

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 49

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَيْنِ أَدْفَنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي﴾

Allah the Exalted says: “And if We give him a taste of mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: ‘This is due to me’”. [Fussilat: 50]

(Showing ingratitude to Allah)

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** In this chapter, the author makes clear that if a person claims they are deserving of Allah’s favours granted to them after being in distress, then they have compromised the perfection of their *tawheed*.
- There is some overlap between this chapter and Chapter 41 (*Recognising the favours of Allah then denying them*). The overlap depends on the interpretation of the *ayaat* and the *hadith* used as evidence:
 1. If a person attributes the favours to their effort and knowledge, then it is *shirk* in the *Ruboobiyya* (Lordship) of Allah. This is as per Chapter 41. It can be major or minor *shirk*.
 2. If a person, however, claims that they are deserving of the blessings and favours, then this shows pride and contempt in the worship of Allah (*‘uboodiya*) where there should instead be humility and submission. It can also be major or minor *shirk*.

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلَيْنِ أَدْفَنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَيْنِ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ﴾

Allah the Exalted says: And if We give him a taste of mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: ‘This is due to me, and I do not think that the Hour will be established. But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best with Him’. We will surely inform those who disbelieved about what they did, and We will surely make them taste a severe punishment. [Fussilat: 50]

قَالَ مُجَاهِدٌ: هَذَا بِعَمَلِي، وَأَنَا مَحْفُوقٌ بِهِ. وَقَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: يُرِيدُ مِنْ عِنْدِي.

Commenting on this ayah, Mujahid said: Man says: ‘This is the result of my effort and I deserve it.’ Also commenting on this ayah, Ibn Abbas said: This is because of what I have [of skills].

وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي﴾

Allah the Almighty said: This has been given to me only because of knowledge I possess.

[al-Qasas: 78]

قَالَ قَتَادَةُ: عَلِيٌّ عَلِمَ مِنِّي بِوُجُوهِ الْمَكَاسِبِ. وَقَالَ آخَرُونَ: عَلِيٌّ عَلِمَ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنِّي لَهُ أَهْلٌ. وَهَذَا مَعْنِي قَوْلُ مُجَاهِدٍ: أُوتِيْتُهُ عَلَيَّ شَرَفٍ.

Commenting on this ayah Qatadah said: Because of his experience in earning. Others scholars said: Because Allah knows that he deserves it. This is similar in meaning to Mujahid's statement: Because of their high rank.

- {أَذَقْتَاهُ} – “Give him a taste of”. Referring to mankind in general, however a believer with true *Iman* can never deny the Hereafter, which is why some scholars are of the opinion that it is referring to the disbeliever specifically.
- {رَحْمَةً مِنَّا} – “Mercy from us”. Wealth and health and other blessings. All of them are from Allah.
- {مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ} – “After some adversity has touched him”. They only experienced the mercy of Allah after they were beset by some adversity, such as poverty and loss of children. A person is happier with a blessing if it comes after hardship and they are more likely to enjoy it, like the one who enjoys food after being very hungry.
- {لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي} – “This is due to me”. He says this out of pride and showing ingratitude to Allah. According to the interpretation of Mujahid, he will claim that he was deserving of the mercy from Allah because he worked hard for it, whereas in the interpretation of Ibn Abbas he will attribute the favour to his knowledge and skill.
- {وَلَئِن رُّجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْبَىٰ} – “But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best with Him”. This is a presumption they make, that if they are to be resurrected, then Allah will give them better than they already have in this *dunya*. Essentially, they believe that Allah’s favour upon them in this world necessitates His favour upon them in the Hereafter.
- {عَلَيَّ عِنْدِي} – “Because of knowledge I possess”. According to the interpretation of Qatadah, the knowledge possessed returns to the person. That is, the favour is because of their knowledge in trading and earning. They have attributed the favours of Allah to the cause (*sabab*) making it *shirk*. According to the interpretation of Mujahid and other scholars, the knowledge returns to Allah. That is, they believe that they were given the blessing because they know that Allah knows that they are deserving of it. This shows pride and contempt in the worship of Allah.
- **General meaning of the ayaat:** In these *ayaat* Allah informs us that when He blesses mankind with health, well-being and wealth, after having been afflicted with sickness, poverty or loss, they do not show thankfulness to Allah, but instead show ingratitude and boast that it is their right upon Allah to receive those blessings. Allah makes clear that the reason for this is their doubt in the reality of the Day of Judgement and all that it entails. In their ignorance, they exceed even this, for they believe that should it prove that the Hereafter is a reality, they will continue to be deserving of greater blessings with their Lord, despite their ingratitude. Then Allah warns them, that they will be shown their deeds and they will be held to account for them on that Day, and they will receive a terrible punishment.
- **Relevance of the ayaat to the chapter:** The *ayaat* prove that attributing blessing to other than Allah, or claiming that they are deserving of these blessings is disbelief because to do so is to set up partners with Allah in his Lordship and constitutes a deficiency in His Worship. If they firmly believe that the blessing is from their skill and intelligence, then this is major *kufr*. If, however, they believe that their skill and intelligence was the cause, and that ultimately Allah was the provider of the blessing, then this is minor *kufr*.

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ يَقُولُ : إِنَّ ثَلَاثَةً مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ : أَبْرَصَ وَأَقْرَعَ وَأَعْمَى ، فَأَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَبْتَلِيَهُمْ فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِمْ مَلَكًا ، فَآتَى الْأَبْرَصَ فَقَالَ : أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : لَوْ نَحَسَّنُ وَجِلْدًا حَسَنًا وَيَذْهَبُ عَنِّي الَّذِي قَدَّرَنِي النَّاسُ بِهِ . قَالَ : فَمَسَحَهُ فَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ قَدْرُهُ وَأُعْطِيَ لَوْنًا حَسَنًا وَجِلْدًا حَسَنًا . قَالَ : فَأَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : الْإِبِلُ (أَوْ الْبَقْرُ، شَكَّ إِسْحَاقُ) فَأُعْطِيَ نَاقَةً عَشْرَاءَ ، فَقَالَ : بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ فِيهَا .

قَالَ : فَآتَى الْأَقْرَعَ فَقَالَ : أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : شَعْرٌ حَسَنٌ وَيَذْهَبُ عَنِّي هَذَا الَّذِي قَدَّرَنِي النَّاسُ بِهِ . قَالَ : فَمَسَحَهُ فَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ ، وَأُعْطِيَ شَعْرًا حَسَنًا . فَقَالَ : فَأَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : الْبَقْرُ أَوْ الْإِبِلُ . فَأُعْطِيَ بَقْرَةً حَامِلًا . فَقَالَ : بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكَ فِيهَا .

قَالَ : فَآتَى الْأَعْمَى فَقَالَ : أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : أَنْ يَرُدَّ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ بَصْرِي فَأُبْصِرَ بِهِ النَّاسَ . فَمَسَحَهُ فَرَدَّ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ بَصْرَهُ . قَالَ : فَأَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ : الْغَنَمُ . فَأُعْطِيَ شَاةً وَالِدَاءَ . فَأَنْتَجَ هَذَانِ وَوُلِدَ هَذَا ، فَكَانَ لِهَذَا وَادٍ مِنَ الْإِبِلِ وَهَذَا وَادٍ مِنَ الْبَقْرِ وَهَذَا وَادٍ مِنَ الْغَنَمِ .

قَالَ : ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ أَتَى الْأَبْرَصَ فِي صُورَتِهِ وَهَيْئَتِهِ فَقَالَ : رَجُلٌ مِسْكِينٌ ، قَدِ انْقَطَعَتْ بِي الْحِبَالُ فِي سَفَرِي ، فَلَا بَلَغَ لِي الْيَوْمَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ بَكَ ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِالَّذِي أَعْطَاكَ اللَّوْنَ الْحَسَنَ وَالْجِلْدَ الْحَسَنَ وَالْمَالَ بَعِيرًا أَتَبَلَّغَ بِهِ فِي سَفَرِي . فَقَالَ : الْخُفُوقُ كَثِيرَةٌ . فَقَالَ لَهُ : كَأَنِّي أَعْرِفُكَ ، أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَبْرَصَ يَقْدِرُكَ النَّاسُ ، فَقِيرًا فَأَعْطَاكَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْمَالَ؟ فَقَالَ : إِنَّمَا وَرِثْتُ هَذَا الْمَالَ كَابِرًا عَنْ كَابِرٍ . فَقَالَ : إِنْ كُنْتَ كَاذِبًا ، فَصَيِّرْكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى مَا كُنْتَ . وَآتَى الْأَقْرَعَ فِي صُورَتِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ لِهَذَا . وَرَدَّ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلَ مَا رَدَّ عَلَيْهِ هَذَا . فَقَالَ : إِنْ كُنْتَ كَاذِبًا فَصَيِّرْكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى مَا كُنْتَ .

