

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 30

بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي الْإِسْتِسْقَاءِ بِالْأَنْوَاءِ

What has been mentioned regarding seeking rain through the stars.

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** The author dedicates this chapter to warn Muslims against attributing rainfall to the stars, as it can constitute either major or minor *shirk*.
- (مَا جَاءَ) – “What has been mentioned”. In the Quran and Sunnah as both these evidences are used in the chapter.
- (فِي الْإِسْتِسْقَاءِ بِالْأَنْوَاءِ) – “Seeking rain through the stars”. It can be divided into two categories according to the categories of *shirk*.
 1. **Major Shirk:** It can have two manifestations.
 - i. That a person makes direct *du’aa* to the stars asking them for rain. Making *du’aa* to other than Allah is major *shirk*.
 - ii. To believe that the stars are the creators of the rain and they are the ones who control the rainfall. That is major *shirk* in the Lordship (*Ruboobiyya*) of Allah, because He alone is the Creator and Controller of all affairs.
 2. **Minor Shirk:** To believe that the stars are the cause of rainfall without attributing influence to them, while still believing that Allah is the one who creates and controls all things. Taking a cause not legislated by Allah constitutes minor *shirk*.
- (الْأَنْوَاءِ) – “The stars”. It can mean stars and can also mean lunar phases. The pagan Arabs would attribute rainfall to the movement of the stars and the positions of the planets and the moon. Therefore, this is a generic word which can refer to various celestial bodies and their movements.

﴿ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴾

Allah the Almighty said: And you make the thanks for your provision that you deny.

[al-Waqi’ah: 82]

- {وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ} – “And you make the thanks for your provision”. That is, you show your gratitude to Allah for the provisions He gives you by denying His blessings.
- {أَنْكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ} – “That you deny”. By denying the blessings of Allah upon you and attributing it to others. For examples: attributing the rainfall to other than Allah by saying: “We have received rain due to such-and-such star”. This denial of favours could constitute major or minor *shirk*, as per the individual’s belief. This is as per the classification mentioned previously.

The *sabab al-nuzul* (reason for revelation) for this *ayah* is mentioned in the subsequent *hadith* of Zaid Ibn Khalid and Ibn Abbas.

- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah refutes the polytheists (*mushrikoon*), who deny the blessings of Allah, by attributing the rainfall to the stars. Furthermore, Allah informs us that what they claim is nothing but absolute lies (*takdheeb*). This is because the rainfall is decreed by Allah and He sends it down out of His favour. His creation has no part in this.
- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That Allah criticises and refutes the disbelievers for attributing the rainfall to the movement of the stars and called it *kadhib* (denial or lies).

وَعَنْ أَبِي مَالِكٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: أَرْبَعٌ فِي أُمَّتِي مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَا يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ: الْفَخْرُ بِالْأَحْسَابِ، وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ، وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ، وَالنَّيَّاحَةُ. وَقَالَ: النَّيَّاحَةُ إِذَا لَمْ تَتُبْ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهَا، تُقَامُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَعَلَيْهَا سَرْبَالٌ مِنْ قَطْرَانٍَ وَدِرْعٌ مِنْ جَرَبٍ. رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Malik al-Ash'ari narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: My Ummah will not abandon four undesirable matters from the Period of Ignorance (jaahiliyya): Boasting of the nobility of their ancestors, defaming or slandering someone's lineage, seeking rain according to the stars, and wailing for the dead. He ﷺ further added: If the wailing woman does not repent before her death, she will be raised on the Day of the Resurrection covered with a garment of liquid pitch, and a cloak of mites. [Muslim]

- **Abu Malik:** al-Harith Ibnul Harith. One of the *sahabi* of the Prophet ﷺ, may Allah be pleased with him.
- (مِنْ أَمْرِ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ) – “From the matters of the *jaahiliyya*”. It was called the period of *jaahiliyya* because of the excessive ignorance in that era. It was the period before the revelation.
Every practice which contradicts what was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ is deemed an act of ignorance, and is prohibited. The era was attributed to ignorance as a deterrence and a condemnation as no individual likes to be attributed to ignorance.
- (يَتْرُكُونَهُنَّ) – “They will not abandon them”. Referring to his *ummah* - the *ummah* of *qabool* (acceptance). These four matters will always be practiced by this *ummah*, whether they are aware of their prohibition or not.
- (الْفَخْرُ بِالْأَحْسَابِ) – “Boasting of the nobility of their ancestor”. That is, they are arrogant over others because of the nobility of their ancestors. For example, those from Banu Hashim look down on others who are not from Banu Hashim. It is considered to be from the matter of the *jaahiliyya* because the true pride is in the *taqwa* of Allah which prevents a person from being boastful over others.
- (وَالطَّعْنُ فِي الْأَنْسَابِ) – “Defaming someone’s lineage”. Such as to say: ‘You are the son of the criminal so-and-so’ with the intention of slandering them and causing them disrepute.
- (وَالِاسْتِسْقَاءُ بِالنُّجُومِ) – “Seeking rain according to the stars”. That is, attributing the falling of the rain to the position of the stars while still believing that Allah is the One who controls everything. If, however, they believe that the stars create the rain, or call upon the stars to bring down rain, then they have committed major *shirk*.
- (وَالنَّيَّاحَةُ) – “Wailing for the dead”. That is, raising the voice intentionally while crying over the dead. It is considered from the matters of the *jaahiliyya* because it represents displeasure and opposition to the decree of Allah.
- (النَّيَّاحَةُ) – “The wailing woman”. Wailing for the dead is predominantly done by women, which is why the feminine pronoun is used in the *hadith*.
- (سَرْبَالٌ مِنْ قَطْرَانٍَ) – “A dress of liquid pitch”. Also known as tar or asphalt. Some scholars have mentioned that it could also mean liquid (melted) copper.

