

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 42

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أُنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

Allah the Exalted says: "And do not set up rivals to Allah while you know (that He alone is your Lord)." [al-Baqarah: 22]

(Do not set up rivals to Allah in worship)

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** From the perfection of *tawheed* is to avoid the statements and utterances which imply associating partners with Allah, even if a person does so unintentionally. The author, therefore dedicates a chapter to this important aspect of *tawheed* and elaborates on some of these prohibited statements to help people avoid them.
- To set up rivals with Allah (*al-tandeed*) is of two types:
 1. To set up rivals with Allah in a matter pertaining to the core of *Imaan*. This is major *shirk* and removes a person from the core of *Islam*. For example, making *du'aa* to other than Allah or prostrating to other than Allah.
 2. To set up rivals with Allah in a matter pertaining to the perfection and completeness of *Imaan*. This is minor *shirk* and does not remove a person from the fold of *Islam*.

In this chapter the author addresses the second type exclusively and provides evidences for it. It is mainly to do with the frequently uttered statements which people do not pay heed to, but which imply setting up rivals to Allah.

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أُنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

Allah the Exalted says: "And do not set up rivals to Allah while you know (that He alone is your Lord)." [al-Baqarah: 22]

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ فِي الْآيَةِ: الْأُنْدَادُ هُوَ الشِّرْكَ، أَحْفَى مِنْ دَيْبِ النَّمْلِ عَلَى صَفَاةِ سُودَاءِ فِي ظُلْمَةِ اللَّيْلِ، وَهُوَ أَنْ تَقُولَ: وَاللَّهِ وَحَيَاتِكَ يَا فُلَانٍ، وَحَيَاتِي، وَتَقُولَ: لَوْلَا كَلْبِي هَذَا لَأَتَانَا اللَّصُوصُ، وَلَوْلَا الْبَطُّ فِي الدَّارِ، لَأَتَى اللَّصُوصُ، وَقَوْلُ الرَّجُلِ لِصَاحِبِهِ: مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشِئْتِ، وَقَوْلُ الرَّجُلِ: لَوْلَا اللَّهُ وَفُلَانٍ، لَا تَجْعَلْ فِيهَا فُلَانًا، هَذَا كُلُّهُ بِهِ شِرْكٌ. رَوَاهُ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ.

Interpreting this ayah, Ibn Abbas said: 'al-Andaad means shirk. It is as inconspicuous as a black ant crawling on a black stone in the darkness of the night. It is to say: 'By Allah and by your life' and 'by my life'. It is also to say: 'Had there not been this little dog or the duck in the house, the thief would have entered.' Or, like the statement of a man to his companion: 'By Allah's will and yours' or 'Had it not been for Allah and so-and-so'. Do not mention anybody with Allah because all of it is shirk.' [Ibn Abi Hatim]

- {فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا} – “So do not set up rivals to Allah”. A ‘nidd’ is an equal or a rival. That is, do not set up equals and rivals to Allah by dedicating acts of worship to them.
- {وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ} – “While you know”. While you that Allah alone is your Lord and Sustainer, and therefore there is none worthy of worship but Him. The context of the *ayah* in Surat al-Baqarah acknowledges the belief of the polytheists in the *Ruboobiyya* (Lordship) of Allah, then necessitates upon them His *Uloohiyya* (worship). That is, just as they establish His Oneness in His Lordship, then it is obligatory for them to establish His Oneness in Worship.
- (دَبِيبِ النَّمْلِ) – “The crawling of ants”. An example given by Ibn Abbas which demonstrates the difficulty of perceiving this *shirk* because of how inconspicuous and hidden it is.
- (وَاللَّهِ وَحَيَاتِكَ) – “By Allah and by your life”. Swearing by other than Allah and making the thing sworn by equal to Allah, are both forms of minor *shirk*. If, however, when they swear by other than Allah they mean to glorify the one sworn by with the same glorification belonging exclusively to Allah, then they have committed major *shirk*.
- (لَوْلَا كَلْبُهُ هَذَا) – “Had it not been for this little dog”. Relying completely on the *sabab* (cause) and forgetting that Allah controls it is a form of minor *shirk*, as is the case with this example.
- (مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشِئْتِ) – “By Allah’s will and yours”. If they believe that this person’s will is equal to that of Allah then they have committed major *shirk*. If, however, they don’t believe this, and it was something they merely uttered, then it is minor *shirk*. There is an upcoming chapter which specifically addresses this statement.
- (لَا تَجْعَلْ فِيهَا فُلَانًا) – “Don’t mention anybody with Allah”. By mentioning their names alongside Allah’s name with the conjunction ‘and’ in between, because it necessitates equivalence with Allah in matters which are specific to Him alone.
- (هَذَا كُلُّهُ بِهِ شِرْكٌ) – “All the aforementioned statements contain *shirk*”. The aforementioned statements and anything similar to them all contain elements of minor *shirk*.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** In this *ayah*, Allah prohibits setting up rivals to Him in worship, by attributing to these rivals acts of worship which are exclusive to Him, while they know that Allah is their Only Creator and Provider, and that those rivals are helpless to even dispose of their own affairs as they will. The statements quoted by Ibn Abbas in his interpretation of the *ayah*, are examples of the practice of setting up rivals to Allah.

