

Shirk & its Types (part 2 of 3)

Description: The Islamic stance with regards to associating other deities with Allah and attributing to others certain aspects which are exclusive and unique to Him. Part 2: Continuation of the greater forms of *shirk*.

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Prerequisites

- Belief in Allah (2 parts).

Objectives

- To learn about *shirk* in Allah's right to worship with clear examples.
 - o *Shirk* in love
 - o *Shirk* in supplication
 - o *Shirk* in obedience
 - o Miscellaneous forms of *shirk*

Arabic Terms

- *Shirk* - a word that implies ascribing partners to Allah, or ascribing divine attributes to other than Allah, or believing that the source of power, harm and blessings comes from another besides Allah.
- *Du'a* - supplication, prayer, asking Allah for something.

Greater *Shirk*: *Shirk* in Allah's Right to Worship

In this category of *shirk*, acts of worship are directed to other than Allah and the reward for worship is sought from the creation instead of the Creator. Praying, bowing, and putting one's forehead on the ground are acts of worship reserved only for Allah.

“So when they ride in the ships, they call upon Allah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo, they commit *shirk* with Him.” (Quran 29:65)

Examples of *Shirk* in Allah's Right to Worship

(1) To love Allah correctly is to worship Him. A form of greater *shirk* is giving someone a portion of love reserved for Allah. Allah is the only One loved for His own sake. Two things beloved for their own sake cannot coexist in one heart. Love of Allah is different from the love of one's parents, spouse, or children as it is coupled with a feeling of His awe and holiness and leads a person to pray to Allah, trust Him, hoping for His mercy, fearing His punishment, and to worship Him alone. Loving other beings as Allah should be loved is *shirk* in love. A Muslim should not be attached to anything else to a level where it enslaves his heart. Hearts get attached to power, money, glamour, women, music, drugs, and alcohol, to name a few. These things can become the 'god' in one's life who a person chases day and night, and, once he gets the thing he loves, he works hard to please it. That is why the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said a man who worships money will always be miserable^[1] and the Quran says,

“And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe love Allah (more than anything else).” (Quran 2:195)

(2) *Shirk* in supplication. First, supplication or invocation (known as *du'a* in Arabic) is part of worship as the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

“Supplication is the essence of worship.” (*Abu Daud, Al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad*)

Calling upon dead saints, righteous men or those who are absent and far away for help and assistance as Allah should have been prayed to is greater *shirk*. It includes praying, invoking or supplicating to a false deity, prophet, angel, saint, idol, or anything besides Allah. Christians pray to a man, the Prophet of Allah, Jesus, whom they claim to have been God incarnate. Catholics pray to saints, angels, and Mary as the “mother of God.” It is also *shirk* to pray to Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, or to deceased holy men believing that they can answer prayers, as Allah says,

“Say: ‘Behold, I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke instead of Allah.’” (Quran 6:56)

“And do not invoke besides Allah that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers.” (Quran 10:106)

“If you pray unto them they hear not your prayer, and if they heard they could not grant it you. On the Day of Resurrection they will disown association with you. None can inform you like Him Who is Aware.” (Quran 35:14)

(3) *Shirk* in obedience. Allah is the only Ruler of the affairs of men. Allah is the supreme Lawgiver^[2], the Absolute Judge, and the Legislator. He distinguishes right from wrong. Just like the physical world submits to its Lord, human beings must submit to the moral and religious teaching of their Lord, the Lord who sets apart right from wrong for them. In other words, Allah alone has the authority to make laws, determine acts of worship, decide morals, and set standards of human interaction and behavior. His is the command:

“His is the Creation and Command.” (7:54)

“Legislation is not but for Allah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.” (Quran 10:40)

Obeying religious leaders in matters of clear disobedience to Allah is a form of greater *shirk* as Allah says:

“They (referring to Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their Lords besides Allah.” (Quran 9:31)

They made partners unto Allah not by directly praying to them, but by willfully accepting their rabbis and clergy changing the lawful into prohibited and the forbidden into lawful in Allah’s religion. They gave their religious men the authority only Allah has - to set the divine law. For example, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church has the authority to determine how God is to be worshipped. He has full authority to interpret, change, and cancel both his own laws and those established by earlier popes, so he determines liturgical service and fasting.

- (4) Making a vow for other than Allah.
- (5) Sacrificing an animal to venerate or please someone other than Allah, like a saint.
- (6) Going around the graves of saints. Bowing or prostrating to people or graves.
- (7) Fearing other beings as Allah should be feared in afflicting a person with punishment.
- (8) Seeking super-natural help and aid from other than Allah of what they are not capable of providing like asking angels or saints for help.
- (9) Making a ‘middle-man’ (intercessor) between one self and Allah, praying to the ‘middle-man’ and relying on him.

Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[2] God’s existence proven by the existence of a supreme Lawgiver is called the ‘ethical’ argument by Western theologians.

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