

## Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

### Class Notes – Chapter 9

#### بَابُ مَنْ تَبَرَّكَ بِشَجَرٍ أَوْ حَجَرٍ وَنَحْوِهِمَا

#### **Whoever seeks blessing (barakah) through a tree, a stone or the like.**

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** The author continues mentioning the condemned practices of *shirk* which contradict or diminish pure *tawheed*.
- (مَنْ) – “Whoever”. Essentially the chapter title is ‘The ruling of whoever seeks blessings through a tree or a rock or anything similar to it’.
- (تَبَرَّكَ) – “Seeks barakah”. That is, looking for it and implementing the means by which to attain it. *Barakah* (blessing) is defined by the scholars as (كَثْرَةُ الْخَيْرِ وَدَوَامُهُ) – An abundance of good and its continuation.
- Seeking *barakah* (*tabarruk*) is considered as *shirk* in two instances:
  1. If a person believes that what they seek *barakah* in provides the *barakah* within itself besides Allah. This is major *shirk*, regardless if the means is legitimate or otherwise.
  2. If a person believes that what they seek *barakah* in is merely a cause and that Allah alone is the provider of *barakah*. However, because the cause is illegitimate, then this is minor *shirk*.
- The *asbaab* (causes) for *barakah* are exclusively established through the *sharie’ah* and not through experience. This is because *barakah* is from the matters of the unseen (*ghayb*) which can only be identified through the authentic evidence of the Quran and Sunnah.
- (بِشَجَرٍ) – “Through a tree”. Any tree, regardless of its size, type or location. From the virtues of Omar Ibnul Khattab is that he cut down the tree where *Bay’atul Ridwaan* took place when he observed that people had started to visit it.
- (حَجَرٍ) – “Through a rock”. Any rock, even the Black Stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*). The Black Stone is kissed and touched as a form of pure worship to Allah, not to seek its blessing in doing so. This is why Omar Ibnul Khattab said:

إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ حَجَرٌ لَا تَضُرُّ وَلَا تَنْفَعُ وَلَوْلَا أَنِّي رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْبَلُكَ مَا قَبَّلْتُكَ

**Verily, I know you are only a stone with no power to harm or benefit me. Were it not that I saw the Prophet ﷺ kiss you, I would not have kissed you.** [Bukhari, Muslim]

This is contrary to what many people do today whereby they wipe over their body after having touched it, wrongly believing that it is a source of *barakah*.

- (نَحْوِهِمَا) – “Or the like”. Such as a particular place - a cave, a grave a relic, a shrine or a tomb.

وقول الله تعالى: ﴿ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَنْوَةَ الْقَالِقَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾

**Allah the Almighty said:** *So have you considered al-Laat and al-'Uzza?. And Manat, the third - the other one? Is the male for you and for Him the female? That, then, is an unjust division. They are not but [mere] names you have named them - you and your forefathers - for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow not except assumption and what [their] souls desire, and there has already come to them from their Lord guidance. [al-Najm: 19-23]*

- {أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ} – “Tell me of, inform me of”. The one who sees such foolishness in worshipping these idols can clearly witness and subsequently inform that they have no capacity to bring about good or avert evil.
- {اللَّاتِ} – “al-Laat”. The name of an idol which was worshipped in the *jaahilliya*. It is derived from the word Allah or *ilaaah*. It was a white rock which had carvings on it and had a building erected over it. It was located in Taif.
- {الْعُزَّىٰ} – “al-'Uzza”. Another of the *jaahilliya* idols. It is derived from Allah’s name al-Azeez. It was the name of a tree surrounded by a wall and decorated with curtains. It was located on the road between Makkah and Taif.
- {مَنَاةٌ} – “Manat”. Another of the *jaahilliya* idols. It is derived from Allah name al-Mannan, or from the word (مَنَى) meaning to spill, in this case blood, because they would offer many sacrifices to it hoping to attain its blessing. It used to be located at al-Mushallal between Makkah and Madinah.
- {أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ} – “Is for you the male and for Him the female?” That is, you ascribe to yourselves what you like (males) and ascribe that what you do not like (females) to Allah, by claiming that they are His daughters!
- {قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ} – “Unjust division”. Firstly, because they attributed something to Allah, and secondly, when they did, they ascribed to Him that which they do not like.
- {إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا} – “They are but mere names you have named”. The pronoun (هِيَ) returns to the aforementioned idols. These idols you worship besides Allah, are but names you have invented and taken them as deities besides Allah.
- {مِمَّا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ} – “For which Allah has sent down no authority”. That is, Allah has not sent down evidence validating and permitting their worship. Rather, Allah has voided these false idols:

﴿ ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ ﴿٦٢﴾ ﴾

**That is because Allah is the Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is falsehood.**

[al-Hajj: 62]

- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah disputes the polytheists’ worship of the aforementioned idols, that they are inanimate objects which cannot avail in any way. He also reprimands them for their unjust impartiality, whereby they disassociate themselves from the females, yet ascribe them to Allah. Allah then rebukes them by demanding evidence for the validity of worshipping these false idols. Allah then argues that assumptions and personal desires can never be taken as evidence in such an argument.

Irrefutable proofs of the obligation to worship Allah alone and to reject idolatry can only come from Allah and His Messenger.

- **Relevance of the ayah to chapter:** These *ayaat* in Surat al-Najm prove the prohibition of seeking the blessings (*tabarruk*) of trees or stones, and that doing so is categorically regarded as *shirk*.

This is because the *mushrikoon* devoted acts of worship to these idols, seeking their supposed blessings. Therefore, seeking the blessings of shrines, trees or stones, is tantamount to seeking the blessings of false deities such as al-Laat, al-Uzaah and Manaah.

The *ayah* is no doubt referring to major *shirk*, but can be extrapolated (*qiyaas*) to also include minor *shirk*.

وَعَنْ أَبِي وَقِيدٍ اللَّيْثِيِّ قَالَ: خَرَجْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ وَتَحْنُ حُدَاثَاءُ عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ، وَلِلْمُشْرِكِينَ سِدْرَةٌ يَعْكُفُونَ عِنْدَهَا وَيَنْوُطُونَ بِهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ فَمَرَرْنَا بِسِدْرَةٍ، فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا لَهُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ! إِنَّهَا السُّنَنُ! قُلْتُمْ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ كَمَا قَالَتْ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ لِمُوسَى ﴿اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ﴾ لَتَرْكَبَنَّ سَنَنْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ. رواه الترمذي وصححه.

**Abu Waqid Al-Laithi said:** We went out with Allah's Messenger ﷺ on the campaign to Hunain while we had just left disbelief (Kufr) for Islam. The Mushrikin had a Sidra (lote-tree) that they would stay there and hang their arms on, called Dhat Anwat. When we passed a Sidra, we asked: "Oh Messenger of Allah, won't you make for us another Dhat Anwat just like their Dhat Anwat?" Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Allahu Akbar! By the One who holds my soul in His Hand, verily these are the ways of earlier nations, you have said exactly as Bani Israel said to Musa: 'Make for us a god just as their gods' (7:138). Certainly, you will follow the ways of those who went before you.

[Reported by al-Tirmidhi who also declared it as sahih]

- **Abu Waqid al-Laythi:** al-Harith ibn 'Awf. A renowned *sahabi*. He died in the year 68 A.H aged 85. May Allah be pleased with him.
- (حُنَيْن) – A valley lying 16 kilometres east of Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ fought the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqeef who gathered an army to fight him after the Conquest of Makkah.  
The Prophet ﷺ went out to meet them with 12 thousand troops. The Muslims were initially deceived by their numbers, but Allah taught them a valuable lesson that victory alone is from Him. They initially fled from Hawazin and Thaqeef when the two armies met, but remarshalled themselves and were granted with eventual victory.
- (حُدَاثَاءُ عَهْدٍ بِكُفْرٍ) – "Just left kufr". That is, they recently accepted Islam. Abu Waqid mentioned this as a legitimate excuse for what they asked, because if *imaan* had been firmly established in their hearts, they would not have asked for such a thing.
- (يَعْكُفُونَ) – "Stay there". They would remain at the tree after hanging their swords on it as a form of veneration, hoping to seek *barakah* from it.
- (يَنْوُطُونَ بِهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ) – "Hang their arms on it". Hoping to seek its blessings.
- (ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ) – "Dhat Anwat". The name of the lote-tree. Called as such, because of the greater number of swords that would be hung on it seeking its blessing.
- (اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ) – A phrase of astonishment. That is, Allah is Greater than to have blessing sought in something other than He has legislated.
- (إِنَّهَا السُّنَنُ) – "Ways of the earlier nations". The blameworthy ways of the earlier generations which led them into *shirk*.

- (لَتَرْكَبُنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ) – “Certainly you will follow the ways of those who came before you”. That is, you will do what they did, and say what they said. The Prophet ﷺ said this as a warning. That is, ‘Beware of following the ways of those before you’. This is because those who came before, requested a deity besides Allah, therefore asking what you asked the Prophet ﷺ is taking the path that they took. It will eventually lead to major *shirk*, just as it did for them.
- **General meaning of the Hadith:** Abu Waqid al-Laythi gives an account of an incident which took place immediately before the battle of Hunain. Some companions had recently embraced Islam and were thus unaware of certain acts of *shirk*. When they saw the *mushrikoon* seeking the blessings of a tree, they requested from the Prophet ﷺ to assign a tree for them, so they too could seek blessing in it. The Prophet ﷺ was astonished and shocked by their suggestion. He likened their proposal to Banu Israeel who asked Musa to assign an idol for them to worship. The Prophet ﷺ then condemned and warned against such an action by informing that the Muslim Ummah would follow the steps of the Jews and Christians.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That the Prophet ﷺ compared their seeking blessing in a tree, to seeking a deity besides Allah. Both are forms of *shirk*, although they vary in their category and ruling.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
  1. **Explanation of the verse in Surat al-Najm.** In it, Allah refutes the worship of the false idols of the *jaahilliya* by belittling them. These idols were constructed of stones and trees.
  2. **The nature of the matter requested by the companions (regarding a tree similar to Dhat-Anwat).** That is, they asked the Prophet ﷺ to assign a tree for so they could seek blessing in it, not to worship it. The fact that the Prophet ﷺ still refuted them, shows that seeking blessing in a tree is forbidden.
  3. **In fact, they (companions) did not act upon it.** That is, they did not precede the Prophet ﷺ by assigning a tree themselves, but asked the Prophet ﷺ to assign one for them first.
  4. **Their intention was to become closer to Allah by their act as they thought He would like it.** That is, they asked out of ignorance, thinking that it was appropriate to do so. This shows the danger of worshipping Allah upon ignorance.
  5. **If the Companions were unaware of the nature of their intended act, it stands to reason that other than they (of much lesser status) are more likely to fall into ignorance.** Because the *sahabah* are the most knowledgeable regarding the *deen* of Islam. If this matter was not clear to them, then to those below them it is potentially less clear.
  6. **For the Companions is the reward of good deeds and the promise of forgiveness that is not for others.** Yet despite this great virtue, the Prophet ﷺ still did not excuse them when they asked what they asked.
  7. **The Prophet ﷺ did not excuse them but denied by saying: "Allahu Akbar, these are ways and you would follow those who came before you"- thereby expressing the weightiness of the matter by these three things.** The three things: (الله أكبر) – Astonishment, (إِنَّهَا السُّنَنُ) – warning, (لَتَرْكَبُنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ) – warning.
  8. **This is a major issue which is intended, that the Prophet ﷺ informed them that their request was like that of Banu Israel when they asked Musa: "Make for us a deity".** Both of the requests negate pure *tawheed* because they are forms of *shirk*. Seeking blessing in a tree is a form of minor *shirk* which could lead to major *shirk*, while taking a deity besides Allah is major *shirk*.

9. **The negation of this act is of the meanings of "There is no true God except Allah", which being subtle and hidden, was not perceived by them.** Because seeking blessing is an act of worship which only Allah deserves. Allah alone is the provider of *barakah*.
10. **The swearing by Allah made by the Prophet ﷺ upon the ruling and he did not swear by Allah except for a beneficial purpose.** Because he ﷺ said: "By the One who holds my soul in His Hand". The Prophet ﷺ only swore upon something when it was of the utmost importance, as was the case here.
11. **Shirk is of two types, i.e. major and minor because the Companions were not turned apostates due to their request.** This shows that their request constituted minor *shirk*, as they asked for an illegitimate cause (*sabab*) in which to seek blessing. Had they asked for the tree believing that it was the source of blessing within itself or to worship it, then it would have constituted major *shirk*.
12. **Their submission that "we had just left disbelief" tells us that other Companions were not unaware of the matter.** They made this statement as an excuse for themselves, and that they were ignorant of the ruling. As for those companions who had accepted Islam for some time, they knew the ruling and would not ask such a thing.
13. **The saying of Allahu Akbar to express surprise. It contradicts those who consider it undesirable (Makruh).** As per the *hadith*. Allah is Greater than to have partners associated with Him in worship.
14. **To put an end to all possible ways leading to Shirk (polytheism).** Because hanging weapons on a tree seeking its blessing is a form of minor *shirk*. However, the Shaytaan will eventually lead to the path of worshipping it. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ closed this path, so it does not eventually lead to major *shirk*.
15. **Prohibition of any resemblance with the people of ignorance (disbelievers).** Because the Prophet ﷺ said: "Certainly, you will follow the ways of those who went before you", refuting that they should follow or imitate them.
16. **A teacher can become unhappy over his students (for the sake of any goodness) while educating.** The *hadith* is not clear whether the Prophet ﷺ was angry when he said 'Allahu Akbar'. Perhaps the author perceived this statement to imply anger.
17. **The general tendency of mankind has been expressed by the Prophet ﷺ by saying: "These are the ways".** That is, the general tendency to follow the blameworthy ways of the past nations. This is because the Shaytaan actively calls to them and adorns them. The Prophet ﷺ said this as a warning, not that it is permissible.
18. **It is one of the signs of the Prophethood that the events occurred accordingly as he informed.** That is, the paths of the Jews and Christians will be followed.
19. **In every place where Allah has censured the Jews and Christians in the Qur'an, He has also warned us against those deeds.**
20. **The Companions (May the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) knew this principle that worships were based on direct commandment.** Because they did not assign themselves the tree in the first instance but asked the Prophet ﷺ to do so. **It therefore, becomes a reminder concerning questions pertinent to the grave. The question (to be asked of the dead) "Who is your Lord"? is clear. The second question "Who is your Prophet?" depends on the information of the Prophet ﷺ regarding unseen. But the third question "Which is your religion" is related to their (the Jews) request (from Musa). "Make for us a god".**

**21. *That the ways of the People of the Book are condemned as are those of the polytheists.***

Because the Prophet ﷺ compared what they asked of him to what Banu Isra'eel asked of Musa. What they requested of the Prophet ﷺ was based on what they had seen of the practices of the polytheists.

**22. *The one who has moved from falsehood (i.e. became Muslim) and get accustomed to certain beliefs or habits is not totally safe from having remnants of these habits as is evidenced in their (the Companions) words: "and we had just left disbelief (Kufr)".***