PRECISE ANSWERS TO THE TURKISH QUESTIONS

الإجابة الزكية على الأسئلة التركية

An Important Clarification On Widespread Misconceptions In Takfeer And Extremism

By Shaykh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi (May Allah Protect Him)

Translated by Al Muwahideen Media
Revised Edition
Precise Answers To The Turkish Questions

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An Important Clarification On Widespread Misconceptions In Takfeer And Extremism

By Sheikh Abu Muhammad Al-Maqdisi

May Allah preserve him

15 Dhul Hijjah 1435 H./ 9th October 2014

Translated by:

Al Muwahideen Media
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https://almuwahideenmedia.wordpress.com
In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

All praise is due to Allah. And may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

To proceed:

One of the Turkish Brothers visited me and informed me of the situation of the youth in Turkey and he handed over to me a letter about it, and this is its summary:

All praises is due to Allah the Lord of all that exists, and peace and prayers be upon the Noble Prophet.

Assalamualaykum warahmatullahi wabarakaatuhu,

May Allah bless you our noble Shaykh, we love you and we have been benefiting much from you and we praise Allah for this and we ask Allah to gather us and you with the last of the Messengers in the highest gardens of Firdaws.

Firstly: We will explain to you the situation in Turkey and that is that the brothers have different opinions in regards to Takfeer. However, this difference is not in the principles or the fundamentals (of Takfeer), rather it is in applying this judgement to the situation and over the people. And they are divided into three groups:

The First: They make Takfeer on everyone who participates in elections and on everyone who doesn't make Takfeer on Erdogan and the (parliamentary) representatives. And they say that those scholars who don't make Takfeer on everyone who participates in the elections do not know the reality in Turkey and that the Turkish people are turning away from the Shareeah and neglecting it. And they see that they are Kaafir Asli (original disbelievers) and they do not excuse them for ignorance and they do not accept T'aweel (interpretations) and they say that (the Kufr of) elections is from issues that are clear.

The Second: They are like the first, but they don't judge the individuals by this ruling while at the same time they believe that the Asl (default ruling) regarding the Turkish people is Kufr (i.e. they are disbelievers even from the beginning itself who never followed Islam) and they do not judge as being upon Islam those whose Aqeedah they do not know, even if they see him pray.
The Third: They follow the Shaykhs of Minbar ut-Tawheed Wal Jihad (new link - http://www.ilmway.com/sitmaqdis/MS_76.html) in their books and Fataawa, like the Book of Shaykh Al Maqdisi (Ath-Thalaatheenya - The thirty issues for warning against extremism in Takfeer) and the answers of the Shaykh for questions 1651 and 1635 on Turkey and his book (Enlightening Answer Regarding Participation in Elections) and the article of Shaykh Abu Qatada (The reply to the one who considers the Muslim people as disbelievers) and others such as these on Minbar.

Following this introduction, we would like from you an answer to the following questions, to advise our brothers in Turkey. And may Allah reward you with good.

Do you see a difference between the Turkish people and other Muslim people?
How do people become Kaafir?
Do you see that the Turkish people have become Kaafirs?
How do you determine which are unclear matters?
How does an unclear issue become a clear issue?
What are the issues which determine this and when does it happen?
Is participation in elections from the unclear matters in Turkey?
Is he to be excused who continues to participate in elections even after being given the proof by the scholar who we look upon?
If they are not considered as Kaafirs is it allowed to pray behind them?
If those who participate in elections are excused, then how should we deal with them?
Is Takfeer on the Tawaaghit (rulers who don't rule by Islam) from that which determines the validity of a person's Imaan or does this issue requires further explanation?
The brothers in Turkey have differed on the Takfeer on the prime minister Rajeb Tayyib Erdogan who has nominated himself now for the presidency. What is the ruling upon him?
What is the ruling on the representatives of the legislative assembly? Are they individually made Takfeer upon? And finally the brothers have a question on the issue of the Islamic State and the Islamic battalions. Is it possible for you to guide and advise us regarding this?

And may Allah bless you with every good.
Oh Allah have mercy upon us and our scholars and our brothers.

