

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 32

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ
وَخَافُونِي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

Allah the Exalted says: “It is only Shaytaan who suggests to you the fear of his supporters, so fear them not, but fear me, if you are true believers.”

[aal-Imraan: 175]

(Fear of Allah Alone)

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** To fear Allah is one of the most comprehensive acts of worship, which like all acts of worship must be exclusively devoted to Him alone.
- The author followed the chapter of love for Allah with this chapter because acts of worship are done out of either love or fear of Allah. Fulfilling a command of Allah is done out of love and veneration while abstaining from His prohibitions is done out of fear of His punishment. Both of them are dependent on one other – the fearful and obedient servant seeks Allah’s mercy and fears His punishment.
- Fear is of two types:
 1. **Natural fear:** Such as the fear of a predatory animal, fire or drowning. There is no sin on a person if such fear overtakes them as it is part of their natural disposition (*fitrah*).
 - If the natural fear becomes a cause for the abandonment of an obligation or the perpetration of a prohibited act, then it becomes *haram* (unlawful).
 2. **Reverential Fear:** This is to fear something to the extent that you take it as an object of worship. This type of fear is to be directed to Allah alone, because it is He alone who causes benefit or harm to befall a servant.
 - For example, a person may wrongfully believe that a false deity will bring about sickness or take their soul (both without legitimate cause). Only Allah has the power to cause sickness and death, so if fear of these things prevails in a person, then they have fallen into major *shirk*.
 - Reverential fear increases and decreases according to a believer’s level of *Imaan* and according to their level of knowledge of Allah.
- {يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ} – “Suggests to you the fear of his supporters”. That is, the *Shaytaan* insinuates to the believers that his supporters are of great power and deserve to be feared by the believers.

This *ayah* was revealed on the day of Uhud when the *mushrikoon* of Quraysh threatened to return to Madinah and annihilate the Muslims once and for all. The hypocrites amongst the Muslims promoted the idea that the *mushrikoon* were gathering in large numbers and should be feared. Allah informs the believers that this threat is from Shaytaan. That is, Shaytaan threatens you with those who have submitted to him and obey him.

- {فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ} – “So fear them not”. That is, do not fear the supporters of the Shaytaan, whom he is trying to make you fear them.
- {وَخَافُونِي} – “But fear me”. Do not disobey Me, as the fear of Allah prevents a servant from disobeying Him.
- {إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ} – “If you are true believers”. Because true *Imaan* necessitates fearing Allah more than anyone or anything else.

It is understood from the *ayah* that fearing Shaytaan and his supporters contradicts true *Imaan*. If this fear is reverential fear, then it represents a complete departure from *Imaan*, whereas if it is natural fear which is a cause for the abandonment of an obligation or perpetration of a prohibited act then it represents a deficiency in the completion of *Imaan*.

- **General meaning of the ayah:** In this *ayah*, Allah informs us that the Shaytaan strives in his attempt to make the believers fear his allies and supporters, so that the believers do not fight them nor command them to do good and forbid evil.

Furthermore, Allah forbids that the insinuations of the Shaytaan to fear his supporters be followed, and orders that He alone be feared, for this is a requisite for true *Imaan*. The stronger a believer's *Imaan* is, the less they fear Shaytaan's supporters, and vice-versa.

وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنِ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

Allah the Almighty said: The Mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, establish prayers, and give Zakat and fear none but Allah. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance." [al-Tawbah: 18]

- {إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ} – “Shall be maintained”. Both spiritually and physically. Spiritually through *salaat*, *dhikr*, recitation of the Quran and worship in general, and physically by building and maintaining them.
- {مَنِ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ} – “Who believe in Allah”. Those who show their true *Imaan* with the actions of the heart and actions of the limbs. Belief in Allah is the basis for all other acts of worship mentioned in the *ayah*, including fear of Allah.
- {وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ} – “And fear none but Allah”. There is a negation (fear none) and affirmation (but Allah) which indicated exclusivity. That is, they fear only Allah.
- *Khashya* is a specific type of fear (*khawf*).
 - *Khashya* is accompanied with knowledge, while *khawf* may not always be.
 - *Khashya* results from the understanding of the greatness of that being feared, whereas *khawf* may be as a result of the weakness of the fearer, not because of the greatness of the feared.
- {فَعَسَىٰ} – “For it is expected”. Expectation here refers to certainty. That is, they will certainly be from those who are upon true guidance.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** In the *ayah* before this *ayah* in Surat al-Tawbah, Allah negates the polytheists' spiritual maintenance of the houses of Allah, which involves performing acts of worship in them.

