

The Misreading's of the Wayward Series



**YOU
KAFIR!**

The rising trend of declaring
Muslims disbelievers

issue

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S A N A D

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In the name of God, the Most Merciful, Most compassionate

All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds, and greetings and salutations be upon the most honorable of the Prophets and the Messengers, our liege lord and Prophet, Muhammad, the truthful one, and all upon his household and companions.

A Sudden Phenomenon

Deviance of thought

In recent times, the phenomenon of declaring other Muslims disbelievers (*Kafir*) has spread among the Muslim community. Many people have adopted a very lax approach concerning the declaration of disbelief, such that hearing to the expression: “you disbeliever” has become the norm. Such laxity has caused the spread of tribulation, the audacity to shed blood, the violation of human dignity, disobedience towards parents and severing of family ties. Many such people have even taken to fighting, on the misconceived grounds that it is their obligation to correct ‘invalid’ Islamic doctrine. Many Muslims have fallen prey to this bizarre notion, due to widespread religious illiteracy, as well as tactful scheming by proponents of such ideas.

Is it permissible for a Muslim to say to another Muslim “you disbeliever”?

No, this is categorically not permitted.

The Prophet, ﷺ, said:

● ‘Any person who says to his brother: “you disbeliever”, then it refers to one of them. It is either true or it returns back to the one who said it’. (al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

● ‘He who labels another a disbeliever or says: “you enemy of God”, and it is not the case, then the claim returns upon him’. (al-Bukhārī and Muslim)


● ‘No one labels another a disbeliever except that it refers to one of them; he (the labeled person) is either a disbeliever, or (the labeler) has disbelieved due to his accusation’. (Ibn

Hibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in the book of faith)



An Erroneous Notion

But, are there not among the Muslims those who are deemed disbelievers due to their actions?



Everyone who testifies the testimony of faith, there is no deity save for God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God, is pleased by good deeds and dislikes bad deeds **is considered a believer**.

- ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said: “the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him and his household, said: ‘One whose good deeds please him, and bad deeds upset him, is a believer’. I wish I would have known regarding the case in which someone says to his brother “You disbeliever” - and this brother is someone whose good deeds please him, and bad deeds upset him - why the label of disbelief against him takes precedence over testifying to his belief (*iman*).”¹

- Abu Sufyān said: “I asked Jābir: did you ever used to call any one from the people of the qibla a disbeliever? He replied: ‘**No.**’ ‘Or a polytheist?’ I asked, to which he said: ‘**I seek refuge in God**, and became alarmed.”

However, Allah says: ﴿And whosoever does not judge according to what God has revealed, then they are the disbelievers﴾. Doesn't this mean that every leader who does not implement the Shari'ah (Sacred Law), and likewise all those are content with such governance, are Kafir?

Absolutely not. This interpretation is entirely incorrect. The Prophet's Companions, their Successors and the vast majority of scholars interpreted the meaning of disbelief [in the verse] here as a disbelief lesser than absolute disbelief, meaning, that it is a grave sin, but **does not remove its perpetrator from the fold of Islam**.

¹ The words of Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, were translated in meaning and not literally due to the difficulty of understanding the literal meaning of his statement.



Who has said that it means 'a disbelief lesser than absolute disbelief'?

This has been stated by Ibn 'Abbās, Hudhayfah, Ṭawūs, Mujāhid, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, and most of the Quranic commentators like Ibn Jarīr, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Baghawī, al-Khāzin, al-Qurṭubī and others.²

Why are there many sheikhs and preachers then, who repeatedly stress that 'those who do not govern according to what God has revealed are disbelievers'?

Know that whoever spreads such an idea has adopted the creed of the *Khawārij* (Seceders), and not of orthodox mainstream *Ahl al-Sunnah*.

Imam al-Qurṭubī states in his book *al-Mufḥim*: The literal meaning of Allah's, Most Exalted, saying: ﴿And whosoever does not judge according to what God has revealed, then they are the disbelievers﴾, is cited as evidence by those who charge others with unbelief for the committing sins, they being the *Khawārij*, yet they have no proof for their claim therein.

Al-Imām al-Sam'ānī said in his explanation of the Quran: '...and know that the *khawārij* infer from this verse that whoever does not judge according to what God has revealed is a disbeliever, whilst the *Ahl al-Sunnah* assert that one does not fall into disbelief by abandoning the divine law.'

The Delusions of Some Preachers



Are there any Muslims today who commit major polytheism (*al-Shirk al-Akbar*), removing them from the fold of Islam?

No. There are no Muslims who commit major polytheism, and thus fall into disbelief.

What is the evidence for this?

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ as narrated by 'Uqba b. 'Amir: Indeed, by God, **I do not fear for you that you will commit polytheism after me**, however, I fear that you will compete with each other over worldly gain..'

