

DeenSahih Lecture Summary
Selected Chapters from Kitāb al-Tawḥīd
Lecture 4 – Excessive Reverence for the Righteous
Saturday, 4 November 2023
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Taken from the book 'Kitaab At-Tawheed' by Shaykh Al Islam Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahab
(May Allāh have mercy upon him)

1. The title shows the importance of clinging onto one's religion, which is basically the call of Prophets and Messengers to worship Allah Alone. As Allah says in the Quran in Surah an Nahl, Ayah 36:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ۖ...

And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allāh (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Tāghūt (all false deities i.e. do not worship Tāghūt besides Allāh)."

2. We also benefit from the title that prevention is better than cure, as it is understood, that from the causes of disbelief is exaggeration regarding the righteous people
3. It is further understood from the title that it is important to have knowledge of evil as well and the means that lead to it, such as in this case where the evil is disbelief and how raising the righteous people above the status Allah has given them, leads to it.
4. Definition of Al Ghuloo (extremism) linguistically is to exceed the boundaries. From an Islamic perspective, it is to go beyond bounds in that which is legislated. Proof is in Surah al Baqarah, Ayah 229:

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ۚ

These are the limits ordained by Allāh, so do not transgress them.

5. Extremism regarding the righteous is going to extreme in praising them, raising them above the status that Allah has given them and then directing an aspect of worship towards them.
6. If it is the case that extremism with regards to those who are righteous people is a cause of disbelief, then it is more so in the case of worshipping statues, shrines, etc.
7. Allah has warned us of this as it was a characteristic of the people before us, in Surah An Nisa, Ayah 171:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ

O people of the Scripture (Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion.

8. Allah has refuted the exaggeration of the Christians regarding Isa عليه السلام stating that him and his mother were like normal people who could benefit or harm anyone except by Allah's Permission. Surah Al Ma'idah, Ayah 75:

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كُنَّا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ ۗ

The Messiah [‘Isâ (Jesus)], son of Maryam (Mary), was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother [Maryam (Mary)] was a Siddîqah [i.e. she believed in the Words of Allâh and His Books (see Verse 66:12)]. They both used to eat food (as any other human being, while Allâh does not eat).

9. The Christians also went into extremity regarding the worship itself and added to it, in the amount of it, the nature of it, etc. and our Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم warned against such extremism such as in the hadith of the three men who came to him and said they would pray all night and not sleep, continuously fast, and not marry. The Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم responded to them saying that he was more knowledgeable and fearing of Allah, and yet he prays and sleeps, and fasts and break the fasts, and marries women as well. And that whosoever turns away from his, صلى الله عليه وسلم, Sunnah, is not from him.

10. Another example of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم warning against exaggeration was during the time of Hajj when some of the companions brought with them big stones for stoning the devil. Upon seeing this, he put forward for them smaller pebbles and told them to throw away the big stones and directed to them to stay away from excessiveness, stating that indeed that which destroyed the nations before them (such as the Jews and Christians) was extremism.

11. Allah refuted the innovations and extremism in the worship of the Christians when they took to being monks and not marrying, in Surah Al Hadid, Ayah 27:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ...

But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them.

12. Thus, Ghuloo or extremism is of two types: extremism in the reverence of an individual above his status and second is extremism in the worship itself by innovating (Bid'ah) and introducing newly invented matters in the religion of Allah, which He has already perfected.

13. With respect to treating the righteous people, then there are three approaches:

- The approach of the fanatics, those who go to extreme and raise the righteous above the status that Allah has given them; by slaughtering at their graves, magnifying their graves, performing Tawaf around them, and some of them even going to the extreme that the righteous can hear their supplication, and all of this is Shirk.
- The approach of those who go to the other extreme of reviling and belittling the righteous, from the companions, May Allah be Pleased with them, and those who came after them such as is done by the Raafidah. And the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم specifically forbade speaking ill of any of his companions.

- c. The third approach is the one of the balanced nation, who deal with the righteous in the correct manner by following their example in their righteousness, their good statements and their good deeds. They love the righteous for their Tawheed and follow them in that, and this is the position of the people of the Sunnah.

