

**Title:** Explaining Shirk: The Greatest Sin

**Original Title:** شرح ثلاثة الأصول، كتاب التوحيد، الإرشاد إلى صحيح الاعتقاد

**Original Authors:** Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān

E X P L A I N I N G  
**Shirk**  
T H E G R E A T E S T S I N

Compiled by:

Authentic-Translations.com<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article was compiled by Authentic-Translations.com, adapted from several books, the most notable: *Sharḥ Thalāthah al-Uṣūl* by Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* and *al-Irshād ilá Ṣaḥīḥ al-'Itiqād*, both by Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān. (**Translator:** Abu az-Zubayr Harrison)

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## WHAT IS SHIRK?

You may have already studied Tawḥīd. However, to truly understand Tawḥīd, its opposite, Shirk, must also be understood. The greatest thing Allah has commanded us to do is worship him alone, and the greatest sin he has forbidden is *Shirk* as he says:

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا﴾

**Worship Allah and do not make Shirk with anything along with him.<sup>2</sup>**

So what is Shirk? Shirk ( شِرْك ) is an Arabic word which means sharing something with others that only Allah deserves. Worshipping others along with Allah is the main type of Shirk. The verse above means we must worship Allah and only him. So whoever worships someone or something **instead** of Allah, he is a disbeliever in Allah who has refused to worship him alone. If someone worships him but also worships someone else **along with** Allah, he is still a disbeliever in Allah, and it is this person who makes Shirk. As for someone who worships Allah alone, he is a Muslim who sincerely believes in Tawḥīd.

Shirk is the greatest sin against Allah and he says about it:

﴿وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾

**And whoever makes Shirk with Allah has certainly made up a great sin.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> The Quran, Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:36

<sup>3</sup> Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:48

Shirk is also the worst of all major sins. Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) once asked his companions:

« أَلَا أُنبِئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكَبَائِرِ »

Should I tell you the greatest of all major sins?

His companions said, “Of course, messenger of Allah.” He then said:

« الْإِشْرَاقُ بِاللَّهِ وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَشَهَادَةُ الزُّورِ أَوْ قَوْلُ الزُّورِ »

Making Shirk with Allah, disobeying parents, and lying.

He was laying back when he said that, but then he sat up and began repeating that over and over because of how serious Shirk and those other major sins are in Islam.<sup>4</sup>

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was also asked, “What is the greatest sin?” He answered:

« أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدًّا وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ »

That you make something equal to Allah while he is the (only) one who created you.<sup>5</sup>

Making someone or something equal to Allah is Shirk. It is to belittle Allah, believing him to be less than he is while believing others are equal to him. About this, Allah says:

<sup>4</sup> Recorded by Muslim

<sup>5</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

﴿الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرْبُّهُمْ يَعْدِلُونَ﴾

**Those who disbelieve think others are equal to their Lord.<sup>6</sup>**

Even though Allah lets people choose to make Shirk and believe others are equal to him, he does not like it and forbids us from doing so:

﴿فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

**So do not make anything equal with Allah while you know (that he alone should be worshipped).<sup>7</sup>**

Shirk is also to deny the very reason Allah created us which was to worship him alone as he says:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾

**I only created Jinn and people to worship me.<sup>8</sup>**

So whoever worships others along with Allah, believing they deserve to be worshipped, they have made the creation equal to its creator. This is the worse comparison because it is to believe that people who are helpless and in need are equal to Allah, the one who is able to do anything and who needs nothing from any of his creation.

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<sup>6</sup> Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:1

<sup>7</sup> Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:22

<sup>8</sup> Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt, 51:56

Shirk is the greatest crime of injustice and unfairness. This is because the greatest rights are the rights Allah deserves. Yet when people make Shirk, they are refusing to give him what he deserves most - Tawḥīd. This is the greatest form of injustice and unfairness just like Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

**Shirk is certainly a great crime of injustice.<sup>9</sup>**

Shirk is also the greatest form of misguidance and straying from the right way of believing in Allah:

﴿ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴾

**And whoever makes Shirk with Allah has certainly gone far astray.<sup>10</sup>**

In short, Shirk is to share something that only Allah deserves with others such as worshipping others or describing others with Allah's descriptions. It is the greatest sin against Allah.

### Review

1. What is Allah's greatest command to us? (page 3)
2. What is the greatest sin against Allah? (page 3)
3. Explain in your own words the meaning of Shirk. (pages 3-6)



<sup>9</sup> Sūrah Luqmān, 31:13

<sup>10</sup> Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:116

## SHIRK IN TAWḤĪD OF LORDSHIP

If you learned about Tawḥīd, you may remember there are three main categories. Let us review the categories of Tawḥīd before moving on.

