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## Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

### Class Notes – Chapter 24

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#### بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي السِّحْرِ

#### **What has been mentioned regarding sihr (magic/sorcery).**

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** The chapter explains what has been mentioned in the texts of the *sharee'ah* of the severe warnings regarding *sihr*. This is because *sihr* contradicts true *tawheed*, as it cannot be achieved without glorifying the devils through *shirk*.
- (مَا جَاءَ) – “What has been mentioned”. In the Quran and Sunnah of the severe warning against *sihr* and the evil consequence of those who practice it.
- (السِّحْرِ) – “Sorcery/magic”. Linguistically, *sihr* is defined as ‘every effect whose cause is subtle or hidden’. The last part of the night is called *al-sahr* because the actions which occur in it are hidden. Similarly, the *suhoor* is called as such because the food partaken is hidden and eaten behind closed doors.
- When referring to *sihr* in the *sharee'ah*, it is divided into two categories, both extending from its linguistic meaning:
  1. Incantations, chants, talismans, charms, knots and the like which the sorcerer uses to reach the *shayateen* to aid in the harming of the one whom the *sihr* is directed at. This is major *shirk*, because the *shayateen* do not cooperate with the sorcerer unless they draw close to them and worship them besides Allah.
  2. Potions, drugs, spells and the like which the sorcerer uses to affect the one whom the *sihr* is being directed at, such that their inclinations and minds are changed. It may even drive them to madness. This is a major sin, and according to the correct opinion does not remove a person from the fold of *Islam*.
- Should the sorcerer be killed?
  - If their *sihr* is from the first category they have committed *kufir* and are killed for their apostasy. The scholars differed as to whether they are given the chance to repent before they are killed. The correct opinion is that they are given this chance.
  - If their *sihr* is from the second category, their matter is returned to the *ijtihaad* of the leader. If they decide that they are to be killed, it is to repel their evil and stop their corruption on the earth.
  - The evidences that the author mentions in the chapter suggest that he is of the opinion that the sorcerer should be killed regardless of the category of *sihr*. This is because some scholars considered both categories of *sihr* as being major *shirk*.

وقول الله تعالى: ﴿وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ﴾

**Allah the Almighty said: And indeed they knew that the buyers of it (magic) would have no share in the Hereafter. [al-Baqarah: 102]**

- {عَلِمُوا} – “They knew”. Referring to the Jews who learnt the magic from the *shayateen* and from the two angels who were sent as a test. They preferred practicing magic instead of following the truth which came from Allah through their Messengers.
- {لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ} – “Whoever purchased it (magic)”. Their desire for sorcery was the same desire a person has for purchasing a commodity or item they need.
- {مِنْ خَلَاقٍ} – “No share”. No share of reward in the Hereafter. This share is completely removed if their *sihr* was major *shirk*, or reduced if it was a major sin.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah clearly states that the Jews who preferred practicing sorcery to believing in Allah and following the Messengers, knew well that whoever did so, would have no share of reward in the Hereafter.
- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That the denial of reward completely or partially in the Hereafter is evidence that the action which prevented this reward from being obtained is forbidden. Some scholars have mentioned that if the share of reward is denied in the Hereafter, then this only applies to those who meet Allah on the Day of Judgement upon disbelief.

وقول الله تعالى: ﴿يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْجِبْتِ وَالطَّاغُوتِ﴾

**Allah the Almighty said: They believe in al-Jibt and at-Taghut (all false deities). [al-Nisaa': 51]**

قَالَ عُمَرُ: الْجِبْتُ: السِّحْرُ، وَالطَّاغُوتُ: الشَّيْطَانُ.

وَقَالَ جَابِرٌ: الطَّاغُوتُ كُفَّانٌ كَانَ يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فِي كُلِّ حَيٍّ وَاحِدٍ.

- {الْجِبْتُ} – “al-Jibt”. It is an Arabic word which can refer to idols, sorcerers and soothsayers. Umar’s interpretation of it as being sorcery is an interpretation which provides one of its connotations, not all of them.
- {الطَّاغُوتِ} – “al-Taghut”. It is originally taken from the Arabic verb ‘*taghaa*’ meaning to transgress the acceptable limits. Shaytaan is the greatest *taghut* because those who obey him have transgressed the limits of worship which exclusively belong to Allah alone. Umar and Jabir’s interpretation of the *taghut* as being the Shaytaan and the soothsayers respectively is not contradictory, but rather each is an example of a *taghut*.
- {يَنْزِلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ} – “Whom the Shaytaan alights”. Not Iblis himself per se, but from his troops, one for each tribe of the Arabs. Each tribe had a soothsayer who would seek assistance in the *shaytaan* allocated to them. In the time of *Jahilliyah* they would seek judgment in these soothsayers. The *tafseer* of Umar and Jabir are both found in Bukhari.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** That Allah states that the Jews believe in *al-jibt*, which includes sorcery.
- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** The Jews believe in *al-jibt*, which involves sorcery and magic. In the previous *ayah*, Allah informs us that those who learn and practice sorcery will have no share of reward in the Hereafter.