I say seeking refuge with Allah, all praise is for Allah and may prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah.

To proceed-

Surely from the calamities that have come upon the Ummah in our time is the Fitna (trial & tribulation) of extremism in religion and the refusal to give excuses to the Muslims who disagree and lack of mercy towards the general Muslims and what some of the reckless ones have caused by permitting the blood and wealth to be violated and getting involved in it. And the effects of this are clearly seen today in the Muslim countries and it is not necessary for us to give examples. And we ask Allah to deliver the Muslims from its consequences and that He return their youth entirely to the religion of truth.

And the reason for that is ignorance and lack of seeking Shariah knowledge and giving Fatwa in matters of the religion of Allah and speaking without knowledge in the major serious issues. And these people who speak on these matters, if you were to ask them about how much they have read on the topic of Imaan and Kufr, you would surely find it to be shallow and a superficial reading which would not be sufficient at all.

Moreover, one should not speak on this matter unless he has atleast read the book "Kitaab ul Imaan" and "Saarim ul-Maslool" by Sheikh ul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, and the second part of the book "Shifaa" of Qaadi Iyaad. And due to this, we used to repeat reading them and we also used to have them read to the youth several times due to their importance. And we have combined their contents in our book "Ath Thalaatheeniyath" (Thirty Issues).

And this Takfeer by the youth who are with you, and their refusal to acknowledge the Muslims as Muslims, who are affiliated to Islam whether Turkish or other than that, and not considering the prayer as one of the characteristics of the people of Islam, by which a person's Islam is testified to if he performs it, all these are only from the results of the taint of extremism which has spread amongst a section of the youth while following empty enthusiasm due to ignorance, and staying away from the statements of the expert scholars and from their rules for Takfeer.
So the Asl (default ruling) of the one who prays is that of Islam until an action that invalidates it has been proven against him. And as long as that has not been proved, then making Takfeer upon him means making Takfeer upon those who pray. And the door of evil is then opened by those who are reckless by killing them and permitting their wealth as is happening with the people of extremism. And the Hadith says, “I have been prohibited from killing the ones who pray”.

And it is in Bukhari and Muslim on the authority Ibn Umar with the wording: "Whoever says to his brother 'oh Kaafir', then it will have come upon one of them." And Muslim added in his narration "If he really was as he has stated (ie. if he really was a Kaafir), then he is so, but if not, then it will fall back on him."

And there is no difference between the people of Turkey and the other Muslim population. And we do not declare the people affiliated to Islam to be Kuffar, neither in Turkey nor anywhere else. And we see that this is from the fruits of extremism and ignorance and misguidance in the religion. And the Asl (default ruling) is that we do not make Takfeer upon them except on him who has manifested a clear Kufr (Kufr Bawah) after looking into the conditions and the impediments that prevent it.

And the unclear matters (المسائل الخفية/Al Masaail al-Khafiyya), they are those matters that are not known by necessity in the religion of the Muslims and they need to be cautioned about and admonished and clarified. And there is no doubt that the issues of elections and the term 'democracy' and other such names and actions of our times and foreign words are not from the clear issues which are known to everyone. But they are from the unclear matters and are acceptable to most of the people and they may also have different meanings. So some of them may intend by it a means (to implement the Shariah) and some may intend to mean what is opposite of dictatorship and torture and silencing of the voices and snatching away of freedom, and other such meanings which do not mean legislation that causes one to be a disbeliever. And some of the scholars have defined the unclear matters (المسائل الخفية) as those that are ambiguous and understood in different ways.

As for the clear matters (المسائل الظاهرة/Al Masaail az-Zaahira), they are those that ought to be necessarily known by all those to whom it has reached in the language he understands. Allah Says,
"And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them".

Surat Ibrahim 14:4

And so whoever rejects it:

"after guidance has become clear to him"

Surat An Nisa 4:115

then he has opposed the Messenger.

