

# A QUESTION REGARDING TAKFÎR & THE EXCUSE OF IGNORANCE

*Abâ Butayn Rahimahullâh*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.*

Shaykh Abâ Butayn Rahimahullâh said,

**“So, the Hujjah has been established upon whomever the Risâlah (prophethood) of Muhammad Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam reached and the Qur’ân reached. Therefore, such person is not excused with regards to not believing in Allâh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day. After this, he does not have the excuse of ignorance.”**

مسألة فيمن يكفر غيره من المسلمين  
والكفر الذي يعذر صاحبه بالجهل والذي لا يعذر

## **A Question Regarding Those Who Declare Takfîr upon Other Muslims and the Types of Kufr that its Possessor is Excused and Is Not Excused**

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(1282 H)

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## **A Question Regarding Those Who Declare Takfîr upon Other Muslims and the Types of Kufr that its Possessor is Excused and Is Not Excused<sup>1</sup>**

**Shaykh Abâ Butayn (1282 H)**

**Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ**

### **[Question]**

In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Question: What is the meaning of the statement Shaykh Taqiyy'ud Dîn Rahimahullâh made in his refutation to Ibn'ul Bakrî,

“For this reason, the People of Knowledge and the Sunnah do not declare Takfîr upon those who oppose them, even if the opposing party declares Takfîr upon them. This is because Kufr is a ruling pertaining to the Sharî'ah. People do not have the right to punish with its similar (in revenge). Just like if someone lies about you or fornicates with your spouse, it is not your right to lie about him and fornicate with his spouse, because fornication and lying is Harâm due to the right of Allâhu Taâlâ. Similarly, Takfîr is the right of Allâhu Taâlâ, so we do not declare Takfîr upon anyone except for those whom Allâhu

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<sup>1</sup> Majmû'at'ur Rasâ'il wa'l Masâ'il'in Najdiyyah, 5/509-523; ad-Durar'us Saniyyah, 10/360-375. Mas'alatun fi Man Yukaffiru Ghayrahu min'al Muslimîn, published by Dâru Atlas al-Khadhrâ. We used the version of Dâru Atlas al-Khadhrâ as the primary manuscript during our translation.

Taâla and His Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam declared Takfîr upon.

In addition, declaring Takfîr upon a Mu'ayyan (specific) person and the permission of killing him are dependent on the reaching of the Nabawî Hujjah that those who oppose it become disbelievers. Otherwise, not all those whom are ignorant of something from the religion become disbelievers (...)"

Until his statement,

"(...) This is why I used to say to the Jahmiyyah who were composed of the Hulûliyyah and those who rejected Allâhu Taâla being above the Throne [when their trials occurred]<sup>2</sup> : If I were to consent with you (in such beliefs), I would have become a Kâfir, since I know that your statement is Kufr. However, in my presence, Takfîr is not declared upon you as you are ignorant..."

Until the end of his statement.<sup>3</sup>

Issue us a Fatwâ. What does it mean to establish the Hujjah? May Allâh reward you with His favors and kindness!

## **The Response**

All Praise is due Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds.

The statement of the Shaykh Rahimahullâh comprises of two issues:

### **[The State of Those Who Declare Takfîr upon the Muslimûn]**

One of the two issues is that we do not declare Takfîr upon those who declare Takfîr upon us. What is apparent of Ibnu Taymiyyah's statement is that the situation is the same whether or not the person has forceful interpretations. A group of the scholars openly expressed that Takfîr is not

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<sup>2</sup> This additional phrase is found in al-Istighâthah.

<sup>3</sup> Ibnu Taymiyyah, al-Istighâthah fi'r Raddi ala'l Bakrî, Dâr'ul Minhâj, p. 252-253.

declared upon such person when he expresses his Takfir with a forceful interpretation.

Ibnu Hajar al-Haytamî narrated from a group of the Shâfi'î scholars that they openly proclaimed the Kufr of such person when he does not bring a forceful interpretation. Thereafter, he narrated from al-Mutawallî that he said,

“One enters Kufr when he says “O Kâfir!” to a Muslim without bringing a forceful interpretation.”

Al-Haytamî said, “A group from the scholars followed al-Mutawallî in this view, and they used the following statement of Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam as evidence,

*“When a man says to his brother (in Dîn), ‘O Kâfir!’ Then surely it returns to one of them.”<sup>4</sup>*

The one who accused the other of Kufr was a Muslim so he himself becomes a Kâfir.

They said: This is because this person named Islâm as Kufr.

Some of the scholars commented on this reasoning, which is their statement, “This is because this person named Islâm as Kufr,” and they said: This meaning is not understood from his statement, nor is it the intent of the person who utters this statement. The intent of this person and the meaning of his statement is only as follows: “You are not upon the true religion of Islâm. You are merely a Kâfir; your religion is other than Islâm whereas, I am upon

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<sup>4</sup> Narrated by Abû Hurayrah Radiyallâhu Anh. (Bukhârî, Hadîth no. 6103)

In the wording of Muslim which was narrated by Ibnu Umar Radiyallâhu Anhumâ, the Hadîth has the following addition,

*“If the addressee is so as he has asserted (the disbelief of the man is confirmed), but if it is untrue, then it will revert to him (the man who placed the label of Kufr on his Muslim brother).”* (Muslim, Hadîth no. 60)



the religion of Islâm.” Undoubtedly, this is his intent. This is because this person merely described the other person with Kufr and he did not describe the religion of Islâm with Kufr. So, he merely negated the other person from being upon the religion of Islâm. That is why he will not enter Kufr with this statement. This person is merely punished with what he deserves because of this obscene revile. The view of those who call this Kufr necessitates that whoever says “O corrupt!” to a worshipper, becomes a Kâfir, as he named worship as corruption. I do not reckon that anyone would say such a thing. This person merely intends that you commit corruption and you do what is (known to be) corruption while you worship. He does not mean that your worship is corruption.”