(al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

² This is mentioned in detail in part one of this series.

³ *Al-Mufḥim* li-mā 'Ushkila min Talkhīṣ Muslim, By Abū al-Abbās Ahmad al-Qurtubī, 2/116.



How did the scholars understand this Hadith?

The mainstream scholarly community affirmed the general understanding of the hadith, namely, that the Muslim community will compete for worldly gain thus leading to its own decline. They negated any fear that the community, in general, will fall into major polytheism just as the Prophet, peace be upon him, informed.

The great scholar Ibn Abd al Barr confirms this in his book, al-Tamhid, ‘...and he who fears for the Muhammadan Community that which their own Prophet did not fear, has undoubtedly come forth with a clear **deviation!**’⁴

But did the Prophet ﷺ not say in a hadith reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim: ‘a night and day will not pass before al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā are worshipped?’

Yes, the Prophet ﷺ said that and the Hadith is authentic. However, the Hadith does not end there, and this fact is often concealed by those who cite it as evidence for accusing Muslims of polytheism. They don’t mention this and it is just one example of how their deception and misinformation.



Is this really possible? What does the Hadith go on to state?

The full Hadith is as follows:


Ā’ishah said that she heard the Messenger of God ﷺ say: “‘A night and day will not pass before al-Lāt and al-‘Uzzā are worshipped.’ So I asked: ‘O Messenger of God, I assumed that when God revealed: ﴿It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that it may prevail over all [false] religion, however hateful this may be to the polytheists.﴾⁵, the matter was complete?’ He replied: ‘There will surely be of this what Allah has decreed, then **He will send a pleasant wind, and everyone who has a mustard grain seed’s weight of belief in their heart will die, and there will remain only those who have no good within them, and they will thus return to the religion of their forefathers.**’” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

4 Al-Tamhid li mafr al-Muwaffāmin al-Ma‘āniwa al-Asānid. The chapter of the letter ‘Yā’, p. 264.

5 (9:33)

Al-Lat and al-Uzza are both idols that used to be worshipped during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance (jahilliyah). The Prophet's words here make it clear that the worship of these idols will not return until the souls of all the believers are taken at the end of time when the major signs of the final hour appear. This has not happened in our time since iman (faith) has not ceased to exist.

Erroneous Belief Concerning the Muslims



Aren't grave worshippers, those who circumambulate around graves (with the intention of worship, just as is performed around the Ka'bah) and revere them, polytheists?

The act of circumambulation around graves is Forbidden (*Haram*), but not polytheism (*Shirk*). For it to constitute polytheism, the person who is circumambulating the grave would have to intend worship of the person in the grave. This, however, is not the case. People who circumambulate graves intend drawing near to Allah through their action. This is forbidden (*Haram*) in the Sharia, since Allah has permitted us to circumambulate the Ka'bah alone.

Yes, but did the polytheists not make the same claim in the Quran, that they worship idols to draw near to Allah? ﴿We worship them for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to God.﴾⁶ Similarly, those who circumambulate around graves desire to draw close to Allah?

Not at all; the difference between the two is huge. The polytheists clearly admit that they worship the idols in order to draw near to God, however, ignorant Muslims, who circumambulate graves, **do not** believe (nor do they intend) that they are **worshipping** the dwellers of the graves.

Also, circumambulation around something does not necessitate the worship of that thing. We circumambulate around the Ka'bah, yet we are not worshipping it. Circumambulation as a general action is only considered worship of Allah (*'ibada*) when it is performed around the Ka'bah and nothing else. In the same way, those who circumambulate around graves are not worshipping the graves, but they are committing *Bid'a* (innovation), since the act of circumambulation has only ever been specified for the Ka'bah.

Is there any other evidence that worshipping anything or anyone other than Allah will never return amongst Muslims?

Yes, there are many proofs. From amongst them are the following two Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

- On the authority of Jābir b. ‘Abd Allah: “I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ‘The devil has despaired that worshippers (*musallūn*) will worship him within the Arab peninsula. However, he will sow discord amongst them.’” Reported by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.
- On the authority of Ibn Mas‘ūd: “The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘*Iblīs* has despaired that idols will be worshipped in the lands of the Arabs. However, he will be content with less than this from you, namely, despicable deeds and these will be the cause of your destruction.’”⁷


Yet there are many sheikhs, preachers and ‘practicing’ Muslims who label other Muslims Kafir and accuse them of shirk (polytheism). How can this be the case?

