

Shirk and its types (part 2 of 3)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Greater Shirk: Shirk in Allaah's right to worship

In this category of shirk, acts of worship are directed to other than Allaah 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 Allaah.

["So when they ride in the ships, they call upon Allaah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo, they commit Shirk with Him."]¹

Examples of Shirk in Allaah's right to worship

- 1- To love Allaah correctly is to worship Him. A form of Greater Shirk is giving someone a portion of love reserved for Allaah. Allaah is the only One loved for His own sake. Two things beloved for their own sake cannot coexist in one heart. Love of Allaah 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 Allaah, trust Him, hoping for His mercy, fearing His punishment, and to worship Him alone. Loving other beings as Allaah 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 peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)*, said **a man who worships money will always be miserable²** and the Qur'aan says,

["And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as rivals (to Allaah). They love them as they love Allaah. But those who believe love Allaah (more than anything else)."]³

¹ Qur'aan [29:65]

² Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

³ Qur'aan [2:195]

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- 2- Shirk in supplication. First, supplication or invocation (known as du'aa in Arabic) is part of worship as the Prophet, *(May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)*, said:

“Supplication is the essence of worship.”⁴

Calling upon dead saints, righteous men or those who are absent and far away for help and assistance as Allaah 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 Allaah. Christians pray to a man, the Prophet of Allaah, 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 or to deceased holy men believing that they can answer prayers, as Allaah says,

[“Say: ‘Behold, I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke instead of Allaah.’”]⁵

[“And do not invoke besides Allaah that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers.”]⁶

[“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.”]⁷

- 3- Shirk in obedience. Allaah is the only Ruler of the affairs of men. Allaah is the supreme Lawgiver⁸, 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, Allaah alone has the authority to make laws, determine acts of worship, decide morals, and set standards of human interaction and behaviour. His is the command:

[“His is the Creation and Command.”]⁹

[“Legislation is not but for Allaah. He has commanded that you worship not except Him. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.”]¹⁰

⁴ Aboo Daawood, Al-Tirmidhee, Ahmad

⁵ Qur'aan [6:56]

⁶ Qur'aan [10:106]

⁷ Qur'aan [35:14]

⁸ God's existence proven by the existence of a supreme Lawgiver is called the 'ethical' argument by Western theologians.

⁹ Qur'aan [7:54]

¹⁰ Qur'aan [10:40]

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Obeying religious leaders in matters of clear disobedience to Allaah is a form of Greater Shirk as Allaah says:

["They (referring to Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their Lords besides Allaah."]¹¹

They made partners unto Allaah not by directly praying to them, but by wilfully accepting their rabbis and clergy changing the lawful into prohibited and the forbidden into lawful in Allaah's religion. They gave their religious men the authority only Allaah 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 Allaah.
- 5- Sacrificing an animal to venerate or please someone other than Allaah, like a saint.
- 6- Going around the graves of saints. Bowing or prostrating to people or graves.
- 7- Fearing other beings as Allaah should be feared in afflicting a person with punishment.
- 8- Seeking super-natural help and aid from other than Allaah 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 Allaah, praying to the 'middle-man' and relying on him.

¹¹ Qur'aan [9:31]