Citation from al-Haytamî ends here.<sup>5</sup>

The apparent of an-Nawawî’s statement in “Sharhu Muslim” is also in agreement with this. For when he mentioned the Hadîth, he said,

“This Hadîth is from amongst those which the scholars considered to be problematic. For verily, the view of the people of truth is that Takfîr will not be declared on a Muslim due to sins such as killing and fornication. Likewise, is he saying to his brother, “O Kâfir” without believing that the religion of Islâm is invalid.”

## **[Explanation of the Hadîth: When a Man Says to His Brother (in Dîn), ‘O Kâfir!’ Then Surely It Returns to One of Them]**

An-Nawawî then narrated various viewpoints regarding the explanation of the Hadîth,

“One of the viewpoints: The Kufr is construed to him when he deems this lawful. The meaning of “**Bâ’a bihâ (Would return).**” Is the word of Kufr will return. Likewise is the phrase, “**Hârat Alayhi (Returns upon him).**” Found in

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Haytamî, al-I’lâm bi Qawâti’il Islâm, p. 47-63.

another narration. It means: the word of Kufr will Raja'a (return) to him. Therefore, the words Bâ'a, Hâra, and Raja'a have the same meaning.

The second viewpoint: His shortcoming to his brother (in Dîn) and the sin of declaring Takfîr upon him returns to him.

The third viewpoint: That this is construed to the Khawârij who declare Takfîr upon the Mu'minûn (pl. Mu'min; believers). Al-Qâdhî Iyâdh narrated this from Mâlik, but this is weak. This is because the authentic and preferred view held by the majority and the verifiers is that Takfîr is not declared upon the Khawârij as it is the case for the other Ahl'ul Bid'ah (people of innovation).

The fourth viewpoint: Its meaning is that it takes to Kufr. For verily, as they have said, sins are the highway of Kufr. It is feared for the one who commits it in abundance, for the end of its misfortune will lead to Kufr. The narration of Abû Awânah in his "Mustakhraj alâ Muslim" supports this,

**"If the addressee is so as he has asserted (the disbelief of the man is confirmed), but if it is untrue, then the Kufr will revert to him (the man who placed the label of Kufr on his Muslim brother)."**<sup>6</sup>

The fifth viewpoint: He returns with his Kufr. What reverts to him is not the reality of Kufr, rather it is the Takfîr, since he deemed his Mu'min brother Kâfir, it is like he declared Takfîr upon himself. This is either because he declared Takfîr upon one who is like him (a Muslim) or it is because he declared Takfîr upon one whom no one declares Takfîr upon other than a Kâfir who believes in the invalidity of Islâm." Quotation from an-Nawawî ends here.<sup>7</sup>

Ibnu Daqîq al-Îd said the following regarding the statement of Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam,

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<sup>6</sup> Abû Awânah al-Isfarâyînî, Mustakhraj, al-Jâmi'at'ul Islâmiyyah bi'l Madînat'il Munawwarah, 1/229, Hadîth no. 118.

<sup>7</sup> An-Nawawî, Sharhu Sahîh Muslim, 2/49-50.

*“...whoever labels a man with Kufr while he was in fact not so, it rebounds on him.”<sup>8</sup>*

Meaning returns upon him. This is a great threat for those who declare Takfir upon anyone from the Muslimûn while he is not a Kâfir. This is an extremely critical situation and a group of scholars fell in this; they disagreed regarding the creed and some of them passed the judgment of Kufr upon others.”

Then, Ibnu Daqîq al-Îd narrated from Ustâdh Abû Ishâq al-Isfarâyînî that he said, “I do not declare Takfir upon anyone except for those who declared Takfir upon me.”<sup>9</sup>

Ibnu Daqîq al-Îd said, “This statement might be obscure to some people and they may misinterpret it to mean other than its correct meaning.

The meaning which the Shaykh’s statement should be interpreted with is

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<sup>8</sup> Muslim, Hadîth no. 61.

<sup>9</sup> Shaykh’ul Islâm Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh said,

“This is in opposition to what some people say, like Abû Ishâq al-Isfarâyînî and those who follow him; they say: We do not declare Takfir upon anyone except for those who declare Takfir upon us. For verily, labeling one with Kufr is not their right, rather, it is Allâh’s right. A person does not have the right to lie about those who lie about him, nor to commit fornication with the spouse of someone who has committed fornication with his spouse. Even if a man is coerced by another to commit sodomy with him, he doesn’t have the right to coerce him to do this in retaliation. And even if a person is killed by being made to drink an alcoholic beverage or by being raped through sodomy, then it is impermissible to kill the murderer in a similar manner. This is because these are unlawful due to the rights of Allâhu Taâlâ. Even if the Christians lambasts our Nabî Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam, it is not allowed for us to lambast Masîh Alayh’is Salâm, and when the Râfidhah declare Takfir upon Abû Bakr Radiyallâhu Anh and Umar Radiyallâhu Anh, it is not our right to declare Takfir upon Alî Radiyallâhu Anh.” (Ibnu Taymiyyah, Minhâj’us Sunnah, 5/244)

that he alluded to this Hadîth which necessitates Kufr reverting to the one who calls a man with Kufr while he is not a Kâfir.

Likewise is the statement of Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam,

*“Whoever says to his brother (in Dîn), ‘O Kâfir!’ Then surely it returns to one of them.”*<sup>10</sup>

It is as if this scholar of theological rhetoric meaning Abû Ishâq says,

“The Hadîth indicates that the Kufr will befall one of the two; either the one who declares Takfîr or the one who is declared Takfîr upon. Therefore, if someone declares Takfîr upon me, then the Kufr befalls one of us. I am absolutely certain that I am not a Kâfir. Therefore, the Kufr returns to the one who declared Takfîr upon us.” Quotation from Ibnu Daqîq al-Îd ends here.<sup>11</sup>

What is apparent from the statement of Abû Ishâq is that between the one who has forceful interpretations and others there is no difference. And Allâh knows best.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ahmad, Musnad, Hadîth no. 5914; Mâlik, Muwatta, narration of Yahyâ, Dâru Ihyâ’it Turâth’il Arabî, 2/984.

