

You Do Not Guide Whom You Love, Rather Allāh Guides

By Shaykh ‘Ubayd al-Jābirī (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Kitāb at-Tawḥīd, Chapter 18: The statement of Allāh, ***“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love but rather Allāh guides whom He wills, and He is the Most Knowing of who is guided.”***

[Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 56]

It is reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ from Ibn al-Musayyib (d. 94H) from his father who said, “When death approached Abū Ṭālib, Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) visited him and by the side of Abū Ṭālib there was ‘Abdullāh b. Abī Umayyah and Abū Jahl. So Allāh’s Messenger said to Abū Ṭālib, *‘My uncle, say Lā ilāha illAllāh, a word with which I will argue for you in front of Allāh.’* So the other two said to Abū Ṭālib, ‘Will you abandon the religion of [your father] ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib?’ So Allāh’s Messenger repeated his request, and the other two again repeated their request. And the last thing he said was he is upon the religion of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib and he refused to say *Lā ilāha illAllāh.*

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *‘I will seek forgiveness for you so long as I am not forbidden from that.’* Then Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed, ***“It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allāh’s Forgiveness for the Mushrikūn (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh) even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief).”***

[Sūrah at-Tawbah 9: 113]

And Allāh revealed concerning Abū Ṭālib, ***“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love but rather Allāh guides whom He wills”***[Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 56]” (Reported by al-Bukhārī, 1360 & Muslim, 24).

This āyah [Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 56] gathers three sentences together:

1. The statement of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) addressing the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ***“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love.”***

Meaning, you are not in control of the guidance of the people. Rather, it is Allāh Who guides.

Upon its apparent meaning, it opposes what has been stated by Allāh elsewhere in the Qur’ān when He mentions regarding the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ***“And verily, you (O Muḥammad) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path (i.e. Allāh’s religion of Islamic Monotheism).”***[Sūrah Shūrā 42: 52]

This āyah affirms that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) indeed guides to the Straight Path.

However, there is gathering between the two:

- ***“Indeed, you do not guide whom you love”***

This is referring to the guidance of Tawfīq (being granted success) and Qabūl (the ability to accept). This is specific for Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and no one else shares that with Allāh.

- ***“...you (O Muḥammad) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path”***

This is referring to Irshād and Dilālah (being directed towards a particular guidance). This is the hidāyah that is general for the Prophets and other than the Prophets, from the du‘āt (callers to Allāh); and it is to direct individuals to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

2. ***“Rather, it is Allāh Who guides whom He wills.”***

This means that Allāh has reiterated that which has preceded: that guidance is only in the Hands of Allāh. He is the One Who gives this Tawfīq. It is Allāh who allows those who deserve it to accept the truth.

For indeed, the people are of two types:

- Those whom Allāh knows are deserving of guidance, so He opens up their hearts with this Tawfīq and Qabūl.
- Those who do not deserve guidance and are therefore restricted, so their hearts are not opened up and they are not guided to the truth.

A person may ask, if that's the case that Allāh guides whom He wills, then why do we have to call to the truth? The answer is: Allāh sent His Prophets with Books to establish the ḥujjah (proof) upon the creation. If this were not the case, then those who were misguided may have brought an excuse on the Day of Resurrection that they did not know.

3. ***“And He is the All-Knowing regarding those who are guided.”***

This is another confirmation showing that the responsibility of the Messengers and those who follow them (i.e. the callers to the truth) is only to convey. Therefore, it is upon the believers to have patience when obstacles are placed in their path and they are restricted regarding what they are calling to. And the small number of people with them is not a proof that they are not upon the truth. It is upon every person who is guided to strive and call the people to the truth.

“It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allāh’s Forgiveness for the Mushrikūn (polytheists, idolaters, pagans, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allāh) even though they be of kin, after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief).”[Sūrah at-Tawbah 9: 113]

This āyah encompasses a number of affairs:

1. The obligation of the Muslim to free himself from those who die upon shirk and kufr, even if they are from the closest of the people to him.
2. It is a refutation upon the one who claims that Abū Ṭālib (the uncle of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) and ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib (the grandfather of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) were upon Islām. It is clear that they both died upon kufr.

