

They Are Not Disbelievers Due to Sins

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Q: "There are those among us who attribute the statement of the Salaf:

'We don't hold anyone from the religion as disbelievers due to sin, unless they deem them (the sins) to be permissible',

to the Murji'ah. So what is your response ?"

A: "This is a mistake. This is a statement of Ahlus Sunnah; that we don't make takfeer due to sins, so long as the sins are not believed to be lawful. The fornicator has not disbelieved, nor the one who drinks intoxicants. (Rather) they are sinners, as long as they don't consider their actions to be permissible. This is a statement of the people of Sunnah, opposing the Khawarij; those who regard the Muslims as disbelievers due to sin.

As for the people of Sunnah, then we say they are sinners, and the legal punishment for such offenses is obligatory. It is imperative that they repent, however we don't regard them as disbelievers so long as they don't consider the sins to be lawful. Fornication, consumption of alcohol, usury, and the like; as long as the one engrossed in these affairs does not hold them to be permissible, they are not treated as a disbeliever. Contrary to what the Khawarij and Mu'tazilah believe, they are sinners from the Muslims with weak and deficient faith. This is the position of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah.

As for those who say that fornication and intoxicants are permissible, then they have disbelieved according to all of Ahlus-Sunnah. If they say dealing in interest is halal, then they have disbelieved. If they claim that disobedience to parents is allowed, they have disbelieved. However, if they commit these acts like disobeying their parents, fornication, intoxicants, etc, while knowing they are forbidden, then they are considered to be sinful, having weak and deficient Eeman. According to the people of Sunnah their faith is weak, but they have not left the fold of Islam. It is required that the legal punishments are established upon them and that they are disciplined according to their offenses."



Source: Al-Risaa'ilu Al-Baaziyah Fee al-Masaa'ilee al-Minhajiyyah, p. 223-224,
Minbaratul Islaam Publishers, Cairo

Translation: Abu Mohamed Abdul Kareem, Sha'ban 1, 1436 coinciding with May 19,
2015, Cincinnati, OH USA