

Some issues regarding *takfīr*

In it is:

Is *takfīr al-mushrikīn* from *Asl Ad-Dīn* or *Usūl Ad-Dīn*? Is it a *wājibah* (obligation) of the religion or is it *hukm shar'ī*? And is all *takfīr* the same?

Can the issue of declaring *takfīr* upon the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* be traced back to the *Salaf*?

The difference between *takfīr* in clear matters and unclear matters

The difference between the *takfīr* itself and the *ahkām* (judgments or rulings) of *takfīr*



AL - AQEEDAH

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent

And may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon the last Prophet and Messenger Muhammad ibn Abdillāh, his family, his companions and those who followed them in goodness until the Day of Resurrection.

And thereafter:

There is a lot of talk regarding the place of the issue of *takfīr upon the mushrikīn* in the religion. The misguided try to use every argument and doubt which they can get their hands on in order to excuse the *mushrikūn* and call them their brothers, and in order to incite fear in the hearts of the Muslims of declaring *takfīr* upon those whom Allāh and His Messenger (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) have declared *takfīr* upon.

Their arguments are mostly a play with words, as was the arguments of their brothers the *Zanādiqah* (heretics) of earlier times.

The issue of declaring *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* is one of the simplest straightforward issues in this religion. The person who worships only Allah Alone without associating any partners with Him in His *Rubūbiyyah*, *Ulūhiyyah* and His *Asmā Was-Sifāt*, he is a *Muwahhid* (monotheist) Muslim, and the one who worships more than one deity he is a *mushrik* (polytheist) *kāfir* (non-Muslim). This is in agreement with the evidences from the Qurān, the *Sunnah*, the agreement of the Muslims, the Arabic language, the logic and the *fitrah*.

And exactly with this *fitrah* Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl said to the *mushrikūn* of Quraysh:

يَا مَعْاشِرَ قُرَيْشٍ وَاللَّهِ مَا مِنْكُمْ عَلَى دِينِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ غَيْرِي

“O gatherings of Quraysh. By Allāh, none of you are upon the religion of Ibrāhīm except me.” (Sahīh Al-Bukhārī)

And this was before the sending of Muhammad (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and before even one verse of the Qurān was revealed. But he still knew that the worshippers of the statues were not upon the religion of Ibrāhīm, which is Tawhīd. And this is the *takfīr* which is required from a person that is included in the understanding of *Lā ilāha illa Allāh*; that he

knows that whoever worships someone else than Allāh then he is not upon Tawhīd, rather he is a *mushrik*. This is the *fitrah* which every single person is created upon, and there will be no change in this creation. As Allāh – the Exalted – said:

﴿ فَأَقِمَّ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

“So direct your face toward the religion, *hanīf* (i.e. free from *shirk*). (This is) the *fitrah* of Allāh upon which He has created all people. No change should there be in the creation of Allāh. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.”

(Ar-Rūm 30:30)

But the misguided excuser of the *mushrikūn* wants to say: “Even if he worships more than one deity and ascribes partners to Allāh in worship, then he is still a *muwahhid* (monotheist) Muslim until the argument is established upon him.”

And when you ask them when is this argument then established upon such a person, there is no specific answer based upon Qurān and *Sunnah* (because it doesn't exist!), or they start to make up their own rules such as saying: “I have to explain to him first”, or “He must go to a *shaykh* who explains the issue to him”, or “He only becomes a *kāfir* if he denies Islām” and other statements of ignorance and confusion.

The argument was established upon this *Ummah* with the Qurān and the Messenger, and saying that the argument has not yet been established is an insult to Allāh and His Messenger (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) since Allāh – the Exalted – said:

﴿ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴾

“Messengers as bearer of glad tidings and warners. In order that mankind will have no argument against Allāh after the messengers. And Allāh is ever Almighty and All-Wise.”

(An-Nisā 4:165)

Despite this, then whoever reads the Qurān, reads the *ahādīth* of the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and sits with his head in the books of the scholars, he is still excused according to them if he should hold an opinion which is *kufir*, because the *hujjah* is not established upon him (as they say). And what they in reality are saying is, that if these *kuffār mushrikūn* – whom they excuse and call Muslims – would meet Allāh with their deeds and beliefs of *shirk*, then they would have an argument against Allāh despite the Book of Allāh having reached them and Allāh sending a messenger to them warning them, and they

would still have the opportunity of entering Paradise despite our Lord – ‘azza wa jalla – saying:

﴿إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾

“Verily whoever commits *shirk* (i.e. associates partners with Allāh in worship), then Allāh has verily made Paradise forbidden for him, and his abode will be the fire. And the unjust will have no helpers.” (Al-Maidah 5:72)

And so you see them calling “brothers” those who allow voting in democratic elections, those who allow seeking judgment with the *tāghūt*, those who invoke and seek intercession with the Prophet (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), those who describe Allāh with the worst imaginable of descriptions, such as Him existing without a place, or His – the Exalted – Word being created and other hideous descriptions which the *zanādiqah* describe Allāh the Exalted with. Far Exalted is Allāh above what the *zanādiqah* describe Him with.

