

What is Shirk

(Associating partners with Allah ﷻ)



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The unforgivable sin by Allah ﷻ

(Comprehensive and easy to understand Article about Shirk)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

Allah will not forgive that partners be associated with Him; but will forgive anything less than that, to whomever He wills. Anyone who ascribes partners to Allah has strayed into far: Q4/116

Kinds of Shirks & How to avoid it

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Before we start to define what is shirk, types of shirk, major and minor shirks, reasons why people commit shirk, and how to avoid it, let's look at some of the Quranic Ayats and Ahadith regarding gravity of shirk (The unforgivable sin in the sight of Allah (SWT)).

Quranic Ayats/verses about committing Shirk

1. ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Allah said after honorably mentioning the name of 18 Prophets, that if (Suppose that) they (Prophets) had set others with Him, certainly what they did (good deeds) would have become ineffectual for them. Q 6/88

2. وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

Tell O Prophet. It was revealed to you, and to those before you, that if you commit Shirk, your good deeds will be in vain, and you will be of the losers. Q39/65

3. إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

Allah will not forgive that partners be associated with Him; but will forgive anything less than that, to whomever He wills. Anyone who ascribes partners to Allah has strayed into far error. Q4/116

4. لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

They disbelieve those who say, "Allah is the Messiah the son of Mary." But the Messiah himself said, "O Children of Israel worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Whoever associates others with Allah, Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his dwelling is the Fire. The wrongdoers have no saviors." Q 5/72.

5. وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

When Luqman said to his son, as he advised him, “O my son, do not associate anything with Allah (committing Shirk), surely, committing Shirk is the worst iniquity/ is great injustice” Q 31/13

6. إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

Surely, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives anything less than that to whomever He wills. Whoever associates anything with Allah has devised a monstrous sin/ a great sinful lie. Q4/48

7. وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى النَّارِ

And they set up rivals to Allah, in order to lead away from His path. Say, “Enjoy yourselves; your destination is the Fire.” Q 14/30.

Ahadith about the severity of committing Shirk

1. Syedna Abu Bakra narrates that the Messenger of Allah said three times “Should I not tell you about the greatest sin? Then he said: Associating others with Allah (SWT)”. Sahih Bukhari # 2654, Sahih Muslim # 259.
2. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that Messenger of Allah (SAW) said that: Every Prophet of Allah has a supplication that will be answered, and every Prophet hastened to offer this supplication and did that prayer in this world. But I have deferred my supplication for my Ummah and that supplication (intercession) of mine will be granted to each of those people on the Day of Judgment who dies not associating anything with Allah (SWT). Bukhari # 6304, Muslim #491.
3. Abuzar Ghefari and Anas bin Malik narrates that Messenger of Allah said: Allah (SWT) said: “O son of Adam! If you came to me with an earthful of sins, and then you met me not associating anything with Me, I will Meet you with a similar amount of forgiveness. Muslim # 6833, Tirmidhi # 3540.
4. Muaz bin Jabal and Abu Darda narrate that Messenger of Allah advised me “Do not associate anything with Allah, even if you are cut into pieces or burnt in fire”. Ibn Majah # 4034, Musnad Ahmed #22,128

5. Prophet (SAW) said “Shouldn’t I not tell you about the biggest sin?” then he said associating anything with Allah (committing Shirk) and disobeying Parents. Bukhari # 2511, Muslim # 87.

6. Prophet (SAW) said “Whoever dies claiming that Allah has rivals will enter Hell fire” Bukhari #4497, Muslim #92.

Based on above Ayats of Quran and Ahadith of our beloved Prophet (SAW), it has become absolutely clear in unequivocal terms that:

a) SHIRK is that serious, dangerous, heinous and unforgivable sin which would deprive the mankind of the Paradise forever and make them the fuel of Hell forever.

b) There will be no helper for the Mushrik (Polytheist) on the Day of Judgment. Even the Imam of the Prophets and the Messengers, the intercessor of the guilty, Syedna Muhammad (SAW) will do nothing for him/her.

c) The man who managed to secure himself from SHIRK in all situations, Allah, the only Lord of the universe, has Himself assured to forgive the rest of his sins.

