

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 21

بَابُ مَا جَاءَ أَنَّ الْعُلُوَّ فِي قُبُورِ الصَّالِحِينَ يُصَيِّرُهَا أَوْثَانًا تُعْبَدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

What has been mentioned regarding the exaggeration of the graves of the righteous tends them to become idols worshipped besides Allah.

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** In this chapter, the author mentions the evidences which warn against excessive reverence or exaggeration of the graves of the righteous, because such actions contradict true *tawheed* and eventually lead to *shirk*.
- In the previous chapter, the author specifically mentioned the prohibition of worshipping Allah near the graves of the righteous, which in of itself is a form of *ghuluw*. In this chapter, he generalises by including all forms of *ghuluw*, including decorating or lighting the graves.
- Generally speaking, there is some overlap between this chapter and the previous two chapters (Chapters 19 and 20).
- In the *shari'ah*, the graves have two rights upon us.
 1. That we do not disrespect them, such as by stepping or sitting on them.
 2. That we do not exaggerate in them (*ghuluw*) by exceeding the guidelines and the limits set in the *shari'ah*, such as elevating or decorating them.
- (الصَّالِحِينَ) – “The righteous”. Includes the messengers of Allah and those who follow them upon the truth.
- (أَوْثَانًا) – “Idols”. A general name for everything worshipped besides Allah, regardless if it has a physical representation (like an idol), or not. Therefore, a *wathan* is more general than a *sanam* (idol).

رَوَى مَالِكٌ فِي الْمُوطَأِ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَجْعَلْ قَبْرِي وَثَنًا يُعْبَدُ، اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَوْمٍ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

Imam Malik recorded in his book al-Muwatta that the Prophet ﷺ said: O Allah! Never turn my grave into an idol to be worshipped. Allah's, wrath intensified on a people who turn their Prophet's graves into a masjid.

- **Malik:** Ibn Anas al-Asbahi. He was the Imam of Daar al-Hijrah (Madinah) and one of the four well known founders of the major Islamic schools of law. He died in the year 179 A.H.
- The *hadith* is narrated by 'Ataa Ibn Yasaar, who is a *tabi'i*, therefore the *hadith* is *mursal*. The *hadith*, however, has other narrations whose chains of narration are complete and correct, therefore it is authentic based on those narrations.
- (اللَّهُمَّ) – “Oh Allah”. A *du'aa* which the Prophet ﷺ made. This *du'aa* was accepted by Allah. His grave is protected by three walls. Therefore, non can reach his grave to make it a *wathan*.

- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ made a *du'aa* to Allah to not let his grave become an object of worship besides Allah. He was afraid that his *ummah* would excessively revere his grave as the Jews and the Christians did to their prophets.

In addition, the Prophet ﷺ explained that this act of *shirk* was the reason for which Allah's wrath and curse was incurred upon the Jews and the Christians.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* proves that showing excessive reverence to the graves renders them idols worshipped besides Allah. This is because the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Allah do not make my grave be an idol which is worshipped". He then explained how it may become as such by saying: "... who took the graves of their prophets as places of worship".

وَلَا بِنِ جَرِيرٍ بِسَنَدِهِ عَنِ سُفْيَانَ عَنِ مَنْصُورٍ عَنِ مُجَاهِدٍ: ﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ﴾. قَالَ: كَانَ يَلْتُمُ لَهُمُ السَّوِيقَ فَمَاتَ فَعَكَّفُوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ.

وَكَذَا قَالَ أَبُو الْجَوْزَاءِ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: كَانَ يَلْتُمُ السَّوِيقَ لِلْحَاجِّ.

Concerning the verse: "Have you then considered al-Laat and al-Uzza." (53:19)

Ibn Jarir reported from Sufyan, from Mansur, from Mujahid: "He (al-Laat) used to serve the pilgrims by preparing Saweeq for them. After his death, the people began to stay and confine at his grave for the purpose of reward."

The same was reported by Abul-Jawza from Ibn Abbas: "He (al-Laat) used to prepare saweeq for the pilgrims."