14. Regarding Surah Nuh, Ayah 23:

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

"And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods: nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwâ', nor Yaghûth, nor Ya'ûq nor Nasr' (these are the names of their idols);

Ibn Abbas, May Allah be Pleased with him, said these were names of righteous individuals from the people of Nuh. And when these righteous people died, Shaytaan inspired the rest to set up statues in their honor and give them their names and place them in their gatherings. He deceived them saying this would remind them of the good and the worship of those righteous. Initially, the statues were not worshipped. But when the first generation that set them up passed away, and knowledge was forgotten, then they were taken as idols for worship.

- 15. The narration in the previous point clearly shows the dangers of Ghuloo or excessiveness in raising people above their status. It also makes clear the deception of the Shaytaan and that he is a clear enemy.
- 16. We also benefit from the same point that innovating in the religion is not allowed, even if it seems to be something good. As building statues of the righteous was not from the call of Adam عليه السلام up until Nuh عليه السلام, and all the generations between them were upon Tawheed. Further, this point includes a warning against making images of that which has a soul and that which it can lead to.
- 17. The same narration of ibn Abbas shows the importance of seeking knowledge as well, knowledge of Tawheed and Sunnah and the way of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم, and knowledge of that which opposes it. And we understand from this the importance of the scholars, the inheritors of the Prophets, and the ones who call to Tawheed with knowledge, proofs and evidences.
- 18. All of that which we study regarding our Belief comes back to Tawheed, and that there's none that deserves to be worshipped in reality, except Allah.
- 19. Ibnul Qayyim mentions regarding the same narration that many from the Salaf stated that when death came to these righteous individuals, the people confined (i'tikaaf) themselves to their graves, and made statues, and once a long period of time had passed, the people started worshipping them.
- 20. Looking further into the Sunnah, we find that the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم also emphasized this affair, and of not going to extreme, regarding even him صلى الله عليه وسلم. He صلى الله عليه وسلم was the closest one to Allah and the seal of the Prophets and the best of the creation. Yet, it comes in the hadith, that he cultivated his nation to not exaggerate in praising him, the way the Christians exaggerated in praising Isa عليه السلام. And to refer to him only as the Slave of Allah and His Messenger.

21. The hadith mentioned in the previous point shows the humility of the Messenger ﷺ. And it also shows the virtue of being a servant of Allah, as the most noble of creation Muhammad ﷺ was also a servant of Allah, however with a status above others. In this is also a refutation of the Jews and the Christians as he ﷺ is stated as a Messenger and likewise is a refutation of those who go to extremes regarding the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ as he ﷺ is stated as a slave of Allah.

22. Surah Al Kahf, Ayah 110:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهٌُ وَحِيدٌ ۚ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ ۚ أَحَدًا

Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): *"I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilâh (God) is One Ilâh (God - i.e. Allâh). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."*

This verse is a proof of Tawheed from beginning to the end.

23. Another proof is the hadith of the Messenger ﷺ where he said that those who are extreme are destroyed, and he ﷺ mentioned this three times.

24. Every type of extremity and exaggeration is impermissible, and any deed that goes to extremes by default goes into its opposite. So for example, when someone claims to respect the righteous people but then goes into extremes regarding them, it is falling into disobedience and Shirk.

25. Allah has commanded to be firm and balanced upon the Straight Path as it comes in Surah Hud, Ayah 112:

فَاسْتَقِيمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمِن تَابٍ مَّعَكَ وَلَا تُطْغَوْا ۝

So stand (ask Allâh to make) you (Muhammad ﷺ) firm and straight (on the religion of Islâmic Monotheism) as you are commanded and those (your companions) who turn in repentance (unto Allâh) with you, and transgress not (Allâh's Legal Limits).

26. The noble companion Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, May Allah be Pleased with him, also warned against innovation, extremism, and philosophy in a narration.

27. The characteristic of balance in deeds is what makes this nation more virtuous than others and the call of the people of the Sunnah, the call to Tawheed and warning against Shirk maintains that balance according to what has come from Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

28. The people who use philosophical and extremist speech and amaze people with it are many on social media during our time.

29. To summarize, it is a must to warn against extremity regarding the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم and other than him as it leads to Shirk. It is accordingly prohibited to imitate the Jews and Christians in their specific ways. We also benefit from the earlier texts that it is legislated to compliment the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم with characteristics such as: he is the servant of Allah, and His Messenger and the one that calls to Allah.
30. It is from the compassion of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم that he warned against extremity, and similarly it is sign of compassion that one warns against excessiveness due to that which it leads to.