And the reality of the matter is, that what the misguided excusers describe as ignorance or *tawīl* (false interpretation), in reality is *i’rād* (turning away from the religion). Because the one who believes *tahākum* to *tāghūt* is allowed will find the refutation of that if he looked in the Islamic sources, the one who believes that man-made legislation is allowed will find the refutation of that in the Islamic sources and the one who believes Allāh is not above the seventh heaven above His Throne separated from the creation with a border will find the refutation of this in the Islamic sources. If they only were willing to look. Or if only they would submit to the Qurān and Sunnah with the understanding of the *Salaf* and not prefer the words and opinions of anyone over this.

We seek refuge with Allāh from misguidance, and ask Him to make us steadfast upon the truth. *Allāhumma Āmīn.*

The first issue: Is *takfīr al-mushrikīn* from *Asl Ad-Dīn* or *Usūl Ad-Dīn*? Is it a *wājibah* (obligation) of the religion or is it *hukm shar'ī*? And is all *takfīr* the same?

First of all know: The issue of naming the *masalah* “*takfīr al-mushrikīn*” as being from *asl ad-dīn*, *usūl ad-dīn* or *wājibah ad-dīn*, or calling it *hukm shar'ī* is an issue of words and terms in which two people who are upon truth might name differently while still believing in the same thing, i.e. that the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* after knowing his *shirk* is himself not a Muslim. Because in reality the issue of *takfīr al-mushrikīn* in the language can be described as:

1. From *Asl*: i.e. it is a **fundament** of *La ilāha illa Allāh*
2. From *Usūl*: it is from the important **fundamental issues** of the religion
3. A *wājibah*: It is an **obligation** to declare *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* in the religion.
4. A *hukm shar'ī*: It is a **legally binding judgment** from the *Sharī'ah*.

This is from the aspect of the Arabic language. And “*hukm shar'ī*” is a general term which can be applied upon every single thing which has come in the Islamic legislation as I will give examples to further down.

The false-doers use these “acceptable” terms to mix truth with falsehood and when they say: “*Takfīr al-mushrikīn* is from *usūl ad-dīn*”, then what they really want to say and the reality of their statement is:

“*Takfīr al-mushrikīn* is from the issues in which you can be excused in ignorance or *tawīl* etc, and the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* after knowing his *shirk* is still a Muslim until after the establishment of the *hujjah* (argument/evidence).”

With the same meaning as the statement above, some of them also say: “*Takfīr al-mushrikīn* is *hukm shar'ī*”. And this – along with the other things they say – only expose their foolishness and ignorance. Because everything that we do in Islām is a *hukm shar'ī* (a judgment from the Islamic legislation). The prohibition of slaughtering for Iblīs and mentioning him – we seek refuge from the *Shaytān* – at the time of slaughter is a judgment in the Islamic legislation just like the prohibition of eating with the left hand is a judgment in Islamic legislation. Does this mean that these two things are equal in degree and severity and in consequence? Does this mean that every *hukm* in the Islamic legislation is on the same level and has the same consequences if they are breached? Of course not. The linguistic description is not sufficient in describing issue in Islām. Every *shirk* is a *bid'ah* (innovation) while saying the intention of the prayer out loud is also an innovation. Does this mean that

these two mistakes are on the same level and the consequences of performing them are the same? Of course not.

And this is why we say and call towards: The Qurān and the Sunnah, **with the understanding of the Salaf**. They understood this religion correctly and they clarified it for us and therefore we must worship Allāh according to how they understood the religion of Allāh, and not according to our own lust and desires.

As for the statement and belief of the false-doers with regards to the issue of *takfīr al-mushrikīn*, then it is wrong from many aspects. Among these are:

1. The issues of the religion can be divided into three types of issues:

The first: Issues of Tawhīd and *shirk*, in which there is no excuse or room for mistakes for anyone.

The second: Issues which are *ma'lūm min ad-dīn bid-darūrah* (known from the religion by necessity) or *masā'il dhāhirah* (clear and well-known issues), in which there is no excuse for anyone except the one who lived in the desert and had no access to the issue which he was ignorant or mistaken in, with the condition that the issue was not from the first type of issues (i.e. Tawhīd and *shirk*).

The third: *Masā'il Khafiyyah* (hidden issues), which are the issues that only the scholars have knowledge about while its evidence is hidden or difficult for the normal Muslim. In these cases the normal Muslim is excused until the argument is established upon him. If he then rejects the evidences and insists on his mistake he becomes a *kāfir*.

The issue of *takfīr al-mushrikīn* is without a doubt from the first type of issues since and no one can refute this. And the issue explained in simple words is: "The one who worships more than one deity is he a *Muwahhid* (monotheist) or a *mushrik* (polytheist)?" Even a child, a Jew or a Christian will know the answer to this question. And the language testifies to the answer since *mushrik* (polytheist) means one who worships more than one deity (or one who ascribes partners to Allāh). And as for the issues which are included in the category of Tawhīd and *shirk*, then there is no excuse in them and the *hujjah* in these issues are the Qurān, the *fitrah* and the '*aql*.

So the first aspect of mistake in their statement is that they did not categorize the issue of *takfīr al-mushrikīn* in the correct category, because if they did they would know that there is no excuse in this issue.