- **Ibn Jarir:** Muhammad Ibn Jarir al-Tabari. A prolific compiler of *hadith*, and a renowned *mufassir* of the Quran. He died in the year 310 A.H.
- **Mujahid:** Ibn Jabr. Trustworthy *tabi'i* and a great *muffasir* of the Quran. He studied under Ibn Abbas and others. He died in the year 104 A.H.
- (اللَّات) – Previously we mentioned that the name was derived from the word *ilaah* (deity). This is correct according to the *qira'ah* which does not stress (*tashdeed*) the ت. There is second *qira'ah* which does stress the ت, which as a result makes its derivation from the word meaning to mix (*latta*). Both derivations are correct, as al-Laat would mix the *saweeq* for the pilgrims, then after his death he was taken as a false deity worshipped besides Allah.
- (السَّوِيق) – Flour or barely which is ground, roasted, then mixed with dates, water or ghee.
- (فَعَكَّفُوا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ) – "Devoted themselves at his grave". They confined themselves at his grave seeking closeness and the reward of doing so.
- **Relevance of the athar to the chapter:** The *athar* indicates that the worship of al-Laat started with the *ghuluw* (excessive reverence) of his grave. After that, the people sculpted an idol of him, and worshipped it besides Allah.

وَعَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ زَائِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ وَالْمُتَّخِذِينَ عَلَيْهَا الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ. رَوَاهُ أَهْلُ السُّنَنِ.

Ibn Abbas reported: Allah's Messenger ﷺ cursed the women who visit the graves and those who set up mosques and lights over graves. [Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and al-Nasa'i].

- (لَعَنَ) – "Cursed". To be distanced and removed from the mercy of Allah, which encompasses all things.
- (زَائِرَاتِ) – "Women who visit the graves". The visiting of graves falls into three categories:

1. *Sunnah* – such as to visit them to seek admonishment or to supplicate for the deceased.
 2. *Bid'ah* – such as to visit them to make *du'aa* next to them, or recite Quran near them.
 3. *Shirk* – such as to visit them to supplicate to them, or seek deliverance in them.
- There is a difference of opinion regarding the permissibility of women visiting the graves. The most correct opinion is that this *hadith* is abrogated and that they are allowed to visit, provided that they adhere to the *sunnah* in doing so and are infrequent in their visits. And Allah knows best
 - (والسُّرُج) – “Lamps/lights”. That is, they illuminate the graves with lights as a form of glorifying them.
 - **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ cursed the women who frequently visit the graves without adhering to the *shari'ah*. Such women may wail and grieve at the graves, making them a source of *fitnah* for all who see them, particularly men.
In addition, the Prophet ﷺ cursed those who take graves as places of worship or use lamps to light them. These practices undoubtedly constitute *ghuluw*, and ultimately lead to *shirk*.
 - **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* clearly prohibits (Allah's curse necessitates prohibition) the *ghuluw* of the graves by taking them as places of worship, or decorating them. This is because such actions stem from the glorification of the grave, which will ultimately lead to *shirk*.
 - **Important issues of the Chapter**
 1. **Explanation of idols.** A *wathan* is a general term for everything which is worshipped besides Allah, regardless if it was an idol, a grave a rock etc.
 2. **Explanation of worship.** To submit to the object of worship, out of hope, fear and glorification. This is what the Prophet ﷺ feared would happen to his grave, which is why he made the *du'aa*.
 3. **The Prophet ﷺ did not seek refuge in Allah except from that which he feared would occur.** That is, he feared that his grave would become a *wathan* which is worshipped besides Allah, hence he sought refuge in Allah from it happening.
 4. **The Prophet's joining this supplication i.e., "O Allah! Never turn my grave..." with taking the graves of Prophets as Masjid.** As per the *hadith*, the cause of the graves being turned into objects of worship is by initially taking them as places of worship.
 5. **Mention of the intense wrath of Allah (on those who indulge in such activities).** The *hadith* establishes the attribute of *ghadab* (anger, wrath). Like all attributes of Allah, it is establish in a manner befitting His Majesty.
 6. **Of most importance is the description as to how the worship of Lat, one of the major (pre-Islamic) idols, was started.** That is, when he died, they confined at his grave seeking reward and closeness to him. This led to him eventually becoming one of the biggest idols of the *jaahiliyya*.
 7. **The knowledge that Lat was the grave of a righteous man.** Because he would prepare the *saweeq* for the pilgrims which is no doubt an act of righteousness.
 8. **Lat was the name of a person buried in that grave and the mention of the meaning behind (the idol) being named such.** He acquired the name because of his preparation (*yalutt*) of the *saweeq*. The idol representing him was subsequently given the same name.
 9. **Curse of the Prophet ﷺ on the women who visit the graves.** Many scholars mention that this ruling is abrogated and that women are permitted to visit the graves, provided it is infrequent and in compliance with the *shari'ah*.
 10. **The Prophet's curse upon those who put up lights on the graves.** Because it is a form of *ghuluw* in the graves which gives them a false sense of glorification, which ultimately leads to *shirk*.