<sup>11</sup> Ibnu Daqîq, Ihkâm’ul Ahkâm, Matba’at’us Sunnat’il Muhammadiyyah, 2/210-211.

<sup>12</sup> In the book al-Âlim wa’l Muta’allim, which was ascribed to Abû Hanîfah Radiyallâhu Anh, he was asked,

“Inform me about the one who testifies to your Kufr; what is your witness against him?”

The scholar Radiyallâhu Anh said, “My testament regarding him is being a liar and I would not call him Kâfir for this. However, I would call him a liar. This is because the unlawful is of two types: The unlawful that is transgressing against Allâhu Taâlâ, and the unlawful that is transgressing against the slaves of Allâh Subhânahu.

## **[The Majority of the Jurists Do Not Declare Takfîr upon the Khawârij Because of Their Forceful Interpretation]**

What was narrated by al-Qâdhî (Iyâdh) from Mâlik regarding him construing this Hadîth to the Khawârij is in agreement with one of the two narrations from Ahmad (bin Hanbal) regarding declaring Takfîr upon the Khawârij. This was the preferred view by a group from the Ashâb and others. This is because they declared Takfîr upon many of the Sahâbah. They considered their blood lawful to shed and their wealth lawful to be taken. With this, they deem that they come closer to Allâhu Taâlâ. Therefore, their invalid forceful interpretations do not excuse them.

However, the majority of the jurists are on the opinion that they are not declared Takfîr upon because of their forceful interpretation. They said: Whoever considers it lawful to kill the innocent and to take their wealth,

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The unlawful that is performed against Allâh Azza wa Jalla is associating partners, rejection, and Kufr.

The unlawful performed against the slaves of Allâh is the injustice between the slaves.

The one who lies about Allâh and His Messenger does not necessarily have to be the same as the one who lies about me. This is because the sin of one who lies about Allâh and His Messenger is graver than this person lying about all mankind.

Therefore, the person who attests to my Kufr is a liar according to me. It is impermissible for me to lie against him just because he lied against me, since Allâhu Taâlâ said,

**“And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.”** (al-Mâ'idah 5/8)

Allâhu Taâlâ says: The enmity you have against a people should not carry you to abandon treating them with justice.” (al-Âlim wa'l Muta'allim, Matba'at'ul Anwâr, p. 26-27)

without having a doubt and without bringing a forceful interpretation, then he becomes Kâfir. And if he considers it lawful because of a forceful interpretation just like the Khawârij, then he will not become a Kâfir. And Allâh knows best and He is the most wise.

## **[Establishing the Hujjah and Declaring Mu'ayyan Takfir]**

The second issue is that,

**“Declaring Takfir upon a Mu'ayyan (specific) person and the permission of killing him are dependent on the reaching of the Nabawî Hujjah that those who oppose it become disbelievers.”**

Until the end of Ibnu Taymiyyah's statement.

His statement encompasses those whom the Da'wah (call) has not reached, and he has explicitly stated this elsewhere.

## **[The First View Regarding the Ruling of the One Whom the Da'wah Did Not Reach]**

Ibnu Aqîl narrated from the Ashâb that there is no punishment for a person as such. He said,

**“Indeed, Allâh forgives those who have transactions and overlook because the Da'wah did not reach him and he acted upon an aspect of good.”<sup>13</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> Ibnu Muflih cited this statement from Ibnu Aqîl. (Shams'ud Dîn Ibnu Muflih, al-Furû, 10/216-217)

Ibnu Aqîl Rahimahullâh is referring to the man mentioned in the following Hadîth,

“There was a merchant who used to lend people, and whenever he saw his debtor in straitened circumstances, he would say to his servants, ‘Overlook him, it may be

This ruling was derived from a Marfû Hadîth found in Sahîh Muslim,

**“By Him in Whose hand is my life, whoever from this nation -be it a Jew or Christian- hears about me and then dies without believing in what I have been sent with, then such person will be but one of the inhabitants of Hell-Fire.”<sup>14</sup>**

## **[The Statement by an-Nawawî]**

In the commentary of Muslim, (an-Nawawî Rahimahullâh) said, “Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam specified the Jews and the Christians since they have a Book.”

He said, “The meaning of this Hadîth is that those whom the Da’wah of Islâm has not reached are excused.”

He said, “This is in accordance with what was determined in Usûl (methodology): According to the correct view, there is no ruling prior to the advent of the Sharî’ah.” Quotation from an-Nawawî ends here.<sup>15</sup>

## **[The Statement by Al-Qâdhî Abû Ya’lâ]**

Al-Qâdhî Abû Ya’lâ said the following regarding the statement of Allâhu Taâlâ,

**“And never would We punish until We sent a messenger.”** (al-Isrâ 17/15)

“There is an evidence in this verse that knowledge concerning Allâhu Taâlâ is not obligatory according to the intellect, and that it is only obligatory by the

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that Allâh will overlook us (forgive our sins).’ Thereafter, Allâh overlooked him (forgave his sins).” (al-Bukhârî, Hadîth no. 2078; Muslim, Hadîth no. 1562)

<sup>14</sup> Muslim, Hadîth no. 153.

<sup>15</sup> An-Nawawî, Sharhu Sahîh Muslim, 2/188.



