

## The Explanation of the Book Kitāb at-Tawhīd

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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 15

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### Class 15: Chapter 11: ‘Acts of Polytheism: Vows for Deities Other than Allāh’

#### Introduction to the Chapter – Vows for Deities Other than Allāh:

In continuing with this Book of Tawhīd, we now arrive at the chapter regarding shirk and vowing to other deities besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) - vowing to false deities instead of vowing to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). Firstly, we need to understand what is this vowing that is being discussed - what is the meaning of vowing, and what do we mean by it?

#### Making Vows Upon Oneself and its Types:

A vow is when a believer makes an obligatory action upon himself of obedience that was **not obligatory** upon him in the Sharī‘ah by default. When a person makes a vow, then that person is making something obligatory upon themselves which the Sharī‘ah had not obligated upon you by default. This was discussed in detail in the previous class regarding the person who vows to fast 3 days from next week, but there is no obligation (not fard) that a believer must fast 3 days from next week, but if (as an example) a believer vows that he is going to fast 3 days next week, it now becomes obligatory upon

him to do so. Therefore, this is the explanation of vowing, to make something obligatory upon yourself. Another example is if something is decreed for you, you then vow that you will do this act of worship or you will do that act of worship, this is vowing in the basic or the broad sense of vowing, we can say that there are 2 types or categories of how this vowing may occur:

1. **The first type:** that the vow is being done for Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).
2. **The second type:** that you are vowing to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى)

Therefore, when a person makes a vow, it is of one of the two mentioned above. The one who has vowed for the sake of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), then either he has made a vow of obedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), or he has made a vow of disobedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). If a person has made a vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) of obedience, then that **MUST BE** fulfilled, and it is an obligation to be fulfilled. However, if you have made a vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) of disobedience, then a vow of disobedience **CANNOT** be fulfilled. This type of vow such as to cut off some family members, cannot be fulfilled as it is ḥarām. Now for the other side where the person has made a vow to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), then whether it was obedience or disobedience it does not matter, because a vow to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) is not correct and ḥarām to begin with. This is a brief overview regarding to vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and to vow to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

The vowing as mentioned is when a believer **mandates** upon himself that which the Sharī'ah **has not made obligatory** upon him. Islamically speaking, it is Makrūh (at least) to make vows - some scholars have even said it is ḥarām for a person to make these kinds of vows - the vows of obedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), that you vow you are going fast three days next week. Firstly, the Sharī'ah has not obligated these affairs upon you, so why are you obligating upon yourself something that the Sharī'ah has not obligated upon you? Why burden yourself with a matter that the Sharī'ah did not burden you with and maybe you may end up failing to fulfil that vow and you end up not being able to do what you vowed to do and so you put yourself into trouble. Therefore, why obligate upon yourself that what the Sharī'ah has not obligated upon you?

### Ḥadīth from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم):

There is a ḥadīth where the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Vowing is only to extract some obedience out of the miserly one” - meaning the person would not fast otherwise - he does not want to do the obedience otherwise - would not do it normally so he vows to compel himself to do it. This is not the way of the believer, because a believer should be running to do the worship of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and not being in this miserly state that he is only going to do it unless he vows and make it obligatory and then he knows it is obligatory upon himself - that is extracting something from a miserly person who is not running to the worship of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) anywhere as he can do. Instead, these vows have to pull and drag that worship out of him. Therefore, that is something that is **not recommended**, it is Makrūh when a person makes these vows upon himself. Rather, a person should hasten to worship Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) without making obligatory upon themselves that which the Sharī’ah did not make obligatory upon you.

### First Evidence and Explanation: Sūrah Al-Insān (76): 7:

The first evidence mentioned in this chapter is the āyah:

﴿يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾

**“They (are those who) fulfill (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil will be wide-spreading.” [Sūrah Al-Insān (76): 7]**

This is a praise that Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) is giving to the one who fulfills their vows. What does that mean? If it is Makrūh or even ḥarām (as some scholars say) to make these vows, then how can it be praiseworthy for you to fulfill these vows? That is because the praiseworthiness is not about making the vow, but the praiseworthiness is about **fulfilling** them (the vow) if you end up making them. Therefore, making the vow is not something praiseworthy for you to do, but if you end up doing it, you ended up making that vow, now it is obligatory upon you and now if you fulfill that, then you have fulfilled an act of worship and that is praiseworthy. It is praiseworthy of course to do the act of worship and to fulfill that vow of obedience, but to make it is not recommended, but if

you ended up making it, then now in this circumstance to fulfill it and to do that act of obedience and worship that is praiseworthy.

You can imagine the opposite ruling to the above, that if somebody vowed to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) that they are going to fast three days next week and they did not do it, would that be praiseworthy? Of course not! While if somebody has ended up making that vow and then to fulfil that vow of obedience then that is praiseworthy, which is what Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) mentions above in the section of the āyah, **“That they fulfill their vows...”** The vows of obedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) have been fulfilled.

