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Explanation of “The Four Rules Regarding Shirk”

Of the Imaam and Mujaddid
- Muhammad bin ‘Abdil-Wahhaab -

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About the Book: Before you is a complete translation of a treatise written by Imaam Muhammad bin ‘Abdil-Wahhaab, “*Al-Qawaa’id-ul-Arba’ah*”, with an explanation by Dr. Muhammad bin ‘Abdir-Rahmaan Al-Khumayyis. The treatise, along with its explanation, was printed in a larger book: “*Jam’-ul-Funoon fee Sharh Jumlati Mutoon Li’Aqaa’id Ahlis-Sunnah ‘alal-Madhaahib-il-Arba’ah*” [A Compilation of Explanations of Treatises on the Creed of Ahlus-Sunnah according to the Four Madh-habs] by Daar Ilaaf Publishers. The treatise was then printed as a separate booklet in order to spread the benefit and facilitate the knowledge for readers.

The treatise “*Al-Qawaa’id-ul-‘Arba’ah*” [The Four Rules regarding Shirk] is well known throughout the Muslim world and needs no introduction. It is a basic discussion that provides fundamental principles regarding Shirk. Although short in size, it is an extremely valuable source of knowledge and a must-read for all students desiring to further their understanding of Islaam.

The commentator, Muhammad bin ‘Abdir-Rahmaan Al-Khumayyis, has added summaries and several test questions at the end of each section, in order to facilitate the study of the material for the readers and students.

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INTRODUCTION

I ask Allaah, the Most Generous, Lord of the Great Throne to befriend you in this world and the Hereafter, and to make you blessed wherever you may be. And (I ask) that He make you from those who when they are given, are thankful; when they are tested, are patient; and when they sin, seek forgiveness (from Allaah). For indeed these three characteristics are the true signs of happiness.

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

yatawallaaka (He befriend you) meaning that He take you as a friend (*walee*) through (His) love, granting of success and guidance.

Explanation:

The author has begun by supplicating and asking Allaah, the Most Generous, Lord of the Great Throne, to befriend the one who reads this book in this world and the Hereafter. As for befriending him in this worldly life, then it is by loving him, guiding him, directing him and assisting him. And as for befriending him in the Hereafter, then it is by showing him mercy and forgiveness, protecting him from the Hellfire and admitting him into Paradise. Then he also supplicates that he be blessed wherever he may be, and that Allaah make him fulfill the meaning of servitude, as well as its stations, which are three:

First: Being thankful for His Blessing. This is at the time when He gives it, as Allaah says:

أَعْمَلُواْ عَالِ دَاوُدَ وَدَّ شُكْرًا

“Work you, O family of Dawood, with thanks!” [Surah Saba: 13]

And Allaah says:

وَإِن تَشْكُرُواْ يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ

“And if you are grateful, He will be pleased therewith for you.” [Surah Az-Zumar: 7]

And He says:

وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ

“And give thanks to Me and do not disbelieve.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 152]

Being thankful for Allaah’s Blessing is shown through the heart by way of affirming, acknowledging and showing gratitude. And it is shown through the tongue by way of speaking about the blessing and praising it. And it is shown through the limbs by way of acting in accordance with what pleases Allaah.

Second: Being patient during tribulations, hard times and with the things that one hates, which befall the people as a test and examination from Allaah. What is obligatory in these situations is that one have patience. Patience means suppressing the heart from being displeased and from despairing; suppressing the tongue from complaining; and suppressing the limbs from those acts that negate and contradict patience. Allaah says:

وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ

“And bear with patience whatever befalls you.” [Surah Luqmaan: 17]

And He says:

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

“And give glad tidings to those who are patient.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 155]

Third: Seeking forgiveness after committing a sin. This is since all of the Son of Aadam (i.e. humans) are sinners. But what is obligatory upon mankind when they should fall into sin is to rush to ask for forgiveness and repentance, as Allaah says:

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا
لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“And those who when they commit some immoral act (i.e. fornication) or wrong themselves with evil, remember Allaah and so seek (His) forgiveness for their

sins. And who is it that forgives sins except Allaah? And they do not persist knowingly in what sins they committed (after that).” [Surah Aali ‘Imraan: 135]

So these are the three characteristics: Being thankful for (Allaah’s) Blessing, being patient during times of tribulation, and seeking forgiveness after committing a sin.