- 1. Tawḥīd of Lordship:** Allah is the only one who creates, owns, and controls everything.
- 2. Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions:** Allah is the only one who is described with his perfect names and descriptions.
- 3. Tawḥīd of Worship:** Allah is the only one who deserves worship.

Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship is to believe that others besides Allah create or share control over his creation. This belief means that someone other than Allah can make good things happen or keep bad things from happening.

One example of this type of Shirk is to believe something brings good luck. People often have “good luck” rings or similar items they believe will help good things happen to them. Others tie special strings around them or their children, believing that if they recite the Quran over the strings, they will protect from bad things happening. However, only Allah can protect us from bad things and we should only seek his protection in ways he mentions in the Quran or the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) taught us in the ḥadīth.

Another common example of Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship today is when people believe others like themselves who are created and have no control in Allah's universe can control what happens. Such people even wait until the ones they believe in are dead before worshipping them by praying to them. The act of praying to dead people is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Worship (which we will cover shortly), but the belief itself is also Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship because when people pray to dead people, they believe the souls of humans can control things in this life even after their death. This is completely wrong because the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) told us:

« إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ »

When a person dies, his actions come to an end except for (receiving rewards for) three things: continuous charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.<sup>11</sup>

While a person may still receive rewards from Allah for things he left behind after he died, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) clearly told us that after death, a human being's actions stop. So how can dead people control whether good and bad things happen in life when they are not even in life anymore? Still, some people continue to pray to the dead, asking for their help in changing events in this life although only Allah can do this.

Even if a dead person was a righteous worshipper of Allah, believing that dead people or anyone else controls things in this life is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship.

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<sup>11</sup> Recorded by Muslim

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## *Review*

1. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship? (page 7)
2. Give an example of Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship. (pages 7-8)



## SHIRK IN TAWḤĪD OF NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions is to believe that Allah is the only one who deserves to be described with perfect names and descriptions. Shirk in this category of Tawḥīd is to believe that Allah can be described with descriptions of the creation, or to believe that others besides Allah share in his descriptions. So believing that Allah is like his creation or that his creation is like Allah is Shirk.

### *Describing Allah with Descriptions of His Creation*

When people describe Allah with the descriptions of creation or they believe Allah is similar to people, they have made Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions. There are several ways this type of Shirk is made. One example is when people make statues or paintings of God, claiming they are images of Allah. By doing so, they have described Allah in the image or form of people although Allah says:

﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ﴾

**There is nothing like him.**<sup>12</sup>

Today, Christians fall into this type of Shirk when they believe Allah has a son. They believe the Messiah, Prophet Jesus the son of Mary, is his son. Allah knows they believe this and he says about this statement of Shirk and disbelief:

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<sup>12</sup> Sūrah al-Shūrā, 42:11

﴿ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا • لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا • تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا • أَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدًا • وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَنِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا • إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَنِ عَبْدًا ﴾

**And they say, “The Most-Merciful has a son.” You have said a terrible thing. The heavens are almost torn, the earth is split open, and the mountains almost fall in ruin because they claim the Most-Merciful has a son. But it is not suitable that the Most-Merciful has a son. There is no one in the heavens and earth except that will come to the Most-Merciful as a servant.<sup>13</sup>**

Allah explains who Prophet Jesus truly is:

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﴾

**The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah.<sup>14</sup>**

Another example of Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions is when many Jewish people claim that Allah likes the Jews more than all other people – just because they were born to a Jewish parent. This belief of theirs means that Allah is prejudice and unfair just like some people are, and this is describing Allah with descriptions of people.

<sup>13</sup> Sūrah Maryam, 19:88-93

<sup>14</sup> Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:171

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Our belief in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions is that Allah is not like his creation. He alone deserves the highest descriptions. When someone believes that Allah is like his creation, they have made Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions by giving Allah the descriptions of his creation.

### *Describing Creation with Allah's Descriptions*

The belief that created beings or things share Allah's names or descriptions is also Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions. This type of Shirk is when people raise other humans up to the level of Allah.