There are four different kinds of Shirk and Four categories of Shirk:

Meaning of Shirk: Shirk in Arabic means ascribing a partner or rival (peer or counterpart) to Allah in Lordship, in divinity, in worship or in His names and attributes. It is opposite of Tauheed.

Types of Shirk: There are four types of Shirk. In Lordship (Shirk-ur-Ruboobiyyah), in His divinity (Shirk-ul-Uloohiyya), in worship (Shirk-ul-Ibadah) and in His names and attributes (Shirk-ul-Asmaa). Let’s explain little bit about each type of Shirk.

Shirk Rububiyyah (Ascribing partners or rivals in Allah’s Lordship.)

(Shirk ar Rububiyyah) is to have not firm belief that Allah SWT alone is the creator, the provider, the one that gives life, the one that exterminates life, the one that manages and has authority over the situations of all his creations (Everything in the universe and beyond) and that he has no associates in that:

Examples of Shirk ar Rububiyyah:

- 1) Believe that other things or people also have a part in creating the universe other than Allah.
- 2) Someone else other than Allah gives life, death and controls the affairs of this universe.
- 3) Believing that other people besides Allah are able to bestow mercy, forgiveness, overlook bad deeds, give blessings as Allah and knows unseen.
- 4) Obedience to any other authority against the decree of Allah like declaring what is Halal (permissible) or Haram (forbidden)

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

(They take their rabbis and their monks for their Lords besides Allah, Q 9/31)

- 5) Relying solely on worldly means (for wealth, health, children, sustenance etc) and not on Allah's reliance (TAWAKKUL)

وَأَحِيطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى مَا أَنفَقَ فِيهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا وَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّي أَحَدًا

(It so happened that all his fruitful garden was utterly destroyed and there he stood wringing his hand with grief over all that he had spent on it, while it lay waste before his eyes, he could only say" I wish I had not associated anyone with my Rabb"! Surah Khaf, Aya # (Originally he was thinking that his entire garden he made with his efforts and it will never finish or destroy, solely relying on worldly means and not on Allah's reliance, power or twakkul. Remember he did not ascribe partner to Allah here, but he relied on worldly things and not Allah, that is

why he said I wish I had not associated anyone with Allah(that he committed shirk.).

6) Combing Allah’s “will” with peoples “will”, like if Allah wills and you/he/she wills or had it not been for Allah and you/he/she, this would have not happened etc

7) Making fun or degrading the religion of Islam. (As Allah has chosen this religion of Islam over all the other religions of the world and since the inception of this world, Allah’s religion was always been Islam (submission to only one Allah, Tawheed) and all His Messengers from Adam to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had same message of Islam

8) Believing in many gods like god of rain, thunder, wealth etc

9) Swearing by other than Allah.

10) Comparing Allah to his creation. Or say that there is another creator, provider or controller besides Allah.

11) Following one own “nafs” (desires) consistently irrespective of Allah’s and His Messenger commandments.

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Have you considered the case of such an individual who has made his own desires as his god, and Allah, knowing him as such, let him go astray, and sealed his hearing and heart and drew a veil over his sight, who is there to guide him after Allah has withdrawn His guidance? Will you not learn a lesson? Q45/23.

12) Promulgating laws to replace the rulings of Allah and makes that law to which people are obliged to refer for judgment.

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوا لَهُ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَبْصِرْ بِهِ وَأَسْمِعْ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا يُشْرِكُ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا

(He shares not His legislation with anyone) Q 16/26.

13) Associating others with Allah in love and veneration, by loving a created being as they love Allah.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَاداً يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعاً وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. Q2/165

14) Being emotionally attached to some means which have no basis and for which Allah has not given permission, such as hanging up “hands”, turquoise beads that they offer protection or they ward off the evil eye, Wearing amulets, talisman and love spells etc. Allah has not made them the means of such protection, either according to shari’ah or according to the laws of the universe.

15) Tiyyarah (superstitious) Belief in omens.

16) Believing that the stars are controlling the universe and they are the ones that cause the rain to fall etc.

16) Touching or kissing a thing seeking its” barakah”{blessing} (when Allah has not created any blessing in it), such as kissing the doors of the mosques, touching their thresholds, seeking healing from their dust, and other such actions.