Although the *ayah* was revealed regarding major *shirk*, and the examples quoted by Ibn Abbas are examples of minor *shirk*, they are still included in the generality of the *ayah*. This is because it was the practice of the *salaf* to use evidences of the prohibition of major *shirk* to also prove the prohibition of minor *shirk*.

- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** The *ayah* proves the prohibition of setting up rivals to Allah in worship. This includes certain statements which people may utter and do not pay heed to their consequences.

وَعَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: مَنْ حَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ كَفَرَ أَوْ أَشْرَكَ. رَوَاهُ

التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَحَسَنَهُ، وَصَحَّحَهُ الْحَاكِمُ

Umar bin al-Khattab narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: Whoever swears by other than Allah has disbelieved or committed shirk. [Tirmidhi - Hassan, al-Hakim - Sahih]

- (وَعَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ) – “Umar Ibn Al-Khattab narrated”. The correct narrator of the hadith is Abdullah Ibn Umar, as opposed to his father. May Allah be pleased with both of them.

- (مَنْ حَلَفَ بِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ) – “Whoever swears by other than Allah”. That is, they swear by any of the creation of Allah, regardless of how honourable and noble they may be. Swearing by other than Allah is major *shirk* if a person means to glorify the one sworn by with the same glorification belonging to Allah. However, it is minor *shirk* if they merely uttered it on their tongue with no heed as to what they were saying.
- (كَفَرَ أَوْ أَشْرَكَ) – “Has disbelieved or committed *shirk*”. This is doubt from the narrator. The most correct wording of the *hadith* is that it is *shirk*, specifically minor *shirk*.
- **General meaning of the *hadith*:** The Prophet ﷺ prohibits swearing by anyone other than Allah, and classifies such an oath to be an act of setting up rivals to Allah. This is because swearing by other than Allah is a means of exalting the one sworn by, while Allah alone is worthy of all Exaltation. Therefore, when making an oath, a person must swear exclusively by Allah or by His Lofty Attributes.
- **Relevance of the *hadith* to the chapter:** The *hadith* proves that whoever swears by other than Allah, then they have committed an act of minor *shirk*. They have essentially set up rivals to Allah in His Glorification and Exaltation.

وَقَالَ ابْنُ مَسْعُودٍ: لَأَنْ أَحْلِفَ بِاللَّهِ كَاذِبًا أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ أَنْ أَحْلِفَ بِغَيْرِهِ صَادِقًا.

Ibn Mas'ud said: 'To swear by Allah while lying is more beloved to me than to swear by other than Him while speaking the truth.'

- **General meaning of the *athar*:** Ibn Mas'ud states that he prefers swearing falsely by Allah to swearing truthfully by anyone other than Him. This is because swearing by Allah entails the virtue of *tawheed* together with the sin of lying, while swearing truthfully by other than Allah entails the virtue of telling the truth with the sin of committing minor *shirk*. The virtue of *tawheed* is greater than the virtue of telling the truth, while the sin of lying is less than the sin of committing minor *shirk*.
- **Relevance of the *athar* to the chapter:** The *athar* shows that swearing by other than Allah is a form of minor *shirk* which surpasses any of the major sins. Swearing by other than Allah is setting up rivals to Him, as has proceeded.