Today, some Christians describe people with Allah's descriptions. They believe Prophet Jesus or saints can hear their prayers while Allah alone is the All-Hearing. Some Christians even believe Jesus was Allah in the form of a man. This is a form of describing Allah with descriptions of people as well as describing the creation with the descriptions of Allah. About this statement of Shirk and disbelief, Allah says:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ﴾

**They have surely disbelieved who say, "Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary."<sup>15</sup>**

By believing that someone is nicer than Allah, more merciful, more forgiving, or treats others more fairly than Allah, this is giving created people Allah's descriptions and this is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions.

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<sup>15</sup> Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:72

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## **Review**

- 1. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions? (page 10)**
- 2. Give an example of Shirk by describing Allah with the descriptions of his creation. (pages 10-12)**
- 3. Give an example of Shirk by describing the creation with the descriptions only Allah deserves. (page 12)**



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## SHIRK IN TAWḤĪD OF WORSHIP

Tawḥīd of Worship means we believe Allah is the only one who deserves worship. Since Shirk is the opposite of Tawḥīd, Shirk in Tawḥīd of Worship is worshipping others along with Allah. We must never share our worship with other than Allah. There are two types of Shirk in this category: **Major Shirk** and **Minor Shirk**.

It is important to remember that both types of Shirk, major and minor, may be in other categories of Tawḥīd as well as Tawḥīd of Worship. We should not become overwhelmed or confused deciding if a statement or action is Shirk in this category of Tawḥīd or that one. Instead, we simply should concentrate on believing in, describing, and worshipping Allah alone as Islam instructs us. Still, we will discuss some differences between Major Shirk and Minor Shirk.

### *Major Shirk*

Major Shirk is any type of Shirk the Quran or the ḥadīth explains that whoever does it is not considered a Muslim, not within the religion of Islam, and is not a true believer in Allah. Major Shirk dooms the person to live in Hell forever if he does not stop making Major Shirk before he dies. Any form of worship that is done for other than Allah is Major Shirk, such as praying to others besides Allah or hoping for things from others that only Allah can give (e.g. forgiveness, Paradise, etc.).

A common example of Major Shirk is when people pray to other people such as prophets or visit the graves of saints, believing those people hear or answer prayers.

This form of Shirk is the greatest sin and the most unfair way to behave toward the Lord of all creation. We will mention some of the results of Major Shirk if a person dies while believing in it and doing acts of Major Shirk in worship.

### *Major Shirk Removes Hope of Entering Paradise*

Allah says about the punishment for someone who dies while making Major Shirk:

﴿ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ﴾

**Surely, whoever makes Shirk with Allah, Allah will make Paradise forbidden to him and his final home will be the fire.<sup>16</sup>**

### *Major Shirk Guarantees Entrance into the Fire*

The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said about someone who meets Allah while making Shirk:

« مَنْ لَقِيَ اللَّهَ لَا يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ ، وَمَنْ لَقِيَهِ يُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا دَخَلَ النَّارَ »

Whoever meets Allah without making Shirk with him will enter Paradise, and whoever meets him making Shirk with him will enter the fire.<sup>17</sup>

We will meet Allah when we die, and one of the most common ways people make Major Shirk is by praying to and calling upon someone other than Allah. For this reason, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) clearly said:

<sup>16</sup> Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5:72

<sup>17</sup> Recorded by Muslim

« مَنْ مَاتَ وَهُوَ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ نِدَاءً دَخَلَ النَّارَ »

Whoever dies while calling upon anything other than Allah, making them equal to Allah (in worship), he will enter the fire.<sup>18</sup>

### *Major Shirk Ruins All Good Deeds*

If someone makes Major Shirk, all their good deeds may be ruined and lost. Allah says:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

**And if they had made Shirk, whatever (good) they used to do would be ruined.**<sup>19</sup>

And he also says:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكَتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ  
وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴾

**It has been revealed to you and to those before you, if you make Shirk, your deeds will be ruined and you will certainly be among the losers.**<sup>20</sup>

### *Minor Shirk*

Minor Shirk is any type of saying or action that the Quran or ḥadīth describes as being Shirk but that the person who says or does it could still be considered a Muslim, still in

<sup>18</sup> Recorded by al-Bukhārī

<sup>19</sup> Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:88

<sup>20</sup> Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:65

Islam, and is still a believer in Allah. However, Minor Shirk does mean that the person's belief in Tawḥīd may be incorrect.