Whoever fulfills all of these will no doubt be from those who will experience happiness. In fact, happiness is linked to these three characteristics more than any others. All of them contain the meanings of Tawheed, submission, compliance and acceptance from Allaah.

SECTION ONE: THE FOUNDATION OF AL-HANEEFIYYAH, THE RELIGION OF IBRAAHEEM

Know, may Allaah grant you the ability to obey Him, that the *Haneefiyyah*, the religion of Ibraaheem is that you worship Allaah alone, making the Religion sincere for only Him, as Allaah says: “**And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me.**” [Surah Adh-Dhaariyaat: 56]

So when you come to realize that Allaah created you in order to worship Him, then know that worship is not called worship unless it is accompanied by Tawheed, just as prayer is not called that unless it is accompanied by (ritual) purity. So if Shirk (mixing partners) enters into one’s worship, it ruins it, just like impurity when it enters into the (ritual) purity.

So when you come to realize that Shirk – when mixed into one’s worship – spoils it, invalidates one’s actions, and makes the person who possesses it into one who will reside eternally in the Hellfire, you will know that the most important thing that is binding upon you is to gain knowledge of that, so that perhaps Allaah may absolve you from this trap, which is ascribing partners to Allaah (i.e. Shirk) about which Allaah said: “**Verily, Allaah does not forgive that partners be ascribed to Him in worship, but He forgives what is less than that to whom He wills.**” [Surah An-Nisaa: 116] This can be achieved by knowing Four Rules that Allaah has mentioned in His Book.

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

Al-Haneefiyyah comes from Haneef, which is someone that turns away from Shirk while being firmly established upon Tawheed; *ahbata* (invalidates) nullifies; *maa doona dhaalik* (what is less than that) i.e. what is less than Shirk such as sins and so on.

Explanation:

The Shaikh, may Allaah have mercy on him, began by clarifying the foundation of Al-Haneefiyyah, which is the upright religion of Ibraaheem. Its basis is found in what Allaah has stated, calling the people to follow Ibraaheem:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا مِّمَّنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

“And who can be better in religion than one who submits his face (i.e. himself) to Allaah, while being a good-doer, and follows the Religion of Ibraaheem as a *Haneef* (i.e. rejecting Shirk and affirming Tawheed)?” [Surah An-Nisaa: 125]

And Allaah says:

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِّلَّةَ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Truly my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, and upright religion, the religion of Ibraaheem – *Haneef* – and he (i.e. Ibraaheem) was not from the polytheists.’” [Surah Al-An’aam: 161]

So its foundation is: Singling Allaah out in the worship and sincerity that is due to Him, as Allaah says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except to worship Me.” [Surah Adh-Dhaariyaat: 56]

So Allaah did not create mankind except for them to worship Him. And it is not truthful to call worship by this name unless Tawheed accompanies it, since one of the conditions for its validity is that it (i.e. worship) must be done sincerely for Him alone. Similarly, it is not truthful to call prayer by this name unless (ritual) purity accompanies it, since it is a condition for its existence.

And if this is not so, then if a condition is absent this means that the thing that requires this condition will also be absent. Shirk entering and mixing into worship spoils and nullifies it, just as an impure occurrence (*hadath*) causes the (ritual) purity to be spoiled and nullified.

So when it becomes clear that Shirk spoils the worship once it mixes into it, causing its reward to be lost and it to return rejected to the one that performed it, as well as canceling out his deeds, as Allaah says:

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِن أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ
وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

“Had you committed Shirk, we would have surely cancelled out your deeds and you would have indeed been one of the losers” [Surah Az-Zumar: 65] and that the one who falls into this Shirk by committing it deserves eternity in the Hellfire, as Allaah says in His Book:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٠﴾

“And those who disbelieve and reject Our signs (i.e. verses), they are the inhabitants of the Hellfire, wherein they will reside forever – what an evil destination” [Surah At-Taghaabun: 10] then at this point it will become clear that the most important thing that is obligated on the servant is that he know how to single Allaah out solely for worship and how to avoid Shirk.