Shar'ah, which is the dispatching of messengers. Also, if a person dies before the dispatchment of the messengers, then it cannot be asserted that he will enter hellfire." Quotation from al-Qâdhî Abû Ya'lâ ends here.<sup>16</sup>

## **[The Second View Regarding the Ruling of One Whom the Da'wah Did Not Reach]**

There is another view regarding those whom the Da'wah has not reached, which is that they will be punished. Ibnu Hâmid preferred this view and used the statement of Allâhu Taâlâ as an argument,

**"Does man think that he will be left neglected?"** (al-Qiyâmah 75/36)

And Allâh knows best!<sup>17</sup>

## **[Establishing Hujjah]**

So, the Hujjah has been established upon whomever the Risâlah (prophethood) of Muhammad Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam reached and the Qur'ân reached. Therefore, such person is not excused with regards to not believing in Allâh, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day. After this, he does not have the excuse of ignorance.

Allâh Subhânahu informed about the ignorance of most of the Kuffâr (pl. Kâfir) alongside openly mentioning their Kufr. He Subhânahu described the Christians with ignorance, and alongside this, a single Muslim does not doubt regarding their Kufr. We also confidently affirm that most of the Jews and the Christians today are ignorant blind-followers and we believe in their Kufr and the Kufr of those who doubt their Kufr.

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<sup>16</sup> Abû Ya'lâ, al-Uddah fî Usûl'il Fiqh, 2/422-423; Shams'ud Dîn Ibnu Muflih, al-Furû, 10/217.

<sup>17</sup> Shams'ud Dîn Ibnu Muflih, al-Furû, 10/217.

The Qur'ân indicates that doubting regarding Usûl'ud Dîn (Fundamentals of the Religion) is Kufr. Doubting is hesitating between two things such as the one who neither positively asserts the truthfulness of the Messenger nor believes him, neither positively asserts the occurrence of the resurrection nor the absence of its occurrence, and etc. such as one who neither believes in the obligation of prayer nor in the absence of its obligation or neither believes in the prohibition of fornication nor in the absence of its prohibition. This is Kufr with the Ijmâ (consensus) of the scholars. There is no excuse for the one who is in this state by not understanding the Hujaj (pl. of Hujjah) and clear proofs of Allâh. This is because there is no excuse for him after it reached him even if he did not comprehend it.

## **[Textual Evidences Regarding Ignorance Not Being an Excuse After the Hujjah is Established]**

Allâhu Taâlâ had informed regarding the Kuffâr that they do not comprehend, so He Taâlâ said,

**“But We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness.”** (al-An'âm 6/25)

Allâhu Taâlâ also said,

**“Indeed, they have taken the devils as allies instead of Allâh, and they think that they are guided.”** (al-A'râf 7/30)

Therefore, Allâh Subhânahu clarified that they do not understand and He did not excuse them since they did not comprehend. Rather the Qur'ân was explicit regarding the Kufr of this type among the Kuffâr, as in the statement of Allâhu Taâlâ,

**“Say: Shall We inform you about the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds? Those are the ones whose effort in the worldly life has gone in vain, while they think they are doing well. They are**

**those who deny the verses of their Lord and the Meeting with Him. So their deeds have gone to waste, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.”** (al-Kahf 18/103-105)

While speaking about the matter of whether or not every Mujtahid is correct in their Ijtihâd, the Shaykh Abû Muhammad Muwaffaq’ud Dîn Ibnu Qudâmah Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ preferred that every Mujtahid is not correct (in his Ijtihâd), rather the truth is in one view among many other views of the Mujtahidûn (pl. Mujtahid) and he said the following,

“Al-Jâhidh claimed that when one who opposes the religion of Islâm observes and thereafter is incapable of understanding the truth, then he is excused and is not a sinner.”

Shaykh Rahimahullâh continued until he said,

“As for the view al-Jâhidh adopted, then it is certainly false, Kufr (denial) in Allâhu Taâlâ, and rejecting Him Taâlâ and His Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam. This is because we know that the Nabî Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam commanded the Jews and the Christians with Islâm and following it, he condemned them for their persistence (to sticking to Kufr), and he fought against all of them and killed from among them those who had reached puberty. We know that the acquainted stubborn ones are those whom are very few. Most are blind-followers who espoused the religion of their ancestors by blind-following and they do not know the miracles of the Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam and his truthfulness. The verses in the Qur’ân that indicate to this matter are many. Such as the statement of Allâhu Taâlâ,

**“That is the assumption of those who disbelieve. So, woe to the disbelievers because of the Fire (they have to face).”** (Sâd 38/27);

**“This thought of yours that you conceived about your Lord brought you to destruction, and you became among the losers.”** (al-Fussilat 41/23);

**“They do nothing but make conjectures.”** (al-Jâthiyah 45/24);

And the statement of Allâhu Taâlâ,

**“And they think that they have something to stand upon.”** (al-Mujâdalah 58/18);

**“And they think that they are guided.”** (al-A’râf 7/30; az-Zukhruf 43/37);

**“Those are the ones whose effort in the worldly life has gone in vain, while they think they are doing well. They are those who deny the verses of their Lord and the Meeting with Him. So their deeds have gone to waste, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.”** (al-Kahf 18/104-105)

In short, condemnation of those who denied Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam are numerous in the Book (Qur’ân) and the Sunnah.” Quotation from Ibnu Qudâmah ends here.<sup>18</sup>

## **[The Stubborn and Non-Stubborn Person Are Alike in Regards to Takfîr]**

So, Ibnu Qudâmah Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ clarified that if we do not declare Takfîr upon anyone but the acquainted stubborn ones, it becomes necessary for us to rule most of the Jews and the Christians with Islâm (account them as Muslim) and this is in the category of the clearest falsehood.

So the statement of Shaykh Taqiyy’ud Dîn Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ, “Declaring Takfîr and killing are dependent on the reaching of the Hujjah.”

The Shaykh’s statement indicates these two matters –which are Takfîr and killing- are not dependent on the absolute comprehension of the Hujjah,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibnu Qudâmah, Rawdhat’un Nâdhir, 2/350-352.

rather they are dependent on its reaching.