Some actions or statements are considered Minor Shirk. For example, saying something like, "If it was not for Allah and you, something bad would have happened!" Someone once said to Prophet Muhammad ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ ), "Whatever Allah wants and you want (to happen will happen)." The prophet ( ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ ) explained that such things are not correct to say; he said:

« أَجْعَلْتَنِي مَعَ اللَّهِ عَدْلًا؟ لَا بَلْ: مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ »

Have you made me an equal with Allah? No, instead say: "Whatever Allah alone wants (to happen will happen)."<sup>21</sup>

Some common superstitions are also Minor Shirk. For example, if someone believes Allah will allow bad things to happen if he does not wear a certain ring or hang verses from the Quran in his car, this is a form of Minor Shirk because Allah has not made those things ways to prevent bad things from happening. However, if someone believes those things themselves actually prevent bad things from happening instead of Allah, then this becomes Major Shirk. Such a wrong belief would then mean there are other things besides Allah that control creation.

Another form of Minor Shirk is harder to recognize. This type of "hidden Shirk" is in a person's intention, or the reason he does something. When someone does a good deed—which he should do for only Allah—yet he does his good deed just for people to

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<sup>21</sup> *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 139) by al-Albānī

think he is a good worshipper, this is a form of Minor Shirk. Examples of this may be if someone prays very well, raises his voice while remembering Allah or reading the Quran, or gives charity but he does so only for people to think and say good things about him. About this type of showing off, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« إِنَّ أَحْوَفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ الشُّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ »

The thing I fear for you the most is Minor Shirk.

His companions asked, “What is Minor Shirk, messenger of Allah?” He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) answered:

« الرِّيَاءُ ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ : إِذْهَبُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تُرَاوُونَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، فَانظُرُوا هَلْ تَجِدُونَ عِنْدَهُمْ جَزَاءً »

Showing off (*riyā*). Allah (عزَّ وجلَّ) will say, “Go to those you were showing off for during life and see if you can find any reward with them.”<sup>22</sup>

### *Minor Shirk Ruins Good Deeds Done for Showing Off*

Good deeds will not be accepted if they are done for anyone other than Allah. While Major Shirk ruins all a person's good deeds, Minor Shirk ruins only the deeds that were done for showing off. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says about this Shirk in intention:

« قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى : أَنَا أَعْنَى الشُّرْكَاءِ عَنِ الشُّرْكِ ، مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلًا أَشْرَكَ فِيهِ مَعِيَ غَيْرِي تَرَكْتُهُ وَشِرْكَهُ »

<sup>22</sup> Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Ṭabarānī, and al-Bayhaqī. al-Albānī said it is *ḥasan* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb wal-Tarhīb* (no. 36)

Allah (تبارك وتعالى) said, "I am in no need of Shirk. Whoever does a deed but does so for someone else besides me, I will reject him and his Shirk".<sup>23</sup>

One of the prophet's companions named Abū Mūsá al-'Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) said: The messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) once gave us a talk and said:

« أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ، اتَّقُوا هَذَا الشُّرْكَ فَإِنَّهُ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَيْبِ النَّمْلِ »

Oh people, be afraid of this Shirk because it is more hidden than a creeping ant.

While Major Shirk is much worse than Minor Shirk, both are sins against Allah. For this reason, we should stay away from all forms of Shirk because Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ ﴾

**Allah will not forgive that Shirk is made with him.**<sup>24</sup>

## Review

1. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Worship? (page 14)
2. What is Major Shirk? (page 14)
3. Give an example of Major Shirk. (pages 14-15)
4. How do we know Major Shirk removes hope of entering Paradise? (page 15)
5. How do we know Major Shirk guarantees entrance into the fire? (pages 15-16)
6. How do we know Major Shirk ruins all good deeds? (page 16)
7. What is Minor Shirk? (pages 16-17)

<sup>23</sup> Recorded by Muslim

<sup>24</sup> Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:48

**Title:** Explaining Shirk: The Greatest Sin

**Original Title:** شرح ثلاثة الأصول، كتاب التوحيد، الإرشاد إلى صحيح الإعتقاد

**Original Authors:** Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān

- 8. Give an example of Minor Shirk? (pages 17-18)**
- 9. How do we know Minor Shirk ruins any good deed that is done for showing off?  
(pages 18-19)**



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## REVIEWING SHIRK

1. What is Shirk? *(pages 3-6)*
2. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship? *(page 7)*
3. Give an example of Shirk in Tawḥīd of Lordship. *(pages 7-8)*
4. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Names and Descriptions? *(page 10)*
5. Give an example of Shirk by describing Allah with the descriptions of his creation. *(pages 10-12)*
6. Give an example of Shirk by describing the creation with the descriptions only Allah deserves. *(page 12)*
7. What is Shirk in Tawḥīd of Worship? *(page 14)*
8. What is Major Shirk? *(page 14)*
9. Give an example of Major Shirk. *(pages 14-15)*
10. What are some results for someone who dies making Major Shirk? *(pages 15-16)*
11. What is Minor Shirk? *(pages 16-17)*
12. Give an example of Minor Shirk? *(pages 17-18)*