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُؤَيَّقَاتِ. قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُنَّ؟ قَالَ: الشِّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ، وَالسَّحْرُ، وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ، وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا، وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ، وَالتَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الرَّحْفِ، وَقَذْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ.

**Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Save yourself from the seven destroyers." The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, what are those?" He ﷺ said: "To associate anything with Allah, sorcery (magic), killing a life Allah has forbidden without any just cause, consuming interest (usury), consuming the wealth of orphans, turning back from the battlefield, and making a false accusation (of adultery) against the chaste, innocent and believing women". [Bukhari & Muslim]**

- (الْجَتْنِبُوا) – “Avoid”. Literally, to place yourself on one side and the prohibited action on another side such that there is a great distance between you.
- (الْمُؤَيَّقَاتِ) – “Destructive sins”. They are classified as destructive because they destroy a person in this world and in the Hereafter should they fall into them. The sins which destroy a person are not restricted to these seven, rather, these seven are the most destructive of the destructive sins. Some of these sins remove a person from the fold of Islam while others do not. They are considered from the major sins.
- (الشِّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ) – “Associating partners with Allah”. By setting up false deities as rivals to Allah, whereby they are revered, glorified and implored besides Allah.
- (وَالسَّحْرُ) – “Sorcery/magic”. Both types of *sihr*. In the case of the first type (which constitutes major *shirk*), mentioning it after *shirk* shows the seriousness of *sihr* as a form of *shirk* (mentioning something specific after something general).
- (إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ) – “Just cause”. Such as the married fornicator, a life for a life, or the apostate.
- (وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا) – “Consuming usury”. All possible means of consuming and dealing in interest-based transactions.
- (وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ) – “Consuming the wealth of orphans”. The orphan is defined as the child (boy or girl) who loses their father before the age of adulthood. Those who consume the wealth of the orphans will consume the Hellfire in their bellies on the Day of Resurrection.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَى ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلُونَ سَعِيرًا﴾

**Indeed, those who consume the orphans' wealth unjustly, they only consume fire into their bellies, and they will burn in a Blazing Fire. [al-Nisaa: 10]**

- (وَالتَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الرَّحْفِ) – “Fleeing from the battlefield”. That is, when the armies meet one another before engaging in battle. From the meanings of ‘*zahf*’ is to advance slowly. This is how the armies sometimes confront one another, cautiously advancing so as not to be deceived by the opposing enemy. It is considered a major sin because it is fleeing from *jihad* and because it breaks the morale of the believers and strengthens the resolve of the disbelievers. There are certain exceptions, such as manoeuvring away as a strategy, or joining another company of the army, or if the enemy is double or more than the army of the Muslim army.
- (وَقَذْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ) – “Accusing innocent, chaste and believing women (of adultery)”. The who accuse the chaste women of adultery without the testimony of four witnesses are lashed eighty times and their testimony is never to be accepted after that.

- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ commanded his *ummah* not to approach seven deadly and destructive sins. Upon being inquired about them, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned *shirk* first, because it is the biggest and gravest of all sins.

The second sin he mentioned was sorcery, then killing the soul which Allah has forbidden to be killed except for a legally valid reason.

The fourth and fifth sins are devouring usury (*riba*) by any means and devouring the wealth of the orphans.

Fleeing from the battlefield at the time of fighting and accusing the innocent, chaste believing women of adultery are the sixth and seven sins highlighted in this *hadith*.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* proves the prohibition of practicing sorcery, and that doing so is considered as one of the deadly and destructive sins.

وَعَنْ جُنْدَبٍ مَرْفُوعًا: حَدُّ السَّاحِرِ ضَرْبُهُ بِالسَّيْفِ. رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ، وَقَالَ: الصَّحِيحُ أَنَّهُ مَوْقُوفٌ.

*Jundub narrated the following marfu' hadith: "The punishment for the sorcerers/magicians is that he be stuck with the sword (executed)." [Tirmidhi – who classed it as mawqoof]*

- **Takhreej:** al-Tirmidhi narrated this *hadith* in his *sunan* and mentioned that it is *mawqoof*. That is, the chain of narration stops at the *sahabi* and is not from the words of the Prophet ﷺ.
- (حَدُّ السَّاحِرِ) – “The punishment of the sorcerer”. That is, his punishment according to the *sharee’ah*.
- (ضَرْبُهُ بِالسَّيْفِ) – “That he be struck with the sword”. Meaning that he should be killed.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The *hadith* shows that the prescribed punishment for the sorcerer is that they be killed. Although the *hadith* is *mawqoof*, the subsequent *athaar* verify this ruling.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The prescribed punishment for the sorcerer is that they are killed. Killing in Islam is not prescribed expect for that which is strongly prohibited because of its evilness upon the individual and upon the community.

