

275500 - Warning against jokes that mock some verses of the Quran

the question

Unfortunately I received this message on WhatsApp: They asked a foolish man who was fasting: Which soorahs of the Quran do you like best in Ramadan? And he said: al-Maa'idah [the word may be understood to refer to a table laden with food], ad-Dukhaan [lit. smoke, but in modern Arabic the word is used to refer to cigarettes and the like] and an-Nisa' [women]. Can you explain the ruling on this joke?

Detailed answer

The words quoted constitute a grave evil and ridicule of the words of Allah, may He be exalted, which is the greatest and noblest of speech; the one who ridicules His words is a disbeliever who is subject to a stern warning, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The hypocrites are apprehensive lest a surah be revealed about them, informing them of what is in their hearts. Say, ‘Mock [as you wish]; indeed, Allah will expose that which you fear.’

And if you ask them, they will surely say, ‘We were only conversing and playing.’ Say, ‘Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?’” [At-Tawbah 9:64-65].

No one falls into this except fools who have the audacity to transgress the limits set by Allah, claiming that they are just joking and having fun, like those concerning whom this verse was revealed.

Imam at-Tabari narrated in his Tafseer (14/333) from Sa'd, from Zayd ibn Aslam, that one of the hypocrites said to 'Awf ibn Maalik during the Tabook campaign: What is the matter with these Quran reciters of ours, who love food the most out of all of us, are the worst liars among us and the most cowardly at the time of battle?! 'Awf said to him: You are lying, but you are a hypocrite; I shall surely tell the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah

be upon him) about what you have said. 'Awf went to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), to tell him, but he found that the Quran had preceded him. Zayd said: 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar said: I saw that man, hanging onto the girth [strap holding the saddle on] of the she-camel of the Messenger of Allah (sa) (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), stumbling over the stones and saying: "We were only conversing and playing" [at-Tawbah 9:65], and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to him: "Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?" [At-Tawbah 9:65].

Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his Tafseer (2/543): What they said was either said in earnest or in jest; whatever the case, it constitutes disbelief (kufr), for uttering the word of disbelief in jest is still disbelief, and there is no dispute concerning that among the ummah. Saying something in earnest and meaning it is akin to truth and knowledge, and saying something in jest is akin to falsehood and ignorance. End quote.

These great soorahs [referred to in the so-called joke] contain rulings, decrees and exhortation; the believer loves them because they are the words of Allah, not because they mention the table (that is, food) or women, let alone making a connection between the fasting person and that which is forbidden to him (during the fast) of food and sex.

Moreover, this reprehensible joke is a distortion of the meanings of the words of Allah, misinterpreting them to make them refer to something that is hated and prohibited. The dukhaan (smoke) referred to in the soorah is one of the signs of the Hour; the word does not refer to tobacco or cigarettes [as is the usage of the word dukhaan in modern Arabic], which this man and his ilk consume and this evil mocker wishes to have.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke

Covering the people; this is a painful torment.

[They will say], 'Our Lord, remove from us the torment; indeed, we are believers.'

How will there be for them a reminder [at that time]? And there had come to them a clear Messenger” [Ad-Dukhaan 44:10-13].

What the one to whom this message was sent should do is denounce it, and advise the one who sent it to him; he should not forward it to anyone, because of what it contains of disbelief in Allah, may He be exalted, and ridicule of His word.

What he must do is beware of the harvest of the tongues, for a word may cause a person to fall in hell a distance greater than that between the east and the west.

Al-Bukhaari (6478) and Muslim (2988) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that he heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “A person may say a word that is pleasing to Allah, not paying it any heed, for which Allah will raise him several degrees in status, and a person may say a word that is displeasing to Allah, not paying it any heed, for which he will fall into Hell.”

Al-Bukhaari (6477) and Muslim (2988) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that he heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “A person may say a word, not realizing its repercussions, for which he will be thrown down into Hell further than the distance between the east and the west.”

At-Tirmidhi (2319) and Ibn Maajah (3969) narrated that Bilaal ibn al-Haarith al-Muzani, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (sa) (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “One of you may speak a word that pleases Allah, and not know how far it reaches, but because of it Allah will decree that He is pleased with him until the Day he meets Him. And one of you may speak a word that angers Allah, and not know how far it reaches, but because of it Allah will decree that He is angry with him until the Day he meets Him.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi.

We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.

It should be noted that saying words of disbelief by way of joking constitutes disbelief, according to scholarly consensus, as quoted above from Ibn al-'Arabi. It is not stipulated that the person who says or does that should have the intention of mocking (Islam or the Quran).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There are three levels. The first level is saying words, intending thereby to revile Islam in a deliberate action, as the enemies of Islam do when they revile Islam.

The second level is saying words deliberately without the intention of reviling Islam. In other words, intending to say such words without intending to revile; rather the speaker is joking and is not serious. In this case the ruling is the same as in the first case: the one who says such things is a disbeliever, because he is still ridiculing and mocking Islam.

The third level is when the speaker does not intend to say the words or to revile Islam; rather it is a slip of the tongue that caused him to say words that could be reviling Islam, without intending to do so at all. The speaker did not intend to say those words or to revile Islam. In this case he is not to be taken to account for it, and this is included in the meaning of the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "Allah will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths" [al-Maa'idah 5:89]. This is like when a man says whilst talking, "No, by Allah; yes, by Allah" - he does not intend to swear an oath, so it does not come under the same ruling as an oath that is uttered deliberately. Whatever a person says without meaning to say it is not subject to any ruling.

End quote from Fatawa Noor 'ala ad-Darb.

And Allah knows best.