

## Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

### Class Notes – Chapter 38

بَابٌ مِّنْ أَطَاعَ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَالْأُمَرَاءَ فِي تَحْرِيمِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ أَوْ تَحْلِيلِ مَا حَرَّمَ فَقَدْ  
اتَّخَذَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا

**Whoever obeys the scholars and rulers, forbidding what Allah has made permissible and permitting what He has made forbidden, has taken them as Lords (besides Allah).**

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** Since obedience is a type of worship, the author highlights the obligation of dedicating it to Allah alone. Obeying the scholars and rulers in making the *halal haram*, and vice-versa, is to take them as deities besides Allah.
- The obedience of Allah stems from His worship. None has the right to be obeyed besides Allah unless they order with what Allah orders.
- Obeying the scholars and rulers in other than what Allah has legislated falls into two categories:
  1. Obeying them and firmly believing the legitimacy of what they order and taking it as a *deen*. This is major *shirk*.
  2. Obeying them but not believing the legitimacy of what they order nor taking it as a *deen* to be followed. A person may obey them for a worldly gain or because of a misconception and misunderstanding. This is minor *shirk*.
- (الْعُلَمَاءُ وَالْأُمَرَاءُ) – “The scholars and the rulers”. The scholars in the *sharee’ah* of Allah, and the rulers who enforce the *sharee’ah* of Allah, as Allah says:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾

**O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.**

[al-Nisaa’: 59]

- The order to obey is repeated for Allah and His messenger, but not for those in authority, to show that they are only obeyed if their orders comply with the orders of Allah and His Messenger. If they do not, then there is no obedience to them.
- (أَرْبَابًا) – “Lords”. From Allah’s attributes of Lordship is that He is the Creator, Sovereign and Disposer of Affairs. Those who obey the scholars and rulers in other than what Allah has legislated has given them a share in Allah’s Disposal of Affairs, as only Allah has the right to legislate what is *halal* and *haram*. Therefore, giving others a share in this right constitutes *shirk*.

وَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: يُوشِكُ أَنْ تَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حِجَارَةٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، أَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَتَقُولُونَ: قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ!

**Ibn Abbas said: It may be that stones are soon to descend upon you from the heavens! I say to you: 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ said' and you say to me: 'Abu Bakr and Umar said!?'**

- (وَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ) – “Ibn Abbas said”. This statement of Ibn Abbas was in response to a person who argued with him regarding the *mut'ah* of *hajj*. Ibn Abbas would instruct people to perform the *mut'ah* of *hajj* in compliance with the directives of the Prophet ﷺ. His opponent argued that Abu Bakr and Umar forbade such an act. Ibn Abbas strongly referred the matter to the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ.
- (قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ) – “Abu Bakr and Umar said”. Abu Bakr and Umar never contradicted the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ with their own opinions. If they did contradict the *sunnah*, it would have been *ijtihad* on their part, in which case they are excused.

Had they spoken from their own opinion, and people had taken this over the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, then the threat of punishment of Allah would have been justified. If Abu Bakr and Umar were the best of the *sahabah*, then the punishment of Allah is more justified if anyone below them is obeyed in other than what Allah and His Messenger have legislated.

- **General meaning of the athar:** Ibn Abbas expected a severe punishment to befall those who give precedence to the saying of Abu Bakr and Umar, or anyone else, over the saying of the Messenger ﷺ. Ibn Abbas was motivated by the truth that belief in the Prophet ﷺ necessitated obeying him and thus giving precedence to his sayings over those of anyone else.
- **Relevance of the athar to the chapter:** The *athar* proves the prohibition of obeying scholars and rulers in matters which contradict the guidance of the Messenger ﷺ, for such an act necessitates punishment from Allah. The threat of punishment made by Ibn Abbas is derived from the Quran as shown in the subsequent evidences.

وَقَالَ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ: عَجِبْتُ لِقَوْمٍ لَعَفُوا الْإِسْنَادَ وَبَدَّهَبُوا إِلَى رَأْيِ سُفْيَانَ، وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: ﴿فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

أَتَدْرِي مَا الْفِتْنَةُ؟ الْفِتْنَةُ الشِّرْكُ، لَعَلَّهُ إِذَا رَدَّ بَعْضَ قَوْلِهِ أَنْ يَقَعَ فِي قَلْبِهِ شَيْءٌ مِنَ الرِّبْعِ فَيَهْلِكُ.

**Ahmad bin Hanbal said: I am astonished at a people who know the chain of narration of a hadith and its authenticity but nevertheless follow the opinion of Sufyan, while Allah the Most High says: Let those who oppose his (the Messenger's) commandment beware, lest some fitnah befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them [al-Noor: 63].**

**Do you know what the fitnah is? al-fitnah is shirk. It may be that the rejection of some of his words would cause one to have doubt and deviation in his heart and thereby be destroyed.**

- **Ahmad Ibn Hanbal:** One of the four Imams of the well-known schools of *fiqh*. He died in the year 241 A.H, may Allah have mercy on him.
- **Sufyan:** Ibn Sa'eed al-Thawri. He was a great and trustworthy scholar of *fiqh*. He had a school of *fiqh* which has since been lost. He died in the year 161 A.H, may Allah have mercy on him.
- (عَجِبْتُ) – “I am astonished”. This a form of refutation, which is one of the meanings of the verb *'ajiba*.
- (لَعَفُوا الْإِسْنَادَ وَبَدَّهَبُوا) – “They know the chain of narration of a hadith and its authenticity”. Because the chain of narration and its authenticity signifies the authenticity of the *hadith*.
- (وَيَدَّهَبُونَ إِلَى رَأْيِ سُفْيَانَ) – “They follow the opinion of Sufyan”. His opinions are from his *ijtihad*, and they are never given preference over the *hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ.