Understand carefully: The act of making vows is not obligatory upon you, BUT if you do make a vow then you are responsible for fulfilling that vow as it is an act of worship which is praiseworthy – this is the point in this chapter. Many people out there make these types of vows to others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). They go to the dead in the graves and say, ‘I vow to you Oh Walī of Allāh such and such... that if you allow us and bless us to be with a child, then I will come and sacrifice three sheep in your honour, I vow to do that for you.’ People would go to the graves, shrines and their idols and make such vows to do certain things if they were blessed with certain things. To highlight, even though we have mentioned that vowing is not recommended, if a person did it, it is done for the sake of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) that you vow that you will do some act of worship. As for what the people have done, vowing to the dead believing that they have power, then that is from shirk, that a person makes these vows to others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

### **Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) – Examples of Vows People Make:**

Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) mentions examples of what people do - they go to the graves and say to the dead ‘I vow to you that I will do this and I will do that if you cure me of some illness perhaps’ or ‘I vow that I will do this or do that for you if you cure my family or if you bring us wealth or if you do some other affair that is desired or required.’ The Shaykh highlights an important point regarding those that go to the dead, the grave and the shrines and make vows to these deceased people and those things that they ask for comes true, that this is NOT an evidence that the vows to these others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) are working, that is not an evidence whatsoever that these vows

being made to others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) are working. Rather, that is a trial which is getting bigger and bigger upon them that the thing that they were asking for happened - this perhaps is a trial upon them that misguides them even more because of the corruption in their hearts, in their thinking that their vows are coming through these dead people, that it is working but this is not the case, rather this may be a further trial from Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) upon them, and further indicates the level of misguidance that they are upon.

In summary, this āyah in the opening of the chapter where it praises the people who fulfill their vows, then that is in the circumstance when somebody has ended up making a vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) of obedience - then it is praiseworthy for them to fulfil that vow as the person cannot go back on it at that stage.

The Shaykh gives some examples of the types of vows that would be considered vows of obedience - such as doing itikāf (staying in the masjid) which is not obligatory, or a person vows that they will visit one of the Holy Mosques such as Masjid al-Aqsa, Masjid al-Haram or Masjid al-Nabawi - again that person has made it an obligatory vow upon themselves which was not necessarily obligated upon them - you would then need to fulfill these vows. Rightly said, the default is that you do not make these vows and it is not recommended for a person to make such vows, as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Do not vow, as these vows do not come with good, it is only to extract something from a miserly person” - somebody who would not do their worship otherwise. A person is obligating upon themselves which they are not obligated to do. As Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) mentions in the Qurʾān:

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

**“Allāh intends for you ease and He does not want difficulty for you”**

[Sūrah Al-Baqarah (2): 185]

### **Second Evidence and Explanation: Sūrah Al-Baqarah (2): 270:**

The next evidence mentioned in this chapter is the āyah from Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى):

﴿وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ. وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾



**“And whatever you spend for spendings (e.g., in Sadaqah - charity, etc. for Allah’s Cause) or whatever vow you make, be sure Allah knows it all. And for the Zalimun (wrong-doers, etc.) there are no helpers.” [Sūrah Al-Baqarah (2): 270]**

This āyah is proof once again that vowing is shirk if you do it to others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), because in this āyah, Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) puts together two things: giving charity and spending from your wealth, and vowing. Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) will reward you for your spending - next to this in the āyah is ‘vowing’ which must be similar to spending in terms of the reward from Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) for the one who fulfils the vow of obedience that he has ended up making to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), so it indicates again that the vowing is an act of worship.

1. Giving charity and spending from your wealth
2. The reward from Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) for the one who has made the vow as mentioned in the above āyah and fulfilled it.

Therefore, making vows for others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), fulfilling those vows for others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), these are acts of shirk.

### **Final Narration and Explanation – Ḥadīth Narrated by ‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها)**

Similarly, in the final narration of the chapter, ‘Ā’ishah (رضى الله عنها) narrates that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Whomsoever vows to obey Allāh, then let him obey Allāh, and whoever vows to disobey Allāh, then let him not disobey Allāh.”

This indicates what was mentioned at the beginning of this class - a vow is either done to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) or to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). If it is done to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and you vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), then either you vow something of obedience, or you vow something of disobedience. If you vow something of obedience then as the ḥadīth says, “Whomsoever vows to obey Allāh, then let him fulfil that obedience, but whomsoever vows to Allāh to disobey...” (to do some action that is impermissible such as he vows he is going to drink alcohol, he vows he is going to cut off his relations with his family, he vows actions that are ḥarām and disobedience), then the ḥadīth says, “...then he is not to disobey Allāh” - meaning it is impermissible for you to fulfil a vow of ḥarām, a vow of disobedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

In summary, whomsoever vows to obey Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) - such as makes a vow about prayer, or about fasting certain days, a vow about going to Hajj, Umrah, giving certain charity and whatever other types of obedience it may be, that person is in a situation that it is binding upon him, and he must fulfil that vow.