Those who do this and have made it a norm are upon misguidance and plain error. The Prophet ﷺ clearly warned us about such a thing 1400 years ago. Hudhayfa said:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Verily what I fear for you is a man who reads the Qur’ān until its splendor is seen on his face. He is a zealous supporter of Islam, but then he changes the meaning of the Quran to whatever God willed. Thus he becomes detached from it, casting it aside. He then approaches his neighbor with a sword and accuses him of polytheism (*shirk*).’” Hudhayfah continued: “I asked: O Prophet of Allah, which of them is more fitting of (the accusation of) polytheism? The accused or the accuser?” The Prophet replied: “Rather the accuser.”⁸

7 Reported by al-Hākim in al-Mustadrak, and authenticated and agreed with by al-Dhahabī.

8 Reported by Ibn Hibban (81), al-Bukhārī in al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr (2907), and al-Bazzār (2793).



So the killings, murders and bloodshed that we see today of those Muslims who are being accused of disbelief and polytheism is all invalid?

Absolutely. Whoever kills another Muslim for these reasons has fallen into great danger and committed a major sin. His sin is like the sin of one who kills all of mankind. Alla ﷺ said: ﴿On account of [his deed], We decreed to the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a person– unless in retribution for murder or spreading corruption in the land– it is as if he kills all mankind, while if any saves a life it is as if he saves the lives of all mankind. Our messengers came to them with clear signs, but many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.﴾

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘To insult a Muslim is a sin and to fight him is **disbelief**.’ (al-Bukhārī and Muslim)

May Allah protect us from **the grave sin of charging other Muslims with Kufr (disbelief)** and accusing them of *Shirk* (polytheism); and may He relieve the Umma of all its tribulations, the manifest and the hidden.

The correct method of dealing with the faults of fellow Muslims



If we are to accept that the all the bloodshed and mayhem perpetrated by fanatical movements within many Muslim communities stems from accusing other Muslims of *shirk* (polytheism), does that mean then that scholars should remain quiet about violations of Sharia and the rise of reprehensible innovations prevalent in some Muslim societies?

The role of the scholars is to preserve the Sharia and propagate correct practice. If innovations and violations prevail in a community then the scholars have the obligation of correcting these. However, they must be mindful of the following:

- The process of correcting wrongs must be conducted **with gentleness, kindness and love**. This was the example of our Prophet, peace be and blessings be upon him.
- The Muslim community in general is **protected from falling into disbelief or polytheism**. Any Hadith that indicate the contrary have a particular context and a very specific purport, and do not apply to our situation today.
- One who seeks to correct the wrongs and shortcomings of others must **remove any trace of bad opinion**, or ill feeling towards the person they are addressing, and his/her actions and beliefs. They must also be aware that committing a wrong act **does not authorize them to charge a person with kufr (disbelief) or shirk (polytheism)**. If not, then any advice and attempt to correct wrongs will be of no avail and will never produce the intended results.
- A scholar is obliged to respect the standards laid out by Islamic scholarship. One of these is to appreciate and respect specialisation in the domain of the Islamic sciences. A specialist in Hadith is not allowed to issue legal verdicts (*Fatwa*) if he is not a *mufti*; likewise the *mufti* is not allowed to undertake more advanced forms of *Ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) if he is not qualified to do so.
- Though religious preachers and speakers who have no qualifications or licences (*ijaza*) in Islamic law (*fiqh*) are required to guide and encourage the masses, but they are not allowed to issue legal opinions on what is right or wrong. Not everyone who speaks on Islam is a qualified scholar.
- Declaring someone a disbeliever requires a legal judgment from a court, due to the gravity of the matter. Historically, it has never been allowed for ordinary Muslims to take it upon themselves to dispense such a duty. Any Muslim who cares about their religion should be careful of committing such a serious sin.

Introducing the misrepresentation and distortion series

The Messenger of God, May the peace and blessings of God be upon him and his household, said:

‘This knowledge will be transmitted from every generation by its upright; they negate from it the distortions of the extreme, the false claims of the falsifiers, and interpretations of the ignorant.’ Some of those that possess misapprehensions have understood the discourse of God in a manner which does not agree with the academic methodology inherited from the pious predecessors (al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ), and does not harmonize with the objectives and greater values of the divine revelation...

They have taken some verses of the noble Qur’ān which were revealed in regard to the non-Muslims, and made them applicable to the Muslims...

They have adopted verses which came as exceptions and applied to them general rulings...

They have distorted the meanings of the words of God in a manner that has led to the establishment or formation of grave erroneous concepts within the minds of the general Muslim populace, a result of which are mannerisms and actions that have no correlation with the true intrinsic religion of Islam...

We shall become acquainted through the parts of this continuous series about the distortions of the meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur’ān and the Prophetic traditions (hadith) which the adherents of these distorted ideas have fallen within, their misguidance concerning legal rulings, and their embracing of wrong conceptions. All of which distanced them from God’s intended meanings, as well as His Prophet’s and the righteous predecessors (salaf al-ṣāliḥ) that followed.



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