

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 18

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾

“Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills, and He knows best those who are the guided”. [al-Qasas: 56]

(Allah guides whom He wills).

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** Despite being the most noble of Allah’s creation, the Prophet ﷺ had no power to guide those whom he loves in this world, just as he has no power to grant intercession in the Hereafter, except with the permission of Allah.

This chapter is related to the previous chapter in that just as no one can benefit another through intercession in the Hereafter, similarly none can guide another in this world.

The chapter refutes the fallacies of the polytheists who believe that the prophets and the righteous can bring about benefit or cause harm.

- {لَا تَهْدِي} – “You guide not”. The guidance which is negated is the guidance of *tawfeeq*. That is, the Prophet ﷺ did not have the power to convert people to Islam. However, he was granted the guidance of *irshaad*, which is the guidance of making clear the straight path.

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾

And indeed, [O Muhammad], you guide to a straight path. [al-Shura: 52]

- {مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ} – “Whom you like”. That is, whom you like that they should be guided, otherwise it would negate the enmity a believer should have to the disbelievers.
- {وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ} – “But Allah guides whom He wills”. Allah guides whom He wills to embrace Islam. It is the pure bounty and favour of Allah.
- {وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ} – “And he knows best those who are guided”. Allah knows best those who deserve to be guided and those who deserve to be led astray. His guidance is from His favour and bounty, while His misguidance is from His wisdom. None can question Allah’s decision to guide or misguide.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah informs His Prophet ﷺ of his inability to convert whom he likes to Islam. Allah alone can inspire people to accept Islam. He surely knows best who deserves to be a Muslim and who does not.
- **Relevance of the ayah to chapter:** That Allah denied from the Prophet ﷺ any power to guide those whom he would like to be guided in this world. This demonstrates the Prophet’s inability to intercede in the Hereafter without the permission of Allah, because this worldly life is the perceived place of power and sovereignty for the creation.

If the Prophet ﷺ has no power or sovereignty to guide whom he likes in this world, then he is not more likely to have the power to intercede in the Hereafter, much less those below him in rank. This maintains the argument against those who invoke the Prophet ﷺ to remove their afflictions.

وَفِي الصَّحِيحِ عَنْ ابْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: لَمَّا حَضَرَتْ أَبَا طَالِبٍ الْوَفَاةُ، جَاءَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَعِنْدَهُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أُمَيَّةَ وَأَبُو جَهْلٍ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا عَمَّ! قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، كَلِمَةً أَحَاجُّ لَكَ بِهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ لَهُ: أترغب عن ملة عبد المطلب؟ فأعاد عليه النبي ﷺ فأعاداً، فكان آخر ما قال: هو على ملة عبد المطلب وأبي أن يقول: لا إله إلا الله. فقال النبي ﷺ: لأستغفرن لك ما لم أنه عنك. فأنزل الله عز وجل: ﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ ﴾ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِي أَبِي طَالِبٍ: ﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾.

Ibn al-Musayyib has reported from his father: When death approached Abu Talib, Allah's Messenger ﷺ came to him and found Abdullah bin Abi Umayyah and Abu Jahl in his company. The Prophet ﷺ said: O uncle, say: 'There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah', a word which will enable me to plead for you with Allah. The two of them said: Would you forsake the religion of (your father) 'Abdul Muttalib?

The Prophet ﷺ repeated (the request) and the two of them also repeated their question. The final word of Abu Talib was about being on the religion of 'Abdul-Muttalib and he refused to say: La ilaha illa-Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said: I shall pray for your forgiveness as long as I am not prohibited to do so. It was then that Allah revealed: "It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe, to ask Allah's forgiveness for the Mushrikin even though they be of kin". [9:113] Allah also revealed concerning Abu Talib: "Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided ones". (28:56)

- **Ibnul Masayyib** – Sa'ad ibnul Masayyib. One of the great scholars and jurists of the *tabi'een*. He died a few years after the age of ninety. His father al-Musayyib was a *sahabi* who died during the Caliphate of 'Uthman. May Allah be pleased with them.
- (ملة عبد المطلب) – "The religion of Abdul Muttalib". The religion of *shirk* and idolatry. Abu Jahl and Abdullah Ibn Abi Umayya reminded him of the religion of his forefathers who were polytheists. The Quran mentions their false argument.

﴿ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴾

They say, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are in their footsteps rightly guided. [al-Zukhruf: 22]

- {مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ} – "It is not proper for the Prophet". Meaning that it is forbidden to seek forgiveness for the disbelievers after their death.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** Abu Talib used to protect the Prophet ﷺ in Makkah from being exposed to any harm from the disbelievers of Quraish. Due to his uncle's protection, the Prophet ﷺ was keen to guide him to embrace Islam. When Abu Talib was on his deathbed the Prophet ﷺ visited him and called him to Islam, hoping that he would embrace it before his death, to attain ultimate success in the Hereafter.

