

The Explanation of the Book Kitāb at-Tawhīd

Author: Shaykh ul Islām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul Wahhāb (رحمه الله)

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Other book used: Concise Commentary on the Kitāb at-Tawhīd (Book of Tawhīd) by Shaykh Dr. Ṣāliḥ Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آهله وصحبه أجمعين

Class 5

17th Rajab 1442

1st March 2021

Chapter 3: ‘The Fear of Shirk’

Review

Abu Mu‘adh (حفظه الله) started with a brief review of the previous chapters from the book by Shaykh ul Islām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul Wahhāb (رحمه الله). In the opening chapters we examined the introduction to Tawhīd, a simplified breakdown of what Tawhīd is, including the chapter on ‘The virtues of Tawhīd’ and the one who practices and perfects Tawhīd, and those individuals who will enter Paradise without any accountability or punishment.

Introduction and examples

After that, the next chapter is the chapter regarding ‘The Fear of Shirk.’ Once the Shaykh has opened the book with the basics and virtues of Tawhīd and the great rewards for the one who perfects Tawhīd, it is suitable and appropriate for a person to then understand and know what the opposite of Tawhīd is, to make sure that a person does not fall into that opposite, which is **shirk!** Having knowledge of the opposite to Tawhīd (which is shirk) will further clarify the reality of Tawhīd.

The true value of something is only known after experiencing or knowing its opposite

As it is said: ‘by the opposites of things, the affairs become clear, and through the opposites the affair becomes clearer.’ Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) explains why we need to know about shirk. A person might say ‘Is it not enough for me to learn the details of Tawhīd? Why do I need to learn about shirk?’ That is because by knowing the opposite of Tawhīd, it will clarify even further what the reality of Tawhīd is.

As Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) mentions: “No person knows the true value of good health except the one who has experienced illness, disease and lack of health.” Also, he (حفظه الله) mentions, “No person knows the value of light except the one who has experienced darkness.” Similarly, “No person knows the value of water except the one who has experienced thirst.” “And no person knows the value of food except the one who understands what hunger is.”

So, in summary by seeing the above examples, one can see why knowing the opposite of something helps you gain an even better understanding of the affair.

The Shaykh (حفظه الله) gives other examples also, “An individual does not know the value of safety, security and peace, except for the one who has experienced fear.” The one who has experienced war, chaos and anarchy is the one who understands the true value of safety, security and comfort. In the same way as all the examples given, a person does not understand the real value and detail of Tawhīd until he understands what shirk is. When a person understands what shirk is, then he understands to a greater degree what Tawhīd is.

The example of Understanding something through its Opposite

Tawhīd	↔	Shirk
Health	↔	Sickness
Light	↔	Darkness
Water	↔	Thirst
Food	↔	Hunger
Safety, Security, Comfort	↔	Fear, War, Chaos

Summary of experiences

It is not a necessity that the person experiences the examples given (experiencing the opposites), but the point being made is that it is necessary **to have an understanding of the opposite**. Some people might have experienced shirk, and then Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) guided them to Islām. Or maybe another person was born upon Islām and that

person has been upon Tawḥīd so, that person has not fallen into, nor experienced shirk, but knows about it. Similarly, a person may never have experienced and fallen into darkness, but the point here is the one who knows about darkness, values what light is. Just as the person who knows about war-torn countries and what is going on there, and has seen that, values the peace, safety, and security that he has. Likewise, the one who knows about shirk, will value Tawḥīd even more. This is the point being made here!

'The Fear of Shirk'

So, in understanding the above examples and experiences, we can see why this chapter appears now, as Shaykh ul Islām Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb (رحمه الله) wants to highlight why the opposite of Tawḥīd, shirk, is something that we need to be extremely cautious, wary and afraid of and that we should be afraid that we should ever fall into it.

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As Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) mentioned, “The person upon Tawḥīd, it is upon him to **fear shirk**. And nobody should say “I am a person upon Tawḥīd and I know Tawḥīd. There is no chance or fear I could ever fall into shirk!” A person should not have this type of approach (attitude) and become deceived by himself. The person should have fear of shirk; the sin that Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) does not forgive if a person dies upon it. The Shaykh (حفظه الله) says: “if anybody becomes deceived by themselves in that way, that is from the deception for the shayṭān.” Therefore, the believer must **remain vigilant**, at all times!

These are the narrations that are mentioned in this chapter. It begins with an Āyah from the Qur’ān, where Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) says,

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾

“Indeed, Allāh does not forgive that partners are set up for Him (and worshipped alongside Him, the gravest of sins) but He forgives whatever is less than that of (all types of sin) for whomever He wills...” [Sūrah An-Nisā 4: 48]

The above Āyah highlights the severity and level of danger that there is in shirk. That Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) tells us, with emphasis, “Indeed verily, certainly Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) does not forgive the one who commits shirk.” Meaning, the one who commits shirk alongside Allāh and, then dies upon that state without having repented and asked forgiveness, then Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) does not forgive the sin of shirk. The Shaykh says, ‘This is the danger of shirk. Consider that the Mercy of Allāh encompasses everything

except shirk.’ The one who dies upon shirk does not enter into the Mercy of Allāh because of the tremendous level of sin and crime against Allāh that he has committed.