By this, perhaps he may be set free from this satanic trap, which the Devil has set up in order to mislead the people away from their Lord and into committing Shirk with Allaah. This is the sin that Allaah does not forgive, as He says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Verily, Allaah does not forgive that partners be ascribed to Him in worship (i.e. Shirk), but He forgives what is less than that to whom He wills.” [Surah An-Nisaa: 116]

And this cannot be accomplished unless one knows the following four rules, which Allaah has mentioned in His Book.

Summary:

1. The foundation of the Religion of Ibraaheem is to make one’s worship sincerely for Allaah alone and not mix partners into His worship.

Explanation of “The Four Rules Regarding Shirk”

2. Shirk spoils one’s worship and causes a person’s good deeds to be invalidated. And the person that commits it will reside eternally in the Hellfire.

3. The most important thing that the servant (of Allaah) is obligated to learn is knowledge of Tawheed so that he may act on it, and knowledge of Shirk so that he may avoid it.

Examination:

1. What is the foundation of the Religion of Ibraaheem and what is the proof for it?

2. Explain the effect that Shirk has on worship and what it resembles. Give an example for it?

3. What is the most important thing the servant (of Allaah) is obligated to learn and know?

SECTION TWO: THE FIRST RULE REGARDING SHIRK

The First Rule: You must know that the disbelievers whom the Messenger of Allaah fought against agreed that Allaah was the Creator and the Administrator. But this (belief) did not cause them to enter into the fold of Islaam. The proof for this is Allaah’s saying: “Say: ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth, or who owns the hearing and the sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who administers the affairs?’ They will surely say: ‘Allaah.’ Say: ‘Will you then not be dutiful to Him?’” [Surah Yoonus: 31]

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

Muqirroon (agreed) means they acknowledged; *Al-Mudabbir* (Administrator) The One who disposes of all affairs; *tattaqoon* (dutiful) means putting a shield and a barrier between yourselves and what you fear.

Explanation:

The first of these rules is: Knowing that the polytheists during the time of Allaah’s Messenger, from the disbelievers of Makkah and others, affirmed and acknowledged Allaah’s Lordship (*Ruboobiyyah*), which is to single Allaah out and make Him one with regard to His creating, administering and controlling of the universe. They did not ascribe partners to Him in these aspects. The proof for this is Allaah’s saying:

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ
السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ
الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

“Say: ‘Who provides for you from the sky and the earth, or who owns the hearing and the sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who administers the affairs?’ They will surely say: ‘Allaah.’ Say: ‘Will you then not be dutiful to Him?’” [Surah Yoonus: 31]

And also His saying:

وَلِيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ
قُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

“And if you ask them: ‘Who created the heavens and the earth (?)’, they will certainly say: ‘Allaah.’ Say: ‘All praise be to Allaah.’ But most of them know not.” [Surah Luqmaan: 25]

The ayaat that provide evidence for this are many. All of them make it clear that the polytheists acknowledged that Allaah alone was the only Creator, Provider and Administrator of all affairs. However, they ascribed and mixed partners with Him in worship, so this acknowledgement was of no benefit to them. And this did not cause them to enter into the fold of Islaam nor did it make their lives and wealth sacred (i.e. unlawful to be violated). Rather, the Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) fought against them and made lawful (the taking of) their lives and their wealth because of that.

They were not judged as being Muslims simply because they acknowledged and agreed to Allaah’s Lordship. Rather he (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) made their abiding by Tawheed Al-Uloohiyyah (i.e. that worship is only for Allaah), acknowledging it and acting upon it as a condition for judging them as Muslims, withholding from causing harm to them, and sparing their lives.

Summary:

1. The polytheists during the time of Allaah’s Messenger used to affirm and acknowledge Allaah’s Lordship (i.e. that He was the sole Creator and Administrator)
2. Acknowledging that Allaah is the one and only Lord (i.e. Ruboobiyyah) is not sufficient to affirm that an individual be judged as a Muslim.