And if we – for the sake of argument – categorized it as being an issue of *ma'lūm min ad-dīn bid-darūrah* on the same level as the five prayers, the *zakāt*, the fast, the forbiddance of alcohol and *zinā* etc., then the normal Muslim is also not excused in being mistaken in these things except if he lives in a desert or a place completely isolated from knowledge. But they apply their claim upon people whose situation is not as such. So for them the person who makes a mistake in this type of issue – even if he reads the Qurān and the *Sunnah* and has access to knowledge and asking scholars and he lives among the Muslims – is still excused for them. And this exposes the hypocrisy in their claim and the dishonesty in their intention.

2. The *hujjah* in issues of Tawhīd and *shirk* is the Qurān

The false-doers want to ward off *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* and even the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* by saying the issue is from “*usūl ad-dīn*” and therefore the *hujjah* must be established before *takfīr* is declared. But there is no doubt that the *hujjah* in these types of issue is the mere presence of the Qurān. Allāh the Exalted said:

﴿ هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنذَرُوا بِهِ وَلِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلِيَذَّكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

“This (i.e. the Qurān) is a Message for the people in order for them to be warned by it and for them to know that He is One *ilāh* (deity), and for people of intellect to remember.”
(Ibrāhīm 14:52)

And the one who disputes the fact that the Qurān is sufficient as *hujjah* in these types of issues have opposed the Qurān, the *Sunnah* and the *ijmā'*. The worst part – and I mention this for the second time – is that they claim the ignorance and excuse for people who already read the Qurān, study the *Sunnah* and look into the books of knowledge, while the Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said:

والذي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ يَهُودِيٍّ، وَلَا نَصْرَانِيٍّ، ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّيْلِ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ.

“By the One whose Hand Muhammad’s soul is in, no-one from this Ummah, neither a Jew nor a Christian hears about me, and then do not believe in what I have been sent with, except that he is from the people of the fire.” (Sahīh Muslim)

And verily did the Prophet (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) come with the *takfīr* upon everyone who worships something else than Allāh the Exalted, i.e. *takfīr* upon the *mushrik*.

3. No basis except their own understanding

The false-doers have no argument for their saying except the people of men which they have interpreted according to their own lust and desires. There is no *muhkam āyah*, no *hadīth*, no narration nor any *ijmā'* which states that declaring *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* is an issue in which a person can be ignorant or have false interpretation which excuses him. Rather the *Salaf* declared *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* and they also declared *takfīr* upon the one who knows the *shirk* and *kufir* of the *mushrik* and still did not declare *takfīr* upon him, as it will be mentioned in the next section.

And when you challenge the misguided excusers most of the time they say: “Yes but *shaykh fulān* said such and such. So whoever commits *shirk* he is still a Muslim until the argument has been established” We ask them: What did Allāh – the Exalted – say?

﴿ وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴾

“And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allāh, any other *ilāh* (deity), of whom he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Verily the *kāfirūn* (the disbelievers) will not be successful.” (Al-Muminūn 23:117)

And He – the Exalted – said:

﴿ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلُوبًا تَمَتَّعَ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلًا إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ﴾

“And he sets up rivals to Allāh, in order to mislead others from His Path. Say: “Take pleasure in your *kufir* (disbelief) for a while: surely, you are among the dwellers of Hellfire.” (Az-Zumar 39:8)

Due to these verses and numerous other verses along with the *ahādīth* from the Messenger of Allāh (*sallAllāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) you will find in the words of the *Salaf* that they declared *takfīr* upon the one committing *shirk* in words, deeds or beliefs directly without mentioning any argument being established prior, and they would furthermore declare *takfīr* upon the one who would not declare *takfīr* upon such a person, as it is described in the next section.

The second issue: Can the issue of declaring *takfīr* upon the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* be traced back to the *Salaf*?¹

The answer is yes. The issue of declaring *takfīr* upon the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* can be traced back to the *Salaf*. And this is firstly because the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* has doubted in the issue due to which *takfīr* was declared in the first place.

Allāh – the Exalted – said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴾

“Verily those who ask you for permission (to be exempt from *jihād*) are those who do not believe in Allāh and the Last Day, and their hearts doubt so they waver in their doubt.”

(At-Tawbah 9:45)

And the person who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* is also *kāfir* himself due to rejecting the evidences which proves that the issue itself is *kufr* which brings a person out of the fold of Islām.

Allah – the Exalted – said:

﴿ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

“And who is more unjust than the one who invents a lie against Allah or rejects the truth when it comes to him. Is there not an abode in *Jahannam* for the *kafirīn*

(disbelievers).” (Al-‘Ankabūt 29:68)

So Allāh declared them as disbelievers due to them rejecting the truth when it came to them.

It was narrated in “*Tabaqāt Al-Hanābilah*” that Imām Ahmad – *rahimahullāh* – said:

أوصيكم ونفسي بتقوى الله العظيم، ولزوم السنة [والجماعة]، فقد علمتم ما حل بمن خالفها، وما جاء فيمن اتبعها، [فإنه] بلغنا عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: "إن الله [عز وجل] ليدخل العبد الجنة بالسنة يتمسك بها" فأمركم أن لا تؤثروا على القرآن شيئاً، فإنه كلام الله [عز وجل]، وما تكلم الله به فليس بمخلوق، (وما أخبر به عن القرون الماضية فغير مخلوق، وما في اللوح المحفوظ، وما في المصاحف، وتلاوة الناس، وكيفما قرئ وكيفما يوصف، فهو كلام الله غير مخلوق))، فمن قال: مخلوق، فهو كافر بالله [العظيم]، ومن لم يكفره فهو كافر.