- {أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ} – “Lest some fitnah befall them”. Imam Ahmad explained this *fitnah* as being *shirk*, because they have willingly obeyed the scholars in making the *halal haram* and vice versa.
- **General meaning of the athar:** Imam Ahmad criticises those who are aware of the *sahih hadith* on a particular matter and yet adopt an opinion in violation of the *hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ. They resort to false excuses to justify their view.

It is obligatory for the believer that once they are aware of evidence drawn from the Quran and Sunnah on any matter that they comply with it, no matter how many people may contradict them.

As for those who are aware of the authenticity of a particular *hadith* then act in violation to it, then it is feared that their hearts may deviate, and cause them to perish in both this life and the Hereafter.

Supporting his statement, Imam Ahmad quoted the above-mentioned *ayah* in *Surat al-Noor*.

- **Relevance of the athar to the chapter:** That those who oppose the Prophet ﷺ are threatened with a *fitnah* or a severe punishment. The *fitnah* is *shirk*, therefore obeying others in the disobedience of the Prophet ﷺ leads to *shirk*. It is an act of associating others with Allah in obedience.

وَعَنْ عَدِيِّ بْنِ حَاتِمٍ: أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقْرَأُ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ: ﴿اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾. فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: إِنَّا لَسْنَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ. قَالَ: أَلَيْسَ يُحْرَمُونَ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ فَتُحْرَمُونَ، وَيُحَلُّونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَتُحَلُّونَهُ؟ فَقُلْتُ: بَلَى. قَالَ: فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَتُهُمْ. رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ وَحَسَنَهُ.

**‘Adiy Ibn Hatim narrated: I heard the Prophet ﷺ read this ayah: They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be lords besides Allah, and the Messiah - son of Maryam, while they were commanded to worship none but One Allah (deity), none has the right to be worshipped but He. Praise and glory be to Him, far above is He from having the partners they associate with Him (al-Tawbah: 31).**

**I said to him: Verily, we did not worship them. He replied: Did they not make haram what Allah made halal so you then made it haram, and did they not make halal what Allah made haram and you therefore made it halal? I said: Yes. He said: That is worshipping them.**

[Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi who graded it as Hasan]

- **Takhreej:** The *hadith* with this chain of narration is weak. However, there are other chains of narration which strengthen it to the grade of *hassan*.
- **‘Adiy Ibn Hatim:** al-Ta’ai. He was a well-known *sahabi*. He died in the year 68 A.H at the age of 120, may Allah be pleased with him.
- {أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ} – “Their rabbis and monks”. The *ahbaar* are the scholars of the jews (rabbis), and the *ruhbaan* are the monks (*‘ubaad*) of the Christians.
- {أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ} – “Lords besides Allah”. Because they obeyed them in making the *halal haram*, and the *haram halal*.
- {وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ} – “And the Messiah, son of Maryam”. They took him as a deity besides Allah.
- {لَسْنَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ} – “We did not worship them”. His understanding of worship was confined to *sujood* and the like.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** In this *ayah*, Allah informs us that the Jews and Christians took their scholars and monks as Lords besides Allah. Those scholars and months enacted laws in violation to the legislation of Allah, and their people acted upon those laws.

Upon hearing the *ayah*, 'Adiy Ibn Hatim became confused as his understanding of worship was confined to prostration and the like.

The Prophet ﷺ clarified that following the scholars and monks in prohibiting what is lawful and vice-versa, is an act of worshipping them.

- ***Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:*** The relevance is from two perspectives:
  1. That Allah deemed their taking of their rabbis and monks as Lords besides Allah as shirk, as per the end of the *ayah* in Surat al-Tawbah.
  2. That the Prophet ﷺ explicitly stated that following them in prohibiting what is lawful and vice versa is worshipping them.
  
- ***Important issues of the Chapter***
  1. ***Explanation of the verse in Surat al-Nur (24:63).*** As explained above. It is as per the *athar* of Ahmad.
  2. ***Explanation of the verse in Surat al-Tawbah (9:31).*** As explained above. It is as per the *hadith* of 'Adiy Ibn Hatim.
  3. ***Pointing out the meaning of worship that was initially denied by 'Adi Ibn Hatim.*** As per the *hadith* of 'Adiy Ibn Hatim. Worship in its comprehensive meaning includes the worship of obedience, as clarified by the Prophet ﷺ.
  4. ***The example given of Abu Bakr and Umar by Ibn Abbas; and Ahmad's example of Sufyan.*** As per the *athar* of Ibn Abbas and Ahmad respectively. That is, despite the great virtue of these two noble *sahabah* and the standing of this great scholar, obeying them and placing their obedience over the obedience of the Prophet ﷺ is still deserving of punishment, so what about those below them in standing?!
  5. ***Conditions have changed to the point that the worship of monks has become the best of deeds under the name of al-Wilayah (sainthood), while the worship of learned men in religion is considered knowledge and understanding. Thereafter, conditions changed to the point that those worshipped besides Allah were not even righteous, and those were also worshipped who were absolutely illiterate.*** The Sheikh points out that obeying the scholars in prohibiting what is lawful and vice-versa, rarely stays at this level and eventually spills over to obeying those who are disobedient, ignorant and illiterate. This was in his time! What about our time now?!