

KABEERAH & SAGHEERAH

الْكَبِيرَةُ وَالصَّغِيرَةُ

Meaning

أَنَّ الْكَبِيرَةَ مَا رُتِّبَتْ عَلَيْهِ عُقُوبَةٌ خَاصَّةٌ...
وَمَا نَهِيَ عَنْهُ فَقَطُّ وَلَمْ يُعَيَّنْ لَهُ عُقُوبَةٌ خَاصَّةٌ فَهُوَ صَغِيرَةٌ

A major sin is whatever has a specific punishment as a consequence [of that action]. Whatever has been prohibited but for which there has not been particularised a specific punishment, then it is a lesser sin.

Explanation

Shaykh al Uthaymeen

What is a major sin?

A *kabeerah* (major sin) in the reality of (its) meaning is the opposite of a *sagheerah* (lesser sin) – but what is the scale [on which to judge this distinction]?

Some of the scholars said: *Whatever the Legislator has laid down in text to be a major sin, then it is a major sin, and whatever has not been laid down in text [to be a major sin] then it is a lesser sin.* So for example,

“Stay away from the seven destructive sins.”¹ This is a major sin.

“Should I not inform you of the most serious of the major sins?”² [This is] a major sin.

So what is important is that whatever the Legislator has laid down in text to be a major sin [then] it is a major sin. And what has not been is not.

And some of the scholars stated: *Whatever has a threat upon it of curse or anger [from Allaah] then it is a major sin.*

¹ Authentic hadeeth, Bukhari (2615) and Muslim (89)

² Authentic hadeeth, Bushari (2511) and Muslim (87)

And others have said: *Whatever has in it a prescribed punishment in this worldly life or a threat in the Hereafter, then it is a major sin.*

And they [the scholars] have differed a great deal; and Shaykh ul Islaam *rahimahullaah* mentioned that *a major sin is that, the consequence of which is a specific punishment.* Meaning, for whatever there has been appointed a specific punishment, then [that action] is a major sin. *And whatever has only been prohibited but for which there has not been particularised a specific punishment, then it is a lesser sin.*

And together with that, he says: that the major sins vary in level, some of them being more severe than others. And his statement is closer to what is correct: whoever performs a major sin and does not repent from it, he is a *faasiq* (evil doer). And whoever persists upon a lesser sin and his persisting does not contain any refraining [from it], then he is a *faasiq* (evil doer).

Taken from

Sharh Al Aqeedah As Safaarineeyyah by Shaykh al Uthaymeen, page 296

Translator Nasser ibn Najam - words in brackets and footnotes are translator's - checked by Dawood Burbank