In this *ayah*, Allah states that His houses are maintained through the acts of worship performed by the believers, who sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day.

They are also persistent in the establishment of *salaat*, paying the *zakat* to its legal recipients and express their sincere fear and adoration to none but Allah.

- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That Allah praised the believers who maintain the houses of Allah. From their noble characteristics is their exclusive fear of Allah.

This was after negating that the *mushrikoon* are the true maintainers of the houses of Allah, because they do not have the characteristic of the believers mentioned in the *ayah*, including exclusive fear of Allah. This proves that fear of Allah is an act of worship which the believers dedicate to Allah, while the *mushrikoon* dedicate it to their false deities.

﴿ وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ ﴾

Allah the Almighty said: And of mankind are some who say: 'We believe in Allah', but if they are made to suffer for the sake of Allah, they consider the trial of mankind like Allah's punishment.

[al-Ankabut: 10]

- {وَمِنَ النَّاسِ} – “And of mankind”. This reference usually applies to the hypocrites in the Quran.
- {ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ} – “We believe in Allah”. They claim to have *Imaan*, but only by word, as is the case of the hypocrites.
- {فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ} – “But if they are made to suffer for the sake of Allah”. That is, they are harmed because of their adherence to Islam.
- {جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ} – “They consider the trial of mankind like Allah's punishment”. It is known that a person flees from the punishment of Allah by complying with His commands. Similarly, the hypocrites flee from the punishment of the people by complying with their wishes, thus renouncing their religion.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah informs us of a class of people who adopt the religion of Islam without firm conviction in their hearts.

Once they are subjected to hardships and afflictions as those which usually harm the Messengers and their followers at the hands of their opponents, they abandon their *Imaan* and compare this temporary punishment of people to the external punishment of Allah, from which the believers strive to flee because of their fear of it.

They flee from the torture at the hands of the enemies of Allah by renouncing their religion. They are similar to the one who flees from the excessive heat and seeks refuge in the fire!

- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That the fear of the hypocrites is reverential fear (which constitutes major *shirk*), whereby they feared the harm that may befall them by adhering to their religion and thus abandoned it and followed the way of those they fear.

وَعَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مَرْفُوعًا: إِنَّ مِنْ ضَعْفِ الْيَقِينِ أَنْ تُرْضِيَ النَّاسَ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْ تَحْمَدَهُمْ عَلَى

رِزْقِ اللَّهِ، وَأَنْ تَدْمُهُمْ عَلَى مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِكَ اللَّهُ، إِنَّ رِزْقَ اللَّهِ لَا يَجْرُهُ حِرْصُ حَرِيصٍ، وَلَا يَرُدُّهُ كَرَاهِيَةٌ كَارِهٍ.

Abu Sa'eed narrated the following Marfu' Hadith: From the weakness of certainty in Allah is to seek the pleasure of others by displeasing Allah and to praise others for the livelihood which was provided by Allah and to blame others for the thing not bestowed by Allah. Not even the desire of a person can bring the sustenance of Allah, nor can a person's dislike prevent it.

- **Takhreej:** This *hadith* is narrated by Abu Nu’aim in his book Hilyatul Awliyaa. The *hadith* is *da’eef* (weak), because of the presence of Muhammad ibn Marwan in the chain of narration. Although the *hadith* is *da’eef* (weak), its meaning is correct and confirmed in other *ahadeeth*.
- (مِنْ ضَعْفِ الْيَقِينِ) – “From the weakness of certainty”. From the signs of weak *yaqeen* in Allah, is that the following can be observed in a person or a person can observe it within themselves.
- (أَنْ تُرْضِيَ النَّاسَ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ) – “You seek the pleasure of others by displeasing Allah”. To prefer the satisfaction of people over the satisfaction of Allah.
- (وَأَنْ تَحْمَدَهُمْ عَلَى رِزْقِ اللَّهِ) – “To praise others for the livelihood provided by Allah”. To attribute the divine provision to people whom Allah simply made causes for this sustenance.
- (وَأَنْ تُذْمُهُمْ عَلَى مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِكَ اللَّهُ) – “To blame others for the things not bestowed by Allah”. That is, dispraising people because they withhold what is asked of them.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ emphasises that a Muslim should have strong trust in Allah, rely on Him, and believe that all matters are according to His Will and Decree. Whatever the causes (*asbaab*) implemented by a person, a Muslim should believe that the ultimate decision lies with Allah.

Likewise, if Allah wills, He may withhold the causes from leading to results. As such, He is the only One worthy of praises in prosperity and adversity. In fact, praising Allah at the time of adversity is the highest degree of certainty in Allah.

