

**The Joke is on You**  
A Caution to Those Who Mock Matters of Allāh’s Religion  
in Memes and Skits on Social Media  
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*Four years ago, we published a treatise entitled A Glimpse at Humor in the Prophetic Sunnah, in an attempt to clarify the Prophet’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) use of humor as a means of displaying openness and brotherhood with his Companions, and kindness and cheerfulness to young children. Part of the book, however, addresses certain instances where joking is strictly prohibited—in some cases they are considered kufr, like ridiculing the rites and tenets of Islam. Whether one mocks Allāh, His Book, His Messengers, His Legislation, etc., it is disbelief.*

*Sadly, we now witness the spread of shameful memes and short skits on social media networks like Instagram and Twitter, satirizing and lampooning matters of Faith and Sunnah: legislated dress, plural marriage (a favorite target of their darts and arrows), etc.—even our beloved Prophet and his noble family are not safe from the depraved hearts and minds of these fools.*

*Moreover, we find some “men,” with little concern for the threat of Allāh’s Punishment, imitating women in their dress and mannerisms in these skits. Are they unaware that the Prophet “cursed the men who imitate women”? Or are they more concerned with eliciting laughs from people than they are receiving such curses?*

*In light of this, we wanted to excerpt the chapter on joking about matters of Religion, as a reminder for those who reflect. As for the perverse of heart, then as it said, there is no path to the resister.*

**Section Two: Prohibited Joking: The Impermissibility of Joking Concerning  
Affairs of Religion and the Signs of Allāh**

**K**EEPING IN MIND the aforementioned conditions mentioned by the *Imāms* al-Manāwī and al-Nawawī, let us examine a few instances where joking is impermissible. In this section, I want to begin with the most dangerous of these prohibitions: joking about matters of the Religion. This is an act that removes one from the Religion altogether, as seen in Allāh’s statement:

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَءَايَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ ﴾

﴿ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنْ نَعَفُ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نَعَذِّبُ طَائِفَةَ بَأْتِهِمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ ﴾

“And if you ask them (O Muḥammad) they will say: We did but talk and jest. Say: Was it at Allāh and His revelations and His Messenger that you were mocking? Make no excuse. You have disbelieved after your confession of belief. If We forgive a party of you, a party of you We shall punish because they have been guilty” [*Al-Tawbah* 9:65-66].

*Shaykh* ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Sa’dī (d.1376H) - رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ - says in commentary of these verses, “**And if you ask them (O Muḥammad)** concerning what they said from defamation of the Muslims and their Religion, when a group of them said during the Tabūk expedition, ‘We have not seen anything like our reciters (i.e. the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions). They possess the hungriest stomachs, the most lying tongues and are the most cowardly in battle’ and so on. So when it reached them that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) learned of their speech, they came making excuses to him saying, ‘We were just talking and jesting,’ meaning, we didn’t intend defamation or calumny.

So Allāh said, clarifying the nullity of their excuse and their dishonesty, ‘**Say: Was it at Allāh and His revelations and His Messenger that you were mocking? Make no excuse. You have disbelieved after your confession of belief.**’ For indeed mockery of Allāh, His *āyāt* and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is disbelief, removing one from the Religion, because the foundation of the Religion is built upon veneration of Allāh, His Religion and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ); and mockery of anything from them is incompatible with that foundation and completely at odds with it.”

Al-Sa’dī says later in the commentary of these *āyāt*, “Whoever mocks anything from the Book of Allāh or the established *Sunnah* or belittles it, or mocks or belittles the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), he has disbelieved in Allāh, the Almighty; and *tawbah* (repentance) is accepted for every sin, no matter how great.”<sup>1</sup>

*Shaykh* Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn (d.1421H) - رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ - said, “The matters of Divine Lordship, Prophethood, Revelation, and Religion are sacred matters which are to be honored. It is impermissible for anyone to show disrespect towards them, whether by mocking them to make others laugh or to make fun of them. If anyone does that, he is a disbeliever, because this is indicative of his disrespect towards Allāh and His Messengers, Books, and Laws. Whoever does this must repent to Allāh for what he has done, because that is a kind of hypocrisy. So he must repent to Allāh, seek His forgiveness, mend his ways, and develop fear of Allāh, show veneration towards Him and love for Him in his heart. And Allāh is the Source of strength.”<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Refer to *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān* (p. 343) of al-Sa’dī.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to *al-Majmū‘ al-Thamīn* (1/63) of Ibn al-‘Uthaymīn.