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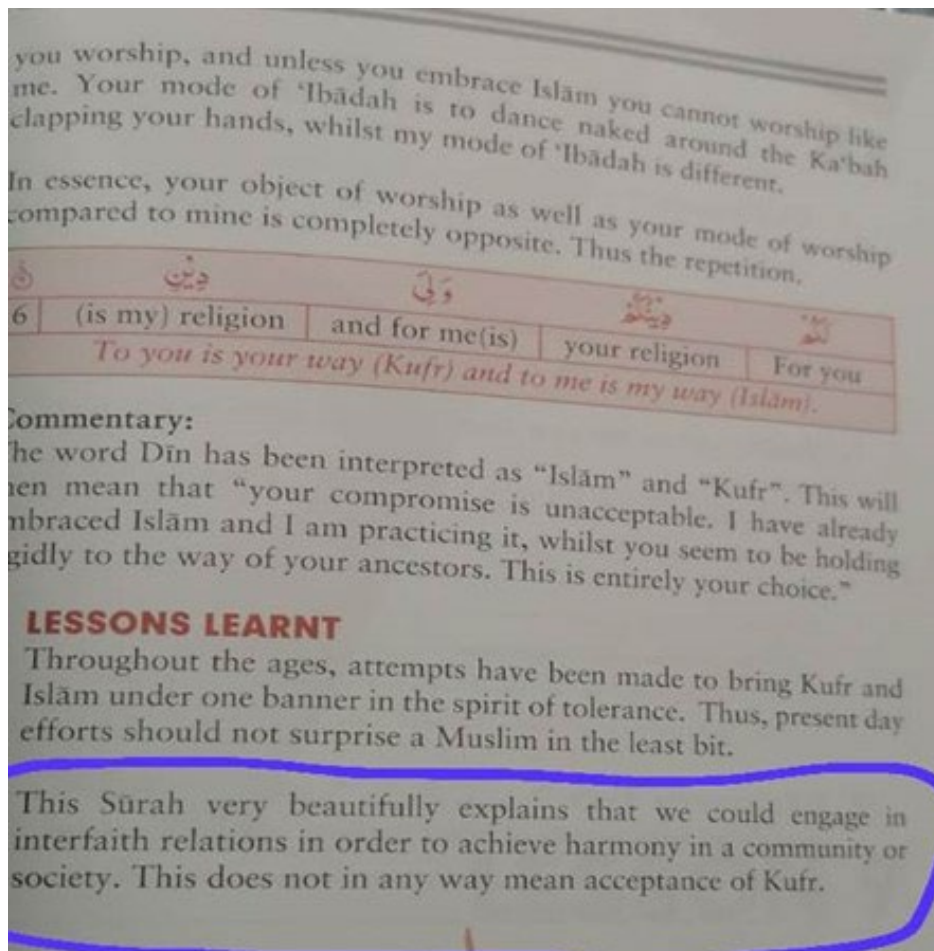
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Misrepresentation, Distortion, Deflection & Aggression

The reaction of many Ulama to an extract from the JAMIATUL ULAMA OF SOUTH AFRICA'S ("JUSA's") *Tas-heel-Durusul Quran*- Book B- was swift and unequivocal. The content was described by various *Ulama* as misleading, a distortion and a misrepresentation of the meaning of Surah Kafiroon. We associate ourselves fully with the views of the Ulama who voiced that objection. The offending extract is reproduced below to enable readers to properly understand the cause of the outcry.



In response, JUSA - on 29 May 2023 - issued a community statement in which it accused those objecting of:

- (i) seeking to discredit its entire *Tas-heel* series on spurious grounds;
- (ii) failing to appreciate the context of the lesson; and
- (iii) being untruthful because, so it alleges, the objectors also promote the very views that are contained in the *Tas-heel* series.

The statement then proceeds to reproduce an extract from JUSA's December 2022 statement that dealt, among other things, with "JUSA's approach to inter religious engagements".

JUSA's aggressive response was deliberately crafted to deflect attention away from the real issue and to place those objecting to its deviance and misdirection on the "back foot", in a manner of speaking.

CONSPICUOUSLY absent from JUSA's statement is an explanation of the following aberrational paragraph reproduced above (in reference to surah Kafiroon) that appears in the relevant *Tas-heel* series text:

***"This surah very beautifully explains that we could engage in interfaith relations in order to achieve harmony in a community or society. This does not in any way mean acceptance of kufr."***

The above assertions are manifestly false. To JUSA's knowledge, surah Kafiroon does not create any licence to engage in interfaith relations. Furthermore, the averment that the surah explains that engagement in interfaith relations does not in any way mean acceptance of kufr is an arrant distortion of the truth.