قَالَ : وَآتَى الْأَعْمَى فِي صُورَتِهِ فَقَالَ : رَجُلٌ مِسْكِينٌ وَابْنُ سَبِيلٍ ، انْقَطَعَتْ بِي الْحِبَالُ فِي سَفَرِي . فَلَا بَلَغَ لِي الْيَوْمَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ثُمَّ بَكَ . أَسْأَلُكَ بِالَّذِي رَدَّ عَلَيْكَ بَصْرَكَ شَاةً أَتَبَلَّغَ بِهَا فِي سَفَرِي . فَقَالَ : قَدِ كُنْتُ أَعْمَى فَرَدَّ اللَّهُ إِلَيَّ بَصْرِي ، فَخُذْ مَا شِئْتَ وَدَعْ مَا شِئْتَ ، فَوَاللَّهِ لَا أَجْهَدُكَ الْيَوْمَ شَيْئًا أَخَذْتَهُ لِي . فَقَالَ : أُمْسِكْ مَالَكَ . فَإِنَّمَا ابْتُلَيْتُمْ ، فَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْكَ وَسَخِطَ عَلَيَّ صَاحِبِيكَ . أَخْرَجَاهُ .

Abu Huraira narrated that he heard the Prophet ﷺ saying: Allah willed to test three men from the Children of Israeli (Israelites) who were a leper, a blind man and a bald-headed man. So, he sent them an angel who came to the leper and said: 'What thing do you like most?' He replied: 'Good colour and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion towards me.' The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given a good colour and beautiful skin. The angel asked him: 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied: 'Camels or cows' (Ishaq, the narrator was unsure). So, he the leper was given a pregnant she-camel, and the angel said to him: 'May Allah bless you in it.'

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said: 'What thing do you like most?' He said: 'I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, for the people have a strong aversion towards me.' The angel touched him and his illness was cured, and he was given good hair. The angel asked him: 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied: 'Cows or camels.' The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said: 'May Allah bless you in it.'

The angel went to the blind man and asked: 'What thing do you like best?' He said: 'I like that Allah may restore my eyesight to me so that I may see the people.' The angel touched his eyes and Allah gave him back his eyesight. The angel asked him: 'What kind of property do you like best?' He replied: 'Sheep.' So he gave him a pregnant sheep. Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones, and multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the (three) men had a herd of camels filling a valley, and one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley.

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said: 'I am a poor man, who has lost all means of livelihood while on a journey. So, none will satisfy my need except Allah and then you. In the Name of Him Who has given you such nice colour and beautiful skin, and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination'. The man replied: 'I have many obligations so I cannot give you.' The angel said: 'I think I know you. Were you not a leper to whom the people had a strong aversion towards? Weren't you a poor man, and then Allah gave you all this property.' He replied: 'I got this property through inheritance from my forefathers.' The angel said: 'If you are telling a lie, then may Allah make you as you were before.'

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one did.

The angel said: 'If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.'

The angel, disguised in the shape of a blind man, went to the blind man and said: 'I am a poor man and a traveller whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah, and after Him, yourself. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eyesight to give me a sheep, so that with it, I may complete my journey'. The man said: 'No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eyesight, so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you from taking anything you need of my property which you may take for Allah's sake.' The angel replied: 'Keep your property. You three men have been tested, and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.' [Bukhari, Muslim]

- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ relates the story of three men from Banu Isra'eel. Each of them was afflicted with a deformity and suffered poverty. Allah wished to test them so He sent down an angel who cured them of their deformities and gave them wealth in livestock. Later the angel came back to them and asked each of them for material help, assuming in each case, the form of the man before being healed, and reminded each of them of Allah's mercy when they were in need, whereupon their real character was exposed. As for the blind man, he recognised the divine favours bestowed upon him and attributed them to Allah, thus preserving Allah's right in return for His favours. Allah was rightfully pleased with Him. As for the other two men, they were ungrateful to Allah for His favours and rejected His blessings and thus deserved His anger.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That Allah was angry at the ingratitude of the leper and the bald man. They did not acknowledge Allah's favour upon them, rather they believed that they were deserving of the inheritance. The anger of Allah could be because of minor *kufr* or because of major *kufr*.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
 1. **The explanation of the ayah in Surat Fussilat (41: 50).** As explained above.

2. **The meaning of: 'He is sure to say: This is due to me'.** The correct meaning is that they say it believing that they are deserving of it.
3. **The meaning of: 'This has been given to me only because of knowledge I possess' (28:78).** As explained above. The knowledge mentioned in the *ayah* either returns to the person, or it returns to Allah.
4. **The great lessons hidden in the wonderful story quoted.** From these lessons is to be thankful to Allah in both the times of ease and in the times of hardship, and to be wary of believing that you are deserving of any of Allah's blessings.