## C O N C L U S I O N

We do not study Tawḥīd and Shirk simply to memorize detailed categories and types of Shirk. We learn Tawḥīd for the purpose of getting closer to Allah by believing in and worshipping him in the way he wants. And we do so only to make him happy with the hope of achieving his forgiveness and entering his Paradise. Similarly, we learn Shirk so we know what beliefs, statements, and actions make Allah unhappy. Remember, while learning the details of Tawḥīd and Shirk may help us know what Allah wants from us, he did not make our religion difficult upon us, he simply instructed us to:

﴿وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا﴾

**Worship Allah and do not make Shirk with anything along with him.**<sup>25</sup>

The important thing to remember is that Allah is the only Lord, the only creator, owner, and controller of everything and everyone in the universe. He is the only one who we describe with the names and descriptions of perfection and we truly believe Allah is not like his creation and his creation is not like him. Allah tells us:

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

**There is nothing equal or comparable to him.**<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Sūrah al-Nisā, 4:36

<sup>26</sup> Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, 112:4

Because we believe Allah is the only Lord and only he deserves the highest descriptions, it only makes sense that we worship him and no one else. So do not let your study of Tawḥīd and Shirk become difficult or confusing. By simply reading about this knowledge, you have taken steps to get closer to Allah. Read what Allah says about those who try to come closer to Allah and those who avoid Shirk:

« وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي شِبْرًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ ذِرَاعًا ، وَمَنْ تَقَرَّبَ مِنِّي ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ مِنْهُ بَاعًا ، وَمَنْ أَتَانِي يَمْشِي أَتَيْتُهُ هَرْوَلَةً ، وَمَنْ لَقِينِي بِقُرَابِ الْأَرْضِ خَطِيئَةً لَا يُشْرِكُ بِي شَيْئًا ، لَقَيْتُهُ بِمِثْلِهَا مَغْفِرَةً »

“Whoever comes close to me a hand-span, I will come close to him an arm’s length; and whoever comes close to me an arm’s length, I will come close to him the distance of two outstretched arms. Whoever comes to me walking, I will come to him running. And whoever meets me with the earth full of sins but does not make Shirk in anything with me, I will meet him with as much forgiveness.”<sup>27</sup>



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<sup>27</sup> Recorded by Muslim

## A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM SHIRK

The prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) once said:

« الشُّرْكُ فِيكُمْ أَخْفَى مِنْ دَيْبِ النَّمْلِ ، وَسَادُّكَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ إِذَا فَعَلْتَهُ أَذْهَبَ  
عَنْكَ صِغَارَ الشُّرْكِ وَكِبَارَهُ ، تَقُولُ : اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أُشْرِكَ بِكَ وَأَنَا  
أَعْلَمُ ، وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا أَعْلَمُ »

Shirk among you is more hidden than a creeping ant, but I will guide you to something that, if you do it, will remove from you Minor Shirk and its Major type. You should say, “Oh Allah, I ask for your protection from making Shirk with you while I know, and I ask your forgiveness for what I do not know.”<sup>28</sup>

Because our belief in Tawḥīd is that Allah is the only one who can help us and we only pray to him, we understand that only he can help us stay away from Shirk completely. Because of this, the prophet ( صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ) taught us to ask his protection from knowingly making Shirk in belief, statement, or action. We must also ask for his forgiveness if we happen to make a mistake by believing, saying, or doing anything that is Shirk that we may not know.

To help memorize this very important prayer our messenger gave us, use the memorization chart on the next page.

<sup>28</sup> al-Albānī said it is authentic in *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḡīr wa Ziyādah* (no. 6044)

A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM SHIRK

Memorization Chart

1	اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ
	Allāhumma innī, aū'dhu bika
	Oh Allah, I ask for your protection
2	أَنْ أُشْرِكَ بِكَ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ
	an ushrika bika wa ana 'alam
	from making Shirk with you while I know,
3	وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ لِمَا لَا أَعْلَمُ
	wa astaghfiruka limā lā 'alam
	and I ask your forgiveness for what I do not know.