakkab), we do not judge people, he should not pass judgements upon the people upon his ignorance. We ask guidance from Allaah for him and us”.

Question: “The actions of the limbs, are they a condition for the perfection (kamaal) of Imaan of a condition for the validity (sihah) of Imaan?”

Answer: “The actions of the limbs – such as fasting, charity, zakaat – they are from the perfection of Imaan (kamaal ul-Imaan), and abandoning them constitutes weakness in one’s Imaan. As for the prayer, then the correct view is that leaving it is disbelief. Therefore, when a person performs the righteous actions, then all of that is from the perfection of Imaan (kamaal ul-Imaan), that he increases in prayer, and voluntary fasting, and charity. Then all of this is from the perfection of Imaan which strengthens his Imaan”.

Question: Do you have any other word or final advice?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: “My advice to all is to acquire understanding of the religion and to reflect upon the Qur’aan, to recite the Qur’aan in abundance, and also to mutually rehearse (memorise) amongst themselves, as has been indicated in the Qur’aan and the Sunnah. And also to read the books of Ahl us-Sunnah, such as those of Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, that they read the books of these two, as they contain great goodness. The books of the Salaf, such as the tafseer of Ibn Jareer, Kitaab ut-Tawheed of Ibn Khuzaimah, Sharh us-Sunnah of al-Baghawee, Sharh ut-Tahaawiyah of Ibn al-Abee ‘Izz and its likes, and al-Hamawiyah, and at-Tadmuriyyah, all of them are great and beneficial books. We ask Allaah for guidance, success, correction of the intentions and actions for all.”

The next two questions and answers are taken from ‘Fataawaa Nur alaa ad-Darb Lish-Shaykh ‘Abdul-Azeez Ibn Baz’, Chapter 3 – Imaan and Islaam (p.36-40).

Question: The sister asks and says: Is the Imaan of the heart sufficient for a person to be a Muslim, whilst being far from the prayer, fasting and zakat?

Imaam Ibn Baaz: The Imaan of the heart (al-Imaan bil-qalb) is not sufficient without the prayer and other than it. Rather, it is obligatory that he believes with his heart, that Allaah is alone, without any partners, and that He is his Lord and his Creator, and it is obligatory for Him to hold all worship to be for him alone, free is He from imperfections, the Most High, and that he believes in the Messenger, Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), that he is the Messenger of Allaah in truth, sent to both the worlds (of Jinn and Men). All of this is required and necessary. And this is the foundation (asl) of the religion and its basis (asaas), just as it is obligatory upon the mukallaf (the one bound by the Sharee’ah) to believe in everything that Allaah and His Messenger informed about, of the affair of Paradise, Hellfire, the Siraat (bridge over the Fire), the Meezaan (Scales) and other such matters that the Noble Qur’aan has indicated and also the authentic pure Sunnah.

Then alongside that, it is necessary for the testimony that “none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone” to be uttered, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, just as the prayer is necessary and the other affairs of the religion. Hence, when he prays then he has fulfilled that which was required of him. And if he does not pray, then he is a disbeliever, since the abandonment of prayer is kufr.

As for zakat, fasting, the hajj and all the other obligatory affairs of the religion, if he believes in them and that they are obligatory, but he is lazy and neglectful, then he does not become a disbeliever on account of that. Rather, he is a sinner, and his Imaan is weak, deficient. Since, Imaan increases and decreases, it increases with obedience and righteous actions and decreases with disobedience, in the view of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah.

As for the prayer alone, specifically, then abandoning it is disbelief in the view of many of the people of knowledge, even if he does not reject its (yajhad) obligation. And it is the most correct of the two sayings of the scholars, in opposition to the remaining affairs of worship, of zakat, fasting, hajj, and whatever is like that. For abandoning them is not major kufr in the correct view. However, it is a deficiency in Imaan, a weakness in Imaan. And a great major sin, from amongst the major sins. Hence, leaving zakat is a major sin, and leaving fasting is a major sin, and leaving the hajj when one has the ability to perform it is a major sin, however it does not become major kufr when he believes that zakat is true and required, and that fasting is true and required and that hajj for the one who has the ability is true and required. So he did not reject any of that and nor did he reject the obligation of that, but he was neglectful in his action, so he does not become a disbeliever because of that – according to the correct opinion.”

