

## Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

### Class Notes – Chapter 16

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ﴾

**“Until when fear is banished from their hearts they say: What is it that your Lord has said? They say: The Truth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.”**

**[Saba: 23]**

***(The angels duly fear and obey Allah).***

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** In this chapter the author demonstrates the fear the angels have for Allah, although they are the strongest and greatest of His creations. Since the angels fear Allah to such a degree, how can they, or any of the creation lesser than them be worshipped besides Him? Therefore, this chapter refutes the polytheists who invoke besides Allah the angels and those inferior to them in status.

The difference between this chapter and the one before it, is that the previous chapter clearly demonstrates the incapacity of the greatest creation on the Earth, and that is the Prophet ﷺ. This chapter demonstrates the incapacity of the greatest creations in the Heavens, and they are the angels.

Some polytheists believed that the heavenly creations, such as the stars, the sun, the moon, and the angels had a power which earthly deities could not match. This chapter also refutes this group of the polytheists.

- {فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ} – “When fear is banished from their hearts”. Referring to when the angels are released from the feeling of great fear they experience when Allah speaks the revelation. This is also proof that the angels were created with hearts.
- {قَالُوا} – “They say”. To one another. That is, they ask each other what Allah has just said.
- {قَالُوا الْحَقُّ} – “They say: The truth”. That is Allah has spoken the truth to Jibreel in the revelation He has given him. This does not imply that Allah may sometimes speaks falsity, it is merely a description of the reality. The angels know that Allah only speaks the *haqq*, therefore the purpose of their question is to establish the praise of Allah. That is, Allah is deserving of all praise, because He only speaks the truth.
- {وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ} – “And He is the Most High, the Most Great”. Allah is the Most High in His Attributes (*sifaat*) and His Essence (*dhaat*). Allah is the Most Great – Nothing is greater than Him. If Allah is the Most High and the Most Great, then He alone is deserving of all worship.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah informs us in this *ayah*, that whenever the angels hear Allah’s words revealed to Jibreel, they tremble and are terrified, to the extent that they are close to fainting. When the terror is released from their hearts, the angles ask one another: “What has your Lord said?”. They reply, praising and glorifying Allah: “The truth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great”.

**وَفِي الصَّحِيحِ** عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ الْأَمْرَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ضَرَبَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا خُضْعَانًا لِقَوْلِهِ كَأَنَّهُ سِلْسِلَةٌ عَلَى صَفْوَانٍ يَنْفُذُهُمْ ذَلِكَ. فَإِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ، قَالُوا الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ. فَيَسْمَعُهَا مُسْتَرِقُ السَّمْعِ، وَمُسْتَرِقُ السَّمْعِ هَكَذَا بَعْضُهُ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ. وَوَصَفَ سُفْيَانُ بِكَفِّهِ فَحَرَفَهَا وَبَدَّدَ بَيْنَ أَصَابِعِهِ. فَيَسْمَعُ الْكَلِمَةَ، فَيُلْقِيهَا إِلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهُ ثُمَّ يُلْقِيهَا الْآخَرَ إِلَى مَنْ تَحْتَهُ، حَتَّى يُلْقِيَهَا عَلَى لِسَانِ السَّاحِرِ أَوْ الْكَاهِنِ، فَرُبَّمَا أَدْرَكَهُ الشَّهَابُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُلْقِيَهَا، وَرُبَّمَا أَلْفَاهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَهُ، فَيَكْذِبُ مَعَهَا مِائَةَ كَذِبَةٍ، فَيَقَالُ أَلَيْسَ قَدْ قَالَ لَنَا يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا كَذَا وَكَذَا فَيُصَدِّقُ بِنِكَ الْكَلِمَةَ الَّتِي سَمِعَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ.

**Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:** When Allah decrees some order in the heaven, the angels beat their wings indicating complete surrender to His Saying, like chains being dragged on rock. And when the state of fear is banished from their hearts, they say: ‘What is that your Lord has said?’ They say: ‘The truth. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.’

Then the stealthy listeners (devils) hear this order, and these stealthy listeners are like this, one over the other (Sufyaan, a sub narrator demonstrated that by holding his hand upright and separating the fingers). The stealthy listener hears a word which he will convey to that who is below him, and the second will convey it to that who is below him, till the last of them will convey it to the sorcerers or fortune tellers.