## **[The Difference between the Comprehension of Hujjah and the Reaching of Hujjah]**

Therefore, comprehending the Hujjah is one thing and its reaching is another. So, if the ruling was dependent upon the comprehension of the Hujjah, we would not declare Takfir upon and kill anyone except those whom we know to be specifically stubborn, and the invalidity of this is evident.

Rather, the last part of the statement by the Shaykh Rahimahullâh indicates that he takes the comprehension of the Hujjah in consideration with regards to matters that are obscure for most people and do not contradict Tawhîd and the Risâlah, such as ignorance regarding some of the Attributes of Allâh.

As for the matters which contradict Tawhîd and believing in the Risâlah, then Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ has explicitly stated in many places the Kufr of the doer and them being killed after being offered to repent. Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ did not excuse them due to their ignorance. This is alongside the fact that we have proved to be correct the reason for them falling into these issues is merely ignorance of its reality. Therefore, if they knew that, it is Kufr that takes one out of the fold of Islâm they would not have performed it.

## **[Statements by Ibnu Taymiyyah Regarding This Matter]**

This topic is found in an ample amount in the statements by the Shaykh Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ, such as his (following) statement in one of his books,

“So, all of those who exceed the bounds with regards to a prophet or a pious man attributing to him a type of divinity such as supplicating to him besides Allâh saying things like, “O so-and-so, aid me,” “forgive me,” “have mercy upon me,” “help me,” “cure me,” “I place my trust in you,” “I am under your

guardianship," "You are my guardian," and similar statements that are from the characteristics of Rubûbiyyah (Lordship) that do not befit anyone except Allâh, will be asked to repent if he repents, he repents, otherwise he will be killed because all of these are Shirk and misguidance."<sup>19</sup>

Shaykh'ul Islâm Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ said, "Whoever appoints intermediaries between himself and Allâh and supplicates to them, places trust on them, and asks from them, then such person becomes a Kâfir by Ijmâ."<sup>20</sup>

He said, "Whoever believes that visiting the Ahl'udh Dhimmah (non-Muslim who pays Jizyah; a protection tax to reside in the Abode of Islâm) in their churches is nearness to Allâh, then such person is a Murtad (apostate). If he is ignorant regarding this being unlawful, he will be taught this. If he persists on it, he becomes a Murtad."<sup>21</sup>

Shaykh Rahimahullâh said, "Whoever reviles the Sahâbah or one of them and adds to his reviling the claim that Alî Radiyallâhu Anh is an Ilâh (God) or a Nabî (Prophet) or that Jibrîl Alayh'is Salâm erred (in delivering the prophethood), then there is no doubt concerning the Kufr of such person. Moreover, there is no doubt concerning the Kufr of the one who does pauses in declaring Takfir upon him."<sup>22</sup>

Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh also said, "And whosoever claims that the Sahâbah became apostates after Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam, except a few; not more than ten odd people in number, or that they became

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<sup>19</sup> With similar wording in Majmû'ul Fatâwâ, 3/395.

<sup>20</sup> With similar wording in Majmû'ul Fatâwâ, 1/124; Badr'ud Dîn al-Ba'li, Mukhtasar'ul Fatâwa'l Misriyyah, Rakâ'iz, 1/412; al-Fatawa'l Kubrâ, 5/535; al-Mardâwî, al-Insâf, thq. Turkî, 27/108.

<sup>21</sup> Narrated by al-Hajjâwî in al-Iqnâ, 4/298; With similar wording in Badr'ud Dîn al-Ba'li, Mukhtasar'ul Fatâwa'l Misriyyah, Rakâ'iz, 2/345.

<sup>22</sup> Ibnu Taymiyyah, as-Sârim'ul Maslûl, p. 586; al-Hajjâwî, al-Iqnâ, 4/299.

corrupt, then there is also no doubt about the Kufr of the who says this. Moreover, whoever doubts his Kufr is also a Kâfir.” Quotation from Ibnu Taymiyyah ends here.<sup>23</sup>

So look at how the Shaykh declared Takfir upon the doubter while the doubter is ignorant. He did not regard ignorance as an excuse in matters as such.

The Shaykh Rahimahullâh said during his speech, “For this reason, they said: Whoever rebels arrogantly just as iblîs did, then he is a Kâfir with agreement (of the Muslims). Whoever rebels by desire does not become a Kâfir in the presence of the Ahl’us Sunnah. Whoever commits something unlawful while legitimizing it, then he is Kâfir with agreement (of the Muslims).”<sup>24</sup>

Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh said, “Legitimizing is believing that it is lawful and this sometimes takes place by believing that Allâh did not make it unlawful, and sometimes takes place by not believing that Allah made it unlawful. This happens due to the defect in faith in the Rubûbiyyah or the Risâlah (messengership) and this happens with mere denial which is not based on an introduction.

Sometimes such person knows that Allâhu Taâlâ made it unlawful then he refrains from commitment to this prohibition and acts stubbornly, so this is more severe in Kufr than the previous one.” Quotation from Ibnu Taymiyyah ends here.<sup>25</sup>

There are many statements of the Shaykh Rahimahullâh as such.

Therefore, he has not specified Takfir to only be declared upon the stubborn, meanwhile confidently affirming that the majority of these people

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<sup>23</sup> Ibnu Taymiyyah, as-Sârim’ul Maslûl, p. 586-587; al-Hajjâwî, al-Iqnâ, 4/300.

<sup>24</sup> Ibnu Taymiyyah, as-Sârim’ul Maslûl, p. 521.

