

الشرك وأنواعه

THE MANY SHADES OF SHIRK

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FOREWORD



Suppose you have set forth on a long and hazardous journey which takes you to an unpopulated land where even the basic necessities of life are scarce and where your search for food and water is in vain. At the moment of acute despair, a magnificent palace looms up in front of you. A man at its gate beckons you inside and invites you to a delicious meal. Without having to pay a penny you are then offered a room for as long as you like. You would naturally wonder at the identity of the person who has been so generous and hospitable to you. It would be the height of ingratitude not to wish to meet your benefactor and thank him wholeheartedly.

This is, in fact, the story of man and his Creator, Allâh, the Master and Sustainer of the entire universe. We live in the beautiful world that He has created, and we enjoy the innumerable comforts and joys with which He has surrounded us. Is it then not our duty to recognize Him, praise Him and thank Him?

To understand Allâh the Almighty in a manner that suits His Glory and Greatness is *Tawheed* (Oneness of Allâh). To be His obedient servant throughout our lives is only the minimum demonstration of our deep gratitude and debt to Him. Unfortunately, mankind has repeatedly deviated from the path of *Tawheed*, and *Shirk* (associating



**IN THE NAME OF ALLÂH,
THE MOST GRACIOUS,
THE MOST MERCIFUL**

Chapter 1

THREE FORMS OF WORSHIP



Each religion has some practices and procedures that are called worship. Worship can be oral, physical or monetary.

Oral worship is to pray to someone, appeal to someone when in need, to chant someone's name in reverence, to address someone as the fulfiller of all needs and the helper of all those in distress, to swear an oath in someone's name, to believe that someone has the power to forgive.

Physical worship includes to prostrate or bow down to someone, to direct your life in obedience to someone's command for their pleasure and reward, to print or engrave the name or symbol of someone on your body or possessions in order to be blessed for it.

Monetary worship is to give charity in the name of someone, to harvest some land or rear an animal that has been dedicated to someone; to make a pilgrimage to a place connected with that being in order to worship and rejoice thereby decorating the place, offering sacrifices and gifts, considering the water there to be blessed and the environment to be sacred.

Allâh alone deserves to be worshipped and revered. Islam considers all the above to be legitimate forms of worship, but maintains that Allâh alone should be the object of this worship. Except for Islam, all other religions have made room for the worship of beings others than Allâh. History shows that man-made worship has not been confined to that of statues and pictures of ancestors only but has taken many different forms, some of which will be elucidated in the following pages.

COMMON FORMS OF MAN-MADE GODS



In his ignorance, man has given many things the status of deities, some of the most famous of which are the following:

1. **Objects of Nature.** Man has worshipped beautiful stones, useful or ferocious animals, the solid trees, towering mountains, flowing streams, volcanoes, even dreadful diseases, the sun, the stars and other planets.
2. **The Noble Prophets.** The disbelieving Arabs used to worship Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmail) (عليهما السلام), the Jews worshipped Prophets Ya'qoub (Jacob) and Uzair (Ezra) (عليهما السلام), and the Christians worshipped Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) (عليه السلام).
3. Some have worshipped jinns and demons in their ignorance.

﴿بَلْ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ الْجِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ بِهِمْ مُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ [سبأ: ٤١]

“Indeed they worshipped the jinn and many of them had faith in them.” (Surah Saba:41)

4. **Kings and Sultans.** In India, China and Japan, emperors and rulers have been worshipped for centuries. Hindus believe that the body of the king is made from heavenly clay and so worshipping it brings divine pleasure.
5. **Angels.** Arab non-believers used to consider angels to be the daughters of God and so made them an object of worship.

﴿وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يَقُولُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ أَهْتُولَاءُ لِأَكَرُّ كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ﴾

[سبأ: ٤٠]

“On that Day He will gather them all and will ask the angels: Are these the people who used to worship you?” (Saba: 40)

6. **Pious Ancestors.** The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “These people were such that if there was a pious man among them who died, they built a mosque on his grave and made statues of him in it. These people will be the most despised people on the Day of Judgment.” Narrated by Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai and Ahmad. The next obvious step was to worship the statues themselves rather than the people they represented.

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ عَازَرَ اتَّخِذْ أَصْنَامًا آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَاكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾ [الأنعام: ٧٤]

“And when Ibrahim said to his father Azar — do you take statues as your gods? Indeed I see you and your tribe in clear ignorance.” (Surah Al-An‘âm:74)

Worshipping the graves of honoured elders is still common today, even among Muslims, despite the punishment that it entails. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “Allâh has cursed the Jews and the Christians because they turned the graves of their Prophets into mosques.” (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad)

Honouring the relics of ancestors and sacrificing to them is prevalent among Hindus, Buddhists and Christians.

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَفَقَةُ وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النَّصَبِ﴾ [المائدة: ٣]

Forbidden to you (for food) are: *Al-Maitah* (the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allâh’s Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allâh, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by