وَفِي صَحِيحِ الْبُخَارِيِّ عَنْ بَجَالَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ قَالَ: كَتَبَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ: أَنْ اقْتُلُوا كُلَّ سَاحِرٍ وَسَاحِرَةٍ. قَالَ: فَفَقْتَلْنَا ثَلَاثَ سَوَاحِرٍ.

وَصَحَّ عَنْ حَفْصَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا، أَنَّهَا أَمَرَتْ بِقَتْلِ جَارِيَةٍ لَهَا سَحَرَتْهَا، فَفَقُتِلَتْ. وَكَذَلِكَ صَحَّ عَنْ جُنْدَبٍ. قَالَ أَحْمَدُ: عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ.

*Bajalah bin `Abadah narrated: Umar bin Al-Khattab: ‘Execute every sorcerer or sorceress’. Bajalah continued: "So we executed three sorcerers."*

*Hafsa is reported to have ordered the execution of a slave woman who practiced magic/sorcery on her and she was executed. Such an event has also been reported through Jundub.*

*According to Imam Ahmad execution of sorcerers (magicians) is testified by three Companions of the Prophet ﷺ (Umar, Hafsa, Jundub).*

- (سَاحِرٍ وَسَاحِرَةٍ) – “Sorcerer and sorceress”. There is no exception between the two genders. They are treated as one, although it is more prevalent in women, as Allah says:

﴿ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴾

*And from the evil of the women who blow on knots.* [al-Falaq: 4]

- (عَنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ) – “By three companions of the Prophet”. They are:
  1. Umar – His narration is found in Sahih Bukhari and Sunan Abu Dawood.

2. Hafsa – Her narration is found in Sunan al-Bayhaqi.
3. Jundub – His narration is found in al-Tareekh al-Kabeer by al-Bukhari.

All these narrations are authentic. The fact that three of the *sahabah* (one of them being from the four *khulafaa*) implemented this punishment, and none of the other *sahabah* objected to it, is strong evidence of its validity.

- **General meaning of the athar:** They show that the prescribed punishment for the sorcerer and sorceress is that they be killed. As previously mentioned, the sorcerer is killed if their *sihr* is major *shirk* because of their apostasy. If their *sihr* is a major sin, they should still be killed to repel their evil and stop their corruption on the earth.
- **Relevance of the athar to the chapter:** The prescribed punishment for the sorcerer is that they are killed. Killing in Islam is not prescribed except for that which is strongly prohibited because of its evilness upon the individual and upon the community.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
  1. **Explanation of the verse in al-Baqarah (2:102).** The denial of reward in the Hereafter indicates that the sorcerer has left the fold of Islam, as those who have a share in the Hereafter will eventually be entered into Paradise.
  2. **Explanation of the verse in al-Nisaa' (4:51).** As per the interpretation of Umar that *jibt* is *sihr*. This is one of its interpretations.
  3. **Meaning of al-Jibt and al-Taghut and the difference between the two.** *Jibt* can be used to mean sorcery, soothsaying or idols, while *Taghut* is anything worshipped besides Allah and they are pleased with it. Examples of *taghut* include Shaytaan and the soothsayers.
  4. **al-Taghut could be among jinns or humans.** As per the interpretation of Umar and Jabir respectively. Shaytaan is from the *jinn* and the soothsayers are from the humans.
  5. **Details of seven grave destroyers which are strictly forbidden.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira.
  6. **Sorcerers or magicians are disbelievers (kafir).** This is taken from the same *ayah* in Surat al-Baqarah:

﴿وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ﴾

***But the two angels do not teach anyone unless they say: 'We are a trial, so do not disbelieve (by practicing magic)'. [al-Baqara: 102]***

7. **That the sorcerers/magicians should be executed and no repentance is accepted.** There is a difference of opinion regarding whether the repentance of the *sahir* is accepted. The Sheikh is of the opinion that it is not. The correct opinion is that it is, however all the conditions of repentance must be present and apparent.  
Some scholars mention that they should be killed, and if they repent beforehand, this is between them and Allah. This is because they conceal their evil and may claim to have repented but they are lying and should not be believed.  
The actions of the *sahabah* indicate that they did not hesitate to execute the practitioner of *sihr*. And Allah knows best.
8. **Sorcerers were found among the Muslims during the period of Umar. So how about thereafter?**  
How can it not be so, when the further the people are away from the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the more misguidance and ignorance there is.