17) Doing all kind of magic for any purpose (including creating love /hatred between spouses, enmity/friendship between humans, harming other people businesses, health etc).

18) If someone is sick and got cured and then believes he is cured because of medicine, best doctor or best hospital. We must employ best worldly means to get cure for ourselves but reliance should be with Allah that with His permission, medicine, Doctor or best Hospital helped him cured, not his worldly means.

19) Same way, if you got a job or started a business through somebody then does not think because of that person you were able to get job or started successful business, it is Allah’s permission you were able to succeed. Though you must thank and appreciate that person who helped you achieve this success, because

Allah choose him as worldly means for your success, but ultimate decision and favor was from Allah alone that you achieve your goal.

Shirk Uluhiyyah (Ascribing partners or rivals in Allah's Divinity)

That is ascribing people, angels, and animals to Allah's divinity.

Examples:

1) Believing that Allah has mother, father and children.

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ "

Say: "He is Allah the one and only; Allah is self sufficient (independent of all, while all are dependent on Him); He begets not, nor is He begotten (He has no child, nor He is child of any one); and there is none comparable to Him. Q112.

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ
فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Nothing is like unto Him: Q42/11

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا

Further to warn those who say "Allah has begotten a son" Q 18/4

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ
الدُّنْيَا وَكَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

And say, "Praise be to Allah, Who has not begotten a son, nor has He a partner in sovereignty, nor has He an ally out of weakness, and glorify Him constantly." Q17/111

وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وُلَدًا

It is not fitting for the Most Merciful to have a son. Q19/92.

2) Christian's belief of Trinity (Son, father, Holy Spirit)

3) Believing Angeles are daughter of Allah

أَفَأَصْنَفَكُم رَّبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنَاثًا إِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُولُونَ قَوْلًا عَظِيمًا

Has your Lord favored you with sons, while choosing for Himself daughters from among the angels? You are indeed saying a terrible thing. Q 17/40

4) Believing in incarnation theory.

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Allah The Originator of the heavens and the earth. He made for you mates from among yourselves, and pairs of animals, by means of which He multiplies you. There is nothing like Him. He is the Hearing, the Seeing. Q42/11

Note: Shirk of above category (That is Shirk in divinity) is Major and open Shirk and if not sincerely repented before death leads one to die in state of Shirk and unforgivable sin in the Sight of Allah

Shirk –in-Ibadah (Ascribing partners or rivals in Allah's Worship)

That is worshipping anyone (People, Jinns, Animals, object) other than Allah.

Examples:

1) Supplication (Dua) with anyone else except Allah;

Definition of Dua in Arabic: Dua means to call, to invite, to pray, to ask, to question, and in term of the Sharia of Muhammad (SAW),” Dua “ means “ To call only one Allah in all situations” be it hardship and trouble or relief and easiness, i.e. To seek assistance only from Allah, and to ask and request only from Allah to fulfill your needs and remove your troubles. “ So Allah made His Beloved Prophet says:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

. And when My servants ask you about Me, I Am near; I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. So let them answer My call (they should worship me and pray to me only) and believe in Me, so that they may be rightly guided.

In fact, “dua” is “Worship” and it is done only to the Allah:

Allah takes this great pledge from us in every Rakat of all the prayers of 5 times

a day. اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You Alone we (and will) worship and You Alone we (and will) call on for help.

اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Both are verb forms of “Present Tense” which give the meaning of both present and future in Arabic language, so both the meanings are correct at the same time.

Prophet (SAW) said Dua (supplication) is worship, and then he recited (Tirmidi 3372/Dawood 1479

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

Our Lord has said, “Pray to Me, and I will respond to you. But those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell forcibly. Q40/60.

In another Quranic verse Allah says:

أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدًا
مَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Or, who answers the one in need when he prays to Him, and relieves adversity, and makes you successors on earth? Is there another god with Allah? How hardly you pay attention.

Based on above Hadith and Quranic verse, it is clear that Dua is worship and it is only for Allah, Removing the evil /adversity after accepting the Dua is only related to Allah, therefore making Dua (Worship) other than Allah is like making him

equal to Allah. The arrogant person who “Prays” other than Allah will be entered in Hell Fire humiliated because of being involved in **SHIRK**.

