

Pharaoh died a disbeliever

Explained by Shaykh Fawzan

On Tuesday 15/1/1432^{هـ} the Okaz Newspaper published an article by columnist **Najeeb Asim Yamani** entitled: "Did Pharaoh die a disbeliever?" He (Najeeb Yamani) said:

"Surely he said the Shahada in the correct manner and proclaimed his belief in Allah and His Oneness when death reached him." As appears in the statement of the Exalted:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أُدْرِكُهُ الْغَرَقُ قَالَ آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا الَّذِي آمَنْتُ بِهِ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

Untill when drowning overtook him, he said: "I believe that none has the right to be worshipped but He," in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am one of the Muslims. (Soorah Yunus 10:90)

And this is a clear apparent Shahada. Allah the Exalted said in another verse:

وَلَيْسَتِ النَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كَفَارًا ﴿١٨﴾

And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: "Now I repent;" nor of those who die while they are disbelievers. (Soorah An-Nisā' 4:18)

While the Pharaoh died after stating the Shahada, therefore the origin is that he did not die as a disbeliever."

O people of intellect, you will be amazed by this strange contradiction from Najeeb! He uses the same verse which proves the erroneusness of his statement. In an effort to prove the faith of Pharaoh he uses the verse:

وَلَيْسَتِ النَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْآنَ ﴿١٨﴾

And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: "Now I repent." (Soorah An-Nisā' 4:18)

Pharaoh only said what he said when death approached him and Allah negated the acceptance of the repentance for those who died like Pharaoh. He only said: "I believe" when he was drowning and death had approached him. Therefore according to this noble verse he had no repentance.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَقْبَلُ تَوْبَةَ الْعَبْدِ مَا لَمْ يُغْرَغْ

"Allah will accept the repentance of His slave so long as the death-rattle has not yet reached his throat." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi 3537 classified as Hasan by al-Albani)

This is when his soul reaches his throat with the death rattle. Pharaoh said what he said when his soul reached his throat with the death rattle due to his drowning and he saw his death was inevitable. Allah said about him:

الآن وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

Now (you believe) while you refused to believe before and you were one of the Mufsidun (evil-doers, corrupts, etc.). (Soorah Yunus 10:91)

And Allah said about him:

وَمَا أَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ۗ وَيَسَّ الْوَرْدَ الْمَوْزُودُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَأَتَّبَعُوا فِي هَذِهِ لَعْنَةً وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ يَسَّ الرَّفْدُ الْمَرْفُودُ ﴿٩٩﴾

And the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided. He will go ahead of his people on the Day of Resurrection, and will lead them into the Fire, and evil indeed is the place to which they are led. They were pursued by a curse in this (deceiving life of this world) and (so they will be pursued by a curse) on the Day of Resurrection. How bad is the curse (in this world) pursued by another curse (in the Hereafter). (Soorah Hud 11:97-99)

And Allah said about him:

وَاسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُم إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَأَخَذْنَا هُوَ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ ۗ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَّةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَأَتَّبَعْنَاهُمْ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُمْ مِنَ الْمَقْبُوحِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

And he and his hosts were arrogant in the land, without right, and they thought that they would never return to Us. So We seized him and his hosts, and We threw them all

into the sea (and drowned them). So behold (O Muhammad) what was the end of the wrong-doers. And We made them leaders inviting to the Fire, and on the Day of Resurrection, they will not be helped. And We made a curse to follow them in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection, they will be among Al-Maqbuhun (those who are prevented to receive Allah's Mercy or any good, despised or destroyed, etc.).

(Soorah Al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 39-42)

- ❖ Each and every verse that mentions his story states that he persisted upon disbelief and arrogance until he died upon this. Allah the Exalted said about him:

فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى ﴿٢٥﴾

So Allah, seized him with punishment for his last [i.e. his saying: "I am your lord, most high"] and first [i.e. his saying, "O chiefs! I know not that you have a god other than I"] transgression. (Soorah An-Nāzi`āt 79:25)

This means a punishment in the hereafter and in this life.

No one denies the disbelief of Pharaoh and that he died upon disbelief except the people of Pantheism (the belief that Allah is present in all of His creation) from the followers of ibn Arabi and those like them.

As for the Hadith the writer uses as evidence such as the person who says 'nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allah' then is killed in battle he will enter paradise. And the man who said 'nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allah' and then Usama رضي الله عنه killed him believing he only said it to protect himself from the sword, and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم disapproved of killing him after he said the testimony of faith. These narrations and those similar to them are only pertaining to those who say the testimony of faith in time, before the death rattle, before the soul reaches their throat. This is different from Pharaoh, because he only uttered the testimony of faith while he was drowning and he saw the Angel of death.

- ❖ Thus is it obligatory upon columnist Najeeb Yamani to retract this opinion – which no one from the people of truth agrees with – and write his retraction in a statement which is circulated in the same paper in which he circulated the aforementioned opinion; and not engage himself in anything he is not qualified for.

Shaykhul Islām ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said in his collection of treatises: This is a statement of disbelief the corruption of which is known in the religion of Islam. No one before ibn

Arabi said this statement as far as I know no one from the Muslims, Jews, or Christians. Rather all religions agree that Pharaoh was a disbeliever. This is known amongst the scholar and the layman and it is too clear to need to be proven with evidence. No one has ever disbelieved in Allah and claimed Lordship and divinity like Pharaoh did. (Volume 1 page 277) And Allah knows best.

May Allah grant us all success to true statements and working according to them. And may Allah raise the rank and send peace upon our Prophet and his companions.

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<http://www.alfawzan.af.org.sa/node/13150>

Translator's note: Imam Abdur Rahman ibn Nasir as-Si'di رحمه الله said:

This is the Sunnah of Allah enacted amongst His slaves. When the Might of Allah and His punishment descend upon those who denied the truth, they believe. But at this time their faith is not correct and it will not save them from the punishment because it is compelled belief, at this point he was forced to belief. And it is belief in something he has witnessed; while the only belief which will benefit and save the person is the belief of choice and the belief in the unseen. And that is before it is accompanied by torment. (Tafsir Si'di page 743)

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee