Three Misconceptions Today!

Abu `Abdil Kareem

There are three misconceptions that some of us Muslims have that are important to clarify.

Misconception #1

Not declaring kufr in what is worshipped besides Allah subhanahu wa ta`ala.

Declaring Kufr in what is worshipped besides Allaah is as essential as affirming the true Unity of Allaah ta`ala. In fact they go hand in hand, as our shahaadah contains both a negation of all deities (Laa ilaaha…) besides Allaah ta`ala and affirmation that Allaah ta`ala Alone is worthy of worship (...illa `Llaah).

There is many ahaadeeth that whoever says Laa ilaaha ill Allaah will enter Jannah. However, as if we at times leave an important hadeeth that explains this issue in more detail: "Whoever says Laa ilaaha ill Allaah and declares Kufr (disbelief) in whatever is worshipped besides Allaah then his money and blood are Haraam (forbidden to be harmed) and the judgment (upon this person) is up to Allaah."

Dr. Saleh as-Saleh says in his book on the Shahadatain, "The above Hadeeth is a great explanation for the true meaning of 'There is no God but Allaah.' It emphasizes that there must be a complete disassociation from anyone/anything (a righteous man, a star, moon, fire, river, cow, Buddha, Ghandi, Jesus, Khomeini, Malcolm X, or Y, Farrakhan, graves, statues, money, lust, heads of states, etc.) introduced between man and Allaah. When the person disbelieves in whatever is being worshipped other than Allaah, then he becomes a Muslim."

So it is essential for our maintaining of tauheed of Allaah ta`ala in our lives to declare disbelief in all that is worshipped besides Him. In fact, one of the principles in Islam that one who does not declare in kufr in what is kufr has himself committed an act of kufr, may Allaah protect us from it.

Misconception #2

Misconception that whoever declares himself Muslim, utters the shahaada, and even prays and pays zakaah and fasts, is necessarily a Muslim and that we cannot criticize his actions, "as we don't know their intention". This is obviously incorrect, as the punishment of killing for apostasy (ridda) was instituted in Islaam for a reason - Allaah ta`ala does not give us legislation that has no application. The issue of takfeer is complicated one, but if a person, say, denies a single aayah in the Qur’aan, even if he does everything else that Islaam requires of him, he may leave Islaam by that act alone and he cannot marry a Muslim, nor can meat he slaughters be eaten, nor can he be buried with Muslims, nor are Muslims allowed to pray for his forgiveness.
The following excerpt from Sh. J.Zarabozo’s "The Friday Prayer: Part III: Khutbahs (II)" explains very well some misconceptions that some of us Muslims may have in this regard.

After explaining how the Jews and Christians went astray believing they are chosen people, and how we should not take the religion in the same way, Sh. Zarabozo writes:

"...The wrong actions we perform can harm us greatly as we may be sent to the Hell-fire due to our actions. Furthermore, and this is the point that I want to stress in today’s khutbah, we may even be performing actions that take us completely out of the realm of Islam to the realm of kufr. These acts - even if we call ourselves Muslims - are such that they negate any belief we claim to have and they can land us in the Hell-fire forever.

Many people don’t realize that leaving Islam does not necessarily mean leaving it completely by not performing any of its acts. Someone can leave the fold of Islam even if he continues to call himself a Muslim, claims to be a believer and even if he continues to perform some of the acts of Islam, such as praying and fasting. A Muslim is not simply one who performs any part of the religion. What happens sometimes is that a person performs part of Islam and at the same time he performs many acts of apostasy - such that, in fact, nothing is left of his Islam. He has left the fold of Islam even if he still claims to be Muslim. He is like the person who performs wudhu and then invalidates his wudhu; obviously nothing is left of his wudhu after he has invalidated it. Similarly, nothing is left of a person’s Islam after he has invalidated it by acts of apostasy and kufr.

Islam or being Muslim is not simply a name that we can call ourselves. Instead, it is testifying to something specific. Our actions must also be representative of that testimony. There are acts that one might perform that completely contradict that testimony. In such a case, nothing is then left of his testimony of Islam and he is no longer a Muslim.

At the outset, however, let me clarify one important point. There is a difference between kufr (act of disbelief) and kafir (a disbeliever). It is possible for a person to commit an act of kufr while he himself is not a kafir. If a person does an act of kufr out of ignorance, this does not automatically make him a disbeliever unless his kufr is explained and clarified to him and he then insists on following that act of kufr.

When you realize this fact - that there are certain acts or beliefs that may take one out of the realm of Islam and into kufr - you will then realize the importance of knowing those acts in order to avoid them. One of the best ways of protecting yourself from evil is by knowing what evil is in order to recognize it when it appears and in order to remain away from the roads that lead to it. Therefore, everyone of us should take the time to study those acts of kufr that may lead us out of Islam. Study them in order to make sure that we ourselves are not performing them. We should know them in order to keep ourselves away from them. We should also be familiar with them in order to teach them to others to protect them from such acts also.

We should also realize that if we stay within the realm of iman and Islam, then even if we commit sins in this life - which is not something we may strive to do or be pleased with - but we should know that if we stay within the boundaries of Islam then even if we should commit many sins, Allah will enter us into Paradise as promised in many statements of His Messenger (peace be upon him). We may be punished in Hell for some time - and I ask Allah to save all of us from such an event - but then Allah will shower His mercy upon us and remove our sins from us, purify us and enter us into Paradise. But if we should leave the fold of Islam, then all of our deeds that we may perform will be worth nothing and we shall be in the Hell-fire forever. So this topic of knowing
what takes one from the realm of Islam to the realm of kufr is of tantamount importance.

**Misconception #3**

Misconception that we should not write or speak about deviations that occur among Muslims.

Ibn Taymeeyah, in Majmoo’ah ar-Rasaa’il wa al-Masaa’il, 4/110, writes, "When some people mentioned to Imaam Ahmad ibn Hambal that they felt uneasy about criticizing people, he replied, ‘If I were to remain silent, how would the ignorant masses know truth from falsehood?’ Those who introduce heretical writings and deviant religious rites contrary to Quraan and Sunnah have to be exposed and the Muslim nation warned against them, according to the unanimous agreement of Muslim scholars. In fact, when Ahmad ibn Hambal was asked if one who fasted, prayed and secluded himself in the masjid was dearer to Him than one who spoke out against people involved in deviations, he replied, ‘When he fasts, prays and secludes himself, he does so for himself alone, but if he speaks out against deviations, he does so for Muslims in general which is more noble’. Hence it is clear that openly opposing innovation and deviation is of general benefit to Muslims in the practice of their religion and comes under the heading of Jihaad Fee Sabeelil-laah. Purification of Allaah’s religion and the repulsion of attacks against it is a general obligation (Fard Kifaayah) on Muslims by unanimous agreement. For, if Allaah did not raise up some people to oppose the corruption preached by heretics, the religious would surely become distorted and deviant. The corruption of divinely revealed religion is far more terrible than the corruption resulting from the military conquest of non-Muslims over Muslims. For, when non-Muslims overpower Muslims, they are not able to corrupt the hearts of Muslims or their religion, except after some time, whereas, heretics corrupt the hearts from the very outset."