¹ The words in this section are based upon what Shaykh Abū Al-Muhammad said in this issue in his explanation of “*As-Sunnah from the Masāil of Al-Karmānī*” lesson number 33.

“I advise you and myself to fear Allāh and adhering to the Sunnah and the Jamā’ah. For you have verily known what happened to those who opposed it, and what was narrated about those who followed it. It verily reached us from the Prophet (sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) that he said: **“Verily Allāh – ‘azza wa jalla – enters a slave into Paradise due to a Sunnah which he held on to.”** So I command you not to prefer (or prioritize) anything over the Qurān, for verily it is the Word of Allāh – ‘azza wa jalla – and that which Allāh spoke in is not created. And that in which He informed about the previous generations is not created, nor what is in the Lawh Al-Mahfūdh, or in the masāhif, or the recitation of the people and no matter how it is described, then it is the Word of Allāh and not created. So whoever says: (It is) created, then he is a disbeliever in Allāh the All-Mighty, and whoever does not declare takfīr upon him, he is (also) a kāfir.” (From the risālah Usūl As-Sunnah – the Riwayāh of Musaddad)

And in the ‘aqīdah of the two Rāzī’s (Abū Hātim Ar-Rāzī and Abū Zur’ah Ar-Rāzī) – rahimahumā Allāh – they said:

ومن زعم أن القرآن مخلوق، فهو كافر بالله العظيم كفراً ينقل عن الملة، ومن شك في كفره ممن يفهم فهو كافر

“And whoever claims that the Qurān is created he is a disbeliever in Allāh the All-Mighty with a kufr that brings him out of the millah (religion). And whoever doubts in his kufr – among those who understand – he is (also) a kāfir.” (Sharh Usūl I’tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jamā’ah by Al-Lālakāī)

So if he understands what they intend to say with their statement: “The Qurān is created”, and he does not declare takfīr upon them, then he is kāfir due to not declaring takfīr upon the kāfir.

It was narrated it “As-Sunnah from the Masāil of Al-Karmānī” in a longer narration that Yahyā ibn Khalaf Abū Muhammad Al-Muqrī narrated said:

ثم أتيت الكوفة فلقيت أبا بكر بن عياش؛ فسألته: (ما تقول في من قال: القرآن مخلوق؟) فقال: كافر، وكل من لم يقل: إنه كافر؛ فهو كافر. ثم قال: أئشك في اليهودي والنصراني؛ أنهما كافران؟ فمن شك في هؤلاء أنهم كفار؛ فهو كافر، والذي يقول: القرآن مخلوق. مثلهما

“Then I came to Kūfah and I met Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh. So I asked him (about the one who says the Qurān is created)? So he said: ‘(He is a) kāfir. And whoever does not say that he is a kāfir, then he is (also) a kāfir.’ Then Abū Bakr said: ‘Does one doubt that the Jew and the Christian both are disbelievers?! So whoever doubts regarding these that they are kuffār, then he (himself) is a kāfir. And the one who says that the Qurān is created is like them (i.e. the Jew and the Christian).’” (As-Sunnah by Al-Karmānī)

And Harb ibn Ismā'īl Al-Karmānī himself said:

والقرآن كلام الله تكلم به؛ ليس بمخلوق، فمن زعم أن القرآن مخلوق فهو جهمي كافر. ومن زعم أن القرآن كلام الله ووقف؛ ولم يقل ليس بمخلوق فهو أكفر من الأول وأخبث قولاً. ومن زعم أن ألفاظنا بالقرآن وتلاوتنا له مخلوقة؛ والقرآن كلام الله فهو جهمي خبيث مبتدع. ومن لم يكفر هؤلاء القوم والجهمية كلهم فهو مثلهم.

“And the Qurān is the Word (or Speech) of Allāh. In it He spoke, and it is not created. So whoever claims that the Qurān is created, he is a jahmī kāfir. And whoever claims that the Qurān is the Word of Allāh and then stops, and he does not say: ‘It is not created’, he is worse in kufr than the first one and more evil in his saying. And whoever claims that our pronunciation of the Qurān is created, and our recitation of it is created and that the Qurān is the Word of Allāh, he is an evil jahmī innovator. And whoever does not declare takfīr upon these people – and all of the Jahmiyyah – he is just like them (in judgment).” (As-Sunnah by Al-Karmānī)

And ‘Abdullāh ibn Imām Ahmad narrated:

“Ghiyāth ibn Ja’far narrated to me and said: I heard Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah say: ‘The Qurān is the Word of Allāh ‘azza wa jalla. Whoever says (that it is) created, he is a kāfir. And whoever doubts regarding his kufr, he is (also) a kāfir.’” (As-Sunnah by ‘Abdullāh)

And Abū Al-Hassan ibn Al-‘Attār narrated:

وَقَالَ هَارُونُ يَعْنِي الْقُرَوِيِّ: " الْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ بِمَخْلُوقٍ، وَمَنْ قَالَ: مَخْلُوقٌ، فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ، وَمَنْ شَكََّ فِي الْوَاقِفَةِ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ، فَعُلْتُ لَهُارُونَ اللَّفْظِيَّةُ؟ قَالَ: هَؤُلَاءِ مُبْتَدِعَةٌ ضَلَالٌ "

