

Discourse 1: Tawhid In The Actions (Of Allah) And Benefits Of Belief In This

عَنْ إِبْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: مَنْ انْقَطَعَ إِلَى اللَّهِ، كَفَاهُ كُلَّ مَوْئِنَةٍ، وَ مَنْ
انْقَطَعَ إِلَى الدُّنْيَا وَكَلَّهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهَا، وَ مَنْ حَاوَلَ أَمْرًا بِمَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ كَانَ أَبْعَدَ لَهُ
مِمَّا رَجَا وَ أَقْرَبَ مِمَّا اتَّقَى، وَ مَنْ طَلَبَ مَحَامِدَ النَّاسِ بِمَعَاصِيِ اللَّهِ، عَادَ
حَامِدُهُ مِنْهُمْ ذَامًّا، وَ مَنْ أَرْضَى النَّاسَ بِسَخَطِ اللَّهِ وَكَلَّهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِمْ، وَ مَنْ أَرْضَى
اللَّهُ بِسَخَطِ النَّاسِ كَفَاهُ اللَّهُ شَرَّهُمْ، وَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ مَا بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ كَفَاهُ اللَّهُ مَا
بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ، وَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ سَرِيرَتَهُ أَصْلَحَ اللَّهُ عِلَانِيَتَهُ، وَ مَنْ عَمِلَ لِآخِرَتِهِ
كَفَى اللَّهُ أَمْرَ دُنْيَاهُ.

It has been narrated from Ibne ‘Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: “One who keeps his hopes solely upon Allah, He will be sufficient for that person in all affairs (of his life); one who keeps his hopes on the material world, Allah will leave him (with the world); one who wishes to reach his goals through disobeying Allah will be the furthest away from that which he wishes (to achieve) and will be the closest to difficulties; one who seeks to please the people through the disobedience of Allah, He will change the pleasure (of the people) towards him to be his disgrace (amongst the people).

One who seeks to please the people while earning the displeasure of Allah, Allah will appoint those people to be above him (to rule him); one who seeks to please Allah while making others displeased with him (through not obeying them), Allah will be sufficient for him from the evil of the people; one who acts properly with that which is between him and Allah, Allah will make sufficient that which is between him and the people; one who makes right that which he performs in secret, Allah will correct that which he performs in the open. Allah will make sufficient the affair of the one who works for his next life in all of his affairs of this world.”¹

One of the important issues in the discussion of Tawhid (monotheism) is in relation to Tawhid-e-Af'ali (belief in the unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)) and if one possesses the correct understanding of this issue, then it would have a profound impact on one's life.

The belief in 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)' informs us that everything and everyone which exists in the entire universe – even the leaves of a tree which move with the passing breeze – originate from Allah (SwT). Nothing can take place without His command – the cutting which the sword performs, the burning which a fire produces and all other actions stem from His order. To sum this belief up in one sentence, we refer to the tradition mentioned in Bihar al-Anwar that reads:

لَا مُؤَثِّرَ فِي الْوُجُودِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.

“There is no one effector in the creation except Allah.”²

Even our own freedom and the choices we make in life all originate from Allah (SwT), since if He had not given us the power of choice, then we would not be able to do a single thing! However at the same time, we understand that He has given us freedom in our life and has not compelled us to perform acts.

When one has the deep-rooted belief of 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)' and understands that the only independent power of decision and will belongs to Allah (SwT) and that the power of choice which Allah (SwT) has given us is merely a test (for the life of this world), then one would definitely not submit himself to others merely to seek closeness to them!

One would also realize that the true source of attaining goodness in the material world does not lie in the hands of the people. With this belief in mind, one would not look seek to covet what others have! In addition, with such a belief, one would not obey and try to please others if this meant transgressing the laws of Allah (SwT). Also, one would not appeal to others to help solve his problems since that person knows that the true meaning of “There is no effector in the creation except for Allah” goes against all of these issues!

If we were to have true faith in the verse of the Qur`an which states:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

“Surely His command when He intends to do something is the mere saying of 'Be' and it is.”³

Then these paths which have the potential of leading us astray would definitely not have any effect on us. It is for this reason that the source of all reformations goes back to a correction of the theological

beliefs.

When the various Prophets of Allah (as) were appointed, the first thing they sought to do was instill the correct set of beliefs within the hearts and minds of the people. Once the beliefs and faith are set straight, then the roots and branches (of the faith) will also become correct.

The tradition we quoted at the beginning of the discussion shows us that all of our actions must return back to the issue of 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT).'

The meaning of "...keeping one's hopes solely upon Allah" is that we cut off hope from all others and attach ourselves solely to Him; we close our eyes to everyone else and focus only on Allah (SwT). If one were to reach this station, then Allah (SwT) would be sufficient during times of difficulty!

The tradition then mentions that "...however if a person keeps his hopes on the transient world, then Allah leaves him to the world..." Therefore, if a person was to stop relying upon Allah (SwT) and put all of his trust in the material world and assumed that respect and disgrace come directly from the people, or assumed this his sustenance comes from the physical Earth through his hard work alone, then Allah (SwT) would leave this individual to the whims of the material world!

Of course, we are not opposed to the world of cause and effect; however, we must remember that behind the material world lies the hand of the One who induces things to happen (the actual Cause). In order for humanity not to forget that there is a Causer for everything, sometimes people create reasons and rationale for things which happen around them. For example, sometimes people say that, "All the doors (of prosperity) were closed to me, and then all of a sudden, I found a way out!" while sometimes, the exact opposite of this is also said!⁴

If one was to lose the Causer for everything that happens and was to rely solely on the frail spider's web known as the material world, then Allah (SwT) would leave the person alone within this weak web, as it has been stated in the Qur`an:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ
الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

"The similitude of those who take other than Allah as their guardian is as the example of the spider who takes his (frail) web as a house. And surely the weakest of houses is the house of the spider, if only the people had knowledge of this (fact)."⁵

The intelligent person is one who does not rely upon the frail house of the spider – the material world. Rather, the intelligent one relies solely upon the chief Causer of all actions (Allah (SwT)) and through this, becomes needless of everything else.

It is mentioned in a tradition that:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ أَبَدًا.

“O' Allah! Do not ever leave me to myself for even the period of the blinking of the eye!”

This tradition points to the same fact previously stated which is that we must always petition Him that, “O' Allah! I appeal to you to be my Protector; I beg to You that You alone be my Guardian...”

The tradition under discussion continues and we are told that, “...the person who wishes to reach his goals through disobeying Allah...” and in this segment, another aspect of the same issue which was mentioned above has been explained.

Sometimes we see that one wants to reach a specific goal, however to reach his aims, must make use of the forbidden means. Such a person must know that he will never reach his ultimate aim. Rather, that which he fears will actually come back to haunt him! Thus, it must be said to such an individual that, “You very well know that the only will which exists is the will of Allah (SwT) and He (SwT)s the sole Sovereign over all things! Thus, why do you still resort to making use of the impermitted means (to attain the objective) in your life?”

The next line reads “...the person who seeks to earn the pleasure of the people...” and this is an allusion by the Messenger (S) to the act of seeking the support of other than Allah (SwT).

Without doubt, in order for the sacred principles of the faith, society, politics, etc... to advance, it is important to take the opinions of the general public into account. Thus, the people must help one another so that everyone can reach to the desired goals of the society. However, we must not confuse ourselves and think that these issues only concern the people. Granted, we want people to come forward and assist to help fulfill the sacred aims of the building of the society, however they must come forward to help for the sake of Allah (SwT)!

We do not want to please Allah (SwT) for the sake of the people and it should not be that one day we see that in order to attract the people, we end up displeasing Allah (SwT)!

In this part of the tradition, the Messenger of Allah (S) has stated that the outcome of the one who seeks to earn the praise of the people through disobeying and sinning against Allah (SwT) is that the same people who are praising him will one day end up condemning him and instead of this person having any sort of impact or influence on the society, he will end up being detested by the people! This is the absolute truth since the one who tries to please the people by circumventing the pleasure of Allah (SwT) will be left to the whims of the people and will lose the hand of His grace.

At this point, it is important to note that on one's own, the human being is weak, and as long as the

assistance of Allah (SwT) is not there, he can not do a thing. Because of this fact, everything we do must be for Allah (SwT) – even if the people are not pleased and become upset with us!

If we act in this manner, then surely Allah (SwT) will prevent the evil of the people from reaching us.

The true believer must pay attention to the verse of the Qur`an which states:

تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ
بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“You bestow the kingdom to whom You desire and You take away the kingdom from whom You desire; You grant honour and dignity to whom You desire and You disgrace whom You desire. In Your hands is all goodness and surely You (Allah) have power over all things.”⁶

In addition, the true believer must state that, “O' Allah! Everything lies in Your hands. Even if we go towards the world of causes, we do so through Your permission and with complete trust and reliance upon You.”

We must never be like those who say, “In the name of Allah and in the name of the heroes of humanity” as this is a form of worship of two entities and we are not people of this type as we are believers who, although want the best for the creations, however we seek this solely from Allah (SwT).

In the Qur`an we read:

إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

“If Allah were to assist you, then there would be none who could overcome you; and if He were to leave you alone, then who is there that could assist you after Him, and upon Allah do the true believers solely rely upon.”⁷

If everyone in the world was to gather together (to do something), but He did not want this to happen, then not a single action could take place! The opposite of this is also true that if the entire world was to gather together to humiliate or attack an individual, but Allah (SwT) did not want that to happen, then it would not be fulfilled!

Thus, we must believe in the 'Unity of the actions of Allah (SwT)' as it has been explained in this discussion and we must be sure to perform our actions with this belief in mind.

One of the important things for the believer to remember is that anytime an issue comes up, he must first ponder upon it and think to himself, “What would Allah (SwT) want from me in this situation?” Truly, once we correct the relationship between ourselves and Allah (SwT), then everything else will fall into place!

We should not be like others who, in order to please the people, end up earning the wrath of Allah (SwT). Therefore, in order to save ourselves from difficulties in life, we must not put forth truth as falsehood and falsehood as truth since if this is done, then a person's friends (and those whom he is trying to please) would end up becoming his idols of worship! These sort of idols are even worse than the idols which the polytheists worship as atleast they worship their false gods in order to achieve proximity to Allah (SwT)! In the Qur`an we read:

مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى

“We do not serve them (the idols) except for the desire that they may make us nearer to Allah.”⁸

However, this is not present in relation to the worship of and following of our friends!

The tradition under review continues and we read, “...the person who does right with that which is between him and Allah, Allah will make sufficient that which is between him and the people.” This means that the person who corrects the relationship between himself and Allah (SwT) will see that Allah (SwT) will correct his relationship with the people.

The Prophet (S) then tells us, “...the person who strives to perfect (and purify) his hidden thoughts and beliefs will see that Allah (SwT) will perfect his outer thoughts and beliefs. The person who seeks to work for his next life will see that Allah (SwT) will be sufficient for him for his worldly matters.”

As was previously mentioned, more than all other things, that which the Prophets strived to instill in their followers was the correct set of theological beliefs. If these are not correct, then one can not expect righteous actions to come forth from an individual!

Truthfully, this is the exact situation we see in the world today! Many people today have no affinity to religion and issues of the faith; mankind has made laws which state that people must not perform certain acts nor are they allowed to question how to carry out a specific act (if they wanted to perform it)! However, in regards to the invitation of the Prophets, we see the direct opposite, as they called humanity to both the inner and outer aspects of actions.

There is a very remarkable expression that used to be quoted in regards to the Usul (Principles) and Furu' (Branches) of the faith. This expression stated that complete faith (of Islam) could be compared to a tree made up of three parts: the roots, branches and the fruits. The roots of the tree are the theological

beliefs (Usul); the branches (Furu') are the actions of the person while the fruits of the tree are the complete and perfect human being!

Some people think that actions and beliefs can be separated from one another; however, this is not the case. A person is not able to – from the point of view of his inner belief – remain healthy and safe, however have incorrectness in his actions, nor can the opposite of this be true. It is not possible for a person to reach perfection in his level of humanity and ethical traits and attain to the highest pinnacles of greatness however does not reach to such levels in his theological beliefs.

Keeping this in mind, the meaning of the tradition under discussion is: “When a person's inner self is corrected, at this point in time would Allah (SwT) correct that person's outer being.” Thus we see that Allah (SwT) places a cause and effect between the outer and the inner being of a person.

It is from this belief and because we know that a relationship exists between the cause and effect, that Allah (SwT) is placed “in between” and is attributed with the performance of certain tasks.

For example, we state “أضلّه الله” or “Allah deluded him”, however Allah (SwT) has placed this outcome or effect in the performance of a wicked and despicable act. Thus, it is the performance of that incorrect action which actually led to the misguidance of the individual – not that Allah (SwT) initiated the misguidance!

Therefore, the conclusion which we can draw is that if our actions are not correct, then this will result in our inner-self becoming polluted; we must start by correcting our belief in the Oneness of Allah (SwT) and must destroy all internal idols.

In the Noble Qur`an we read that:

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا

“Have you seen the person who takes his lower desires to be his god? Do you have any authority to guide such a person?”⁹

There are people who outwardly worship Allah (SwT), however in reality they are polytheists since their object of worship is not Allah (SwT) – rather it is their own soul and inner desires and from this we can understand that polytheism actually has many branches to it.

In Bihar al-Anwar it has been mentioned that:

الشِّرْكُ أَخْفَى فِي الْعَمَلِ مِنْ دَبِيبِ النَّمْلَةِ السَّوْدَاءِ عَلَى الصَّخْرَةِ الصَّمَاءِ فِي
اللَّيْلَةِ الظُّلْمَاءِ.

“Polytheism is more hidden in actions than the footprints of a black ant on a dark rock walking in the dark of the night.”¹⁰

In addition, we see that Allah (SwT) has taken a promise from humanity that they must not worship Satan, and in the Qur`an we read:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ

“Did I not take a pledge from you, O' children of Adam, that you must not worship Satan?”¹¹

However, it does not seem that those being spoken to in this verse are the (official) Satan worshippers, who are very small in number in the world. Rather, those addressed in this verse are humanity on a whole! From this, it becomes clear that the worship of Satan is a tribulation which a great number of people can fall into.

Some people may read the last line of the tradition under discussion which reads, “Whoever works for the next life, Allah will make the life of this world easy for him” and assume that if a person does not exert any efforts in the life of this world and rather, focuses all of his attention on performing actions for the next life, that the life of this world will be put in order – however this is definitely not the case! Rather, we must also put forth an effort for the life of this world.

The summary of our discussion is this: If we wish to correct our actions and etiquette, we must start with reforming our theological beliefs.

Thus, if everyone was to become a true believer in the Oneness of Allah (SwT) and become Muslims (in the true sense of the word), then all types of atrocities and corruption would be removed from the Earth! If we see that day by day, the world is becoming more and more corrupt, then it is due to a lack of belief in the true religion or little belief in the true faith.

Therefore, in order for our actions to be correct, we must ensure that we have the correct theological beliefs since every action – good or bad – is a mere reflection of our beliefs!

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, pg. 178

2. Ibid., vol. 5, pg. 151

3. Surah Yasin (36), verse 82

4. In the words of Mawlana Rumi:

5. Surat al-Ankabut (29), verse 41
6. Surat Ale Imran (3), verse 160
7. Ibid., verse 26
8. Surat al-Zumur (39), verse 3
9. Surat al-Furqan (25), verse 43
10. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 61, pg. 244
11. Surat Yasin (36), verse 60

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