Note: It is important to understand the difference of human attributes and Allah’s permanent and absolute attributes; Allah has created the mankind with attributes that are manifestation of His own absolute qualities; However the characteristics of mankind and are inherently impermanent, granted by Allah and are “limited” as against the “ self inherently permanent”, “unlimited “and “absolute “attributes of Allah.

Consider this Aya from Quran

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

We created man from a liquid mixture, to test him; and We made him hearing and seeing. Q76/2

Here for above reason the qualities like “ Samee” and “Baseer” hearing and seeing for mankind despite being similar to “AL-Samee” and “Al Baseer” of Allah do not constitute shirk.

However the other absolute attributes that Allah has made exclusive for Himself; for example a) WORSHIP (Ibadah) and b) seeking help from Him in His physical absence, i.e Supplication; would be considered pure Shirk and unpardonable sin, if attributed to any of Allah’s creations despite knowing that the attributes of all creations are inherently `impermanent` granted by Allah and limited in their nature.

The following Hadith will make it this point very clear: Abdullah bin Abbas narrates that a Companion came to Prophet and said “What Allah wills and you wills” Prophet said “Are you making me equal to Allah? But say only what Allah alone wills” (Musnad Ahmed # 3247). From this Hadith it is clear the companion knew that when he said “what Allah wills and you wills” knowing fully that RASOOLULLAH’S qualities/attributes are inherently impermanent, granted by Allah and are limited in nature, while Allah’s attributes are absolute and permanent but Prophet (SAW) declared it “Shirk”, and corrected his companion not to say this.

2) Worshipping humans (Saints, Pious people, etc dead or alive) , Idols, Animals.

3) Sacrificing (human or animals) for dead or alive people. Even, if you sacrifice animal with the name of Allah, but your intention is to get closeness or for accepting of your Dua by that person. Sacrificing at the place of any shrine or tomb is Shirk. Surah Kauser of Quran clearly says Pray and sacrifice in the name of your Rabb only . Prophet said “Curse of Allah on whom who sacrifices in the names of others than Allah, (Muslim #1979)

4) Seeking help, asking for refuge from someone (Dead or alive) in his absence other than Allah.

5) Prostrating to someone (Dead or Alive) other than Allah (SWT).

6) Showing off (Riyaa in Arabic) (Ostentation) on any act of worship for people (It should be purely for the sake of Allah).

The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him peace, compares riyaa' to a black ant crawling in the middle of a pitch-dark night on a black rock that can go undetected.

Riyaa' is a heart disease that cause death to your good deeds. Don't let riyaa' creep into your heart.

The symptoms of riyaa' include the desire to seek praise or a reputation, fear of criticism or being looked down upon, doing good deeds in public and evil ones in private, worrying about what people think of oneself, doing good deeds for someone else's sake when they should be done for the sake of Allah only.

The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him peace, said,

Shall I not inform you of what I fear for you more than the maseeh ud-dajjaal (false messiah)? It is the hidden shirk (riyaa). It is when a man stands up for prayer, and then beautifies his prayer for another to look at (Ibn Majah).

Abu Huraira narrated that the Messenger of Allah, Allah blesses him and grant him peace narrated a story about three people on the Day of Judgment.

The first of the people whose case will be decided on Judgment Day will be a man who died as a martyr. He will be brought forth. Allah will make him know about

His blessings (which He had bestowed on him in the World). The man will acknowledge them. Then Allah will ask him: What did you do with them? He will say: I fought in Your way until I died as a martyr. Allah will remark: You are lying. You fought so that you may be called a brave warrior. Then orders will be passed against him. So he will be dragged along on his face and cast into Hell.

Second will be a man who studied religious knowledge. Then he taught it to others and recited the Quran. He will be brought for Judgment. Allah will remind him of His favors (showered on him in the world). He will admit them (having enjoyed them in his life). Then Allah will ask him: What did you do with them? He will reply: I acquired knowledge and imparted it and also recited the Quran for Your sake. Allah will observe: You have told a lie, for you got knowledge to be renowned as a scholar; and you recited the Quran to be marked as a Qari (one who recites the Quran according to the rules). Then orders will be passed against him. So he will be dragged along on his face and thrown into Hell.