The meaning of this āyah is that it is forbidden for the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and likewise his followers from the People of Īmān to supplicate for forgiveness for those who die as disbelievers upon shirk and kufr.

3. The meaning of the statement *Lā ilāha illAllāh*. Collectively, the Muslims do not differ regarding the wording and lettering itself. They bear witness to it and likewise to *Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh*.

The Muslims are in two groups as it relates to the meaning of the kalimah *Lā ilāha illAllāh*:

- Those who know its meaning, which is, there is nothing worthy of worship in truth except for Allāh. And they know what it includes and what it necessitates by way of action and ikhlāṣ (i.e. making one’s worship purely for the Sake of Allāh), and that all of the Prophets and Messengers were sent with the establishment of the meaning of this kalimah. The proof for this can be found in the Book of Allāh. For example, ***“And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muḥammad) but We inspired him (saying): Lā ilāha illa Ana [none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allāh)], so worship Me (Alone and none else).”***[Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ 21: 25]

This establishes what is regarded as Dīn al-Khālīṣ (the religion that is sincerely established for the worship of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى).

- Those who do not know *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, except for its words and letters; they only repeat it. As for the meaning and the action it necessitates, then they have no share in that whatsoever. And if they knew the true meaning of *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, then they would not have slaughtered, made vows, or Istighāthah (seeking deliverance and rescue) to other than Allāh, and they would not call upon other than Allāh. Many Muslims in our times have fallen into this, increasing upon that which was worshipped by way of idols and other than idols.

As for the statement of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “*O my uncle, say Lā ilāha illAllāh*”, this is a proof that this kalimah is not just mere words without meaning. Rather, it is the foundation and very root of the religion itself. This is the meaning the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was conveying to his uncle Abū Ṭālib, and Abū Ṭālib knew what the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) wanted from him.

4. Abū Jahl knew the true meaning of the kalimah *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, and not that its meaning was other than what we previously mentioned. For this reason, Abū Jahl prevented Abū Ṭālib from saying it.

The intent is not that there is no Khāliq (Creator) except Allāh, nor there is no Rāziq (Provider) except for Allāh, nor there is no Mudabbir (Controller of the Affairs) except for Allāh—this is not the meaning of *Lā ilāha illAllāh*.

Both Abū Jahl and his companion ‘Abdullāh b. Abī Umayyah knew that *Lā ilāha illAllāh* means there is nothing worthy of worship in truth except for Allāh. Its meaning is freedom from the worship of idols and everything else besides Allāh. It is to have ikhlāṣ for Allāh in worship.

This proves that Abū Jahl and his companion knew its true meaning and that it encompassed certain affairs they needed to act upon. Thus, they wanted him (Abū Ṭālib) to remain upon the religion of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. And what was the religion of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib except that it was a religion of shirk and kufr.

Therefore, if in this time you hear a caller calling and he explains that the meaning of *Lā ilāha illAllāh* means that there is no Rāziq except for Allāh and there is no Khāliq except for Allāh, then know that this individual is not a caller to the truth. Rather, he is a caller to ḍalālah (misguidance), such as what we find in the likes of Jamāt at-Tablīgh.

Abū Jahl and his likes understood the meaning of *Lā ilāha illAllāh*. That it truly means the abandonment of the worship of everything else besides Allāh and making one’s worship sincerely and purely for Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

5. The ardent desire of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in calling his uncle to the true religion and for him to die upon *Lā ilāha illAllāh* and what it necessitates. Therefore, we find in the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)—as Allāh has described him— **“an excellent example”** for every Muslim in calling one’s close relatives to Islām and the foundation of Islām, which is the kalimah *Lā ilāha illAllāh*. One’s close relatives are more deserving that they are given attention to before anyone else.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) placed great importance and effort in calling his uncle to *Lā ilāha illAllāh* because he knew that this kalimah and what it necessitates would benefit his uncle, and therefore he wanted his uncle to be guided to that. That is why he said to his uncle, *“O my uncle, say Lā ilāha illAllāh, a statement by way of which I will stand before Allāh and argue on your behalf.”* The meaning of this is, I will bear witness that I was present when you said it at the time of your death.