Some people become attached to the means owned by wealthy and powerful individuals, whereby if they gain some benefit through them, they praise them but if they withhold those benefits, they dispraise and blame them. Such people lack certainty in Allah and their reliance on Him is impaired and deficient.

The Prophet ﷺ then stresses that Allah is the Only One who gives and withholds according to His decree – regardless of the servant’s desires or dislikes.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That whoever seeks the pleasure of the people at the expense of Allah’s anger, has placed their fear of the people over the fear of Allah.

It is apparent from the *hadith* that the fear being referred is the natural fear which leads to the abandoning of an obligation or the implementation of a prohibition. This is because it is a weakness of certainty in Allah (which is a form of weakness of *Iman*), rather than a departure of complete certainty in Allah.

وَعَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: مَنْ التَّمَسَ رِضَى اللَّهِ بِسَخَطِ النَّاسِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَأَرْضَى عَنْهُ النَّاسُ، وَمَنْ التَّمَسَ رِضَى النَّاسِ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ سَخَطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَسَخَطَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ. رَوَاهُ ابْنُ حِبَّانٍ فِي صَحِيحِهِ.

A'isha narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: Whoever seeks Allah's pleasure at the cost of peoples displeasure, will win the pleasure of Allah and Allah will cause people to be pleased with him. Whoever seeks to please people at the cost of Allah's displeasure, will win the displeasure of Allah, and Allah will cause people to be displeased with Him.

[Reported by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih].

- **Takhreej:** This *hadith* is narrated by Ibn Hibaan in his *Saheeh*. The *hadith* is also narrated by al-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*. There is a difference of opinion whether the *hadith* is *marfu'* or *mawqoof* – and Allah knows best.

- (بِسَخَطِ النَّاسِ) – “At the cost of people’s displeasure”. That is, the people become displeased at their implementation of Allah’s orders.
- (وَأَرْضَىٰ عَنْهُ النَّاسُ) – “And Allah will cause people to be pleased with him”. That is, Allah will place in the hearts of the people the pleasure of this person. This is because the hearts are between the two Fingers of Allah, He turns them as He pleases.

- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ informs of the way by which the satisfaction of Allah is attained, and with it, the satisfaction of people. Similarly, he informs of the way by which the dissatisfaction of Allah is incurred and with it the dissatisfaction of people.

Allah, always decrees what is good for His creation, however the demands and desires of people may contradict what Allah has ordered, for they do not know the consequences of their deeds and are influenced only by worldly factors.

It is here that the stance of the true believer becomes distinct from those who waver in their belief. A true believer gives priority to Allah’s satisfaction over that of people, and thus acts upon Allah’s legislation and does not fear the blame of the critics.

However, a Muslim with wavering belief prefers the satisfaction of people over the satisfaction of Allah, and seeks to fulfill the desires of the people even if they are contrary to Allah’s orders.

Such a person fears people more than they fear Allah. As a result, they are given the opposite of what they willed. Those who praise them, will turn to dispraise them, and those people they sought to please will avail them nothing before Allah.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That whoever seeks the pleasure of people at the expense of the pleasure of Allah, has in fact placed the fear of people over the fear of Allah.

Allah’s anger and displeasure is incurred when His prohibitions are transgressed. These prohibitions may take a person outside the fold *Islam* or may constitute a major sin.

- **Important issues of the Chapter**

1. **Explanation of the ayah in aal-Imran (3:175).** As explained above.
2. **Explanation of the ayah in al-Tawbah (9:18).** As explained above.
3. **Explanation of the ayah in al-'Ankabut (29: 10).** As explained above.
4. **There is a fluctuation in Imaan, it weakens and strengthens.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Sa’eed. Weak certainty in Allah may come from a position of strength, or it may have always been weak.
5. **The signs of a decline in the strength of Iman. Three of them are mentioned.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Sa’eed. They are pleasing people at the expense of Allah’s anger, praising them for Allah’s sustenance, and blaming them for that which Allah did not decree for you. These are examples of some of the things which weaken certainty in Allah and are not an exhaustive list.
6. **Devoting fear to Allah only is a duty (in Islam).** As per the *hadith* of A’isha. It is an obligatory duty, because the one who leaves it incurs the anger and displeasure of Allah.
7. **The reward of a person who fears Allah Alone with utmost sincerity.** As per the *hadith* of A’isha. They will earn the pleasure of Allah, and subsequently the pleasure of the people.
8. **The punishment of a person who does not have fear of Allah.** As per the *hadith* of A’isha. They will earn the displeasure and anger of Allah, and subsequently the displeasure of people.