Examination:

1. What was the stance the polytheists during the time of the Prophet took with regard to Allaah’s Lordship? Bring three ayaat that prove what you say.
2. What was the stance Allaah’s Messenger took with regard to these polytheists during his time?
3. Is acknowledging that Allaah is the sole Creator and Administrator (*Ruboobiyyah*) enough to affirm that someone is Muslim? Provide evidence for your answer.

SECTION THREE: THE SECOND RULE REGARDING SHIRK

The Second Rule: They (i.e. the disbelievers) said: “We did not invoke them nor turn towards them except to seek nearness (to Allah) and (their) intercession. The proof for their seeking nearness (to Allaah) is His saying: **“And those who take protectors besides Him (say): ‘We don’t worship them except to bring us closer to Allaah.’ Verily Allaah will judge between them concerning that which they differ in. Verily, Allaah does not guide he who is a liar, a disbeliever.”** [Surah Az-Zumar: 3]

The proof for their seeking intercession is Allaah’s saying: **“And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not nor benefit them. And they say: ‘These are our intercessors besides Allaah.’”** [Surah Yoonus: 18]

Intercession is of two types: Intercession that is negated and Intercession that is affirmed.

The Negated Intercession is that which is sought from someone other than Allaah in matters that no one has the ability to carry out except Allaah. The proof for this is Allaah’s saying: **“O you who believe! Spend of that which We have provided for you, before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining nor friendship nor intercession. And it is the disbelievers who are the wrong-doers.”** [Surah Al-Baqarah: 254]

The Affirmed Intercession is that which is sought from Allaah. The intercessor is one who is granted the honor of being able to intercede (by Allaah), while the one who is interceded for is the one whom Allaah is pleased with his statements and actions. (All of these occur) after Allaah’s permission is granted, as Allaah says: **“Who is it that will intercede in His presence except with His permission.”** [Surah Al-Baqarah: 255]

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

Zulfaa means closeness; *Shufa’aaunaa* (our intercessors) is the plural of *shaafi’* and *shafee’*, and he is the one that gets in between (two parties) in order to bring some benefit or to repel some harm; *Khillah* (friendship) mutual love.

Explanation:

These disbelievers used as an argument for their supplicating and worshipping of other gods besides Allaah, the claim that they did not call unto them nor turn to them except for two reasons.

First: So that these things (i.e. false gods) that they were worshipping could bring them nearer to Allaah. And **Second:** So that they may intercede for them before Allaah.

The proof for the first reason is Allaah’s saying:

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ

“And those who take protectors besides Him (say): ‘We don’t worship them except to bring us closer to Allaah.’” [Surah Az-Zumar: 3] Meaning: We only supplicated to them and worshipped them so that they may serve as a means to gain nearness to Allaah and attain a high position with Him.

The proof for the second reason is Allaah’s saying:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَٰؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَتْنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

“And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not nor benefit them. And they say: These are our intercessors besides Allaah.” [Surah Yoonus: 18] Meaning: We only worshipped them so that they may intercede for us before Allaah in bringing about some good or repelling some harm.

Then the Shaikh explains that Intercession is of two types in the Book of Allaah. The first is an intercession that the Qur’aan has negated, rejected and restricted that it be achieved. And the second type is the Affirmed Intercession, which the Qur’aan has affirmed will occur on the Day of Judgement, based on the clear evidences.

As for the Intercession that Allaah has negated in His Book, when He said:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمَ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةَ وَلَا شَفْعَةً

“O you who believe! Spend of that which We have provided for you, before a Day comes when there will be no bargaining nor friendship nor intercession”

[Surah Al-Baqarah: 254] then it is the Intercession that is sought from other than Allaah in matters that no one has control over except Allaah, such as a person who seeks entrance into Paradise from other than Allaah, for example, or to be saved from the Hellfire. What also falls into the Negated Intercession is the Intercession that is done for those whom Allaah did not permit that intercession be granted to, such as the disbelievers, or the Intercession from someone that Allaah did not allow to intercede.

As for the Affirmed Intercession, then it is that which is sought from Allaah and which occurs with His permission. So the one who intercedes, Allaah has granted him the honor of interceding. As for the one who is interceded for, he is the one whom Allaah is pleased with his statements and actions, after He has given His permission for him to be interceded for. This is as Allaah says:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

“Who is it that will intercede in His presence except with His permission.” [Surah Al-Baqarah: 255] The true intercession, which is the affirmed one cannot occur unless two conditions are first met:

First: Permission for the intercessor to intercede, as is stated in the previous ayah.