“And Hārūn (Al-Farwī) said: ‘The Qurān is the words of Allāh and it is not created. And whoever says that it is created then he is kāfir. And whoever doubts regarding (the kufr) of Al-Wāqifah² he is kāfir.’ So I said to Hārūn: And (what about) Al-Lafdhiyyah³? He said: ‘Those are mubtadi’ah and misguided.’” (As-Sunnah by ‘Abdullāh)

And Al-Khatīb Al-Baghdādī narrated:

أخبرنا أبو بكر البرقاني، قَالَ: قرأت على بشر بن أحمد الإسفراييني، قَالَ لكم أبو سليمان داود بن الحسين البيهقي: بلغني أن الحلواني الحسن بن علي، قَالَ: إني لا أكفر من وقف في القرآن، فتركوا علمه.

² Those who say that the Qurān is the Word of Allāh, and deliberately refuses or refrains from saying that it is not created.

³ Those who say that the Qurān is the Word of Allāh but that their pronunciation of the Qurān is created.

قَالَ أَبُو سُلَيْمَانَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا سَلَمَةَ بْنَ شَيْبَةَ عَنِ عِلْمِ الْحُلَوَانِيِّ، قَالَ: يَرْمَى فِي الْحَشِّ، قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ: مَنْ لَمْ يَشْهَدْ بِكُفْرِ الْكَافِرِ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ.

“Abū Bakr Al-Barqānī narrated to us and said: I read for Bishr ibn Ahmad Al-Isfarāriyibī: Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd ibn Al-Husayn Al-Bayhaqī said to you: It has reached me that Al-Halwānī Al-Hasan ibn ‘Alī said: ‘I verily do not declare takfīr upon the one who stops regarding the Qurān.’ So they left his knowledge.

Abū Sulaymān said: I asked Abū Salamah ibn Shabīb about the knowledge of Al-Halwānī. He said: ‘It is thrown in the grass.’ Abū Salamah said: ‘And whoever does not testify to the kufr of the kāfir, then he (himself) is a kāfir.’” (At-Tārīkh)

So in the case where the *kufr* of a person is clear just as in these issues, then whoever does not declare *takfīr* upon him he himself is *kāfir*. And the issue is from the *Salaf* and it is not a new issue which has been invented among the later generations. So there is no basis for describing the one who declares *takfīr* upon the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *mushrikīn* as being extreme or misguided. Rather whoever declares *takfīr* upon the one who does not declare *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* whose *shirk* and *kufr* is clear and obvious, he is upon the truth in the issue and there is no blame upon him whatsoever.

The third issue: The difference between *takfīr* in clear matters and unclear matters

There is a clear difference between the *takfīr* upon the grave worshipper whose *kufr* is clear and undeniable, and for example a *jahmī* who is playing with his words in order to disguise his *kufr*. When looking into the words of the *Salaf* it is clear that they acknowledged and recognized that the some of the cursed Jahmiyyah Zanādiqah – and other *kuffār* from the misguided sects as well – would play with their words in order to avoid people describing them with *kufr* and the consequences which would befall them due to that. For example did Imām Ahmad – *rahimahullāh* – say in “Ar-Radd ‘alā Az-Zanādiqah and Jahmiyyah”:

فَلَمَّا حَقَّقْتُهُ الْحُجَّةَ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَلَّمَ مُوسَى، إِلَّا أَنَّ كَلَامَهُ غَيْرُهُ فَعَلْنَا وَغَيْرُهُ مَخْلُوقٌ؟ قَالَ نَعَمْ فَعَلْنَا هَذَا مِثْلَ قَوْلِكُمْ الْأَوَّلِ، إِلَّا أَنَّكُمْ تَدْفَعُونَ عَنِ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الشُّعْبَةَ بِمَا تُظْهِرُونَ .

“So when he (i.e. the *jahmī*) is choked by the argument he says: “Verily Allāh spoke to Mūsā, but His Words are not Him.” So we said: “And something other than Him is created?” He said: “Yes.” So we said: “This is the same as your first saying (i.e. that the Qurān is created), except that you are repelling from yourselves the hideous by what you acknowledge publicly.”

Which means: You are only trying to avoid being described with *kufr* and the judgments which this entails.

And Ibn Battah – *rahimahullāh* – said:

وَاعْلَمُوا رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّ صِنْفًا مِنَ الْجَهْمِيَّةِ اعْتَقَدُوا بِمَكْرِ فُلُوبِهِمْ، وَخُبْتِ آرَائِهِمْ، وَقَبِيحِ أَهْوَائِهِمْ، أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ مَخْلُوقٌ، فَكَتَبُوا عَنْ ذَلِكَ بِيَدَعَةٍ اخْتَرَعُوهَا، تَمْوِيهَا وَهَجْرَةَ عَلَى الْعَامَّةِ، لِيَحْفَى كُفْرُهُمْ، وَيُسْتَعْمَضَ إِحْدَاهُمْ عَلَى مَنْ قَلَّ عِلْمُهُ، وَضَعْفَتْ نَجِيذَتُهُ، فَقَالُوا: إِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ الَّذِي تَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَقَالَ، فَهُوَ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ غَيْرَ مَخْلُوقٍ، وَهَذَا الَّذِي نَتْلُوهُ وَنَقْرُؤُهُ بِالْسِتْنَانِ، وَنَكْتُبُهُ فِي مَصَاحِفِنَا لَيْسَ هُوَ الْقُرْآنُ الَّذِي هُوَ كَلَامُ اللَّهِ، هَذَا حِكَايَةٌ لِذَلِكَ، فَمَا نَقْرُؤُهُ نَحْنُ حِكَايَةٌ لِذَلِكَ الْقُرْآنِ بِالْقَاطِنَا نَحْنُ، وَالْقَاطِنَا بِهِ مَخْلُوقَةٌ، فَدَقَّقُوا فِي كُفْرِهِمْ، وَاحْتَالُوا لِإِدْخَالِ الْكُفْرِ عَلَى الْعَامَّةِ بِأَعْمَضِ مَسْئَلِكِ، وَأَدَقِّ مَذْهَبٍ، وَأَحْفَى وَجْهِ

“And know – may Allāh show you mercy – that a group from the Jahmiyyah – due to the evilness of their hearts, the wickedness of their opinions and the dirtiness of their desires – believed that the Qurān is created. So they concealed this with an innovation which they invented as a camouflage and decoration for the ordinary people. (This,) in order to hide their *kufr* and make their disbelief unclear for those who have little knowledge and those of weak nature. So they said: ‘Verily the Qurān which Allāh has spoken in and said, it is the Words of Allāh and not created, but this what we recite and

read with our tongues and write in our masāhif (pl. mushaf), that is not the Qurān which is the Word of Allāh. This (instead) is a narration of this. So what we read is a narration of this Qurān with our words, and our words of it are created.’ So with this they went even deeper in their kufr and they played a trick in order for the kufr to enter upon the normal people in the most unclear way, the voidest path and the most hidden of angles.” (Al-Ibānah Al-Kubrā 5/317-318)

So the *takfīr* of a *zindīq* like this becomes obligatory upon the slave once he realizes and understands the reality of what he is saying. And it is not as such with the grave-worshipper. Because the moment he turns to the grave and invokes its inhabitant and asks him for bringing about benefit or warding off harm, his *kufr* becomes evident and only a *kāfir* refuses to declare *takfīr* upon him.

But as for the *jahmī zindīq* and other *zanādiqah* – in some cases – then they disguise their *kufr* by mixing words of truth with words of falsehood thereby confusing and disorientating the one who is weak in knowledge and understanding. And the *āthār* of the *Salaf* take this unclarity into consideration and hold the door open for seeking understanding of a specific statement or belief before making a judgment upon it, and that they themselves would ask into details when the statement of misguidance could bear different meanings.

‘Abdullah ibn Imām Ahmad said in “As-Sunnah”:

سَمِعْتُ أَبِي رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ، وَسَأَلَهُ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْجَهْمِ عَنْ مَنْ قَالَ: بِالْقَدْرِ يَكُونُ كَافِرًا؟ قَالَ: " إِذَا جَحَدَ الْعِلْمَ، إِذَا قَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يَكُنْ عَالِمًا حَتَّى خَلَقَ عِلْمًا فَعَلِمَ فَجَحَدَ عِلْمَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ "

“I heard my father – *rahimahullāh* – when ‘Alī ibn Al-Jahm asked him regarding the one who holds the opinion of the Qadar, is he a *kāfir*? He said: ‘If he rejects the knowledge (he is). If he says: ‘Verily Allāh – ‘azza wa jalla – did not have knowledge until He created knowledge, then He knew.’ So he rejects the knowledge of Allāh – ‘azza wa jalla – then he is *kāfir*.’”

And he said:

سَمِعْتُ أَبِي رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ وَسُئِلَ عَنِ الْوَاقِفَةِ فَقَالَ أَبِي: «مَنْ كَانَ يُخَاصِمُ وَيُعْرِفُ بِالْكَلامِ فَهُوَ جَهْمِيٌّ وَمَنْ لَمْ يُعْرِفْ بِالْكَلامِ يُجَانِبُ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ عِلْمٌ يَسْأَلُ»

“I heard my father while he was asked regarding the *Wāqifah*, so my father said: ‘Whoever used to debate and is known for speaking out (about this) then he is *jahmī*. And whoever is not known for speaking out is avoided until he returns (to the truth). And whoever (of them) who does not have knowledge then he should ask.’”

And he said:

سُئِلَ أَبِي رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ - وَأَنَا أَسْمَعُ - عَنِ اللَّفْظِيَّةِ، وَالْوَاقِفَةِ، فَقَالَ: «مَنْ كَانَ مِنْهُمْ جَاهِلًا لَيْسَ بِعَالِمٍ فَلْيَسْأَلْ وَلْيَتَعَلَّمْ»

“My father was asked – while I was listening – regarding the Lafdhiyyah and the Wāqifah, so he said: ‘Whoever is ignorant among them and does not have knowledge, then let him ask and let him learn.’”