Sometimes a shooting star may strike the devil before he can convey it, and sometimes he may convey it before the shooting star strikes him, whereupon the sorcerer adds to that word a hundred lies. The people will then say: ‘Didn’t he (the sorcerer) tell such and-such a thing on such-and such date?’. So, the sorcerer is said to have told the truth because of the one statement which has been heard from the heavens. [Bukhari]

- **(Sufyaan)** – Ibn ‘Uyayna ibn Maymun al-Hilali. He was from the generation of the *tabi’-tabi’een* and was a great *hafith* and scholar. He died in 198 A.H.
  - (وَفِي الصَّحِيحِ) – “In the Sahih”. Referring to Sahih Bukhari.
  - (إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ الْأَمْرَ) – “When Allah decrees an order”. That is when Allah speaks an order in the Heavens, because further on in the *hadith* it mentions that the angels ‘surrender to His saying’.
  - (صَفْوَانٍ) – “Rock”. Specifically, a smooth and hard rock. When a chain is dragged over this type of rock it makes a great sound. The resemblance is not comparing the sound of the chain on the rock with the sound of Allah’s words, but rather it is comparing the fear of the angels when they hear the words of Allah, just as someone may fear the sound of a chain being dragged on a rock.
  - (يَنْفُذُهُمْ ذَلِكَ) – “It will penetrate them”. That is, when Allah speaks His command in the heavens, it will reach all the angels and subsequently cause them to be terrified, beating their wings in submission.
  - (فَرُبَّمَا أَدْرَكَهُ الشَّهَابُ) – “Sometimes a flame may strike the devil”. The *shihab* referred to is a piercing flame which emanates from the star, and not the star itself. Essentially it is a meteorite.
- The scholars have mentioned that in the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the devils would be struck all the time, so that no ambiguity exists in the revelation. However, after that, and with the permission of Allah, they may manage to sometimes steal the news of the sky.
- (فَيَكْذِبُ مَعَهَا مِائَةَ كَذِبَةٍ) – “Whereupon they add to that word a hundred lies”. The number is not specific but implies exaggeration. That is, they add to the one true word many falsehoods which greatly dwarf it.

- **General meaning of the Hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ informs us of one of the matters of the unseen, and that is the angel's glorification of the words of Allah and their state of fear upon hearing it. They ask one another about what Allah has said and receive answers from one another.

The Prophet ﷺ further informs us that the devils eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels and then convey them to the sorcerers and soothsayers. Upon hearing these conversations, the devils are punished by shooting stars.

Despite being pursued by shooting stars, they may manage to steal the news and convey it to the sorcerer or soothsayer, for a reason only Allah knows. Nothing, however, falls outside the boundaries of Allah's complete knowledge and will.

The sorcerers and soothsayers then blend the heavenly words with a myriad of lies, which are accepted by the people due to the few true words which are included in them.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** This *hadith* refutes the false belief of the polytheists who glorify and worship the heavenly entities, including the angels.

Despite the great strength the angels have been given by Allah, they still become frightened upon hearing His words, thus proving the invalidity of dedicating any worship to them.

Other false deities who are inferior in strength to the angels are therefore even less worthy of worship.

وَعَنِ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنْ يُوحِيَ بِالْأَمْرِ تَكَلَّمَ بِالْوَحْيِ، أَخَذَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ مِنْهُ رَجْفَةً - أَوْ قَالَ: رَعْدَةً شَدِيدَةً - خَوْفًا مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. فَإِذَا سَمِعَ ذَلِكَ أَهْلَ السَّمَاوَاتِ صَعِقُوا وَخَرُّوا لِلَّهِ سُجَّدًا، فَيَكُونُ أَوَّلَ مَنْ يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَيَكَلِّمُهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَحْيِهِ بِمَا أَرَادَ، ثُمَّ يَمُرُّ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ، كُلِّمَا مَرَّ بِسَمَاءٍ سَأَلَهُ مَلَائِكَتُهَا: مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّنَا يَا جِبْرِيلُ؟ فَيَقُولُ جِبْرِيلُ: قَالَ الْحَقُّ، وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ. فَيَقُولُونَ كُلُّهُمْ مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ، فَيَنْتَهِي جِبْرِيلُ بِالْوَحْيِ إِلَى حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

*al-Nawas bin Sam'an narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: When Allah wishes to reveal something to mankind, He speaks out the words to be revealed. At this, the heavens shake strongly in fear of Him. When the Words of Allah fall upon the inhabitants of the heavens (the angels), they fall unconscious and submit in prostration to Allah.*

*The first of them to raise his head is Jibreel whom Allah speaks to him of the revelation what He wishes. Then Jibreel passes by the other angels in the different heavens, and is asked at each station: 'What did our Lord say, O Jibrael?' He answers: 'He said the Truth; He is the Most High, the Most Great' and all repeat the same after him. Then Jibreel moves on to the destination with the revelation, to where commanded by Allah the Most High.*

- This *hadith* has been narrated by many of the scholars of *tafsir*, most notably Ibn Katheer, al-Tabari and al-Baghawi, all in their respective books of *tafsir*. The grading of the *hadith* is *da'eef* (weak).

It is customary of the author to place the *ahadeeth* which have a difference of opinion regarding their grading at the end of the chapter. His inclusion of such *ahadeeth* suggests that he perhaps considers them as being authentic.

- (الْوَحْيِ) – “The Revelation”. The words of Allah which He reveals to any one of His Prophets.
- (خَوْفًا مِنَ اللَّهِ) – “Out of fear of Allah”. The heavens fear Allah as He has given them knowledge and awareness of His Majesty, which necessitates fear.

