

FORMS OF MINOR SHIRK

1. To swear by a name other than Allah's: The instances of this are swearing by father and mother or by one's country and nation or by any name other than Allah's. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) was moving along with his Companion, when he heard Hadrat Umar (*RadhiAllahu Anhu*) swearing by his father. The Messenger of Allah said Allah has forbidden swearing by one's father. If, one has to swear, he must swear by the name of Allah, otherwise, he should keep quiet (Muslim). At another place Allah's messenger (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said " If one has to swear he must swear by the name of Allah". (Muslim) Once Hadrat Ibn Umar heard somebody swearing by Ka'ba. He objected and told him to swear only by the name of Allah. I heard the Messenger of Allah saying that one who swore by someone other than Allah he committed *shirk* or *kufr* (Tirmidhi, Nasai). He said if one wants to swear by Ka'ba he should use these words: I swear by the Lord of Ka'ba (**Ahmad**).

2. Such sayings as "If Allah wills and if you will", or "If there were no Allah and no you", or "If here were no Allah and no so and so". All these are instances of minor shirk. Once the Messenger of Allah heard somebody saying: "If Allah and you will". He told him that he had made the prophet co-equal of Allah. Don't say like this but say only "If Allah wills" (Ahmad). As narrated by Hadrat Hudhaifah, the Messenger of Allah said: Don't say: "If Allah and so and so wills" but say: "If Allah wills and after Him so and so wills" (Abu Dawood). In the first instance, the will of Allah is equated with the will of the creature but in the second instance the will of the creature is subordinate to the will of Allah. Obviously, the first instance is void and should be avoided.

3. Riya [Hypocrisy]: The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) has declared *riya* [Hypocrisy or duplicity] as a minor *shirk*. Although its practitioner is not excluded from the community of faith yet the reward of his deed becomes less and if it becomes a persistent habit all of one's deeds go in waste. The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) once said: O people may I warn you against the risk of minor *shirk*? The people inquired what is minor

shirk? He replied: It is *riya* [doing something to show off]. On the Day of Judgment, when, Allah will compensate all for their deeds, He will say to the hypocrites: Go back to the world and show off your deeds to whom you did for, then to see and tell me if, they can reward you for them (Ahmad, Tibrani, Bihaqi). It is narrated through Hadrat Anas (RadhiAllahu Anhu) that the Messenger of Allah said: On the Day of Resurrection the deeds of mankind will be presented before Allah in sealed books. Allah will then decree that reject the deeds of so and so and accept the deeds of so and so. The angels would say: By you our Lord we did not see on his part except righteousness. Allah would then say his deeds were meant not to seek my pleasure. Today, I will accept only those deeds, which were performed to seek my pleasure (Al-Bazzar). A man came to the Messenger of Allah and said: A man fights with the intention of getting booty; a second man fights to secure fame; and a third one fights to raise his status. O Messenger of Allah who of them will be regarded as a fighter in the way of Allah? The Prophet replied that one who fights for raising the word of Allah aloft will be considered a fighter in the way of Allah (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

4. Wearing of Rings, Threads and Amulets: Those, who wear such items in the hope that they will protect them from harm, or give them some benefit or ease their difficulties are indulging in *shirk*. Because in all such cases they expect benefit or harm from sources other than God Almighty. Therefore, it will be considered as *shirk*.

Allah declares:

﴿وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾
 الأنعام: ١٧

(Translation of meaning) [“If Allah does subject you to any harm there is nobody to remove it except Him. And if he does subject you to any good then He has full control over everything” [Al-An’am: 17)].

The Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: Anybody, who wears an amulet commits *shirk* (Ahmad, Hakim).

It is narrated though Hadrat Imran Bin Haseen that once the Messenger of Allah (sallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) saw a person wearing a copper ring. He asked what it is. He said I have worn it to lessen my weakness.

