

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 51

بَابُ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ ﴿١٨٠﴾

Allah the Exalted says: "And to Allah belong the most Beautiful Names, so invoke Him by them, and leave those who practice deviation concerning His Names - they will be recompensed for what they used to do". [al-A'raaf: 180]

(The most Beautiful Names belong to Allah)

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** In this chapter, the author refutes those who seek means of approach to Allah (*tawassul*) through the deceased. The legislated means of approaching Allah is through His Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes. Furthermore, the author shows that deviating concerning Allah's Names is *shirk* and contradicts *tawheed*.
- This chapter specifically addresses one of the three categories of *tawheed*, namely *Tawheed al-Asmaa' Wal-Sifaat*, which is to maintain the Oneness of Allah's Names and Attributes which He described Himself with, without *tamtheel* (likening Him to the creation), *takyeef* (asking how) or *ta'teel* (denying and rejecting them).

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Allah the Exalted says: And to Allah belong the most Beautiful Names, so invoke Him by them, and leave those who practice deviation concerning His names - they will be recompensed for what they used to do". [al-A'raaf: 180]

ذَكَرَ ابْنُ أَبِي حَاتِمٍ عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: ﴿يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ﴾: يُشْرِكُونَ.
وَعَنْهُ: سَمُّوا اللَّاتَ مِنَ الْإِلَهِ، وَالْعَزَى مِنَ الْعَزِيزِ.
وَعَنِ الْأَعْمَشِ: يُدْخِلُونَ فِيهَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهَا.

Ibn Abi Hatim reported that Ibn Abbas said: 'The phrase '...those who practice deviation concerning His names' means they commit shirk regarding His Beautiful Names'.

Ibn Abbas also said: They derived al-Laah from al-Ilaah and al-'Uzza from al-Aziz'.

Commenting on this ayah, al-A'mash said: 'They included in the Names of Allah those which do not belong to Him'.

- {الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى} – “Beautiful Names”. To Allah belong the Beautiful Names which have reached the pinnacle of beauty and perfection such that they are equal to nothing. No other names can be substituted for them.
- {فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا} – “So invoke Him by them”. Invoking Allah by His Names (*du’aa*) has two meanings:
 1. *The du’aa of worship (du’aa al-ibaadah)*, which is to worship Allah in accordance to what His Names necessitate. For example, His name al-Ghafoor is indicative of His expansive forgiveness, therefore you expose yourself to His forgiveness with lots of repentance. Similarly, His name al-Samee’ necessitates that you do not utter anything which angers Allah and which He is not pleased with.
 2. *The du’aa of asking (du’aa al-mas’ala)*, which is to use Allah’s Names as a means of approaching Him when you ask Him for the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter. For, example in the *hadith*:

« فَاعْفِرْ لِي مَغْفِرَةً مِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَارْحَمْنِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ »

So, grant me a forgiveness from You and have mercy on me, indeed you are The Forgiving, The Merciful. [Bukhari, Muslim]

- {يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ} – “Practice deviation regarding His Names”. Deviation in Allah’s names can take a number of forms.
 1. Giving Allah’s Names or names derived from them to false deities worshipped besides Allah. For example, when the pagan Arabs of Quraysh named their idol *al-Laat* which is derived from the same root as Allah.
 2. Ascribing names to Allah which do not befit His Majesty. For example, when the Christians refer to Him as the Father, or the philosophers refer to Him as the Active Cause.
 3. Ascribing attributes to Allah which He is far removed from and which do not befit His Majesty. For example, the false claim of the Jews that Allah rested on the seventh day.
 4. Changing the meaning of Allah’s names and attributes and rejecting their true meaning. For example, the *Jahmiyya* who claim that He is the All-Hearing, but He does not Hear, and that He is the Living, but He does not live.
 5. Comparing the attributes of Allah with those of His creation. For example, the representation of God as an old man with a white beard wearing robes by the Christians.
- {سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ} – “They will be recompensed for what they used to do”. This is a threat from Allah that they will be punished for their deviancy in Allah’s Names and Attributes.
- {يُشْرِكُونَ} – “Commit shirk”. This is Ibn Abbas’s explanation of the term *ilhaad* in the *ayah*. It is *shirk* because when they named their idols with names derived from Allah’s names, they made their idols equal to Allah. Similarly, those who resemble Allah’s Names and Attributes to the creation have fallen into *shirk*.
- {اللَّات} – “*al-Laat*”. The name of an idol which was worshipped in the *jaahiliyya*. It is derived from the word Allah or *ilaaah*. It was a white rock which had carvings on it and had a building erected over it. It was located in al-Ta’if.
- {وَالْعُزَّى} – “*al-‘Uzza*”. Another of the *jaahiliyya* idols. It is derived from Allah’s name *al-Azeez*. It was the name of a tree surrounded by a wall and decorated with curtains. It was located on the road between Makkah and al-Ta’if.
- {يُدْخِلُونَ فِيهَا مَا لَيْسَ مِنْهَا} – “They include in the names of Allah, those which do not belong to Him”. They gave names to Allah which He did not name Himself with, nor did His Messenger ﷺ. This is one of the types of *ilhaad*.

- **General meaning of the ayah:** In this *ayah*, Allah informs us that His Names are of the utmost beauty and that He is the Most Perfect and Complete in all of His Divine attributes. He then orders us to supplicate to Him using these names, so that these supplications may be answered and to avoid those who reject His names or knowingly alter their meaning in order to suit their deviated understanding of *tawheed*. He then warns of the justified punishment on the Day of Judgement awaiting those who practice deviation in His Names and Attributes.
- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That the *ilhaad* in Allah's names and attributes can take a number of forms which according to the interpretation of Ibn Abbas constitute *shirk*.
- ***Important issues of the Chapter***
 1. ***Affirming the Names of Allah.*** As per the *ayah*; 'And to Allah belong the most beautiful Names'.
 2. ***All the Names of Allah are beautiful.*** That is, they have reached the pinnacle of beauty and perfection such that nothing can equal them.
 3. ***We must invoke Allah by His Names.*** Allah's Names are a means of approaching Him (*tawassul*) in both forms of *du'aa*; the *du'aa* of worship and the *du'aa* of asking.
 4. ***The command to shun the ignorant, evil apostates.*** That is, to shun them and to shun their path. They are shunned only if after having made the truth clear to them, they persist upon their deviance.
 5. ***Explanation of the kind of deviancy one commits by misusing the Names of Allah.*** There are five kinds, as explained above.
 6. ***The promise of punishment for the person who deviates concerning Allah's Names.*** As per the *ayah*.