What JUSA has done is to render a baseless interpretation of the surah to pollute young minds into thinking that JUSA's interfaith engagements are sanctioned by the Noble Quran. This, respectfully, is a cynical misrepresentation of the Kalaam of Allah, a complete distortion of the Revelation (Wahi) and a shameless miscarriage of the trust it is obliged to fulfil as an association of Ulama



Its conduct is reminiscent of the leaders of Bani Israel, who deliberately misinterpreted the revelation to promote their deviance.

*“Among the Jews are those who distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., usages] and say, "We hear and disobey" and "Hear but be not heard" and "Rā'ina," twisting their tongues and defaming the religion. And if they had said [instead], "We hear and obey" and "Wait for us [to understand]," it would have been better for them and more suitable. But Allāh has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, except for a few.”<sup>1</sup>*

JUSA is reminded of the following verse in the Noble Qur’ān,

*“And who is more unjust than one who invents about Allāh a lie or denies His verses? Indeed, the wrongdoers will not succeed.”<sup>2</sup>*

The community statement of JUSA highlights its distortion of the truth and its departure from proper context. The statement conflates multiple issues to create the impression that the seriously deviant text of the JUSA *Tas-heel* series textbook is actually in order.

The text’s express rejection of Kufr is sterile when read in the context of its express acceptance of interfaith activities. Rejection of kufr and endorsement of interfaith practice are antithetical. Interfaith activities, on their own, entail Kufr. In an interfaith prayer, attended by participants from diverse religions, a Muslim cannot and will not denounce the disbelief being enacted before him. In an interfaith prayer, participants pray to multiple deities. This is polytheism. Hence, an interfaith activity, like an interfaith prayer, which JUSA has openly embraced, can never be a demonstration of the rejection of Kufr.

There are two dimensions to kufr or disbelief. The first is a statement or utterance of Kufr; the second is an action of Kufr. Just as an utterance of Kufr causes a person to descend into Kufr, so too does an action of Kufr, like wearing a cross or participating in interfaith worship, cause a like descent.

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<sup>1</sup> Sūrah an-Nisā’: 46

<sup>2</sup> Sūrah al-An’ām: 21



Neither the offending text in the textbook, nor the statement of JUSA disassociates from interfaith activity – which has a direct negative bearing on *tawheed* as the cardinal element of the faith of a Muslim.

In addition, the text of the commentary of Mufti Shafi' raḥimahullāh in his exegesis *Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān* has been deceptively and mischievously invoked in the JUSA statement in support of its interfaith agenda.

There are two incidents mentioned by Mufti Shafi in *Ma'ārif-ul-Qur'ān*. One is the pact offered to Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam in Makkah Mukarramah by the polytheists. It entailed a mixture of Īmān and Kufr, and was hence rejected. The second was the treaty entered into with the Jews in Madinah Munawwarah, which did not entail a mixture of Īmān and Kufr. It was beneficial to the Muslims and was concluded on the basis that the final decision maker in all matters subject to the treaty was Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam - which the Jews agreed to.

It is instructive that neither of the two events had anything to do with interfaith or inter religious harmony. Moreover, the Tafsīr of Mufti Shafi is quite emphatic in its denunciation of any pact or arrangement in terms of which the principles of Islām are compromised, or which conflates truth with falsehood.

There is no precedent in the Blessed Sunnah of our Noble Master justifying participation in interfaith activity.

The message given to the student of the *Tas-heel* series textbook is that it is fine to engage in actions of Kufr, while simultaneously believing that he or she rejects Kufr. This is intolerable and untenable. Even JUSA will agree that such a paradox is ludicrous.



The boldness with which JUSA has embarked on its campaign to condone interfaith activity is deplorable. The function of the Maktab and the educational material disseminated therein is to build īmān and a strong sense of association with Islām. The offending material in issue however teaches, without more, tolerance and acceptance of polytheism and disbelief. The role of an ‘ālim in this case, or a common Muslim in every other situation, is to prioritise and elevate the word of Allāh and not to dilute it with disbelief. *"Our Rabb, let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed, you are the Bestower. Our Rabb, surely You will gather the people for a Day about which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allāh does not fail in His promise."*<sup>3</sup>

***Electronically issued by the Association of Muslim Professionals of South Africa***

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<sup>3</sup> Sūrah āl-‘Imrān: 8-9