And most of the differences between the Muslims in some of the matters which some consider as those necessarily known is because of the differences in looking at issues. So some of what is known may be different for one individual when compared to what another one knows about it, because it is a matter that is relative and varies in regards to each individual. And an example for this is what has been authentically narrated from Abdul Rahman bin Yazeed, who said "Abdullah ibn Masood used to scratch off the Mu'awwizathayn (the last two chapters of the Quran) from the Mus-hafs and he would say "They are not from the Book of Allah, glory be to Him, the Exalted". And no Muslim would say that Ibn Masood is a Kaafir because he had denied that which is known by necessity. And it cannot be imagined that his likes denied that the Mu'awwizathayn is from the Quran even though it has been affirmed to be from the Quran that is with him.

And due to to this, our Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Majmoo' al Fataawa (23/347): A matter being definite (Qath'i) or ambiguous (Zanni) are from issues which are relative (those connected to the situation and case). And a matter may be for a man something which is clear and definite due to him having clear evidence for it, like the one who heard the revelation from the Messenger and is certain of what is meant by it. And for another man this same matter

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1 Qathi translated as "Definite matter" is "An undisputed evidence that is clear to all without any possibility to have another interpretation or to be understood differently”. Zanni translated as "Ambiguous matter" is "An evidence that can be more than one possible interpretation and can be understood differently". 
may not even be an ambiguous issue (i.e. have no idea at all about this matter), let alone be a definite clear cut matter, due to the text not having reached him, or due to the matter not being confirmed for him, or due to his inability to know it through evidences”.

And he said in Majmoo' al Fataawa (19/211), "So the matter being definite or ambiguous is a matter that is relative and in accordance with the situation of the ones having belief. It is not a description for the statement by itself. Since a man may find a matter to be clear and definite (Qath'i) which he would know by necessity or through a transmission which he knows to be truthful, while those other than him may not know it neither with certainty nor can he know it with ambiguity (ie. nor as Zanni or as an ambiguous information). And a person may be intelligent, strong in mind, and quick in understanding and so he knows the truth or a matter becomes definite for him, while others may not comprehend it and they may not have any knowledge or any ambiguous information about it.

So a matter being definite or ambiguous is according to the proofs that have reached the person, and in accordance with his ability to find proofs. And people are different in regards to these. So a matter being definite or ambiguous is not a necessary characteristic of the disputed statement for it to be said that "whoever has opposed it has opposed what is definitely known". Rather, it is the description of the condition of the one who is looking and is seeking evidences and is a believer. And this is from those that people differ upon.

And he, may Allah have mercy on him, said in "Minhaaju Sunnah" (5/91), "A matter being definite or ambiguous is a relative matter according to the condition of the believers. It is not a description of the statement by itself. So a matter may be clear and definite (Qath'i) to a man which he would know by necessity, or through a transmission whose truthfulness is known to him while those other than him may not know it neither as a certain information (ie. Qath'i) nor as an ambiguous information (ie. Zanni). And the person may be intelligent, strong in mind, and quick in understanding and so he knows the truth. So a matter becomes definite for him while others may not comprehend it and they would not have any knowledge or any assumption about it. So being definite or ambiguous is in accordance to the proofs that have reached the person, and in accordance with his ability to find proofs".
And due to this those who are new in Islam and foreigners who do not understand the Arabic language are excused in matters that those other than them are not excused.

And because of that he also said in Majmoo al Fataawa (6/60), "Indeed the statement of truth, when it is said, then for it to be described as confirmatory, it must be in consistence with the news. As for it being to the listener a thing that is known, or assumed or unknown or known with definite clarity or as ambiguous, or whether it must be accepted or prohibited or whether the one who denies it should be considered a Kafir or not, these are practical rules that differ based on the difference regarding the individuals and the situations. So if you have seen an Imam being harsh towards a person who made a statement, or made Takfeer on him due to that, then this is not considered a general rule over all those who have said it except if the condition which deserves this harshness and Takfeer has been fulfilled, for indeed the one who denies a thing from the apparent rules of the Sharee'ah and has newly accepted Islam or grew up in a country of ignorance is not declared to be a Kafir until the Prophetic evidence reaches him.

Similarly, is the opposite. If you have seen a wrong statement that was made by an Imam in the past and he has been excused due to the proof (Hujjah) not having reached him, then the one to whom the proof has reached is not excused for what the first has been excused."

When this is known and it is known that an issue may be clear for one person and unclear for another, then it is not permissible to treat an individual by looking at the situation of the majority (of people) without looking into his own situation in terms of understanding or lack of understanding, or rejecting it or not rejecting it. And from this you will know that applying the rules of Takfeer on a people entirely without considering this principle is from ignorance which many of the extremists of our era have fallen into.

And in a Hadeeth in Saheeh Al Bukhari that is narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik, he said: The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said "Whoever prays like us and faces our Qibla and eats our slaughtered animals is a Muslim and is under Allah's and His apostle's protection. So do not betray Allah by betraying those who are under His protection"
This Hadeeth represents a principle of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah which distinguishes them from the people of Ghuloo (extremism) and the Khwaarij. This principle states that the Asl (basic ruling) for being upon Islam remains for the one who is seen to have displayed some of the characteristics of Islam until he commits a known nullifier of Islam which is clear and agreed upon and not just a possibility, and the conditions of Takfeer must be fulfilled in him and there should be no impediments that prevent Takfeer, because certainty is not removed with doubt.

Sheikh ul Islam, may Allah have mercy on him said, “No one should make Takfeer on another from amongst the Muslims even if he has made mistakes and acted wrongly, until the proof has been set up against him, and the evidences have been made clear for him. And the one whose Islam has been confirmed with certainty, then it does not leave him because of doubts. Rather, it does not leave him until after the proof has been established and the doubts are removed”.

So based on this, the two groups mentioned in the first and second questions are groups who are upon error and have strayed away from the truth as they have made Takfeer on the people of Turkey entirely or refused to accept them as Muslims, and did not treat anyone of them as Muslims even if he prays until he knows what is in his heart. So all of these are from misguidance which we absolve ourselves from. We had previously cautioned about it and rejected it in our above mentioned treatise “Thalaatheeniyat” (Thirty Issues). So the original ruling is to accept what is apparent. So whoever has shown one of the distinct characteristics of the people of Islam, then he is judged as being upon Islam. And we do not need to know what is in his heart. Ibn Hajar says in "Al Fath-hul Baari" (12/272), "All of them have consensus that the worldly rulings are based on what is apparent and it is Allah who deals with the secret affairs".

I add to this the obligation of looking at the distinction over that which we always caution about, and that is between the weak Muslim people and between those sections of people that abstain from the Shareeah by using power and who impose Kufr and rule over such people by other than what Allah has revealed. Indeed the masses of the weak Muslim population should be dealt with mercy and without hastening to make Takfeer on them due to the permissibility for them to use Taqiyyah (concealing one’s faith) in a situation of weakness. And I mean by Taqiyyah, the concealment of enmity towards the Kuffar and not openly making Takfeer and Baraa (disassociation) from them. And
whoever does not openly do it due to his situation of weakness is excused, and it is not permissible to declare him as an unbeliever.

And I have seen a lot of the youth quoting some of the generalized statements of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab and some of the Imams of the Najdi Dawah regarding that. And so they understand that to mean making Takfeer on the one who does not openly display his enmity towards the Kuffar or announce his disassociation from them, and thus they would not excuse the one who is weak and they would not testify to anyone’s Islam even if he prays and fasts and claims to be a Muslim until he announces his disassociation from the Thawaageeth despite his weakness. And this is a wrong understanding and a clear mistake that gave rise to the emergence of extremists throughout the country. And we had noticed these kinds of broad generalizations in the statements of the Imams of the Dawah in the beginning while studying and writing, and so you would see that we have cautioned about some of them in the footnotes of our book “Millath Ibrahim” and others since more than thirty years ago, by the grace of Allah. And this was not just born in this hour, so whoever wishes then let him refer to that in our writings.

An example of that is our comment over a statement of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab which we have quoted in “Millath Ibrahim” and that is his statement, “So if you have known this, then you know that a person’s Islam will not be upright even if he follows Tawhid and abandoned Shirk (polytheism) except by having enmity to the Mushrikeen (polytheists) and by declaring enmity and hatred towards them as stated by Allah the Exalted:

لا تجد قوما يؤمنون بالله واليوم الآخر يوادون من حاد الله ورسوله

“You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger”

Surat Mujaadilah 58:22

And a little further is the statement of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abdul Latheef from “Durar Saniyyah”: - “Know, may Allah guide us and you to that which He loves and is pleased with, that a slave’s Islam or religion will not be upright except by him having enmity towards the enemies of Allah and His messenger, and by loyalty towards the friends of Allah and His Messenger. Allah the Exalted says:
So you would find us having commented over these two texts, by our statement in the footnotes (of Millat Ibrahim), “If what is meant is the basic enmity then these words are to be taken in an absolute sense. But if what is meant is the complete enmity in all its aspects; its showing and its precise details and making it apparent, then these words are (to be taken to) refer to the (level of) correctness of the Islam and not the removal of its entire foundation. And the Shaykh Abdul Latif has in his book “Misbah Az-Zalaam”, an explanation regarding this issue, so whoever wishes should review it. And it has in it his statement, “So the one who understands the words of the Shaykh as to mean making Takfir on whoever does not openly show his enmity, then his understanding is Baathil (false) and his opinion is astray…” And the explanation of these words will be presented within these pages, and we have only narrated their statements within this chapter in order to clarify the importance of this basic enmity, whose fundamental concepts have been disregarded by most of the preachers in this time. Then we added these clarifications – despite the words themselves being clear in and of themselves, to close the path upon those who attempt to hunt in murky waters, (by means of searching for general (statements) and things, which might assist others in accusing us of holding the beliefs (Aqidah) of the Khawarij).”

And examples of these general statements are found in Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah and similar other books. And when the books of the Imams of the Najdi Dawah and their old written works are not clarified at the proper places, then this causes extremism to grow in many areas. And this was what the extremists of Peshawar mostly depended upon and so did the group of (Abu Mariyam) Al Mukhlif depend on such, as did Abu Umar Al Kuwaiti, Zia u Deen al Maqdisi and Al Hazmee in some of his extracts which I have read which are like that. The extremists have treated such general statements as
if they were the foundations of the Shareeelah, rather they magnified them and built upon them their schools of thought just like how the scholar establishes his foundations upon the clear verses and the authentic Hadith whose evidences are clear. And the one who has read the Fataawa of the Imams of the Dawah, will see that some of them also applied those general statements in a dangerous manner around them through which they aided the Thawagheet and made the blood of the Muwahideen permissible. And nothing can better prove that than the Fatawa of the well-known scholars of Al 'Arid in their Takfeer on the Ikhwans from Ajmaan and Duwaysh and those with them by permitting their blood as I had previously clarified in my reply to question no.3269. And they were followed in their path by the contemporary scholars in issuing Fatawas to kill our Mujahideen brothers for their Jihad and by calling them Khawarij and misguided group and such.

And let it be known that my claims that in the books of the Imams of the Dawah, there are general statements that need to be explained in context is not a claim I made up myself, even though it is a result of my in-depth reading of their books. But I was preceded in that by the most well-known scholars of Hijaz. Indeed, I have seen Sheikh Ibn Baz warning against these general statements and he used to say that a student would fall into extremism if he reads some of the books of the Imaams of the Dawah without (the guidance) of a Shaykh and would be led to errors. And we used to condemn that saying of his in the beginning while we were studying and having devotion to those books, due to our enthusiasm and our longing for those books. And then Allah bestowed His favour on us and we began to see those general unrestricted statements and mistakes against which we warned our brothers in an early period as you have seen.

The point is that, my advice to the youth in Turkey and in other than Turkey is, to be careful of this and to not go behind critical issues which will result in the spilling of blood and making of wealth and honour permissible in many countries.

