



**Fatwa no. 9260**

**Q:** There has been much controversy among the Islamic groups in the Arab Republic of Egypt about one of the issues related to Iman (Faith), which is the ruling on violating the Islamic 'Aqidah (creed) and abandoning part of the Shari'ah (Islamic law) due to ignorance. It has even reached the extent of creating hostility among the brothers; many debates and researches were made by both parties: those who accept excuse by reason of ignorance and those who do not. Some of them say that people can be excused regarding the branches of faith, but not its fundamentals; others say that people can be excused in both the branches and the fundamentals of faith; whereas others say that the evidence is already established. Those who accept excuse by reason of ignorance call the people to Islam and do not judge them as disbelievers until Da'wah (Call to Islam) reaches them. If they refuse this guidance, they are then considered disbelievers. On the other hand, those who do not accept excuse by reason of ignorance judge them as disbelievers for committing acts of Kufr (disbelief), and declare people to be disbelievers, outside Islam, for committing acts of Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) and provide evidence for their beliefs.

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**I am confused between both parties, which one should I follow? Each of them accuses the other of Ibtida' (heresy) and each party thinks they are right and the other is wrong. I have no idea who is right and who is wrong. This problem has spread among the Muslims as a result of disagreement on this issue. Who is right and who is wrong? I want to follow the truth which the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and his Sahabah (Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all) followed.**

**A:** A Mukallaf (person meeting the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions) cannot be excused for worshipping other than Allah, or offering sacrifices as a means of drawing closer to other than Allah, or making a vow to other than Allah, and other acts of worship that should be devoted to Allah alone. They may only be excused if they live in a non-Muslim country and Da'wah (Call to Islam) has not yet reached them. In such a case, they can be excused for not being informed and not just for being ignorant. This is supported by a Hadith recorded by Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, [\(“By Him in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, any Jew or Christian from this Ummah \(nation\) who hears of me, and then dies without believing in that with which I have been sent, will be among the dwellers of Hellfire.”\)](#) Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not excuse anyone who had heard of him. Whoever lives in a Muslim country must have heard of the Messenger (peace be upon him), and therefore cannot be excused for not knowing about the fundamentals of Iman (Faith) due to ignorance.

As for the story of those who asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to assign to them a Dhat Anwat (lote-tree) for them to hang their weapons on (as the disbelievers had one), those people had newly abandoned disbelief and they only requested this, but did not act on it.

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What they were requesting contradicted the Shari'ah (Islamic law), and the Prophet's reply to them indicated that if they had done what they asked for, it would have been an act of Kufr (disbelief).

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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