<sup>25</sup> With similar wording, Ibnu Taymiyyah, as-Sârim’ul Maslûl, p. 521.



are ignorant who do not know that what they said or did was Kufr. Therefore, they are not excused due to ignorance regarding such things. This is because from amongst these things is opposition to Tawhîd which is the greatest of obligations. Also from them is the inclusion of the opposition to the Risâlah and rejection of the textual proofs of the Book and the Sunnah which are apparent and all of the scholars of the Muslims have made Ijmâ upon.

The Salaf and the Imams have stipulated regarding the Takfir of people due to statements that originate from them while knowing that they were not stubborn. For this reason, the jurists Rahimahumullâhu Taâlâ said: Whoever rejects the obligation of worship from the five acts of worship<sup>26</sup>, rejects the lawfulness of bread and its like, rejects the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, or doubts regarding these while a person in his circumstance would not be ignorant concerning these, then such person commits Kufr. If someone like him would be ignorant concerning these, then he is informed of these. If he persists after being informed, then he commits Kufr and is killed. The jurists did not specify the ruling to being stubborn.<sup>27</sup>

The jurists mentioned many things, many statements and acts that its doer becomes a Murtad in the sections relating to the ruling of the apostate and they did not stipulate that the ruling is valid regarding the stubborn person.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibn'un Najjâr al-Futtûhî Rahimahullâh explains the five acts of worship as follows:

"These are Salâh (prayer), Zakâh, Sawm (fasting), Hajj (pilgrimage), and Tahârah (purification), since the evidences of the obligation of these five are established in the Qur'ân." (Ibn'un Najjâr, Sharhu Muntaha'l Irâdât, 10/536-537).

<sup>27</sup> Some of the jurists who have stated similar to this are: Majd'ud Dîn Ibnu Taymiyyah, Husayn bin Yûsuf ad-Dujaylî, Ibn'un Najjâr al-Futtûhî, Ibn'ul Imâd, and al-Buhûti Rahimahumullâh. (al-Majd, al-Muharrar, 2/167; ad-Dujaylî, al-Wajîz, p. 491; Ibn'un Najjâr, Sharhu Muntaha'l Irâdât, 10/536-537; Ibn'ul Imâd, Mu'tiyat'ul Amân, p. 264; al-Buhûti, ar-Rawd'ul Murbi, Rakâ'iz, 3/419-420)

## **[The Incident of Qudâmah bin Madh'ûn Radiyahâhu Anh and His Companions]**

The Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah also said, “When a group among the Sahâbah and the Tâbi’în like Qudâmah (bin Madh’ûn) Radiyahâhu Anh and his companions legitimized alcoholic beverages and they thought that it is permissible for those who believe and act righteously according to what they understood from the verse in al-Mâ’idah<sup>28</sup>, the scholars of the Sahâbah such as Umar Radiyahâhu Anh, Alî Radiyahâhu Anh and others agreed that they will be asked to repent and that if they persisted upon legitimizing they become Kâfir and if they affirm that it is unlawful, they will be flogged. Therefore, they did not declare Takfīr upon them in the beginning because they legitimized until they clarified the truth to them since there existed a doubt. If they had persisted, they would have committed Kufr.”<sup>29</sup>

The Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah again said, “We know by necessity that Rasûlullâh Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam did not prescribe for his nation directing supplication to anyone among the living and the dead, be it a prophet or other, neither by the wording of seeking help, seeking aid, or other than it. Just as he Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam did not prescribe for his nation prostrating for the dead nor to the dead and its likes. Rather, we know that he Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam prohibited them from all of this and that it is from Shirk that Allâhu Taâlâ and His Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam made unlawful. However, because of the prevalence of ignorance and the decrease of knowledge regarding the traces of the Risâlah among many of the latter-day

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<sup>28</sup> Allâhu Taâlâ states,

**“There is no sin, for those who believe and do good deeds, in what they ate earlier, if they fear Allâh, believe, and do good deeds; and again fear Allâh and believe, and still again fear Allâh and do good deeds. Allâh loves those who are good in their deeds.”** (al-Mâ’idah 5/93)

<sup>29</sup> With similar wording, Ibnu Taymiyyah, al-Istighâthah, p. 253.

people, it is impossible to declare Takfîr upon them by reason of these until what the Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam brought is clarified to them.” Quotation from Ibnu Taymiyyah ends here.<sup>30</sup>

Look at his statement, “...it is impossible to declare Takfîr upon them by reason of these until what the Rasûl Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam brought is clarified to them.” He did not say, “...until it is clear for them and stubbornness is proven true from them behalf after being acquainted with this.”

The Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh is saying, “These affairs are Shirk and the one who commits them is a Mushrik.” However, in this passage, he, out of being cautious, refrained from applying Kufr and apostasy to them. Yet, he also did not say, “Declaring Takfîr upon such people is impermissible and those who do declare Takfîr upon them should be criticized.”

The Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh also said while mentioning what most people are upon from Kufr and leaving the fold of Islam,

“This is a lot and is prevalent especially in the eras and cities which the Jâhiliyyah (days of pre-Islâmic ignorance), Kufr, and Nifâq (hypocrisy) have prevailed in it. So, these people possess ignorance, oppression, lies, Kufr, Nifâq, and misguidance which is unheard of and cannot be expounded on in this treatise.

When this occurs in obscure views, it might be said: Indeed, he is mistaken and misguided regarding it, the Hujjah that those who oppose it become Kâfir has not been established upon him. However, this (Kufr) occurs in groups from amongst them in the apparent affairs that are known by both the elite and the common folk of the Muslims to be from the religion of Islâm. Rather, even the Jews, Christians, and polytheists know that Muhammad Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam was sent with it and that he declared Takfîr upon those who oppose it. Such as his commandment of worshiping Allâh -Alone Who has no partner- and his forbidding from worshipping any other than Allâhu Taâlâ such as the angels, the prophets, and other than them. Indeed, these are the

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<sup>30</sup> With similar wording, Ibnu Taymiyyah, *al-Istighâthah*, p. 411.

most apparent signs of Islâm. Manifesting enmity towards the Jews, Christians, and polytheists is like this. Also the prohibition of the shameful deeds, interest, alcoholic beverages, gambling, and their likes are also like this.

Then you will find that many of their leaders fell into these types, thereby becoming apostates, even though they may repent or turn from it.”

The Shaykh Rahimahullâh continued until he said, “What is graver than this is that some of them wrote books regarding the religion of the Mushrikûn and apostasy from Islâm. Just as ar-Râzî wrote his book regarding worshipping the stars. He brought evidences regarding its goodness and its benefit and he encouraged this.<sup>31</sup> This is apostasy from Islâm with the agreement of the Muslims. This is so, even if he may have turned to Islâm.” Quotation from Ibnu Taymiyyah ends here.<sup>32</sup>

## **[Ibnu Taymiyyah Differentiated between Obscure Matters and Apparent Matters with Regards to the Excuse of Ignorance]**

Pay attention to Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah separating between the obscure views and the apparent matters. So he said regarding obscure views that are Kufr, “It might be said: Indeed, he is mistaken and misguided regarding it, the Hujjah that those who oppose it become Kâfir has not been established upon him.” Shaykh Ibnu Taymiyyah did not say this regarding the apparent matters.

So his statement is apparent regarding the difference between the apparent and obscure matters. So, Takfîr is declared with apparent matters and its ruling is absolute. Takfîr is also declared with things that occur from a Muslim out of ignorance once this Muslim is informed, such as legitimizing

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<sup>31</sup> Ibnu Kathîr (in the Tafsîr of al-Baqarah 2/102) and adh-Dhahabî (in Mîzân’ul I’tidâl, 3/340) attributed this book to him, but they mentioned that he might have repented from it.

<sup>32</sup> Majmû’ul Fatâwâ, 18/53-55; also see Majmû’ul Fatâwâ, 4/54-55.

something that is forbidden or an act or statement related to Shirk. Takfir is not declared with obscure matters which occur due to ignorance, like ignorance regarding some of the Attributes of Allâh. The ignorant person is not declared Takfir upon in an absolute manner, even if this person is a preacher. Like the statement by Ibnu Taymiyyah to some of the Jahmiyyah, "In my presence, Takfir is not declared upon you as you are ignorant."<sup>33</sup>

His statement, "In my presence" clarifies that the lack of declaring Takfir upon them is not a matter that there is consensus upon, however, it was his preference.

His view in this matter is in opposition to the well-known view in the Madhhab. For verily, the correct view in the Madhhab is declaring Takfir upon the Mujtahid who calls to the view that the Qur'ân is created, nullifying Allâh being seen (by the believers in the Hereafter), Rafidhaness (Shiism), and their likes and declaring the imitator as being corrupt.

## **[The Issue of Declaring Takfir upon the People of Bid'ah]**

Majd Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh<sup>34</sup> said,

"The correct view is that we consider the imitator of every Bid'ah -that we declare Takfir upon its inviter- to be corrupt. Such as the one who says that the Qur'ân is created, the Knowledge of Allâh is created, His Names are created, that Allâh will not be seen in the Hereafter, the one who curses the Sahâbah by espousing it as a religion, the one who says that faith is abstract belief, or whatever resembles it. Whoever has knowledge regarding one of these Bid'ah, calls to it, and debates it then he is convicted (ruled) with becoming a Kâfir. (Imâm) Ahmad mentioned this in many places." Quotation

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<sup>33</sup> Ibnu Taymiyyah, *al-Istighâthah fî'r Raddi ala'l Bakrî, Dâr'ul Minhâj*, p. 253.

<sup>34</sup> He is the grandfather of Ibnu Taymiyyah, named Majd'ud Dîn Abu'l Barakât Abd'us Salâm Ibnu Taymiyyah. He passed away in the year 652 H.

from Majd ends here.<sup>35</sup>

So look at how they ruled them with Kufr alongside their ignorance. The Shaykh (Ibnu Taymiyyah) Rahimahullâh preferred the lack of their Kufr due to ignorance and also the lack of their corruption. Likewise, Shaykh Muwaffaq'ud Dîn (Ibnu Qudâmah al-Maqdisî) Rahimahullâh preferred the lack of their Kufr while they are corrupt according to him.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibnu Muflih, al-Furû, 11/340-341; al-Mardâwî, al-Insâf, thq. Turkî, 29/347.

<sup>36</sup> Shaykh Muwaffaq Rahimahullâh expressed this view in his letter addressing Shaykh Fakhr'ud Dîn Ibnu Taymiyyah Rahimahullâh, the uncle of Shaykh Majd'ud Dîn Ibnu Taymiyyah, who claimed that the people of Bid'ah will abide in hellfire forever. Some portions of this letter was narrated by Ibnu Rajab Rahimahullâh.

Shaykh Muwaffaq said in this letter,

“As for his statement, “Verily, the old and new books of the Ashâb (Hanâblilah) hold the view that Takfīr is declared upon the person who claims that the Qur’ân is created.”

This statement encompasses the statement of the Ashâb being the definitive proof. This is astonishing! What do you say, if the Ashâb made consensus upon a subsidiary issue, then would this be a proof which is sufficient and contented with being mentioning? (...) Then, even if it were proven that all of the Ashâb agreed upon declaring Takfīr upon them, then this opposes the view of those who do not declare Takfīr upon them. This is because aside from Abû Hâmid, ash-Shâfi'î and his Ashâb hold the view that they should not be declared Takfīr upon. So then, what determines the view which carries more weight? Then, even if everyone were to agree upon declaring Takfīr upon them, then these people abiding eternally in the hellfire is not from the requirements of this Takfīr. This is because on some occasions, the Nabî Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam labelled with Takfīr while (the person declared Takfīr of) will not abide eternally in hellfire.”