The Prophet ﷺ implored his uncle to utter the *shadah*, while the polytheists urged him not to renounce the religion of his forefathers. They understood that uttering the *shadah* necessitated the renunciation of all false deities, and dedication of all devotional acts to Allah alone.

The polytheists kept on urging him to refuse Islam, till they managed to avert him from the truth, and made him die upon *shirk*.

The Prophet ﷺ vowed to seek forgiveness for his uncle unless he should be forbidden from doing so. Then Allah revealed the prohibition of asking forgiveness for the polytheists and showed that the power of guiding to Islam belongs only to Allah who grants it to whomever He wills for those deserving of it.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That the *hadith* is the *sabab al-nuzool* (reason of revelation) for the previous *ayah*.

If the Prophet ﷺ has no power to guide whom he likes in this world, then he is not more likely to have the power to intercede in the Hereafter, much less those below him in rank.

This proves the invalidity of invoking him, or anyone else, to bring about benefit or guard against harm, as he was powerless to benefit even the nearest of his kin.

- **Important issues of the Chapter**

1. **Explanation of the verse: "Verily, you (O Muhammad) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided ones." (28:56).** As explained above.
2. **Explanation of the verse: "It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allah's Forgiveness for the Mushrikun even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief)." (9: 113).** As explained above.
3. **It is a major issue in the explanation of the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: "Say La ilaha illa-Allah." Differing with those who claim to be possessing (religious) knowledge. (They claim it sufficient to be forgiven by merely uttering Kalimah).** That is, the reality of the *shadah* is that it necessitates the abandonment of false deities and the dedication of all worship to Allah alone. It is not sufficient to merely utter it on the tongue with no conviction in the heart.
4. **Abu Jahl and those who were with him knew full well the intent of the Prophet ﷺ when he said to the man (his uncle) "Say La ilaha illa-Allah." May Allah denounce the ones who were less knowledgeable than Abu Jahl regarding Islam.** Otherwise they would not have reminded Abu Talib to remain on the religion of his forefathers.
5. **The eagerness and intense desire of the Prophet ﷺ to convert his uncle to Islam.** Because of his protection of the Prophet ﷺ in the times of hardship and also because of the close kinship between them.
6. **The denial of those who claim that Abdul-Muttalib and his forefathers were Muslims.** Because the polytheists reminded Abu Talib of the religion of Abdul Muttalib after the Prophet ﷺ urged him to utter the *shadah*, meaning that they are not the same.
7. **Allah did not forgive Abu Talib despite the Prophet's initially asking forgiveness for him. On the contrary, he ﷺ was forbidden to do so.** The Prophet's ﷺ *du'aa* is the most likely to be answered by Allah, however His *hikmah* (wisdom) dictated that his *du'aa* in this instance not be accepted to show that the matter is completely in the Hands of Allah.

8. **The harmful influence that evil companions can have on people.** The evil companions urged Abu Talib to remain on his *shirk*, even on his deathbed. Evil companionship can be general and not specific to *shirk*.
9. **The harm of over praising ancestors and important personalities.** The polytheists reminded Abu Talib of the religion of Abdul Mutallib, because they considered their forefathers to be on the truth, when in fact they were upon clear misguidance. The truth is no known through personalities.
10. **The arguments of falsifiers are the arguments of Jahiliyah (pre-Islamic period).** That is the false argument of following and praising the ancestors. The *mubtiloon* (falsifiers) of today do it as did the polytheists of the *jahiliyya* before.
11. **An attestation to the weight of the final deeds in one's life because had Abu Talib confessed it that there is no true God but Allah, he would have been benefited by it.** Had Abu Talib uttered the *shadah* on his deathbed it would have benefited him in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said:

« إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَعْمَلُ عَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ وَإِنَّهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَيَعْمَلُ عَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّهُ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ وَإِنَّمَا الْعَمَلُ بِالْخَوَاتِيمِ ».

Indeed a slave does the deeds of those who go to hell but is one of those who go to paradise, and another does the deeds of those who go to paradise but is one of those who go to hell, for judgment is given according to one's final actions. [Bukhari, Muslim]

12. **The consideration of the magnitude of this false argument in the hearts of the misguided, because in the story they did not argue except with it despite the intense effort of the Prophet ﷺ and his repetition (of the kalimah). Because of their tremendous pride (in ancestry) and its distinction among them, they were content with it.**