Hadīth a person may do the deeds of Paradise while he is a person of the Hellfire

Consider the narration where the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informed us that,

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّىٰ مَا يَكُونُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا

‘One of you may do the deeds of the people of Paradise until there is no more than a forearm’s length between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of Hell until there is no more than a forearm’s length between him and it, then the decree overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of Paradise until he enters therein.’

Perhaps, a person is upon righteousness his whole life but then something overcomes him from the shayṭān, and he performs an action of shirk and ends up in the hellfire. This is the severity and the danger of the one who commits shirk.

The Consequence of Major Shirk

Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) mentions in another Āyah,

﴿ نَهَىٰ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴾

“Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zālimūn (polytheists and wrong-doers) there are no helpers.” [Sūrah Al-Mā'idah 05:72]

There is no help for the disbelievers (polytheist). This shows the severity and danger that Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) has informed us of regarding the one who falls into shirk. Is it not

deserving that a believer beware of what that shirk is? And make sure that he never falls into it. Remember! When a person dies upon shirk, the Āyah tells us that Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى) does not forgive it.

The Consequence of Minor Shirk

Some of the scholars hold the opinion that this includes both types; major shirk which exits a person from the fold of Islām and minor shirk, that does not exit a person from the fold of Islām. But some of the scholars said that ‘both types of shirk enter this Āyah. Therefore even if a believer commits minor shirk, it will not be forgiven in the afterlife. He will be punished in the fire first, but because minor shirk does not exclude him from Islām, eventually he will be taken out of the Hellfire and he will enter Paradise. Remember! Shirk is not forgiven for the one who dies upon it. This is the **first point** the Shaykh mentions that “**Allāh does not forgive that we commit shirk alongside Him.**”

The Khalīl of Allāh, Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), asked Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى) to protect him from worshipping idols

The Shaykh then brings more evidence from Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام). He (عليه السلام) was mentioned in the last lesson. He was the second best of all the Messengers, after the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who is the most beloved and the one who Allāh spoke to, and Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) has one of those two characteristics, he was also a Khalīl, the most beloved to Allāh. He was the second highest of all the Messengers, the father of the Prophets because they came from his lineage thereafter.

Ibrāhīm made this duʿā mentioned in the Qur’ān:

﴿وَأَجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ﴾

“and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols.” [Sūrah Ibrāhīm 14: 35]

First point to consider here is, who is the one here making the duʿā? It is none other than Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام), the Khalīl of Allāh, the second most beloved Messenger from all the Messengers in all their virtues and level. The one whom Allāh took as a Khalīl, the highest level of love, with all of that status, rank and level that Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) had, he is making duʿā, asking Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى) saying: “**Protect me and my offspring from falling into the worship of idols.**”

[Special point – timer: 23:00]

The Salaf said, ‘If the likes of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) feared shirk upon themselves, making this duʿā and asking Allāh to protect them from shirk, what therefore of us?’ Similarly

we can say now: “if the Salaf said ‘What therefore of themselves,’ then we should be 10 or 100 times more worried for ourselves today. The Salaf also said, (concerning Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) making this duʿā): ‘Who can think themselves to have safety from a trial afflicting them after Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام). If Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) did not feel safe and secure from this trial afflicting him, then what about the rest of us?’

Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) smashed the idols yet he still asked Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی) to protect him from them

In summary of the above great point, consider that Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) was making this duʿā asking for protection from Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی), despite him being the one (عليه السلام) who smashed and destroyed the idols, yet he is now asking for protection from ever falling into the harm of the idols. The Shaykh says, ‘The hearts of the people are between two fingers from the fingers of Al-Raḥmān, Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی). And the one who is alive cannot be safe from trials and tribulations ever falling upon him.’ Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) feared shirk when he saw so many of the people being afflicted by it. He mentions regarding those idols: **“Indeed my Lord they have misguided many of the people (those idols), so protect me and my offspring that we should fall into the worship of idols.”**

The Shaykh says, ‘This is one of the greatest refutations against the deviants of our time and throughout history who claim that the affair of shirk is something minor. They say: “You are a believer if you say, ‘(لا إله إلا الله) - **Lā ilāha ill-Allāh!** You have nothing to worry about shirk. It is taken out of proportion by the Salafīs and by Ahl-al-sunnah. It is not a big issue. Politics and the rulers are the issues afflicting the Muslim Ummah today. This is what we need to be talking about. They have not understood and realised the severity of shirk. On the day of Judgement the **distinction between the people of Paradise and the people of the hell fire will be based upon this point.** There will be people of Tawḥīd and people of shirk.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) spent 13 years in Makkah primarily calling to Tawḥīd. Look in the Qur’ān at the Sūrahs that were revealed in Makkah, they are all about Tawḥīd as the primary goal! Then after the Hijrah to Madinah, Sūrahs came regarding the affairs of Fiqh, fasting, Hajj and other matters. Such is the severity and importance of this affair! That even Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) was making duʿā asking and Allāh for protection from this evil affair.