After al-Muwaffaq mentioned a few Ahâdîth such as the Hadîth which states, “Defaming a Muslim is corruption, and fighting him is Kufr.” (Muslim, Hadîth no. 64) He said, “Abû Nasr as-Sijzî said: Those who view that Takfīr should be declared upon the one who says that the Qur’ân is created disagreed. So some of them stated that this

Similar to this is the statement by Ibn'ul Qayyim Rahimahullâhu Taâlâ for verily, he said, "Corruption in belief is like the corruption of the people of Bid'ah who believe in Allâh and the Last Day, prohibit what Allâh prohibited and obligate what Allâh obligated, however they negate many things that are affirmed by Allâh and His Rasûl out of ignorance, forceful interpretations, and imitating the Shuyûkh (pl. Shaykh), and they likewise affirm what Allâh and

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is a Kufr that takes one out of the fold of the religion while others stated that this is a Kufr that does not take one out of the fold of the religion.

Then, Imâm Ahmad, who is from amongst the harshest of people against the people of Bid'ah, used to say to al-Mu'tasim (the caliph who espoused the Mu'tazilî view and claimed that the Qur'ân was created), "O commander of the Mu'minûn (believers)." He held the view that one must obey the caliphs who used to invite to the view that the Qur'ân was created and that the Friday and Îd prayers are to be offered behind them. If Imâm Ahmad had heard this view, which was not narrated from the Nabî Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam nor anyone before Imâm Ahmad, he would have objected it severely, since he used to object to what is lesser than this. (...)

Know, o sincere brother that you shall arrive to your Lord and that you will be questioned regarding this very view of yours. So look at who your questioner is and look at what you will tell Him. Prepare an answer for the question and equip your excuse with an outer garment. Do not think that He will be satisfied from you when you answer stating that you imitated some of the Ashâb. The defense of the Ashâb agreeing that these people are from amongst the group of Kuffâr and that this necessitates them abiding eternally in hellfire will not save you. This is diseased speech and an unacceptable answer."

Al-Muwaffaq then said, "If Allâh made His Ghayb (the unseen) visible to you, freed you from ignorance and its imperfections, and informed you of what He is doing with His creation, then know that we are a weak people. We have sufficed with the statement by our Nabî Alayh'is Salâm and with following his path and we do not have the audacity to proceed ahead of Allâh and His messenger. So do not harbour your strength with our weakness, nor your knowledge with our ignorance." (Ibnu Rajab, Dhaylu Tabaqât'il Hanâbilah, Maktabat'ul Obekan, 3/326-331).



His Rasûl did not affirm. These are like the renegade Khawârij (who go through, pass in and out of the religion), most of the Rawâfidh (Shia), the Qadariyyah, Mu'tazilah, most of the Jahmiyyah who are not extreme in Tajahhum (way/innovation of the Jahmiyyah; Jahmism).

As for the extreme Jahmiyyah, they are like the extreme Rawâfidh, both groups do not have a share in Islâm. This is why a group of the Salaf excluded both categorizes from the seventy-two sects and said: They have parted from the religion." Quotation from Ibn'ul Qayyim ends here.<sup>37</sup>

## **[Warning from Delving into Issues of Takfir without Knowledge]**

In brief: It is obligatory upon the one who advises himself not to speak concerning this matter except with knowledge and proof from Allâh and to beware of excluding a man out of the fold of Islâm merely with his comprehension and what is approved by his intellect. Because excluding a man out of the fold of Islâm or entering him into it is the greatest of matters of the religion. We have sufficed in explaining this issue as we have done with other issues, rather, in brief; its ruling is the most apparent of the rulings of the religion.

Therefore, it is obligatory upon us to follow and abandon innovating, as Ibnu Mas'ûd Radiyallâhu Anh said,

*"Follow and do not innovate, for you have been sufficed."*<sup>38</sup>

Also, in matters which the scholars disagreed regarding it being Kufr, then what is precautious for the religion is pausing and not preceding so long as there does not exist an explicit text from the Infallible Sallallâhu Alayhi wa Sallam regarding the issue.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibn'ul Qayyim, Madârij'us Sâlikîn, Dâru Atâ'ât'il Ilm, 1/557.

<sup>38</sup> At-Tabarânî, Mu'jam'ul Kabîr, Hadîth no. 8770; ad-Dârimî, Musnad, thq. az-Zahrânî, Hadîth no. 212.

In this era, satan made most of the people err regarding this matter.

Satan confined this to a group, thereby; they passed the ruling of Islâm upon those whom the textual proofs of the Book, Sunnah, and Ijmâ ruled with their Kufr, such as those who invoke the dead and those who are not present, come close to them with sacrifices and vows. Those who excuse them say: Verily, they say La Ilaha Illallâh!

Satan infracted with others who declared Takfîr upon those whom the Book, the Sunnah, and the Ijmâ stated to be Muslim.

From the strangest things is that if one of them is asked concerning a matter about purification, business transactions, or the like, they do not issue verdicts with their mere comprehension and what is approved by their intellect. Rather, they will search for the statements of the scholars and issue a verdict according to their statements. So how can they rely -with regards to this great issue which is the greatest and most dangerous of affairs of the religion- upon mere comprehension and what is approved by their intellect?

How great is what befell Islâm from these two groups and how great is its trial from these two tribulations!

## [Epilogue]

We ask you, O Allâh, to guide us to the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not of those who have earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray.

All Praise is due to Allâh, Lord of the Worlds. May Allâh send peace and blessings upon Muhammad, his family, and companions.

*[The treatise "A Question Regarding Those Who Declare Takfîr upon Other Muslims and the Types of Kufr that its Possessor Is Excused and Is Not Excused" authored by Shaykh Abâ Butayn Rahimahullâh has been completed. All praise is due to Allâh, by whose grace good deeds are completed.]*