

223069 - Ruling on Uttering Words of Kufr with Changes in Words or Letters

the question

My question is about some misguided people in my country. They play with words and phrases of disbelief (kufr) – Allah forbid – and say that it is not disbelief. For example, they change one letter in a phrase, so that it sounds like a phrase that constitutes disbelief. Am I right to tell them off or not? I ask Allah, the Most High, the Almighty, to forgive me for everything.

Summary of answer

You are right to tell them off, because they are coming close to kufr with these words. Changing one letter does not alleviate the grievousness of their error.

Detailed answer

Undoubtedly you are right to tell them off, because they are coming close to disbelief (kufr) with these words. Changing one letter does not alleviate the grievousness of their error, because these words are very close to words of disbelief.

Religion has limits that must be protected, and no one should transgress these limits.

These words that sound like [words of disbelief](#) are a transgression of those limits, and the only thing standing between the speaker and disbelief is this letter that he changed. Allah, may He be exalted, says, warning such people (interpretation of the meaning):

{They were nearer to disbelief that day than to faith.} [Al 'Imran 3:167]

Coming near to disbelief is of various levels, and it is not permissible for the Muslim to come near to it on any level. Rather what is required is to keep away from it altogether.

Moreover, coming near to disbelief with such words desensitises the listener to words of disbelief. Perhaps the changed letter may sound unchanged to the listener, and he will not notice the change.

By the same token, changing one letter will not reduce the impact on the listener, for this altered phrase is still indicative of disbelief, so it is as if the listener is saying: I understand what you mean and are referring to.

What the Muslim must do is guard his tongue, for perhaps a word that a person utters, not thinking anything of it, will be the cause of his doom and punishment – Allah forbid.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “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.”
(Narrated by al-Bukhari (6477) and Muslim (2988)

According to a report narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2314): “A man may utter a word, not seeing anything wrong with it, for which he will fall down into Hell the distance of seventy years.”
(Classed as sahah by al-Albani in *Sahah at-Tirmidhi*)

Bilal al-Muzani (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “One of you may speak a word that angers Allah, not realizing how far it may go, and because of it Allah will decree that He is angry with it until the Day he meets Him.” (Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (2319); classed as sahah by al-Albani in *Sahah at-Tirmidhi*)

Moreover, **cursing** in and of itself is a major sin, so how about if there is added to it that which gives the impression of disbelief and comes near to it?

This way of sounding tough and macho, as some people claim – because they cannot prove themselves to be tough and macho except by cursing and **swearing** – is baseless and false, and it is not the way to prove anything. If they were real men, they could confirm their manliness in other ways, by speaking true and sound words and committing themselves to them.

And Allah knows best.