- (وَدِدْنُ مِنْ جَرَبٍ) – “And a cloak of mites”. Being infected with mites on the skin is a disease which affects both humans and animals. Her skin will be crawling with the mites of the Hereafter, that it is like she is wearing a cloak of mites!
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ informs us that some characteristics of the people of *jaahiliyya* will remain in this *ummah*. Of these traits he mentioned four:
 1. Boasting of the nobility of one’s ancestors. This is despite the fact that piety is the measure of honour and nobility.
 2. Slandering the ancestors of others.
 3. Attributing rainfall to the stars and planets.
 4. Wailing and excessive mourning of the dead.

The Prophet ﷺ then describes the punishment of the wailing woman who dies before repenting. On the Day of Resurrection, she will be made to wear a garment of liquid pitch (or melted copper) and will be covered in mites which will stick to her body and cause her great suffering.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* is clear evidence of the prohibition of seeking rain through the stars or planets. Such an action is from the matters of the *jaahiliyya*.

وَلَهُمَا عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: صَلَّى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ صَلَاةَ الصُّبْحِ بِالْحَدِيثِ عَلَى إِثْرِ سَمَاءٍ كَانَتْ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ. فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَقَالَ: هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ: قَالَ أَصْبَحَ مِنْ عِبَادِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِي وَكَافِرٌ. فَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطْرِنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ، فَذَلِكَ مُؤْمِنٌ بِي كَافِرٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ. وَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطْرِنَا بِنُوءِ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَذَلِكَ كَافِرٌ بِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ.

Zaid bin Khalid narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ led us in Fair prayer at Hudaibiyah after a rainy night. On completion of the Salat, he faced the people and said: Do you know what your Lord has said (revealed)? The people replied: Allah and His Messenger know better. He ﷺ said: Allah has said: 'In this morning, some of My slaves remained as true believers and some became disbelievers; whoever said that the rain was due to the blessings and mercy of Allah is the one who believes in Me and disbelieves in that star, and whoever said that it rained because of that star, is a disbeliever in Me and a believer in the star.' [Bukhari and Muslim]

وَلَهُمَا مِنْ حَدِيثِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ مَعْنَاهُ، وَفِيهِ: وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: لَقَدْ صَدَقَ نُوءُ كَذَا وَكَذَا. فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ ﴿فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ﴾ ٧٥ ﴿وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ﴾ ٧٦ ﴿إِنَّهُ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ﴾ ٧٧ ﴿فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ﴾ ٧٨ ﴿لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ﴾ ٧٩ ﴿تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ ٨٠ ﴿أَفِيْهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُدْهِنُونَ﴾ ٨١ ﴿وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ﴾ ٨٢

In a similar hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas. It was said that Allah revealed the following ayaat when some claimed that the promise of such and such a star has come true: So, I swear by the setting of the stars. And that is indeed a great oath, if you but know. Indeed, it is a Noble Qur'an.

In a register well-guarded. Which none can touch but those who are pure from sins (i.e. the angels). It is a Revelation from the Lord of the worlds. Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent? And instead of thanking Allah for the provision He gives you, on the contrary, you deny Him by disbelieving. [al-Waqi'ah: 75-82] [Bukhari and Muslim]

- **Zayd Ibn Khalid:** A well-known *sahabi* from the tribe of Juhayna. May Allah be pleased with him.
- (وَلَهُمَا مِنْ حَدِيثِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ) – “Bukhari & Muslim narrated from the hadith of Ibnul Abbas”. The second narration of Ibn Abbas is narrated in Muslim and not in Bukhari.