And in the ‘aqīdah of the two Rāzī’s (Abū Hātim Ar-Rāzī and Abū Zur’ah Ar-Rāzī) – rahimahumā Allāh – they said:

ومن زعم أن القرآن مخلوق، فهو كافر بالله العظيم كفراً ينقل عن الملة، ومن شك في كفره ممن يفهم فهو كافر

“And whoever claims that the Qurān is created the is a disbeliever in Allāh the All-Mighty with a kufr that brings him out of the millah (religion). And whoever doubts in his kufr – among those who understand – he is (also) a kāfir.”

And they also said:

وَمَنْ وَقَفَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ جَاهِلًا عَلِمَ وَبَدَعَ وَمَ يُكْفَرُ

“And whoever stops regarding the Qurān out of ignorance he is taught (the truth) and (he is) described as an innovator, but takfīr is not declared upon him.” (Sharh Usūl I’tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jamā’ah by Al-Lālakāī)

But all this does not mean that the obligation of declaring *takfīr* upon the *kāfir* is lifted or is dependent upon the *hujjah* being established upon the one whose *shirk* and *kufr* has become clear. Rather as soon as the *shirk* and *kufr* of a person becomes clear and a person has understood the reality of his saying then if he does not declare *takfīr* upon him he becomes a *kāfir* just like him and equal with him in judgment due to the reasons which have been mentioned.

Another important thing to distinguish between, is the person who understands what is intended but has doubt regarding what is the truth and what is falsehood, and the person who does not understand what is intended and what is the reality of a statement of *kufr*.

As for the one who understands the reality of a saying of *kufr* but he doubts whether or not this is *kufr*, then he himself is *kāfir* due to doubting regarding the truth. Having *yaqīn* (full certainty) in one’s belief is a condition for the validity of the testimony of *La ilāha illa Allāh*. Allāh – the Exalted – said:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا ﴾

“Verily the believers are those who believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and thereafter do not doubt.” (Al-Hujurāt 49:15)

So the one who doubts regarding whether or not the Qurān is created, whether or not it is allowed to choose another legislator besides Allāh, whether or not one can seek judgment with the *tāghūt* in case of disputes he is *kāfir* himself due to having doubted regarding the truth, and he is in no way comparable or equal to the one who doubts regarding the meaning of some unclear words while his *usūl* (fundamental beliefs) are correct and once he recognizes the *kufr* of the *kāfir* he declares *takfīr* upon him.

The two Imāms Abū Hātim and Abū Zur’ah Ar-Rāzī mentioned this differentiation in their *‘aqīdah* when they said:

ومن شك في كلام الله عز وجل فوقف شاكا فيه يقول: لا أدري مخلوق أو غير مخلوق فهو جهمي. ومن وقف في القرآن جاهلا علم وبدع ولم يكفر.

“And whoever doubts regarding the Words of Allāh – ‘azza wa jalla – and stops (regarding it) due to doubting about it saying: ‘I don’t know if it is created or not created’, he is jahmī. And whoever stops regarding the Qurān out of ignorance (regarding the meaning of the different statements) he is taught and (he is) described as an innovator, but takfīr is not declared upon him.” (Sharh Usūl I’tiqād Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jamā’ah by Al-Lālakāī)

So the one who doubted in the issue of *kufr* itself he was declared a *jahmī* – and the Jahmiyyah are *kuffār* – while the one who doubted regarding the reality of the saying was still declared an innovator but not a *kāfir*.⁴

⁴ In this statement lies an important point in the *‘aqīdah* of the *Salaf*. And that is: As long as a person is not 100 percent upon the *Sunnah* and all his beliefs and sayings are in accordance with the *Sunnah*, then even if he is ignorant and his beliefs and statements does not reach a level of *kufr* that brings him out of the fold of Islām, then he is still declared an innovator until he aligns his beliefs and statements with the *Sunnah* in all issues. For more details on this issue see the article: **“Whoever opposes only one principle from the principles of the Sunnah, then he is an innovator.”**

The fourth issue: The difference between the *takfīr* itself and the *ahkām* (judgments or rulings) of *takfīr*

As for the *takfīr* itself, then it is: The belief that whoever commits a nullifier among the nullifiers of Islām he is not considered a Muslim, rather he is a *kāfir*.

And as for the *ahkām* of *takfīr* then it is: the judgments or rulings that are consequences – in an Islamic state implemented by the Islamic judge or authority – that follows when a person is declared *takfīr* upon, such as the *istitābah* (asking for repentance), *qubūl at-tawbah* (whether or not the repentance is accepted), the *hadd* (punishment prescribed by Islamic law) and the *mu'āmalāt* (the way such a person is treated).

These are judgments which are only known through the Islamic texts and there are even different opinions in some of them. If a person does not know these judgments it is not the same as him not knowing that whoever commits a nullifier of Islām is no longer a Muslim.

The people of falsehood who want to excuse the *mushrikūn* and call them their brothers some time use the example of the *ahkām* of *takfīr* in order to invalidate consequences of not declaring *takfīr* upon the *kāfir*. So they say to the one who is weak in understanding: “Do you know about this judgment and this judgment etc. These judgments are only known through the Islamic texts. And likewise is the *takfīr* itself only known through the Islamic texts and is only performed after the *hujjah* (argument or evidence) is established upon a person.”

