

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 62

بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي كَثْرَةِ الْحَلْفِ

What has been mentioned regarding frequently taking oaths.

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** That from the perfection of *tawheed* is to respect the name of Allah and not to hold it in contempt by taking frequent oaths in His name. Frequently swearing by the Name of Allah is a demonstration of disrespect and shows a lack of veneration to Allah and His Beautiful Names.

﴿وَأَحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ﴾ وَقَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى:

Allah the Almighty said: But safeguard your oaths. [al-Maidah: 89]

- {وَأَحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ} – “But safeguard your oaths”. This section of the *ayah* in Surat al-Ma’ida is mentioned in the context of expiating a broken oath (*kafarat yameen*). The expiation of a broken oath is to feed ten poor people or to clothe them or to free a slave. If a person does not have the means to do any of these, then they must fast three consecutive days as an atonement for breaking their oath. Safeguarding oaths taken in the name of Allah can have three meanings.
 1. To safeguard them initially by not frequently taking them. Frequent oath-taking weakens the trust in a person and casts doubt in what they say.
 2. To safeguard them by not breaking them and having to atone for them.
 3. To safeguard them by expiating for them if they are broken. That is, to pay *kafarat yameen*.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** In this *ayah*, Allah commands the Muslims to safeguard their oaths and not to make them excessively in order that they do not swear falsely and are thus disgraced before Him. Should a person make an oath falsely or is unable to uphold it, then the atonement is to feed ten poor persons or to clothe them or to free a slave, but whoever does not have the means to do any of these things must fast for three consecutive days. Allah made this expiation as a solution should a person fall into error, and as a means for respecting an oath taken in His name.
- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That Allah orders the safeguarding of oaths taken in His name. From the forms of safeguarding such oaths is to not frequently take them. The order shows the obligation of safeguarding oaths, and that not safeguarding them is a sin.

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: الْحَلْفُ مَنْفَقَةٌ لِلسَّلْعَةِ، مَمْحَقَةٌ لِلْكَسْبِ.
أَخْرَجَاهُ.

Abu Hurairah narrated: I heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ saying: By swearing the seller may promote his goods but his earnings will be deprived of Allah's blessing. [Bukhari, Muslim]

- (مَنْفَقَةٌ لِلسَّلْعَةِ) – “Promote his goods”. That is, they swear by Allah falsely that the product they are selling is worthy of buying when it is not. For example, swearing that it is from a certain manufacturer when it is not, or to swear that its wholesale price is more than they paid for it.
- (مَمْحَقَةٌ لِلْكَسْبِ) – “Deprived of Allah's blessing”. The verb *mahaqa* literally means to obliterate. It could be a physical obliteration such as fire or theft or a sickness which consumes the ill-gotten earnings through treatment. It could also be a non-physical obliteration whereby Allah removes all the blessings (*barakah*) from their earnings.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ warns us against making oaths taken in the name of Allah insignificant by taking them for the sake of promoting goods and earning more profit. A seller may falsely swear that they bought a particular commodity for such and such amount. The customer may believe them and thus pay an amount which exceeds the market value of the commodity based on the strength of the seller's oath. Those sellers who resort to taking false oaths in disobedience to Allah will be punished by either having their wealth physically destroyed or having the *barakah* removed from it.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That taking false oaths to promote a commodity necessitates the removal of *barakah* from the earnings, or that that the earnings will be physically destroyed. This indicates that the method of acquiring these earnings was prohibited.

وَعَنْ سَلْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ: أَشْهِيْمٌ زَانٍ، وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ، وَرَجُلٌ جَعَلَ اللَّهَ بِضَاعَتَهُ، لَا يَشْتَرِي إِلَّا بِيَمِينِهِ، وَلَا يَبِيعُ إِلَّا بِيَمِينِهِ. رَوَاهُ الطَّبْرَانِيُّ بِسَنَدٍ صَحِيحٍ.