The third person will be a man to whom Allah had made abundantly rich and granted him every kind of wealth. He will be brought for judgment. God will let him know about His gifts conferred upon him in the world. He will recognize them. Then Allah will inquire: What did you with them? He will say: I left no way in which you like money to be spent without spending in it for your sake. Allah will say: You are lying. You did so to be described as generous and philanthropic in the society; It means you got your reward in the world according to your intention. Now you deserve nothing in the Hereafter except Hell. So orders will be passed against him and he will be dragged along on his face until he will be hurled into Hell.

Allah says by warning us against spoiling our deeds, “O you who believe, cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by harming; like those who spend their wealth to be seen of men,” (Qur’an 2:264).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

7) Visiting graves to worship, prostrate, get blessings or asking dua.

8) Believing that others (Allah's creations) will help them bringing them closer to Allah (Waseela). Even asking Dua (supplication) with Allah using "waseela" (access) of our beloved Prophet (SAW) is not confirmed through any of Prophet's companions

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

Is not to Allah that sincere faith is due? As for those who take guardians besides Him, "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Allah will judge between them regarding their differences. Allah does not guide the lying blasphemers.

9) Allah has appointed His Angels for the protection of the ummah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Similarly Prophet confirmed that "Whoever (Muslim) recites Ayat-al-Kursi before going to bed at night, one angel is appointed for his protection for the whole night by Allah (SWT) and Shaitan cannot come near him till morning, (Bukhari #2311). But calling Angels for protection is pure Shirk and unforgivable sin.

10) Sacrificing or dedicating material (Nazar & Niaz in urdu) things to someone to get blessing, relief from affliction, accepting of your duas through him.

11) Doing Tawaf (Circling around any grave, object, picture etc) to get blessing. Tawaf is only allowed for "KABA" house of Allah in MECCA.

12) Making Tomb or Masjid on dead person's grave, so people can pray.

13) Calling dead person for help or asking Dua from him (No matter whom, even Allah's Messengers) is Shirk. Quran clearly says:

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلًّا
يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا
يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِنْهُ خَبِيرٌ

He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night; and He regulates the sun and the moon, each running for a stated term. Such is Allah, your Lord; His is the sovereignty. As for those you call upon besides Him, they do not even own a thread of the date-stone.

If you pray to them, they cannot hear your prayer. And even if they could hear, they would not answer you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will reject your associating them with Allah (Shirk). None can inform you about all this like the One Who is All-Aware. Q35/13/14.

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ

أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

Those they invoke besides Allah create nothing, but are themselves created.

They are dead, not alive; and they do not know when they will be resurrected. Q16.20-21.

Note: Remember Polytheists (Mushrakeen of Mecca at the time of Prophet) believed in Allah's Lordship but not in His worship and that is why they were polytheists (Mushriks) and disbelievers. Quran clearly testifies that:

قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

قُلْ مَنْ فِي يَدَيْهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

In surah Al-Mu'minoon verse 84-90 Allah SWT says, "Say: Whose is the earth, and whoever is therein, if you know? They will say: Allah's. Say: Will you not then mind? Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the mighty dominion? They will say: (This is) Allah's. Say: Will you not then guard (against evil)? Say: Who is it in whose hand is the kingdom of all things and who gives succour, but against Him Succour is not given, if you do but know? They will say: (This is) Allah's. Say: From whence are you then deceived? Nay! We have brought to them the truth, and most surely they are liars".

As you can see in these verses Allah SWT clearly states that the polytheists admitted to these things that if they were asked they would answer that the one who owns the earth and everything within, the lord of the seven heavens and the lord of the mighty dominion, the one in whose hand is the kingdom of all things and who gives succour and who against Him succour isn't given they'll answer all of that by saying "Allah".

Ibn Katheer says in his tafseer when interpreting these verses, "Allah SWT attests to his oneness and his independence from the creation, his management, and his kingship to guide to the fact that he is the god and that no god exists besides him and that the worship is not befitting other than Him. He is alone and doesn't have any associates and therefore he said to his messenger Muhammad SAW to say to the polytheists the ones worshipping with him others, the ones that have

acknowledged for him rububiyyah, and that he has no associates in it, and with that they have associated with him in his Al-Ilahiyyah, "الإلهية" that they worshipped besides him, with them acknowledging that the ones that they worshipped do not create anything and do not have possession over anything and that they do not have force over anything in fact they believed that they bring them closer to Allah SWT. "We haven't worshipped them except that they bring us closer to Allah".

Bottom Line: Follow what Allah Says in Quran:

فُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say, "My prayer and my worship, and my life and my death, are devoted to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.. No associate has He. Thus I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit (Muslim). Q6/162-163..

Note: Current era Muslim's shirk is even worse than previous Mushrikeen. Previously Mushrikeen use to call righteous and pious people, but now a day's Muslims even call people who are known to have bad characters, like never prayed, drug addict, insane, grave worshiper etc. Before Mushrikeen only did shirk when they were happy and have no distress, while at time of distress and affliction, they used to call only Allah, but now a day's people who are involved in Shirk do in both happy and distress situations.

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ

. When they embark on a ship (and ship gets into trouble) they pray to Allah, devoting their faith to Him; but once He has delivered them safely to land, they attribute partners to Him (Shirk) (giving credit to others for their safe arrival) Q29/65.

Shirk –in-Al-Asmaa (Ascribing partners or rivals in Allah’s Names and Attributes)

(Shirk-in-Al Asmaa) is not to firmly believe in the names of Allah SWT and his characteristics that are reported to us through the Qur'an and Sunnah and to affirm it without distortion, negation, asking how or contrasting

Shirk- in-Al=Asmaa is assigning Allah’s Names and Attributes to others: Allah’s names and attributes are for Him alone. No one and nothing is comparable to Him; therefore giving Allah’s names to others than Allah constitute Shirk. At the time of the Prophet (SAW) idols were worshipped on the Arabian Peninsula. Al-LAAT and Al-UZZA were names of idols, Al Laat is derived from the Arabic word ILAH, meaning “diety”, something worshipped as a god; Al-Uzza derives from AL-Azeez , one of the names of Allah by calling their idols Al-Lat and Al Uzza, the people committed shirk using Allah’s name.

Examples:

1) Allah is free from all imperfections; it is not permissible to name Allah with names of the creation or to attribute to Allah something from the attributes of creation; for example, by calling Him Father as Christians do or as a group of Jews are quoted as saying in the Quran:

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ

“Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich-----“ Q3/181

Allah says “ وَبِاللَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call Him by them, and disregard those who blaspheme /profanity in His names. They will be repaid for what they used to do. Q7/180.

2) According to The Holy Quran Qualities of Rauf, Raheem are of Allah (*subhana wa tallah*) as well as of Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu alayhi was'salam*):

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Surah Tawbah (9) Verse 128: **Now there has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves:** the one who grieves at your loss and who is excessively anxious for your success (in both worlds) and who is compassionate and merciful towards the believers: (*Rauf ur Raheem*).

If a person was to believe that Prophet Muhammed (*sallallahu alayhi was'salam*) is Rauf, Raheem but with the aqeedah that Allah (*subhana wa tallah*) granted, bestowed, given (*i.e. Atahi*) these qualities to Messenger (*sallallahu alayhi was'salam*) are not his own (*i.e. Zati*) or was to believe that his qualities of Rauf, Raheem are limited (*i.e. Baaz*) and are not equal with Allah (*subhana wa tallah*) in meaning quantity (*i.e. Qulli*) or believes these qualities were given to Messenger Muhammed (*sallallahu alayhi ws'salam*) at a time in creation, and negates possession of these qualities from eternity, then that person does not committed shirk

3)) By denying Allah's name or attributes, like He is not "Rehman or Raheem" or any of 99 famous attributes of Allah.

4)) Affirming attributes that Allah has negated for Himself, attributes that imply imperfection or fault in some way- for instance, that He becomes tired or That He sleeps or rests.

5) Changing the meaning of Allah's attributes (Like Allah can't be "Al Wadood" meaning , Loving) because that makes Allah emotional like humans.

6) people should not be given names of Allah's attributes alone without adding "ABD" Meaning slave to it, like "Samad or Rehman" without adding Abdu-Rehman or Abdu-Samad. We should also not call people whose names include Allah's attribute without adding Abd to it.

In one Quranic Aya Allah has closed four avenues of shirk, namely: owner besides Allah, sharer with Allah, helper for Allah, intercessor without Allah's permission.

