

The ruling on the one who abandons Prayer 3

source: *silsilat ul-hudaa wa nnoor* – the series of guidance and light – tape no. 81

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question no.10: “What about the hadeeth: ‘whoever abandons the prayer has disbelieved?’”¹

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) ² answers:

“This is not the first hadeeth in which it is said that whoever does such-and-such has disbelieved. You have the famous hadeeth ‘whoever swears by other than Allaah has disbelieved,’³ but we don’t say that whoever says ‘by the life of my father’ has apostatized from his religion.⁴ And you know, for example, the hadeeth of ‘Umar bin al-Khattaab (rad iyallaahu `anhu)⁵ in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree when the Messenger (of Allaah) (عليه السلام) ⁶ heard him swearing by his father, so he (عليه السلام) said: ‘Don’t swear by your fathers; whoever of you swears, then let him swear by Allaah or keep silent.’⁷ And in the hadeeth of (‘Umar’s (rad iyallaahu `anhu) son ‘Abdullaah bin ‘Umar (rad iyallaahu `anhu), he said that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘Whoever swears by other than Allaah has associated partners with Him,’⁸ and in another narration, ‘he has disbelieved.’

So it is not necessary for the occurrence of the expression ‘whoever does such-and-such has disbelieved’ to mean that he has disbelieved with the disbelief of apostasy. Rather, it can have many meanings, such as for example: ‘he has disbelieved’ can mean that he is close to disbelieving, that he has disbelieved with the disbelief related to actions (i.e., minor kufr), and such meanings that the people of knowledge were obliged to (apply) in order to reconcile between the texts.

‘Whoever abandons the prayer has disbelieved.’ (But also) we say, ‘whoever says *laa ilaaha illallaah*⁹ (sincerely) will enter Paradise;’¹⁰ ‘whoever says *laa ilaaha illallaah* (sincerely), it will benefit him some day,^{11 12} as mentioned in the hadeeth of al-Bazaar and others. (Another hadeeth mentions that) ‘whichever slave runs away from his master has disbelieved.’¹³ These expressions are very numerous: ‘he has disbelieved, he has disbelieved.’ And there isn’t any hadeeth that is interpreted like this upon its apparent meaning if it comes with the expression: ‘he has disbelieved.’ This hadeeth – ‘whoever abandons the prayer has disbelieved’ – is treated the same way as the other narrations which share the saying ‘he has disbelieved’ with the hadeeth about prayer. So here, many

¹ Saheeh at-Tirmidhee no.2621

² (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

³ Saheeh at-Tirmidhee no.1535

⁴ Swearing by other than Allaah can become major disbelief when the one swearing believes that the one whom he falsely swears by has the ability to avert harm from him and the like; refer to The Methodology of the Saved Sect by Shaykh Muhammad bin Jameel Zaynoo, p. 101

⁵ (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

⁶ (عليه السلام) (alaihis-salaam) Peace be upon him

⁷ Saheeh an-Nasaa’ee no.3775, Saheehul-Jaami no.1923

⁸ Saheeh at-Tirmidhee no.1535

⁹ ‘La ilaha ‘illaallaah’ (لا اله الا الله) There is no deity truly worthy of being worshiped except Allaah.

¹⁰ Silsilat ul-Ahaadeeth is-Saheeha no.2355

¹¹ i.e., even if he first enters the Fire to be punished therein

¹² Saheehul-Jaami no.6434

¹³ Saheeh Muslim no.68

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interpretations can occur for this text as for many (other) narrations. For example, ‘the tale-carrier¹⁴ will not enter Paradise,’¹⁵ (but) does that mean that he has disbelieved because of his tale-carrying? The answer is: if he considers that to be permissible by his heart, then Paradise has been forbidden for him. And if he acknowledges the forbiddance of that, and admits that he is wrong, a sinner and an evildoer, then his affair is with Allaah, as He, the Mighty and Majestic, said: **‘Verily, Allaah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills.’**¹⁶ So abandoning the prayer is an action that leads its doer to die upon other than ‘Eemaan (faith) – and Allaah’s protection is sought. And abandoning the prayer is from the characteristics of the disbelievers who don’t pray and don’t give the zakaah (obligatory charity). Hence, if the Muslim does not pray, he has resembled the disbelievers. So his disbelief here is the disbelief related to actions [as long as he believes in the legislation of the prayer]. And the narrations which must be explained (with regard to their true meanings) are very numerous.

For instance, during the farewell pilgrimage, (the Prophet) (عليه الصلاة والسلام)¹⁷ ordered Jareer bin ‘Abdillaah al-Bajalee (rad iyallaahu `anhu) to quieten the people down and make them listen, and he (عليه السلام) said while addressing them: **‘Do not return to being disbelievers after me by striking the necks of one another.’**¹⁸ And he (عليه الصلاة والسلام) said: **‘Insulting a Muslim is disobedience (to Allaah), and fighting him is disbelief.’**¹⁹ But if a Muslim kills or fights another Muslim, has this (person) apostatised from his religion? The answer is: no, because Allaah said: **[And if two parties or groups among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if one of them outrages against the other, then fight you (all) against the one that which outrages till it complies with the Command of Allah].**²⁰ He considered each of the two groups – the one outraging and the one being outraged – to be from the believers, although the Messenger (of Allaah) said in the previous hadeeth that ‘insulting a Muslim is disobedience (to Allaah) and fighting him is disbelief.’ So how is disbelief interpreted here? It is minor disbelief; it is disbelief related to actions. And the narrations about prayer – which declare that the one who abandons the prayer has disbelieved – are also (interpreted) likewise: either it is said that he is close to the disbelief related to faith (i.e., major kufr), that he is close to dying upon other than the religion of Islaam, or (it is said) that he has disbelieved with the disbelief related to actions. This interpretation is necessary so that we don’t contradict the narrations of the Messenger (of Allaah) (عليه السلام) with one another.”

asaheeha translations

¹⁴ the tale-carrier is the one who spreads the speech of the people among one another with the intention of causing corruption, such as you going to someone and saying: ‘such-and-such person insulted you, and he said such-and-such thing about you, etc’ so that you separate between them; refer to Shaykh Muhammad bin Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen in *Noorun ‘alaa ddarb* tape no.48a and *Silsilatu Liqaa il-Baab il-Maftooh* tape no.93a

¹⁵ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree no.6056, Saheeh Muslim no.105

¹⁶ Surat un-Nisaa, 4:48

¹⁷ (عليه الصلاة والسلام) Alayhi 'l-salat wa'l-Salam Upon him prayer and peace

¹⁸ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree no.4405

¹⁹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree no.6044

²⁰ Surat ul-Hujuraat, 49:9