The Prophet said: Remove it. It will only increase your weakness (Ibn Majah). Once Hadrat Hudhifah Bin Al-Yaman went to visit a patient. A thread was tied on his hand to ward off fever. He cut out that thread and then recited this verse of the Quran:

﴿ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴾ يوسف: ١٠٦

(Translation of meaning) [“most of them believe in Allah but at the same time they take his co-partners” (Yusuf: 106)].

5. Releasing Birds for Taking Omens: It was a habit of the pagans to take an omen before doing anything. For this purpose they released birds or used certain instruments. Before them Bani Israil did likewise. When something good happened they said it is because of us and deserve it. But when something bad happened they imputed it to the curse of Hadrat Musa and the believers. The Prophet of God has prohibited the taking of omens. The Prophet has made it clear that to believe that bad omen affects any work is tantamount to shirk. He also said "if somebody keeps away from doing something because of a bad omen he has committed shirk". The people inquired what its atonement is. He replied: One must pray “O Allah what good is delivered from Your side that is the real good. No bird flies but with Your will and there is none worthy of worship but You (Ahmad). On another occasion he declared the releasing of birds to take omens as shirk (Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi). However, the Prophet has encouraged pronouncing good omens. Once he said: What a good omen is this! People inquired what omen. He said: Good words (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). A true believer always acts out what he wills relying on God Almighty true to this divine dictum:

﴿ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ ﴾ الطلاق: ٣

(Translation of meaning) [“And one who relies on Allah He is enough for him” (At-Talaq: 3)].

The might of Allah and a believer's unshakable reliance on Allah becomes the base of his endeavours and source of his strength. Full reliance on Allah keeps him away from shirk.

6. The Forbidden Blowing and Amulets: These are of the innumerable forms of shirk. During the Age of Ignorance and even today people use pagan formulas, unintelligible chanting, blowing, amulets and threads

to treat various afflictions. Islam has categorically prohibited such irrational practices. All this amounts to *shirk* because in all such forms the aid is sought from other than Allah. They represent satanic designs and must be avoided. Once, Hadrat Abdullah Bin Masud saw a thread hanging from the neck of his wife. He inquired what it was. She said a protection. Hadrat Abdullah cut it out and said the household of Abdullah is immune from *shirk*. I heard the Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) as saying these amulets and blowing is *shirk* (Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah).

However, if amulets contain solely the names of Allah or verses from holy Quran then its wearing is allowed as in this case recourse is made to Allah and He is the source of all remedy for all afflictions. Moreover, whatever effect such instruments may have will be due to the permission and command of Allah.

7. Seeking Refuge in other than Allah: The pagans of ancient Arabia used to seek refuge in the jinn as they thought they could protect them from calamities and troubles. Dismissing it Allah says:

﴿وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا﴾ ^٦ الجين:

(Translation of meaning) [“And verily, there were people from the humankind seeking refuge in people from the Jinn and thereby they increased their [Jinn’s] arrogance” (Al-Jinn: 6).

8. Taking of Vows for other than Allah: Taking vows is one of the matters connected with devotion and worship. This is not permissible at all except in relation to Allah. Those who make vows before anyone else are guilty of committing *shirk*. Allah has pronounced:

﴿يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا﴾ ^٧ الدهر:

(Translation of meaning) [“And they fulfil their vows fearing that Day whose horror will be ubiquitous” (Ad-Dahr: 7)]. In another place He said:

﴿وَمَا أَنفَقْتُمْ مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ﴾ ^{٢٧٠} البقرة:

(Translation of meaning) [“And what amount you spent [in charity] and what vows you took Allah knows them all” (Al-Baqarah: 270)].

