

## Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

### Class Notes – Chapter 47

#### بَابُ احْتِرَامِ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَتَغْيِيرِ الْإِسْمِ لِأَجْلِ ذَلِكَ

#### **Respect for the Names of Allah and changing one's name for the sake of that.**

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** That showing reverence and respect to Allah's Beautiful Names and changing one's name for this reason is from the perfection of *tawheed*.
- Respecting the names of Allah is to respect Allah. No one is to be called with a name specific to Allah, as this shows a lack of reverence and may constitute disbelief if the person named with such a name intended to rival Allah in the meaning of that name. For example, when Fir'awn called himself al-Rabb and demanded that the people worship him alone.
- The names of Allah are divided into two categories in regards to using them to name people.
  1. Names which are specific to Allah which people cannot be named with. For example, *Allah*, *Rabb al-'Alameen*, *al-Samad* and *al-Rahman*.
  2. Names which are permissible to name people with, bearing in mind that the creation may share the name with Allah, but they do not in any way share the attribute which the name indicates. For example, *Ra'oof*, *Raheem*, *Kareem*, *Samee'*, *Baseer*. Humans have these attributes, but they do not in any way resemble the attributes of Allah.

عَنْ أَبِي شُرَيْحٍ، أَنَّهُ كَانَ يُكْنَى أَبَا الْحَكَمِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَكَمُ وَإِلَيْهِ الْحُكْمُ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ قَوْمِي إِذَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِي شَيْءٍ أَتَوْنِي فَحَكَمْتُ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَرَضِي كِلَا الْقَرِيبَيْنِ، فَقَالَ: مَا أَحْسَنَ هَذَا فَمَا لَكَ مِنَ الْوَالِدِ؟ قُلْتُ: شُرَيْحٌ وَمُسْلِمٌ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: فَمَنْ أَكْبَرُهُمْ؟ قُلْتُ: شُرَيْحٌ، قَالَ: فَأَنْتَ أَبُو شُرَيْحٍ. رواه أبو داود وغيره.

*Abu Shurayh narrated, that his kunyah (nickname) was Abul Hakam. The Prophet ﷺ once said to him: Allah is al-Hakam (the Judge) and His Judgement prevails. Abu Shurayh said: 'When my people fall into dispute, they come to me for adjudication; and when I judge between them, both parties are pleased with my judgement.' The Prophet ﷺ replied: How excellent this is! Do you have any children? I said: 'Yes, they are Shurayh, Muslim and Abdullah.' Then the Prophet ﷺ: Who is the eldest? I said: 'Shurayh'. The Prophet ﷺ said: You are henceforth to be called Abu Shurayh.*

[Abu Dawud, al-Nasaa'i - Hassan]

- **Takhreej:** The *hadith* is narrated by Abu Dawud and al-Nasaa'i in their respective Sunan. It is graded as *Hassan* (sound).
- **Abu Shurayh:** Haani' Ibn Yazid al-Kindi: He lived in al-Kufa and eventually died in al-Madinah in the year 68 A.H, may Allah be pleased with him.

- (يُكْنَى) – “His Kunyah”. A kunya is essentially a nickname with either the prefix *Abu* (father) or *Umm* (Mother).
- (الْحَكَمُ) – “The Judge”. One of Allah’s Beautiful Names. It means that Allah is the Supreme Judge whose judgements are irreversible.
- (وَإِلَيْهِ الْحُكْمُ) – “And His Judgement Prevails”. He arbitrates between His servants in this world and in the Hereafter.
- (إِنْ قَوْمِي إِذَا اخْتَلَفُوا) – “When my people fall into dispute”. This shows that it was not Abu Shurayh who gave himself the nickname, but rather his people.
- (مَا أَحْسَنَ هَذَا) – “How excellent this is”. It is something excellent to settle people’s disputes and arbitrate between them in a fair manner.
- (فَأَنْتَ أَبُو شُرَيْحٍ) – “You are henceforth to be called Abu Shurayh”. He changed his nickname because it resembled the name of Allah in both the name itself and in the attribute. Also, because it is as if they are saying ‘the father of al-Hakam’, or the father of Allah.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** Abu Shurayh came to the Prophet ﷺ in a delegation from his tribe. His nickname at the time was Abul Hakam, which means ‘father of judgement’. When the Prophet ﷺ heard his people addressing him with this nickname, he rejected it and informed him that al-Hakam is one of Allah’s names, for His is the final Judgement from which there is no appeal.  
Abu Shurayh then explained to him that his people had given him this name because of his skill in arbitration, which in most cases satisfied both parties. The Prophet ﷺ praised him for his wisdom and good judgment, and then asked him if he had any children. Abu Shurayh stated that he had three sons, the eldest whose name was Shurayh. The Prophet ﷺ then informed him from that point forward he would be known as Abu Shurayh.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* proves the obligation of changing a name if there is any similarity between it and the Names of Allah. To have one of Allah’s specific names or one of Allah’s shared names intending with it the meaning reserved for Allah is a form of *shirk* in His Names and Attributes and reduces the *tawheed* of an individual.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
  1. **Respect for the Names and Attributes of Allah, though its actual meaning was not intended (by the user for himself).** Abu Shurayh did not give himself this nickname and he accepted the change suggested by the Prophet ﷺ.
  2. **Changing the name on account of that.** Because the Prophet ﷺ changed the nickname of Abu Shurayh out of reverence and respect for the name of Allah, al-Hakam.
  3. **Taking the eldest child's name as a kunyah.** Because the Prophet ﷺ nicknamed him after his eldest son, Shurayh.