



Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah: Explaining Imaan and the Errors of the Murji'ah – Part 2

Trans. al-Maktabah as-Salafiyyah

All praise is due to Allaah and prayers and peace be upon His Messenger, to proceed: This is a compilation of some excellent excerpts from Kitaab ul-Imaan of Shaykh ul-Islaam, which explain in detail, the errors of the Murji'ah in their understanding of Imaan, as well as giving a thorough understanding of the reality of Imaan itself, and that which opposes it, which is Kufr.

REFUTING THE ERRORS OF THE JAHMIYYAH IN IMAAN AND KUFR – THEIR RESTRICTING IMAAN TO JUST ILM AND TASDEEQ

Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said in Kitaab ul-Imaan (7/187-188):

“And it is from here that the error of the saying of Jahm Ibn Safwaan and whoever followed him becomes apparent, in that they thought that Imaan is merely the tasdeeq (assent) of the heart and its ilm (knowledge), and they did not make the actions of the heart to be from Imaan, and they thought that a person can be a believer, perfect in his Imaan (kaamil ul-Imaan) with his heart, and then alongside this he can revile Allaah and His Messenger, show enmity to Allaah and His Messenger, and show enmity to the Awliyaa of Allaah, and then he show loyalty to the enemies of Allaah, kill the Prophets, destroy the mosques, show disrespect to the Masaahif (pl. of mus.haf, i.e. qur'aan), honour the Kuffaar with great kindness, and disdain the believers with the greatest of disdainment. So they say that all of this is disobedience that does not negate the Imaan that is in his heart. Rather he commits all of this while he is internally a believer in the sight of Allaah. They say that in the life of the world the rulings pertaining to the disbelievers are established for him, since these actions are like a sign (amaarah) for kufr (disbelief), and on account of which external judgement can be made, just like judgement is made by way of (external) iqraar (affirmation) and shuhood (witnesses) – even though he can be, internally, in opposition to that which he affirmed (externally) and in opposition to that which was observed by the witnesses.

So when the Book and the Sunnah and the Ijmaa' is narrated to them that one of these such people is actually a disbeliever in the very affair itself, and one who is punished in the Hereafter, they say: that this (i.e. what is observed from him externally) is indicative (daleel) of the passing away of tasdeeq (assent) and ilm (knowledge) from his heart. Hence, kufr in their view is only one thing, and it is jahl (ignorance), and Imaan to them is one thing, and it is ilm (knowledge). Or in other

words, the tasdeeq (assent) of the heart and its takdheeb (rejection). And then they also mutually contend: Is the tasdeeq of the heart something other than ilm (knowledge) or is it the same thing?"

Then Shaykh ul-Islam makes mention of Iblees, Fir'aun, and the Jews and many of the Mushriks, all of whom did not make takdheeb of Muhammad's Messengership, rather they had ilm and tasdeeq, but it was the likes of inaad, istikbaar and the likes that made them disbelievers." (7/188-189)

Then he said:

"And so they erred from two angles:

The first: Their thought that Imaan is pure tasdeeq and ilm alone, and that there is no action alongside it, or state (haal), or movement (harakah) or will (iraadah) or love (mahabbah) or awe (khashyah) in the heart. And this is from the greatest of the errors of the Murji'ah absolutely. For the actions of the heart (a'maal ul-quloob), which some of the Soofiyyah call "Ahwaal" (states, conditions), or "Maqaamaat" (ranks), or "Manaazil us-Saa'ireen Ilallaah" (the levels of the travellers to Allaah) or "Maqaamaat ul-Aarifeen" (the levels of the Gnostics) and what is other than that, then everything that is within it, from what Allaah and His Messenger have made obligatory (farada), then it is from the Obligatory Imaan (al-Imaan al-Waajib). And then whatever there is also from within that, that which He loves, but which He did not make obligatory, then that is from the Recommended Imaan (al-Imaan al-Mustahabb). As for the first (al-Imaan al-Waajib), then every believer is required to have it, and whoever brought it and sufficed with it, then he is from the As.haab ul-Yameen (the People of the Right, i.e. on the Day of Judgement), and whoever acted upon this (i.e. al-Imaan al-Waajib) and also did the second (i.e. al-Imaan al-Mustahabb), then he is from the Muqarriboon, as-Saabiqoon (the Foremost, Nearest to Allaah). And this is love of Allaah and His Messenger, that Allaah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything besides them, that Allaah and His Messenger, and making Jihaad in His path, is more loved to him than his family and his wealth. And also like fear of Allaah (khashyah) alone, without having fear of the creation, and hoping in Allaah alone, without hoping in the creation, and relying upon Allaah alone, without relying upon the creation, and returning to him with remorse (inaabah) alongside having fear of him, just as Allaah, the Most High said, **"(It will be said): "This is what you were promised, - (it is) for those oft-returning (to Allâh) in sincere repentance, and those who preserve their covenant with Allâh. "Who feared the Most Beneficent (Allâh) in the Ghaib (unseen): (i.e. in this worldly life before seeing and meeting Him), and brought a heart turned in repentance."** (Qaaf 50:32-33). And also like loving and hating for the sake of Allaah and showing loyalty and enmity for the sake of Allaah.