All forms of vows which are before anyone other than God are null and void. For instance, taking of vows on the graves of those who are dead. People say that if such and such of my wishes is granted I shall fulfil my vow. This is absolutely void. Anybody who indulges in it is guilty of committing shirk. Allah has declared it *haram*. Allah's messenger said " Whoever vows to obey Allah, then he should obey Him, but he who vows to disobey Allah, should not disobey Him. (Al-Bukhari, Abu Daood, Timrizi, Nisai, Ibne Majah)

9. Slaughtering for other than Allah: During the days of ignorance, pagans used to slaughter animals for other than Allah. Islam forbade it, because slaughtering is an act of worship by which nearness to Allah is sought, so how can it be allowed for other than Allah. Anyone who does so, commits an act of shirk. Allah made it haram (unlawful) for us:

He declared:

﴿ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ لَغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ﴾ المائدة: ٣

(Translation of meaning) [*“Forbidden for you is the flesh of dead animals, the blood, pork, and whatever is slaughtered in the name or for any but Allah. In another place it is said:*

﴿ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ ﴾ الكوثر: ٢

(Translation of meaning) [*“So pray to your Creator and sacrifice [your cattle]” (Al-Kauthar: 2).*

He added further:

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ لا شريك له، وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ

الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ الأنعام: ١٦٢ - ١٦٣

(Translation of meaning) [*“Say: Verily, my prayer, my rituals, and my life and death are for the sake of Allah the Creator of the worlds. There is no co-partner of Him. And I have been ordered to do it and I am the first of the submitters” (Al-An'am: 162-163).*

The faith of Islam is very sensitive in respect of shirk. It prohibits from all actions which could a semblance of shirk. It, therefore, prescribes keeping of distance from places where there is a risk of encroachment of shirk. During the life-time of the Prophet a person vowed that he will

sacrifice a camel at Bawanah [a place little far from the Ka'ba]. He sought the permission of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet inquired whether any idol was worshipped at that place during the Age of Ignorance [*Jahiliyyah*]. The people said no idol was worshipped there. Then he asked again whether any festival was held at that place. The people said no. Then the Prophet said: Fulfil your vows. No doubt, one should not fulfil a vow against God's commands nor any which is beyond his capacity (Abu Dawood).

10. Visiting Fortune-Tellers, Palmists and Astrologers: The fortune-tellers, palmists and astrologers claim to have the knowledge of the future and the unseen. Ignorant people think they do have the knowledge of the unseen and the occult. However, as a matter of fact, only God Almighty possesses the knowledge of the unseen. Thus it is regarded as *shirk* if somebody believes that any human person has the knowledge of the unseen. The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said if any person goes to an astrologer to know about his future God Almighty declines to accept his *salat* for forty days (Muslim). The Prophet added further that if somebody goes to a fortune-teller or astrologer and believes him to be true then he refutes what has been revealed to Muhammad (Ahmad, Hakim). About the knowledge of the occult Allah declares:

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِيحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ﴾ [الأنعام: ٥٩]

(Translation of meaning) [*“And with Him are the keys of the unseen which nobody knows except Him” (Al-An'am: 59)*].

In another place it is declared:

﴿عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ۝ إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ۝﴾ [الجن: ٢٦ - ٢٧]

[*“He is the knower of the unseen and He does not reveal his unseen to anybody except to his messengers whom He likes and he walks with protectors in front and behind of him” (Al-Jinn: 26-27)*].

The pagans also believed that the Jinn possessed the knowledge of the unseen. Allah has refuted it by saying:

﴿ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ أَنْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ﴾ (سبأ: ١٤)

(Translation of meaning) [“So when [Solomon] collapsed, the Jinn became aware that had they known the unseen they would not have suffered the ignominious travails” (Saba: 14)].

Even the apostles of God do not have the absolute knowledge of the occult. Allah declared:

﴿ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَأَسْتَكْثَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ (الأعراف: ١٨٨)

(Translation of meaning) [“(The Prophet said) Had I the knowledge of the occult I would have maximized my benefit and no hardship would have touched me. I am nothing but a warner and annunciator for the folks who believe” (Al-A’raf: 188)].

11. Magic and Sorcery: So far as the learning and application of magic and sorcery is concerned it is the opinion of the community of theologians that it is *haram*.