وَعَنْ حُدَيْفَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: لَا تَقُولُوا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشَاءَ فُلَانٌ وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ شَاءَ فُلَانٌ. رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ بِسَنَدٍ صَحِيحٍ

Hudhaifah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: Do not say 'If Allah wills and so-and-so wills' but rather say 'If Allah wills then so-and-so wills'. [Abu Dawud – Sahih]

وَجَاءَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ النَّخَعِيِّ: أَنَّهُ يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يَقُولَ الرَّجُلُ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ وَبِكَ، وَيَجُوزُ أَنْ يَقُولَ: بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ بِكَ. قَالَ: وَيَقُولُ: لَوْلَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ فُلَانٌ، وَلَا تَقُولُوا: لَوْلَا اللَّهُ وَفُلَانٌ.

It was narrated from Ibrahim al-Nakha'i that he said: 'It is detestable for a man to say: 'I seek refuge in Allah and in you', but it is permissible to say: 'I seek Allah's refuge first and then yours.'

He also said: 'It is permissible to say: 'Had it not been for Allah and then so-and-so' and impermissible to say: Had it not been for Allah and so-and-so'.

- (مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشَاءَ فُلَانٌ) – “If Allah wills and so-and-so wills”. Because using the conjunction ‘and’ (وَ) signifies combination and equivalence between Allah and the person, essentially ranking them together.
- (مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ شَاءَ فُلَانٌ) – “If Allah wills then so-and-so wills”. Using the conjunction ‘then’ (ثُمَّ) signifies succession, or that the servants will is subservient and adherent to that of Allah.

- (كَانَ يَكْرَهُ) – “It is detestable”. The *salaf* would use the word ‘*yakrah*’ (detestable) to mean prohibited, rather than its *fihi* meaning of detestable or disliked.
- (أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ بِكَ) – “I seek Allah’s refuge first, then yours”. It is permissible to seek refuge in a person if they are able to provide refuge (See chapter 13).
- **General meaning of the athar:** The Prophet ﷺ prohibits linking the creation with the Creator by means of the conjunction ‘and’ when talking about Allah’s Will and the like. This is because the conjunction ‘and’ signifies equivalence between the creation and Allah, not succession, thus implying *shirk*, or setting up rivals to Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ permits linking the creation with the Creator with the conjunction ‘then’ which signifies succession rather than equivalence.

The *athar* of Ibrahim al-Nakha’i carries the same meaning as the *hadith* of Hudhaifa. Seeking refuge in the creation is restricted to the living who can help, not the dead who are helpless.

- **Relevance of the athar to the chapter:** Both the *hadith* and the *athar* stress the prohibition of uttering statements which equate the creation with their Creator using the conjunction ‘and’. Such statements imply setting up rivals to Allah and fall under the realm of minor *shirk* if a person uttered them without thought.

- **Important issues of the Chapter**

1. **Explanation of al-Andaad as mentioned in the ayah of al-Baqarah (2:22).** As explained above.
2. **The sahabah interpreted the ayaat revealed about major shirk to also include minor shirk.** Because the *ayah* in al-Baqarah addresses the polytheists, whereas the interpretation of Ibn Abbas includes examples of minor *shirk*.
3. **To swear by other than Allah is shirk.** As per the *hadith* of Ibn Umar. It is usually minor *shirk*, but can be major *shirk* depending on what is in the heart of the one taking the oath.
4. **To swear by other than Allah truthfully (believing such) is a far greater sin than to swear by Allah while lying.** As per the *athar* of Ibn Mas’ood. The sin of lying is less than the sin of minor *shirk*.
5. **The difference between the conjunctions ‘wa’ (and) and ‘thumma’ (then).** As per the *hadith* of Hudhaifa. The conjunction ‘and’ implies equivalence which is forbidden, whereas the conjunction ‘then’ implies succession and adherence and is permissible.