Another benefit here is that there is a refutation upon those who believe that benefit and harm are in the hands of those who claim that they are awliyā' of Allāh. This is a refutation of that because benefit and harm are not in their hands. This point that he (Abū Ṭālib) died upon the millah of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, meaning that Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) did not guide him to enter into Islām, is proof that benefit and harm is not in the hands of anyone except Allāh.

Important points from this chapter:

1. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) sought forgiveness for his uncle and that was not accepted from him. Rather, he was prohibited from doing so. This is a clear evidence that whomsoever dies upon kufr is from the people of the Hellfire, as Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) has mentioned towards the end of that āyah from Sūrah at-Tawbah, ***"...after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire (because they died in a state of disbelief)."*** So those who die upon kufr are from the inhabitants of the Hellfire, whether they be Jew or Christian or Magian. This is what we say as a general statement: Those who are outside of Islām are from the inhabitants of the Hellfire.
2. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) stated in an authentic ḥadīth, ***"A person is upon the religion of his close companion."***

There is some benefit to be gained from this affair: Whoever accompanies a righteous, truthful person (who is) upon their religion, then that companionship benefits the individual. As for accompanying and flattering the people of innovation, sin and transgression without explaining their sins, errors, misguidance and innovation, then this does nothing but harm the individual.

There is a lesson in what took place regarding Abū Ṭālib and the two individuals who were with him (i.e. Abū Jahl and 'Abdullāh b. Abī Umayyah). As for 'Abdullāh b. Abī

Umayyah, he later entered into Islām. The lesson that can be learnt from this affair is that Abū Ṭālib had these two companions who were calling him to nothing other than dying upon kufr.

Likewise, there is a lesson for the Muslims: When one mixes with and accompanies Ahlul-Bid'ah and he does not admonish them, then there is a great danger in this. Rather, those individuals upon bid'ah deserve admonishment. They must be called to the truth, and there is no being lackadaisical with this affair. Rather, they are to be called and invited, and there is no flattery. There is great danger in mixing with the people of sin and innovation.

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) stated that the similitude of righteous companionship and evil companionship is like the similitude of the seller of perfume and the blower of the bellows of the blacksmith. As for the one who sells the perfume, then if you accompany him either he will give you some (i.e. perfume), or you will buy some, or at the very least you will walk away with a nice smell you attained from him. As for the one who accompanies the blacksmith, then either you will gain from him a foul stench into your nose, or your clothing will become burnt by the fact that you have kept close companionship with him. Likewise with your companionship, it will either bring about benefit or harm for you.

One of Salaf, 'Abdullāh b. Shawdhab (رحمه الله), said that it is from the blessings upon a non-Arab that he befriends a person upon the Sunnah and that he carries him upon that. Some of the scholars used to say, "Do not sit with the one who is afflicted (i.e. a person of innovation); either he will beguile you or he will cause harm upon you."

Therefore, in these times when we hear these calls for the coming together between the sects of misguidance from the People of Innovation, one should be aware and cautious of that misguided call. Even those who call for unity between Islām and the

religions of disbelief from the Jews, Christians and Magians, beware of this and do not be deceived by these calls.

However, that does not prevent us from calling them to Islām. We call the disbelievers to Islām, and if they accept our call and are guided, then they become our brothers in Islām and there is nothing between us and them except brotherhood.

In conclusion, I say, that from the affairs that are very important to note from this chapter is that great affair that actions are in accordance to that which one concluded upon. Though the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) encouraged Abū Ṭālib with the kalimah *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, which would have benefited him had he said it, he refused and thus he died upon the millah of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the religion of kufr and shirk.

That which we gain from this is that following the ways of the kuffār is dangerous and one should be cautious of it.

والحمد لله رب العالمين