The second: Their thought that everyone whom the Legislator judged to be a kaafir, one who will remain eternally in the Fire, then this was due to the reason that there is nothing in his heart of knowledge (ilm) and tasdeeq (assent).

And in this matter they opposed both what is observed (al-hiss), the intellect (al-'aql) and the legislation (ash-shar'), and also what groups from the sons of Aadam, those of sound fitrah, agreed upon, and also groups of theoreticians. For a person knows that the truth is with someone besides him and alongside this he rejects that (yajhad), due to his jealousy of him, or due to his seeking elevation over him, or due to a desire of the soul and this desire makes him transgress against him, and so he rejects what he says in every way. Whereas in this heart he knows that the truth is with him.

And the generality of those who rejected the Messengers knew that the truth was with them, and that they are truthful, but (they rejected them) either due to jealousy of them, or due to seeking elevation or leadership, or either due to their love of the religion that they were upon, or what they might acquire of objectives, such as wealth and leadership, and the trust and friendship of the people, and other than that. So they saw that in the following of the Messengers, there was the abandonment of the desires that were beloved to them, or that they would encounter dislikeable things, and hence (as a result of this), they rejected them (yukaddhiboonahum) [whilst acknowledging their truthfulness] and showed enmity to them (yu'aadoonahum) and hence, they become the most disbelieving of people, like Iblees and Fir'aun, alongside their knowledge that they are upon baatil (falsehood), and that the Messengers are upon the truth..." (7/189-191)

And he said a page later:

"And the Jahmiyyah did not suffice with merely making every disbeliever to be one who is Jaahil (ignoramus) of the truth, until they said, "He does not know that Allaah's existence is true", hence, kufr in their view was not ignorance of any particular truth, but ignorance of this particular truth. And yet we and all of the people see a portion from the Kuffaar knowing internally that the religion of Islaam is the truth, and they mention what prevents them from Imaan, either enmity towards its people, or wealth that would be acquired by them which they would cut off from them, or due to their fear that if they believe they will not have the respect with the Muslims that they have in their own religion, and whatever is similar to these objectives, which they themselves explain are what prevents them from Imaan, alongside their knowledge that the religion of Islaam is the truth and that their religion is false." (7/192).

Notes

1. The Jahmiyyah restricted Imaan to mere tasdeeq and ilm (assent and knowledge, i.e. the speech of the heart) in the heart, devoid of any actions of the heart (whilst noting that the other less extreme, and mainstream sects of the Murji'ah did include actions of the heart into Imaan).
2. This made them conceive of matters that were impossible, such as a man having the faith of Jibreel and Mikaa'eel in his heart (as they claim), yet he utters kufr and commits the greatest of the acts of kufr. And this is because of their expulsion of the actions of the heart from Imaan.
3. This also led them to believe that the external can be fundamentally opposed to the internal – and that there is no binding link between the two. This again is due to their expulsion of the actions of the heart from Imaan.
4. Fir'aun, the Jews, many of the Mushriks, and Iblees, all had tasdeeq and ilm (assent and knowledge) but their kufr returned back to matters that were related to the actions of the heart, such as kibr (pride), istikbaar (arrogance), inaad (stubborn opposition), juhood (rejection) and the likes.
5. The Jahmiyyah, due to their mistaken notion that Imaan is mere tasdeeq and ilm in the heart, claimed that a person can only become a disbeliever with the passing away of this tasdeeq and ilm, and thus kufr to them was either jahl (ignorance) or takdheeb (rejection).
6. A fair portion of those who are disbelievers are disbelievers alongside their knowledge and belief that Islaam is the truth, but it is other factors and motives that render them disbelievers, not the absence of knowledge (ilm) and assent (tasdeeq) concerning the truthfulness of Islaam (which is what the Jahmiyyah held to be kufr).
7. The Jahmiyyah, when they saw that a person can be a kaafir in this life and the next by the commission of actions and statements of kufr, they said that this is evidence of the passing away of knowledge (ilm) and assent (tasdeeq) in the heart, and therefore it is kufr. Thus external acts and statements of kufr were merely indicators of the ignorance (of Allaah's existence) or the rejection of Him (takdheeb) in the heart.