But this is falsehood. There is a clear difference between the *takfīr* itself and the *ahkām* of *takfīr*. The *takfīr* upon the *mushrik* is known from *fitrah* and it is included in what is understood from *Lā ilāha illa Allāh* – which is necessary in order to be a Muslim in the first place – while the *ahkām* of *takfīr* only can be known through the Islamic texts. So far far away are these two things from being equal.

An example of this is that: All of the *Salaf* agreed upon that the Jahmiyyah are *kuffār*. And the Jahmiyyah is a sect ascribing to Islām who used to pray, fast, and bring evidences from the Qurān and the *Sunnah* for their beliefs. And there exist absolutely no difference of opinion that they all agreed upon the *kufr* of the one who says that the Qurān is created and who invalidated the Attributes of Allāh the Exalted. Nevertheless we find different *ahkām* (judgments) with regards to the *jahmī* from different scholars:

‘Abdullāh ibn Imām Ahmad narrates different opinions from different scholars in Kitāb As-Sunnah. For example he said:

11 - حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا سُرَيْجُ بْنُ التُّعْمَانِ، أَحْبَبَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ نَافِعٍ، قَالَ: كَانَ مَالِكُ بْنُ أَنَسٍ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ: «مَنْ قَالَ الْقُرْآنُ مَخْلُوقٌ يُوجَعُ ضَرْبًا وَيُجَسَسُ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ»

11. My father – *rahimahullāh* – narrated to me and said: Surayj ibn An-Nu'mān narrated to us (and said): 'Abdullāh ibn Nāfi' informed me and said: Mālik ibn Anas – *rahimahullāh* – used to say: "Whoever says that the Qurān is created is hurt with strikes and imprisoned until he dies."

31 - حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْوَاسِطِيُّ الضَّرِيرُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ وَكَيْعَ بْنَ الْجَرَّاحِ، يَقُولُ: «أَمَّا الْجَهْمِيُّ فَإِنِّي أَسْتَتِيبُهُ فَإِنْ تَابَ وَإِلَّا قَتَلْتُهُ»

31. Abū 'Abdillāh Muhammad ibn Ismā'il Al-Wāsītī Ad-Darīr narrated to us and said: I heard Wakī' ibn Al-Jarrāh say: "As for the jahmī then I verily ask him to repent. Then he either repents or I kill him."

45 - حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، حَدَّثَنِي أَحْمَدُ بْنُ يُونُسَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مَهْدِيٍّ، حَدَّثَنِي عَمِّي، مُوسَى سَمِعْتُ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مَهْدِيٍّ، يَقُولُ: «أَنَا لَا أَرَى أَنْ نَسْتَتِيبَ الْجَهْمِيَّةَ»

45. Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to me (and said): Ahmad ibn Yūnus ibn 'Abdir-Rahmān ibn Mahdī narrated to me (and said): My uncle Mūsā narrated to me (and said): I heard my father 'Abdur-Rahmān ibn Mahdī say: "I do not consider that we should ask the Jahmiyyah to repent (before they are executed)."

So already here there are three different statements regarding the *ahkām* of those who left Islām by believing in the belief of the Jahmiyyah:

1. He is beaten and imprisoned until death.
2. He is asked to repent and if he does not repent then executed.
3. He is executed without being asked to repent.

(Execution can only be done by the Islamic authority in an Islamic state after witnesses have testified and the judge is satisfied and gives the verdict. It cannot be done by the ordinary person).

And they all agreed upon the *jahmī* being a *kāfir*. So the claim that because it is a Muslim becoming a *murtadd* therefore his kufr is only known by studying the *ahkām* of *riddah* is already falsified here from this aspect.

The truth is that a person might be ignorant about how to deal with a *murtadd*, but he cannot be ignorant about whether or not the one committing *shirk* is a *mushrik* or a Muslim, just because he ascribes to Islām and calls himself a Muslim.

If this was so, then all of the *kuffār* among the Jahmiyyah, Murjiah, Qadariyyah, Rāfidah etc. etc. their kufr is not known except after the explanation. And this is falsehood and not the manhaj of the *Salaf*.

And whoever wants more details can return to the book “**An introduction to Tawhīd and Sunnah according to the understanding of the Salaf of the Ummah**” under the section of (1) **Declaring takfīr upon the mushrik**, (2) **Excuse in ignorance and the one who considers the mushrik a Muslim**, and also under the section of (3) **The place of takfīr in the religion**.

And let the reader know, that understanding and guidance is from Allāh. Many people have the truth and the evidences in front of them and they possess the means to finding the correct belief, but Allāh has not guided them. So no matter what are presented to them they will insist that a person who worships Allāh and someone or something else along with Allāh is a person only worshipping one deity!! And often they cling on to this belief of *kufr* due to some names or some words which they hold at higher esteem than Allāh, His Messenger (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and the *Salaf*. So be not surprised, because whoever prefers anything over Allāh and His Messenger (*sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and the *Salaf* then Allāh will leave them to themselves and not support them. And verily the one who is left by Allāh is in plain misguidance and destruction.

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴾

“And whoever contradicts (or 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.” (An-Nisā 4:115)

Whoever returns to the words of the *Salaf* and submits to their way and methodology will have no problem in his religion or how he should deal with the various issues in the religion.

We ask Allāh for protection in the religion and steadfastness upon the truth. *Āmīn*.

Abū Hājar