

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 54

بَابُ لَا يَقُولُ: عَبْدِي وَأَمَّتِي

Do not say: 'My slave-boy or my slave-girl'.

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** Uttering the words 'abdi' and 'amati' and the like, gives the false impression that the one calling this name is a partner to Allah in His Lordship. Therefore, out of reverence for Allah and to block all avenues leading to *shirk* it is forbidden to utter these words.
- The Sheikh did not use the phrases in the beginning of the *hadith* (feed your Lord, help your lord perform ablution) in the chapter title because they are not commonly used, whereas the phrase 'abdi' and 'amati' are more frequently used.

فِي الصَّحِيحِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: لَا يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ: أَطْعِمُ رَبَّكَ، وَصَيِّ رِبَّكَ، وَلَيَقُلْ: سَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ، وَلَا يَقُلْ أَحَدُكُمْ: عَبْدِي وَأَمَّتِي، وَلَيَقُلْ: فَتَايَ وَفَتَاتِي وَغُلَامِي.

Abu Hurairah narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: One of you should not say: Feed your lord, help your lord in performing ablution, but he should say: My master (sayyidi), my guardian (mawlaya). And one should not say: My slave-boy ('abdi'), or my slave girl (amati), but he should say: My lad (fataya), my lass (fatati) and my boy (ghulami). [Bukhari, Muslim]

- (أَطْعِمُ رَبَّكَ، وَصَيِّ رِبَّكَ) – “Feed your Lord, help your Lord perform ablution”. These phrases and their like are prohibited because they imply likeness with Allah in the actions of humans (eating, making wudu). This prohibition is specific to the lordship over people; however, it is permissible to use terms which indicate lordship over objects or animals such as the Lord of the house, or the lord of the beast.
- (وَلَيَقُلْ سَيِّدِي) – “He should say: My master (sayyidi)”. Because the term master refers to the one who has authority over others. There is a difference of opinion as to whether al-Sayyid is from the names of Allah. If it is from the names of Allah, it is not used as frequently as His name al-Rabb.
- (مَوْلَايَ) – “My guardian (mawlaya)”. It is an Arabic word which has many meanings. In the context of this *hadith*, it means the owner.
- (عَبْدِي وَأَمَّتِي) – “My slave-boy, my slave girl”. Because the true Lord in all its meaning is Allah, and because such phrases express glorification which none among humans deserve. There is further elaboration in this prohibition.
 - a. If the true meaning of Lordship was not intended or observed, then it is permissible, but disliked, because Allah says:

﴿ وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ﴾

And marry off the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. [al-Noor: 32]

- b. If, however, the true meaning of Lordship was intended in a manner which challenges Allah in His Lordship, then it is prohibited as a means of protecting *tawheed* and blocking all avenues leading to *shirk*.
- (فَتَايَ وَفَتَاتِي وَغُلَامِي) – “My lad, my lass and my boy”. Because these names do not have the implication of Lordship and servitude as ‘*abdi*’ and ‘*amati*’ do. Also, there is no misunderstanding or veneration in these names.
 - **General meaning of the hadith:** In this *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ prohibits Muslims from uttering words that may imply *shirk* and show a lack of courtesy towards Allah, such as labelling a person as someone’s lord (*rabb*) or someone’s slave (‘*abd*’). This is because Allah is the only Lord and He is the only One worthy of all worship. The Prophet ﷺ then guides his *ummah* to the appropriate words to substitute for the doubtful ones, for the sake of maintaining and preserving *tawheed*.
 - **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* is clear evidence of the prohibition of uttering the words ‘my slave-boy’ and ‘my slave-girl’.
 - **Important issues of the Chapter**
 1. **Prohibition of saying: ‘my slave-boy or ‘my slave-girl’.** As per the exact wording of the *hadith*. The prohibition can be disliked (*makrooh*) in some cases, as explained above.
 2. **The slave should not say: ‘my lord’, nor should it be said to him: ‘feed your lord’.** As per the *hadith*.
 3. **Teaching the master to instead say: ‘my lad’, ‘my lass’ and ‘my boy’.** As per the *hadith*.
 4. **Teaching the slave to instead say: ‘my master’ or ‘my guardian’.** As per the *hadith*.
 5. **The point here is to emphasize tawheed in the fullest, even in one’s expressions.** It is from the perfection of *tawheed* to preserve even the things you utter and speak.