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِنْ شِرْكٍَ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيرٍ

وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَن قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا
قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

Allah says: “Say: Call upon the other gods besides Allah whom you pretend. They have no power, not even the weight of an atom in the heavens or on earth. Nor do they have a share in them, nor is any of them a helper to Allah. No intercession can avail with Him, except for those who He has granted permission,” (Qur’an 34:22-23).

After discussing 4 kind of Shirk, let’s discuss categories of Shirk.

Major Shirk(Shirk ul Akbar), Minor Shirk (Shirk ul Asghar), Hidden Shirk (Shirk ul Khaafee) and Obvious Shirk (Shirk ul Jalee).

Major Shirk: Committing this Shirk puts one beyond the pale of Islam. It is totally opposite of Tawheed.

Minor Shirk: Minor Shirk does not make it’s doer a Disbeliever, but it is still a major sin and his concept and belief in Tawheed becomes weak. If not controlled, it can easily lead one to Major Shirk.

Hidden Shirk: These shirk is very dangerous, because it is not obvious and person doesn’t even know he is committing Shirk, it is generally happens when someone forgets the consent of Allah, to show off and to act hypocritically or to give importance to satisfying the desires of the soul. It can also happen when people give too much importance to beings, which function as a means in the creation of the things, and to think that they have the power to influence. Another kind of hidden Shirk, which is veiled; it takes place in the realm of feelings and heart, not in the realm of deeds. To give too much importance to causes/means is also regarded as hidden Shirk.

Obvious/open Shirk: This kind of Shirk is very obvious, like partnership in Allah’s divinity, prostration to humans dead or alive, asking dead people for help and blessings from them etc.

Bottom Line: Shirk in Al-Iraadaat [desires] and in An-Niyyaat [intentions] then [verily] it is an ocean of which there are NO shores, and very few are successful [in not drowning in it] from it, and whoever desires with his actions [from his acts of worship] other than the Face of Allah and intends [by it] something other than seeking nearness to Him [Allah] and seeks a reward from it, then he has committed shirk in his niyyah [intention] and his Iraada[desire], and Al-Ikhlaas [having sincerity in worship to Allah only] is that one sincerely devotes his Af'aal [actions] and Aqwaal [statements] and his Iraadah[purpose/desire] and his Niyyah [intention] for the sake of Allah only then this is the religion of Ibraheem [alayhi salam] that which Allah commanded all His servants with, and nothing other than it [Al-Islaam] shall be accepted from anyone [except Islaam] Just as Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.

[Q 3:85]

Reasons why people commit Shirk:

There are several reasons why people commit Shirk: Here are few listed.

- 1) Giving up on Allah's Mercy.
- 2) Shaitan's trick of whispering in people's heart and convincing them that they have committed so much sins that Allah will never forgive them, so they should call pious and righteous people for their intercession with Allah.
- 3) Wrong concept of Intercession with Allah by his pious/Righteous slaves.
- 4) Exaggeration of devotion and love with religious personalities like Prophet of Allah, saints or Angeles. Like Christians do with Prophet Essa (Jesus).
- 5) Ignorance about true faith of Islam.

6) Prejudice and following blindly their ancestor's beliefs and actions. Just like Allah mentions in Quran (Surah Baqara, Aya 170) وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُم اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَوْا كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئاً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah has revealed." They reply: "Nay! We will follow what our forefathers practiced. Well! Even if their forefathers had no sense at all and lacked guidance?."

7) Not pondering /critical thinking on Allah's signs in this world and on Quranic Ayats.

8) Becoming too much impress/love, involvement in worldly technological advancement, its culture etc and started thinking this is all due to human endeavor and power thus forgetting Allah. (Who is the real Owner, Granter of knowledge and resources). Because of this phenomenon they started loving and respecting human beings and started relying on worldly resources more than Allah. Like Allah mentions in Quran 28/78 that Qaroon said about all his wealth "All that I have been given is by virtue of the knowledge that I possess".

9) Most of the households including Muslim families are far away in guiding their lineage to the correct faith. As Prophet (SAW) said every child is born on "Fitra" (correct Islamic faith), but it is up to parents that they make him, polytheist, Christian or Jew (Bukhari #1292, Muslim #2658).

