

Light Upon Light

Towards Correcting Our Beliefs and Practices

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Quran

And invoke not any other ilah (god) along with Allah, La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). Everything will perish save His Face. His is the Decision, and to Him you (all) shall be returned.

[Al-Qasas - 28:88]

And of humankind 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). If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is Severe in punishment.

[Baqarah - 2: 165]

Hadith

Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever died while supplicating another deity besides Allah, will enter the Fire." (Bukhari)

Categories of Shirk :

Shirk In al-'Ebaadah

In this category of *Shirk*, acts of worship are directed to other than God and the reward for worship is sought from the creation instead of the Creator. As in the case of the previous categories, *Shirk* in *al-'Ebaadah* has two main aspects.

(A) Ash-Shirk al-Akbar (Major Shirk):

This form of *Shirk* occurs when any act of worship is directed to other than Allaah. It represents the most obvious form of idolatry which the prophets were specifically sent by Allaah to call the masses of mankind away from. This concept is supported by Allaah's statement in the Qur'aan:

"Surely we have sent to every nation a messenger saying, worship Allaah and avoid Taaghoot (false gods)" (An-Nahl, 16:36.)

Taaghoot actually means anything which is worshipped along with Allaah or instead of Allaah. For example, love is a form of worship which, in its perfection, should only be directed to Allaah. In Islaam, the love of God is expressed by total obedience to Him. It is not the type of love which man naturally feels toward creation; towards parents, children, food, etc. To direct that type of love towards God is to lower Him to the level of His creation which is *Shirk* in *al-Asmaa was-Sifaat*. Love which is worship is the total surrender of one's will to God. Consequently, Allaah told the Prophet (saws) to tell the believers:

"Say: If you love Allaah, follow me and Allaah will love you." (Aal'Imraan, 3:31.)

The Prophet (saws) also told his companions, "None of you is a true believer until I become more beloved to him than his child, his father and the whole of mankind". (Bukhari, Muslim) Love of the Prophet (saws) is not based on his humanity but on the divine origin of his message. Thus, like the love of Allaah, it is also expressed by total obedience to his commands. Allaah said in the final revelation:

"Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allaah," (An-Nisaa, 4:80.) ... and ...

"Say: Obey Allaah and obey the Prophet..." (Aal'Imraan, 3:32.)

If man allows the love of anything or anyone to come between himself and Allaah, then he has worshipped that thing. In this way, money can become one's god or even one's desires could become a god. The Prophet (saws) said, "The worshipper of the Dirham will always be miserable" (Bukhari) and Allaah said in the Qur'aan

"Have you not seen the one who takes his desires as his god?" (Al-Furqaan, 25:43.)

Much emphasis has been placed on the evils of *Shirk* in *'Ebaadah* (worship) because it contradicts the very purpose of creation as expressed in Allaah's statement:

"I have not created Jinn or mankind except for my worship." (Adh-Dhaariyaat, 51:56.)

Major *Shirk* represents the greatest act of rebellion against the Lord of the Universe, and is thus the ultimate sin. It is a sin so great that it virtually cancels out all good a person may do and guarantees its perpetrator eternal damnation in Hell. Consequently, false religion is based primarily on this form of *Shirk*. All man-made systems in one way or another invite their followers to the worship of creation. Christians are called upon to pray to a man, a Prophet of God named Jesus, whom they claim to have been God incarnate. Catholics among Christians pray to Mary as the "mother of God", to the angels, as well as to human saints, whether real or fictitious.

Muslims whose acts of worship fall into this category of *Shirk* are those who pray to Prophet Muhammad (saws) or to mystics in the *Sufi* hierarchy of saints believing that they can answer their prayers.

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Though Allaah has clearly said in the Qur'aan: **"Say: Think to yourselves, if Allaah's punishment came upon you or the Final Hour, would you then call on other than Allaah? (Reply) if you are truthful."** (al-An'aam, 6:40.)

(B) Ash-Shirk al-Asghar (Minor Shirk):

Mabmood ibn Lubayd reported, "Allaah's messenger (saws) said: *"The thing I fear for you the most is ash-Shirk al-Asghar (minor shirk)." The companions asked "Oh! messenger of Allaah, what is minor Shirk?" He replied "Ar-Riyaa (showing off), for verily Allaah will say on the Day of Resurrection when people are receiving their rewards, 'Go to those for whom you were showing off in the material world and see if you can find any reward from them.'"* (Ahmad, at-Tabaraanee, and al-Bayhaqee in *az-Zuhd*)

Mahmood ibn Lubayd also said, *"The Prophet (saws) came out and announced, 'O people, beware of secret Shirk!' The people asked, 'O messenger of Allaah, what is secret Shirk?' He replied, 'When a man gets up to pray and strives to beautify his prayer because people are looking at him; that is secret Shirk.'"* (Collected by Ibn Khuzaymah.)

Ar-Riyaa

Riyaa is the practice of performing any of the various forms of worship in order to be seen and praised by people. This sin destroys all the benefits that lie in righteous deeds and brings on the one who commits it a serious punishment. It is particularly dangerous, because it is natural for man to desire and enjoy the praise of his fellow men. Doing religious acts to impress people or in order to be praised by them is, therefore, an evil which deserves man's utmost caution. This danger is really significant to the believers whose goal is to make all of the acts of their lives religious acts dedicated to God. In fact, the likelihood that knowledgeable true believers would commit *ash-Shirk al-Akbar* is small, since its pitfalls are so obvious. But, for the true believer like everyone else, the chance of committing *Riyaa* is great because it is so hidden. It only involves the simple act of changing one's intention. The motivating forces behind it are also very strong, since it comes from man's inner nature. Ibn 'Abbaas alluded to this reality when he said,

"Shirk is more hidden than a black ant creeping on a black stone in the middle of a moonless night." (Quoted in *Tayseer al-'Azeez al-Hameed*, p. 587)

Thus, great care has to be taken to ensure that one's intentions begin pure and remain pure whenever righteous deeds are being done. In order to ensure this, the saying of Allaah's name is enjoined in Islaam before all acts of importance. A series of *Du'aas* (informal prayers) have also been prescribed by the Prophet (saws) before and after all natural habits like eating, drinking, sleeping, and even going to the toilet, in order to turn these everyday habits into acts of worship and develop in Muslims a keen awareness of Allaah. It is this awareness, called *Taqwaa*, which ultimately insures that intentions remain pure.

The Prophet (saws) also provided protection against the inevitable acts of *Shirk* by teaching certain specific prayers which may be said anytime. Abu Moosaa said, *"One day Allaah's messenger delivered a sermon saying 'O people, fear Shirk for it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant.' Those whom Allaah wished asked, 'And how do we avoid it when it is more hidden than the creeping of an ant, O Messenger of Allaah?' He replied, 'Say: Allaahumma Innaa na'oodhu bika an nushrika bika shay'an na'lamuh, wa nastaghfiruka limaa laa na'lamuh (O Allaah, we seek refuge in you from knowingly committing shirk with you and we ask your forgiveness for what we do not know about)."* (Ahmad and at-Tabaraanee.)

Source: http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/fundamentals/tawheed/abutaw/abutaw_8.html (minor changes...)

Originally: **The Fundamentals of Tawheed (Islamic Monotheism)** by Bilal Philips

Check Your Heart !

Imam Ibn-ul Qayyim al-Jawziyyah [*rahimahullah*] states in his book:

· Whoever **neglects** [remembering Allaah] **most of the time**, then his heart will become rusty in accordance with how neglectful the person is.

· When this [filthy] rust **accumulates on the heart**, then it no longer recognizes things as they really are.

· It views **falsehood** as if it is the truth, and **truth** as if it is falsehood.

This is because this rust darkens and confuses the heart's perception, and so it is **unable to truly recognize** things for what they really are. So as the rust accumulates, the heart gets blackened, and as this happens the heart becomes stained with this filthy rust, and when this occurs it **corrupts the heart's perception and recognition of things**. The heart [then] **does not accept the truth nor does it reject falsehood**, and this is the **greatest calamity** that can strike the heart.

· Being neglectful [from *dhikr*] and **following whims and desires** is a direct consequence of such a heart, which [further] extinguishes the heart's light and blinds its vision.

Allaah - the Most High - said, "And do not obey him whose heart We have made to be neglectful of Our remembrance, one who **follows his whims and desires** and whose affairs have gone beyond bounds and whose deeds have been lost. (*Soorah al-Kahf* :28)

(Ref. **Ibn-ul Qayyim al-Jawziyyah** [*rahimahullah*] in his book *al-Waabilus-Sayyib min Kalimit-Tayyib*, pp. 78 - 82)

"You know Allaah; **yet** you do not obey Him.
You recite the Qur'aan; **yet** you do not act according to it.

You know Shaytaan; **yet** you continue agreeing with him.

You claim to love the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam); **yet** you abandon his Sunnah (guidance and way).

You claim to love Paradise; **yet** you do not work for it.

You claim to fear the Fire; **yet** you do not stop sinning.

You say: **'Indeed death is true'**; **yet** you have not prepared for it.

You busy yourself with the faults of others; **yet** you do not look at your own faults.

You eat the sustenance that Allaah provides for you; **yet** you are not grateful to Him.

And you bury your dead; **yet** you have not heeded its lesson."

Ibraheem ibn Adham (rahimahuAllah)