**Question:** What if the person fails to fulfil that vow?

A person makes a vow and says they are going to fast three days next week - it is not Ramaḍān, it is not obligatory to fast three days next week, but the person vows that they are going to do it for Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). Next week comes and for whatever reasons something happened - that person is prevented from fasting those days, the week comes and goes, and the person has not fulfilled that vow.

**Answer:** The scholars have mentioned that what is upon that person is to fulfil an expiation by feeding 10 people or clothe them or free a slave as the expiation is now upon the person.

**Question:** What about if someone vowed to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) a vow of disobedience such as they are going to drink alcohol which of course is ḥarām, somebody vows they are going to sacrifice something for a deceased individual, somebody vows they are going to leave their prayer or cut off their family, we know according the narration that the person is not allowed to fulfill that vow, but is an expiation upon this person or not? Likewise, for the one who vowed to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), is there an expiation upon that person because he vowed to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى)? That cannot be fulfilled either. Therefore, if those circumstances you cannot fulfil your vow, does it mean that the expiation is upon you in those circumstances or not?

**Answer:** There is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars regarding this - some have said if you make a vow of disobedience or you vow to other than Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), then those vows are invalid from the beginning, so there is no expiation upon you. Therefore, if your vow is invalid from the beginning then there is **no expiation**. One of the evidences used by the scholars is this ḥadīth that, “Whomsoever vows to obey Allāh then let him obey Allāh, and whoever vows to disobey Allāh then let him not disobey Allāh.” The Prophet (سبحانه وتعالى) did not then add on ‘and to expiate for what

you have done in making that vow,' he never mentioned that in this narration, that is why the scholars said, 'you cannot add that ruling on.' Although the person can make Tawbah, making repentance of this act.

Other scholars have the opinion that there **is an expiation** to be done upon you, and this is the opinion of 'Ā'ishah (رضى الله عنها) and others where they have another narration where they have an extra line in it where it says, "the one who vows disobedience then he cannot fulfill that and the expiation is feeding ten people or clothing them or freeing a slave." These are some of the differences of opinions amongst the scholars regarding this issue here.

It is agreed upon that if you make a vow of disobedience, it is impermissible for you to fulfill it. Nobody can say, 'but I vowed to Allāh that I will do some issue that is ḥarām,' the person cannot say they are going to have to do it now that they have made a vow. If a vow to do ḥarām, an action of disobedience has been made then it is invalid, the vow cannot be fulfilled. It is upon you to make tawbah, and upon the opinion of some of the scholars is to give expiation for that wrong that you have done.

### **Summary of Chapter:**

Some of the fiqh of making vows have been mentioned but the **key point** of the chapter was to highlight the impermissibility of making vows to others besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), because this action of fulfilling a vow is an act of worship. If you have made a vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) of obedience, then to fulfil that is an act of worship.

Therefore, vowing comes under the acts of worship of 'ibādah, so it is impermissible for a person to do what many people do regarding going to the graves of great Imāms saying, 'I vow to you I will fast two months in a row, or six months in a row, if only you would bless us with a child,' or 'I vow that I will pray the night prayer for a whole month every night if you bless us with something in our business or in something else.' They make these vows to the graves and the shrines as the Mushrikūn used to make vows to their idols and other deities, which is ḥarām and impermissible and is also shirk to make these vows to other deities besides Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). As for the believer making the vow to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), that is permissible but as mentioned in this class it is not recommended that the person does so and makes an act obligatory upon themselves,



that which the Sharī'ah did not make obligatory upon you, but if you did do it then it is praiseworthy that you fulfil that vow of obedience to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and fulfil what you have vowed that what you would do. Here ends this chapter from this book 'Kitāb al-Tawhīd' which we will conclude upon and next week begin a new chapter In Shā Allāh

### **Main Points Taken from This Lesson:**

- ❖ Introduction to the chapter: Vows for Deities other than Allāh
- ❖ Making vows upon oneself and its types
- ❖ Ḥadīth from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)
- ❖ Evidence and explanation: Qur'ān - Sūrah Al-Insān (76): 7
- ❖ Shaykh Al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) – the vows people make
- ❖ Evidence and explanation: Qur'ān - Sūrah Al-Baqarah (2): 270
- ❖ Evidence and explanation - ḥadīth narrated by 'Ā'ishah (رضى الله عنها)
- ❖ Summary of the chapter

Above notes taken by:

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وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم