122729 - Swearing by the life of Allaah is permissible

the question

I got a letter from someone who said in it “By the life of the One who sent down the Qur’aan.” Is it permissible to swear using this phrase?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Swearing by the life of the One Who sent down the Qur’aan is swearing by one of the attributes of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, namely the attribute of life. The texts of the Prophet’s Sunnah indicate that it is permissible to swear by the attributes of Allaah. These are saheeh texts which are narrated in the Saheehs of al-Bukhaari and Muslim, and the scholars quoted them as evidence concerning that.

Imam al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Chapter on swearing by the glory of Allaah and His attributes and words.

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say: “I seek refuge in Your glory.” Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “A man will remain between Paradise and Hell and will say: ‘O Lord, turn my face away from the Fire and by Your glory I will not ask You for anything else.’”

Abu Sa’eed (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah said: ‘You will have that and ten times as much.”

And Ayyoob (peace be upon him) said: “By Your glory, I cannot do without Your blessing.” End quote.

Saheeh al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-Aymaan wa'l-Nudhoor (Book of Oaths and Vows), chapter no. 12. Although al-Bukhaari quoted these ahaadeeth as mu'allaq reports here, he recorded their isnaads in full elsewhere.

Imam al-Bayhaqi also narrated these ahaadeeth in al-Sunan al-Kubra (10/41), and included them in a chapter entitled:

Chapter on what was narrated about swearing by the attributes of Allaah, such as His glory, majesty, power, greatness, words, hearing and so on.

Under this title he narrated a report from Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), which says that he was asked about alcohol and he said, "No, by the hearing of Allaah, it is not permissible to sell it or to buy it."

Al-Haafiz Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Swearing by the attributes of Allaah is permissible and expiation is required [if the oath is broken], because they are part of Him, may He be exalted. End quote.

Al-Istidhkaar (5/205)

Ibn Rushd (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

As for those who regard it as impermissible to swear by the attributes and actions of Allaah, this is a da'eef (weak) view. End quote.

Bidaayat al-Mujtahid (1/298).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It is well known that swearing by His attributes is like swearing by Him, such as if he says "By the glory of Allaah" or "By the life of Allaah" or "By the Holy Qur'aan". It is proven from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the Sahaabah that it is permissible to swear by the divine attributes and the like. And swearing by His attributes is like seeking refuge in them,

and refuge can only be sought with Allaah, as in the words of Allaah, “I seek refuge in Your countenance” and “I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allaah” and “I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath” and so on. This is something that is affirmed by the scholars. End quote.

Al-Fataawa al-Kubra (4/130).

This is what has also been stated by the fuqaha’ of the four madhhabs.

Al-Kaasaani al-Hanafi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

If a person says, “By the glory of Allaah, by the greatness of Allaah, by His Majesty, by His pride”, then he is swearing an oath, because customarily and usually when these attributes are mentioned, what is meant is Allaah Himself. So what the person who swears such an oath intends is to swear an oath by Allaah. Similarly, people are used to swearing oaths by these attributes, and there is no report to suggest that sharee’ah forbids swearing oaths by them. End quote.

Badaa’i’ al-Sanaa’i’ (3/6).

The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Whoever wants to swear an oath, let him swear by Allaah” should not be understood as meaning that permissible oaths are limited to swearing by this name only; rather the ruling on all the names of Allaah is the same as the ruling on this name. So if a person swears by al-‘Azeez (the Almighty) or al-‘Aleem (the All-Knowing) or al-Qaadir (the All-Powerful) or al-Samee’ (the All-Hearing) or al-Baseer (the All-Seeing), then it is a permissible oath. There is scholarly consensus on this point. The same ruling applies to an oath sworn by the attributes of Allaah, such as saying “By the glory of Allaah, by His knowledge, by His power” and so on. This is a case where the focus is on the attributes of Allaah. There should be no dispute, because these are oaths like the first kind. End quote.

Al-Mufhim lima ashkala min Talkhees Saheeh Muslim (4/623).

Shaykh al-Islam Zakariya al-Ansaari, the imam of the Shaafa’is of his time (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

An oath may be sworn by saying “By the knowledge of Allaah, or by His power, or by His truth, or by His greatness, or by His hearing, or by His sight,” and so on. End quote.

Asna’l-Mataalib Sharh Rawd al-Taalib (4/244).

Ibn Qudaamah the imam of the Hanbalis of his time (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Swearing by the attributes of Allaah, may He be exalted, is like swearing by His names. End quote.

Al-Mughni (9/395).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

There is nothing wrong with swearing an oath by saying “By the life of Allaah”, because oaths may be sworn by Allaah, and by any of His names, or by any of His attributes, such as life, knowledge, glory, power and so on. So it is permissible for one who is swearing an oath to say: “By the life of Allaah, by the knowledge of Allaah, by the glory of Allaah, by the power of Allaah” and other attributes of Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted. End quote.

Majmoo’ Fataawa wa Rasaa’il Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (2/219-220).