10) Extreme form of veneration of the Prophet or Messengers, righteous personalities.

11) Intentional innovations. Any innovation if not corrected can lead to Shirk unintentionally.

12) In Muslim world, educational institutions and Media is not performing their role correctly, in fact they are part of problem in promoting Shirk.

13) The major reason People commit Shirk, when he thinks he can obtain benefit. This benefit must be one of these four characteristics. A) His deity is the owner of what he wants, B) If not owner then he believes that it is an associate to [or has a share with] the owner. C) If he doesn't believe to be an associate then he

believes that it is an aid or assistant to the owner. D) If not aid then he believes to be an intercessor with the owner. Quran has clearly negated these assumptions in clear terms in different Ayats. See Surah “Saba, Ayats 22-23.

Remedy to avoid Shirk:

- 1) Fully understand Shirk, its types, categories and possible reasons then Ask forgiveness with sincerity of his heart from Allah (SWT) and do his best effort not to commit again in life.
- 2) Consistently ask the Dua (Supplication) with Allah to help him avoid Shirk as taught by our beloved Prophet (SAW):

DUA FOR PROTECTION FROM SHIRK

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Shall I not teach you something which if you say will eliminate minor or major shirk (polytheism)?

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَشْرِكَ بِكَ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا أَعْلَمُ

Allahumma inni a`udhu bika an ushrika bika wa ana a`lamu wa astaghfiruka lima la a`lamu

(O Allah I seek refuge in You from knowingly associating partners with You, and I seek Your forgiveness for that which I do not know)

Al-Adab al-Mufrad 716 (Sahih- al-Albani)

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- 3) Must study Quran (with its meaning and explanation [Tafseer])
- 4) Read/learn life of Prophet (SAW) (Seerah and Ahadiths)

5) Before doing any good action, check and correct your intention that it is for the sake of Allah only.

6) Must offset any attribute of shirk with Tawheed so as to eliminate it, for instance one should counter (any feeling of ostentation/showing off with sincerity, devoting one's intention to Allah (SWT) ONLY.

7) Keep good deeds hidden as much as possible. (One thumb of rule is, do all obligatory (Fariad) deeds openly and all non obligatory (Nawafil) i.e Sadaqat, nawafil prayers, fasting etc secretly)

8) Must counteract any corruption in intent with its immediate reform by repentance, sincere and firm intention not to repeat it.

9) Oppose Shirk and all that entails, whenever it is possible with passion, logic and sound knowledge.

10) Avoid all kinds of innovation (Bidah), as it can lead to Shirk very easily.

11) Dissociate yourself from the company of polytheists and from people who are involve in innovation in religion.

12) Be loyal to Muslims who are staunch in their [belief in] Tawheed, unite with them, keep their company and support them against the polytheist, indeed, one's love for believers and hatred toward disbeliever (only in the matter of religion and belief, not as human beings) is the criterion for knowing the faithfulness. The Prophet (SAW) said that anyone who loves, hates, gives and withholds for the sake of Allah has perfected his faith (Abu Dawood).

Note: I am leaving up to our learned reader to apply what kind of shirk (Major/Minor, Open/Hidden) on the examples given above in the article. Some examples are very obvious about major and open Shirk, rest which is minor and hidden, is depends on your or scholars interpretation. But the goal is to avoid all regardless, but minor Shirk can easily lead to Major Shirk and take one out from the fold of Islam.

Please make a sincere Repentance (right now after reading this article) to Allah (SWT) for your previous shirk you committed knowingly or unknowingly and firm commitment not to do it again and May Allah guide you to right path and help you in understanding and avoiding shirk at all cost. Remember door of Repentance from any sin is open until visible sign of death appears. You never know when your time is up in this world without any warning at all, so do it right now.

May Allah give us understanding of all kind of Shirk, save us from committing any kind of shirk knowingly or unknowingly. Please spread /share this article about Shirk to everywhere you can, this is the best Sadaqa Jaria (continuous charity) you can have In Shaa Allah. Also please share my website with your friend, family members thru any means [social media, emails, Whatsapp, Twitter, face book, snap chat etc] and become soldier of our beloved Prophet, who mandated us to spread the message of Islam, Quran and his sunnah after his departure from this world.