Salman narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: There are three types of people whom Allah will not speak to, nor will he purify them and for them is a painful punishment: A grey-haired adulterer, an arrogant beggar and the one who has made Allah as his merchandise. He does not purchase except by swearing by Allah, nor does he sell except by swearing by Allah. (al-Tabarani – Sahih]

- **Salman:** Abu Abdullah al-Farisi. He originally came from Asfahan or Ram Hormuz in Persia. He embraced Islam upon the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ to Madinah. He witnessed the *Battle of al-Khandaq* and subsequent battles after it. He died in the year 36 A.H.
- (لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ) – “Allah will not speak to them”. That is, Allah will not speak to them words of approval and Mercy as He does to His believing servants on the Day of Judgement. It has been established that Allah will speak to those who are greater in sin than them, however the words He speaks to them are words of anger and reprimand.
- (وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ) – “Nor will he purify them”. That is, Allah will not praise them, nor will He purify them from their sins.
- (وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ) – “And for them is a painful punishment”. Because their sins were great, they were deserving of a great punishment.
- (أَشْهِيْمٌ زَانٍ) – “A grey-haired adulterer”. That is, they commit the evil act of *zina* despite their old age.
- (وَعَائِلٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ) – “An arrogant beggar”. They are arrogant despite being poor. Arrogance usually stems from wealth and status, of which the poor person has none.
- (جَعَلَ اللَّهَ بِضَاعَتَهُ) – “Has made Allah as his merchandise”. That is, they frequently take oaths in the Name of Allah when buying and selling.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ informs us of three categories of people whom Allah will not speak to on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them of their sins, and they

will have a painful torment. This is because they committed sins without any excuse or justification. The first of these is the adulterer who continues to commit adultery despite their advanced years and lessening of sexual urge. Therefore, their evil sin stems from their fondness of disobedience and immorality. The second is the man who behaves arrogantly towards people, though he possesses none of the wealth, rank or privilege which often leads men to behave like this. The third is the one who treats Allah's name with disrespect, frequently swearing by Him to buy and sell their goods, without a valid cause or excuse.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That those who frequently swear by Allah to buy and sell their products, are threatened with severe punishment on the Day of Judgement. This shows that their action constitutes a major sin.

وَفِي الصَّحِيحِ عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: خَيْرُ أُمَّتِي قَرْنِي، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ. قَالَ عِمْرَانُ: فَلَا أَدْرِي أَدَّكَرَ بَعْدَ قَرْنِهِ مَرَّتَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلَاثًا. ثُمَّ إِنَّ بَعْدَكُمْ قَوْمًا يَشْهَدُونَ وَلَا يُسْتَشْهَدُونَ، وَيَخُونُونَ وَلَا يُؤْتَمَنُونَ، وَيَنْدُرُونَ وَلَا يُوفُونَ، وَيَظْهَرُ فِيهِمُ السَّمَنُ.

Imran bin Husain narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: The best of my Ummah is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them. Imran said: 'I do not know if he mentioned two generations after his, or three'. Then there will come a generation who will testify without being called to testify, and they will be treacherous and untrustworthy. They will make vows but never fulfill them, and obesity will be seen in them. [Muslim]

- (قَرْنِي) – “My generation”. That is, the *sahabah*. They were the best generation of this *ummah*, rather the best generation amongst all the nations.
- (يَشْهَدُونَ) – “Who will testify”. That is, they will give false testimony (perjury).
- (وَلَا يُسْتَشْهَدُونَ) – “Without being called to testify”. Because of their persistent acts of disobedience, or because they are quick to take an oath by Allah when giving testimony even though they are known to be from those who do not tell the truth.
- (وَيَظْهَرُ فِيهِمُ السَّمَنُ) – “And obesity will be seen in them”. That is, they will be obese due to the life of luxury they lead, and their heedlessness of the Hereafter.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** In this hadith, the Prophet ﷺ declares that the first three generations of the Muslim *ummah*; namely the *sahabah*, the *tabi'een* and the followers of the *tabi'een*, are the best generations because they were the first to embrace Islam and were the closest to the shining light of Prophethood.

The Prophet ﷺ then informs us that after the demise of these preferred generations, evil will spread amongst the *ummah*, innovations will emerge and become widespread, people will take their testimonies lightly, and breach their trusts and vows. Furthermore, these later generations will tend to lead a life of luxury, paying little heed to the Hereafter. The emergence of these evils indicates a weakness in the adherence to Islam.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The relevance is not clear; however, it has been mentioned that perhaps when they give their false testimonies which they have not been asked to give, they support them with false oaths taken in the name of Allah. And Allah knows best.