- (الْحُدَيْبِيَّةِ) – “Hudaibiyah”. The place was named after a well that was in it. It is very close to Makkah with part of it being in the *haram* and part of it is outside the *haram*. The area is now called al-Shimisi.
- (هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ) – “Do you know what your Lord has said?”. The question is to alert them and draw their attention, as he knew that they did not know, as they are not privy to the revelation.
- (وَكَاْفِرٍ) – “And some became disbelievers”. Minor disbelief, as they attributed the rain to the stars while still believing that ultimate control belongs to Allah alone.
- (مُطِرْنَا بِنُوءِ كَذَا وَكَذَا) – “It rained because of such-and-such star”. The (ب) indicates cause. That is, because of the star the rain fell down, however it was still Allah who sent it down. Had they said that it was the star itself that brought down the rain, they would have committed major *shirk*.

Similar to this is the statement in the second narration of Ibn Abbas.

- (صَدَقَ نُوءُ كَذَا وَكَذَا) – “The promise of such-and-such star has come true”. Meaning that the promise of rain anticipated from the position of the star has come true and has brought rain.
- **General meaning of the two ahadeeth:** Zaid Ibn Khalid narrates that the Prophet ﷺ led the people for Fajr in an area known as Hudaibiyah after a night of rain. After the prayer he faced the people and addressed them, wishing to increase their knowledge and warn them of falling into disbelief.

He told them that people are divided into two categories regarding the rain - those who thank Allah, and those who are ungrateful to Him. As for those who are grateful and believe in Him, they are the ones who attribute the blessing of rain to Allah. Those who are ungrateful and disbelieve in Him, attribute the rainfall to the positions of the stars.

The narration of Ibn Abbas shows that the incident which happened in Hudaibiyah was the cause of revelation (*sabab al-nuzool*) for the *ayaat* in Surat al-Waaqi'a.

- **Relevance of the two ahadeeth to the chapter:** They clearly prove that attributing rainfall to the movements or positions of stars is forbidden. Whoever attributes rainfall to the stars is considered a disbeliever (*kaafir*). This is because they attributed the blessing of rainfall to other than Allah, who is the source of all blessings.

● Important issues of the Chapter

1. **Explanation of the verse in Surat al-Waqi'ah (56: 82).** As explained above.
2. **The four undesirable customs of the pre-Islamic period.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Malik al-Ash'ari. The four undesirable customs are: Boasting of the nobility of ancestors, defaming someone's lineage, seeking rain in the stars and wailing over the dead.
3. **The Kufr (disbelief) contained in some of them.** Seeking rain in the stars is a form of *kufr* (either major or minor) as per the *hadith* of Zaid bin Khalid and Ibn Abbas. In another *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that defaming someone's lineage and wailing over the dead are also forms of lesser *kufr*.

« ائْتَانِ فِي النَّاسِ هُمَا يَمِ كُفْرًا: الطَّعْنُ فِي النَّسَبِ وَالنِّيَاحَةُ عَلَى الْمَيِّتِ »

Two matters are signs of disbelief: Defaming and speaking evil of a person's lineage, and wailing over the dead. [Muslim]

4. **That some acts of disbelief do not expel one from the religion (of Islam).** As per the classification mentioned above, whereby some forms of seeking rain in the stars constitutes major *shirk* which remove a person from the fold of Islam, while some constitute minor *shirk* and do not remove a person from the fold of Islam.

5. **The statement of Allah: "In this morning, some of my slaves remained as true believers and some became disbelievers..." due to the favour bestowed upon them (of rain).** As per the *hadith* of Zaid bin Khalid and Ibn Abbas. When the blessings of Allah descend (including rain), the people are divided into two categories.
1. Those who believe in Allah and attribute the descending of favours and blessings to Him.
 2. Those who disbelieve in Allah and attribute the descending of favours and blessings to other than Him (such as the stars).
6. **The understanding of Imaan in such a circumstance.** As per the *hadith* of Zaid bin Khalid. It is part of *Imaan* to attribute the rainfall to Allah's blessings and favours.
7. **The understanding of Kufr (disbelief) in such a circumstance.** As per the *hadith* of Zaid bin Khalid. It is disbelief to attribute the rainfall to the stars.
8. **The understanding of his statement in response to some who claimed that: "The promise of such and such a star has come true."** As per the narration of Ibn Abbas. The claim that such-and-such star has fulfilled its promise is form of praise for that star which necessitates the belief that the rain descended because it.
9. **The scholar's teaching to students by way of a question to explain the issue as the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do you know what your Lord has said (revealed)?"** As per the *hadith* of Zaid bin Khalid. The Prophet ﷺ knew that the *sahabah* are not privy to the revelation of Allah, however he posed it as a question to draw their attention and focus it on the answer.
10. **Punishment promised to the bewailing women.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Malik al-Ash'ari. She will be covered with a garment of liquid pitch (or melted copper) and will be cloaked in mites.