Question: And the questioner says: There is something that is repeated amongst the people when they say that Islaam is a condition for prayer, and Islaam is a condition for hajj, and hence, that a person can be a Muslim, even if he does not bring the rest of the pillars of Islaam. So we desire clarity in this matter, may Allaah bless you.

Imaam Ibn Baaz: Yes, a person is a Muslim on account of (utterance) of the two testimonials (shahaadatayn), hence, when he affirms the two testimonials, holds the Tawheed of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, believes in the Messenger of Allaah, Muhammad, (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), he enters into Islaam. Then it is to be observed, if he prays, then his Islaam is completed, and if he does not pray, then he becomes an apostate. And similarly, if thereafter, he was to reject the prayer he becomes an apostate. Or if he rejected the fasting in the month of Ramadan, he becomes an apostate, or he said that the zakat is not obligatory, he becomes an apostate, or he said that hajj when one has ability to do it, is not obligatory, then he becomes an apostate, or he mocks the religion, or reviles Allaah or reviles the Messenger, he becomes an apostate.

So it is desirable that this matter becomes clear, so if he enters into Islaam with the two testimonials, he is judged as having Islaam. Then the rest of the affairs are to be observed after that, so if he remains firm upon the truth, his Islaam is completed. But if something is found from him that negates his Islaam, such as reviling the religion, or rejection (takdheeb) of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), or whoever rejected (jahada) whatever Allaah, free is He from imperfections, and His Messenger have made obligatory, of the prayer, fasting, or if he rejected whatever Allaah has made unlawful, such as if he was to say, “Fornication is lawful”, then he will apostatise from Islaam on account of this, even if he was to pray and fast, and even if he was to say “I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah and that Muhammad is His Messenger”.

So if he was to say that fornication is lawful, and he knows the evidence (of its prohibition), and then the proof is established upon him, he is a disbeliever in Allaah with the major kufr, and refuge is with Allaah. Or if he said that intoxicants are lawful, and the evidence has been explained to him and they are clear to him, then he persists and says intoxicants are lawful, then this is major kufr and apostasy from Islaam, and refuge is from Allaah. Likewise if he said that cutting off the ties (of kinship) is lawful, this is apostasy from Islaam, and refuge is from Allaah. Or if he said that giving false witness is

lawful, this is apostasy from Islaam after the Sharee'ah evidences have been explained to him.

Likewise, if he was to say that the prayer is not obligatory, and zakat is not obligatory, or that fasting is not obligatory, or that hajj, when one has the ability to do so, is not obligatory, then all of these are nullifications of Islaam, and a person becomes a disbeliever on account of them.

But the difference is when he says that prayer is obligatory, but I am lazy, and do not pray. So the majority of the jurists say he does not become a disbeliever, and that he is a sinful person, he should be made to repent and if he does not then he is to be killed, as a hadd punishment. And others from the people of knowledge have tended to the view, and it is narrated from the Companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, that he becomes a disbeliever on account of that, so he is made to repent, and if he repents then so, otherwise, he is killed as a disbeliever, due to the saying of Allaah, the Mighty and Exalted, **“So if they repent, establish the prayer, give the zakat, then give them their way...”** (Tawbah 9:5). So this shows that the one who does not establish the prayer, he is not to be granted his free way, rather his repentance is to be sought, so either he repents or he is to be killed. Allaah, free from imperfections, said, **“But if they repent, perform As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât) and give Zakât, then they are your brethren in religion.”** (Tawbah 9:11). So this shows that the one who does not establish the prayers and does not pray, then he is not a brother in the religion.