وَفِيهِ عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرْنِي، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ. ثُمَّ يَجِيءُ أَقْوَامٌ تَسْبِقُ شَهَادَةَ أَحَدِهِمْ يَمِينُهُ وَيَمِينُهُ شَهَادَتَهُ. قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ: وَكَانُوا يَصْرُبُونَنَا عَلَى الشَّهَادَةِ وَالْعَهْدِ وَنَحْنُ صِعَارٌ.

Ibn Mas'ud narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: The best of mankind is my generation then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Thereafter will come a people whose testimony will precede their oaths and their oaths will precede their testimony. [Bukhari]

Ibrahim al-Nakha'i said: 'In our childhood, we were beaten to stand firm in our testimony and oaths'.

- **Ibrahim:** Ibn Yazeed al-Nakha'i al-Kufi. From the scholars of the *tabi'een*. He died in the year 96 A.H.
- (تَسْبِقُ شَهَادَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ يَمِينَهُ وَيَمِينُهُ شَهَادَتَهُ) – “Their testimony will precede their oaths and their oaths will precede their testimony”. It can have two meanings.
 1. That because there is so little trust in them, their testimony is not accepted except with an oath. Sometimes one will precede the other.
 2. That because they give so little regard to their testimonies and oaths, they give them recklessly and without thought. Sometimes one will precede the other.
- (وَكَانُوا يَضْرِبُونََنَا عَلَى الشَّهَادَةِ وَالْعَهْدِ وَنَحْنُ صِبَاغًا) – “We were beaten to stand firm in our testimony and oaths”. They would be beaten if their testimonies were false or they were quick to make them, so that they would learn not to fall into this habit when older. Similarly, they were beaten if they were quick to make oaths or did not fulfill them.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** In this *hadith*, the Prophet ﷺ declares that the most righteous generations of the Muslim *ummah* are the first three generations. These preferred generations will be followed by a people who will show leniency with regard to giving testimonies and oaths. Their leniency stems from a lack of *Imaan* and from the absence of fear of Allah.
 Commenting on this *hadith*, Ibrahim al-Nakha'i relates that the *tabi'een* would train their children to uphold their testimonies and oaths so that they would grow up not taking them lightly, but rather be steadfast with them and hold them in high regard.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** That the Prophet ﷺ criticised those whose testimonies precede their oaths and vice versa. This is because he mentioned them in direct comparison to the best three generations.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
 1. **The admonishment to protect oaths.** As per the *ayah* in Surat al-Ma'idah.
 2. **That taking oaths when trading may sell the goods but deprive the earnings of blessing.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira.
 3. **The threat of severe punishment for those who do not buy or sell except by taking oaths.** As per the *hadith* of Salman. Allah will not speak to them, nor purify them and they will have a painful punishment.
 4. **Warning that committing a sin for an insignificant reason, or for no reason, increases the degree of that sin.** As per the *hadith* of Salman. This is in regard to the grey-haired adulterer, the arrogant beggar and the one who frequently swears by Allah when buying and selling.
 5. **Criticism of those who swear by Allah without being asked to.** As per the *hadith* of Salman regarding those who do not buy or sell except by taking oaths. They are criticised because the context does not demand that an oath be taken by Allah.
 6. **The Prophet's praise for the first three or four generations and his mention of what will happen after them.** As per *hadith* of Imran Ibn Husáin and Ibn Mas'ud.

7. **Criticism of those who give testimony without being asked to.** As per *hadith* of Imran Ibn Husáin. Also, the other characteristics mentioned in the *hadith* which are worthy of being criticised over.
8. **The pious predecessors (*salaf*) would beat their children for needlessly bearing witness or needlessly taking oaths.** As per *athar* of Ibrahim al-Nakha'i. The beating should be to train them rather than to seek revenge from them. Therefore the child must be of the age where they can understand why they are being beaten. The hitting should not be harmful to the child.