And making Takfeer on the Thawagheet, if what is meant by Thawagheet are people who are affiliated to Islam who have committed what nullifies their Islam, then the issue of Takfeer on them as individuals may be unclear to a lot of the common people and to others. So making Takfeer on them while that is their condition is not from the foundations of Imaan which is a condition for its validity. Indeed, the only condition of Imaan is to disbelieve in Thawagheet which would mean disassociating
from worshiping them by any kind of worship which is Shirk and turning away from obeying them in Kufr or from legislation which has not been permitted by Allah and to turn away from supporting them and allying with them or allying with their supporters or their worshippers. As for Takfeer, then that is from its aftermaths and is not from the conditions of its validity. So it not permissible to make Takfeer on an ignorant one in this matter as long as he has fulfilled the statement of Allah the Exalted:

اعْبُدُوا اللَََّّ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

"Worship Allah and avoid the Thaguth".

Surat An Nahl 16:36

As for the president (of Turkey), then he is a secularist. And even if he has differed with the Ataturk secularists, then he has only differed with them in interpreting secularism and he does not disassociate himself from secularism. Rather, he interprets it regarding it as praiseworthy and thinking good of it. And that is a false interpretation which is not outside the framework of the secularism that makes one a Kafir as he interprets it by separating the religion from the state and by leaving religion as a matter of choice to the one who wants. And his case and those like him means that one can be a Zindeeq apostate if he wants. This is different from the Ataturk secularism which was a war against the religion of Islam and its symbols and everything that was linked to it. And this interpretation which this man considered to be good, and is promoting it has got nothing to do with Islam since the religion of Islam does not permit disbelief and associating partners to Allah and does not accept it and does not separate between politics and religion. Rather all of them are nullifiers of Islam and they are from the clear Kufr.

But we know the condition that the Muslims were upon during the time of the Ataturk secularists when they took over the presidency and they dominated over the majority in the parliament. And we see as seen by many people that the situation of the Muslims under the government of Erdogan is lesser in evil, rather in the words of a lot of Turks, in a better condition than before. And they also point out his bold stances or nationalistic stances towards the issues of the Muslims and others like that.

And we always direct our brothers in all countries which do not fight nor clash with Islam from within, and its people in it are not attacked, rather the preachers are granted
some freedom and the transportation of the Mujahideen are to an extent not prevented, that they should avoid clashing with these kinds of regimes as long as they are incapable of a real change. We advise them to take advantage of the freedoms which are available for them to call towards Allah from inside the ranks of the people and educate them and guide them with that which is best, and by wisdom and beautiful preaching whether they are from those who participate in elections or not, and to educate the youth in Tawhid and to teach them and cause them to understand the correct path and to protect them from falling into the pits of extremism and Irjaa. And let them avoid harmful haphazard actions that are of little benefit and those that bring them no results except pressure and constraints in their religion and in their Dawah and also in their movement and their livelihood, and shoving their youth into prisons with no real benefit for them or for their religion or their worldly life.

And with this we advise the youth in Turkey to utilize this stage to call towards Tawheed, and teach their brothers its basics and warn them from straying towards excessiveness or negligence, and not to unwind their thread (i.e undo their good work) by causing their Dawah to be in vein, or by being negligent about it by responding to the call of the enthusiasts who do not really have a basis and who go every day to something new without a yardstick or clear guidance, or who call the youth and stir them in every calamity to carry out haphazard actions blindly without bringing benefit to the people of Islam. But let them focus on matters of preparation and assisting in that which empowers the people of Islam. And do not obligate them to give Dawah to give Bay'ah to one who has no authority upon them and has no connection to their land and is not capable of fulfilling their rights or supporting them. And do not cause disorder in their rows or fragment their actions which are done for the sake of the Religion and their Dawah to Tawheed nor dispute or be divided for the sake of such calls. But let them be firm and constant upon the call towards Tawheed and let them strive in it and guide the believers and come close to them and ally with them wherever they may be and whatever may be their labels.

And I ask Allah Ta'ala to rectify their situation and guide them to the straight path and to enlighten them in their religion and to use them for its victory and not to replace them. And may peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and on his family and all of his companions.