- (صَعِفُوا وَخَرُّوا لِلَّهِ سُجَّدًا) – “They become unconscious and fall in prostration”. That is, they become unconscious, then when they regain consciousness they fall in prostration, otherwise the two actions are contradictory to one another if done in unison.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ informs us of the Greatness and Grandeur of Allah, in that when He pronounces the revelation, the heavens shake out of fear of Him, since they fully recognise His Greatness. Upon hearing the words of Allah, the angels become unconscious and prostrate themselves in glorification to Allah and out of fear of Him.

The first of them to raise their head is Jibreel, as he is the messenger of Allah to His prophets. Allah then reveals to Jibreel what He wills, and when Jibreel passes by the angels in the heavens, they ask him about what Allah has said. He replies: “The truth and He is the Most High, the Most Great”. His reply is in turn repeated by the angels. Jibreel then proceeds to convey the revelation to whomever Allah has assigned from the Messengers.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** In conjunction with the *ayah* and the *hadith* previously mentioned in the chapter, this *hadith* demonstrates how the angels duly fear Allah. It is thus an argument against those who worship false deities besides Allah which are either equal or inferior to the angels.

- **Important issues of the Chapter**

1. **Explanation of the ayah [34:23].** As explained above.
2. **The ayah is proof for the invalidation of shirk. Especially regarding what is attached to those righteous people (i.e. of the supplications of the ignorant toward them). It is said that this verse cuts the roots of the tree of Shirk in the heart.** It cuts the roots of *shirk* in the hearts, because if a person knows the Might of Allah whereby the sky shakes and the angels fall unconscious at His words, then how can they be taken as an object of worship besides Him, much less those below the angels in stature.
3. **Explanation of Allah's Words: "They say: 'The truth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.'"** As explained above.
4. **The reason for their question about that (verse).** The purpose of their question is to establish the praise of Allah. That is, Allah is deserving of all praise, because He only speaks the truth.
5. **That Jibreel answers their question after that by his words "He said such and such".** That is, he responds to them by saying: ‘He has spoken the truth’.
6. **The description of the fact that Jibreel was the first to raise his head (to attend to the revelation of Allah).** As per the hadith of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan.
7. **Jibreel answers to all angels of the heavens for they all question him.** As per the hadith of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan. This demonstrates his great standing amongst the angels.
8. **Unconsciousness occurs to all the dwellers of the heavens.** As per the hadith of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan. Taken from: ‘When the Words of Allah fall upon the inhabitants of the heavens, they fall unconscious and submit in prostration to Allah’.
9. **Trembling of the heavens due to the Words of Allah.** As per the hadith of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan. Taken from: ‘The heavens shake strongly in fear of Him’.
10. **That Jibreel is the one who conveys the revelation to wherever Allah commands.** As per the hadith of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan. Because he is the one entrusted by Allah with conveying the revelation.
11. **Eavesdropping of heavenly discussion by devils.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira.

12. **State of standing of Jinns atop of one another.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira and as described by Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah whereby he held his hand upright and separated his fingers.
13. **Falling down of shooting stars.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. The shooting stars which burn the devils who steal the heavenly news.
14. **The shooting star sometimes hits the devil before he conveys the stolen message and sometimes he reaches the ear of his human friend before he is struck.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira.
15. **Sometimes the soothsayer may relay the truth.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. Because, with the permission of Allah, they may receive the stolen truth from the heavens, however they add to it many lies.
16. **The soothsayer mixes the truth with a hundred lies.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. The mention of one hundred is a not an exact amount but is a form of exaggeration to demonstrate the great number of lies.
17. **His lies are not believed except for the word (of truth) which was heard from heaven.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. That is, despite all the lies they have told, people will still believe them because of the one stolen truth.
18. **The acceptance of falsehood by the human nature. How they hang onto one truth and not consider the 100 lies.** This is not a general statement but refers to those who are ignorant and foolish. They believe everything the soothsayer tells them because of the one stolen truth yet turn a blind eye to the many lies they have told.
19. **How they pass the word to one another, memorize it and use it as evidence (for other lies).** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. Because the stolen truth is what promotes their evil. If all their commodities were lies, their evil trade would not circulate amongst the people.
20. **Affirmation of the Divine Attributes of Allah, in opposition to denials of the Ashaa'irah and Mu'attilah.** Ahlus Sunnah believe that Allah speaks according to His *mashee'ah* (will) and in a manner befitting His Majesty. The Ashaa'irah deny all of Allah's attributes except seven, while the Mu'attilah (such as the Mu'tazilah) deny all of His attributes and establish only His Names.
21. **That the trembling and shaking of the heavens is due to the fear of Allah the Almighty.** As per the *hadith* of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan.
22. **Angels fall down in prostration for Allah.** As per the *hadith* of al-Nawaas ibn Sam'aan.