The greatest thing Muḥammad feared for the Ṣaḥābah was minor shirk

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“The greatest thing that I fear for you is minor shirk.”

Who was the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saying this to? He was saying this to the Companions, the likes of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (رضى الله عنهما). This again highlights an important point, if the likes of the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (رضى الله عنهما), the great companions were being addressed with this ḥadīth, then what therefore of us? Should we not have fear of major and minor shirk? Then the companions asked the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “What is that?” And he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) replied, “Al-Riyā’: Showing off.” **An important point here** is that when the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “the greatest thing that I fear for you is minor shirk.” The Companions inquired and asked him what he meant by this so they could stay away from it.

Al-Riyā, Showing off

As Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) says, ‘Showing off is that a person displays (shows) in front of people that he is a man of Taqwā, and that he fears Allāh (سبحانه و تعالی). He does righteous actions in front of people and perfects his prayer and other than that so that people praise him.’

The word **al-riyā** comes from the word **al-ru’yah**, which in Arabic means to see something and this is the nature of ‘showing off’. Another type of **al-riyā does not** revolve around seeing something nor is it connected to vision, rather it is **connected to hearing**. It is that a person loves that the people **hear** about his good deeds, or physically hears their deeds. For example, reciting on purpose to ‘show off’ so that people praise your recitation. Another example; imagine you say to some brothers (or a particular brother) ‘Let us get together for dinner one night, after salāt al-Ḍhā’.’ A brother tells you ‘Akhī (my brother) can I please excuse myself today because I am very tired. You know I am extremely fatigued today so please excuse me from the invite. I am very tired because last night I was awake for 3 hours in Tahajjud.’ This is an example of al-sumʿā the person is narrating his good deeds for praise. This is also a type of ‘showing off’ that is mentioned in this chapter.

Shirk is of 2 types

Remember in class 4 how the Salaf were? When one of them said, ‘Do not think it was because I was praying last night that I saw the shooting star!’ He did not want the people to praise him for something he had not done. So, all these affairs come into minor shirk and showing off is a type of shirk that is called shirk al-Khafī, the concealed type of shirk. Shirk is of 2 types (from this other perspective):

1. Shirk that is **apparent**.
2. Shirk that is **concealed**.

Showing off is a type of shirk that is concealed because when you are praying, showing off and perfecting your prayer, no body knows that you are showing off(in your heart) because that intention is concealed in your heart. The people do not know of this, as it emanates from the heart so, it is a shirk that is **concealed**.

In summary the ‘showing off’ and minor shirk, **al-riyā**, are from the characteristics of the munāfiqīn (the hypocrites). Allāh tells us that when the hypocrites pray, they are lazy and only showing off to the people. They just want to show them as a pretense but in their hearts they are not upon sincerity to Allāh. The Salaf used to say, ‘The most difficult thing you have to deal with is your sincerity, i.e, the Ikh̄lās in your heart. You should regularly check that your actions are for the sake of Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى).

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ

النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

“Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allāh, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for As-Salāt (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allāh but little.” [Sūrah An-Nisā 04: 142]

The punishment for the one who dies making shirk with Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى)

The Shaykh then mentions the following short narrations. Ibn Masʿūd (رضى الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“The one who dies calling upon another deity or equal or partner alongside Allāh, then he will enter hell fire.” [Related by al-Bukhārī]

Similarly, another narration mentioned from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim by Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh who said, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“Whomsoever meets Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى) not committing any shirk with Him, then he will enter paradise. And whomsoever meets Allāh (سبحانه و تعالى) having committed shirk alongside Him of any type then that individual will enter the hell fire.”

Note! The wording ‘**meets Allāh**’ (سبحانه و تعالى) means meeting Him on the day of resurrection.

Summary of this lesson

In this chapter, it is made clear for the individual that **shirk** is an extremely dangerous affair, a sever matter that a person needs to have fear and be wary of and regularly

check one's intentions to ensure that they are doing actions sincerely for the **sake of Allāh** (سبحانه و تعالی).

Next week In shā' Allāh we will do the Chapter regarding the 'call to **Lā ilāha ill-Allāh!**' Giving da'wah to Tawhīd.

Main points taken from lesson:

- ❖ Introduction to shirk and knowing its opposites
- ❖ The fear of shirk and its types
- ❖ A Believer must be vigilant upon Tawhīd
- ❖ There is No forgiveness for the one who dies upon shirk (without repenting)
- ❖ The du'ā of Ibrāhīm (عليه السلام) seeking Allāh's protection
- ❖ Types of Al-Riyā (Showing off)
- ❖ Narrations from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Above notes taken by:
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وصلی الله علی نبینا محمد وعلی آله وصحبه وسلم