Second: Allaah must be pleased with the one being interceded for. This is as is stated in Allaah’s statement:

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ

“And they cannot intercede except for he whom Allaah is pleased with. And they stand in awe from fear of Allaah.” [Surah Al-Anbiyaa: 28]

So due to this, all of the Intercession occurs by Allaah’s Permission and it is all in His Hand and Command, as Allaah says:

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا

“Say: To Allaah belongs all of the intercession.” [Surah Az-Zumar: 44]

Summary:

1. The disbelievers worshipped false gods besides Allaah seeking nearness (to Allaah) and intercession (from them) before Allaah.

2. Having good intention is not sufficient in the absence of following of the Sunnah.
3. Intercession is of two types: Affirmed and Negated.
4. The Conditions for Intercession are: (a) permission must be granted to the intercessor and (b) Allaah must be pleased with the one being interceded for.

Examination:

1. What is it that caused the disbelievers to worship other than Allaah? Provide evidence for your answer.
2. What are the types of Intercession? Give one proof for each type.
3. What are the conditions for the Affirmed Intercession?

SECTION FOUR: THE THIRD RULE REGARDING SHIRK

The Third Rule: The Prophet was sent to people that differed from one another in their worship. Among them were those who worshipped the angels. And among them were those who worshipped the prophets and righteous people. And among them were those who worshipped trees and stones. And among them were those who worshipped the sun and the moon. However, the Messenger of Allaah fought against (all of) them and did not differentiate between any of them. The proof for this is Allaah’s statement: **“And fight against them until there is no more *fitnah* (trial, i.e. Shirk) and the Religion is all purely for Allaah alone.”** [Surah Al-Anfaal: 39]

The proof of them worshipping the sun and the moon is Allaah’s saying: **“And among His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon, but rather prostrate to Allaah who created them, if it is truly He whom you worship.”** [Surah Fussilat: 37]

The proof that they worshipped the angels is Allaah’s saying: **“And nor did he order you to take the angels and prophets as lords (besides Allaah).”** [Surah Aali ‘Imraan: 80]

The proof that they worshipped the prophets is Allaah’s saying: **“And when Allaah will say: ‘O ‘Eesaa, son of Maryam! Did you tell the people: Take me and my mother as gods besides Allaah?’ He will say: ‘Glory be to You, it is not for me to say what I have no right to say. Had I said such a thing, You would have surely known it. You know what is in my inner self yet I do not know what is in Your self. Verily, You re the All-Knower of the Unseen.’”** [Surah Al-Maa’idah: 116]

The proof that they worshipped the righteous people is Allaah’s saying: **“Those whom they call unto (besides Allaah), they themselves seek the means of access to their Lord as to which of them will be the nearest (to Him). And they hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment.”** [Surah Al-Israa: 57]

The proof that they worshipped trees and stones is Allaah’s saying: “**Have you then considered Al-Laat and Al-Uzzaa, and Manaat, the third other?**” [Surah An-Najm: 19-20] ¹

And also the hadeeth of Abu Waaqid Al-Laythee (*radyyAllaahu ‘anhu*) who said: “We went out with Allaah’s Messenger to (the Battle of) Hunayn, and we had just recently come out of Kufr (Disbelief). The polytheists used to have a lote-tree, which they would organize by and hang their swords on (seeking blessings from it); it was called Dhaat Anwaat. So we passed by a lote-tree and said: ‘O Messenger of Allaah! Make for us a Dhaat Anwaat, just as they have a Dhaat Anwaat?’”

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

Fitnah (tribulation) here means Shirk; *‘alaamaat* (signs) proofs and indicators; *yabtaghooon* (they seek) they look for; *hudathaa ‘ahdin* (recently come out) close to that time; *sidrah* (lote-tree); *yanootoon* (hang on) cling onto.

Explanation:

The Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was indeed sent to a people who varied in their worship and differed in their religions. Among them were those that worshipped angels and (those that worshipped) prophets and righteous people, and those that worshipped trees and stones or the sun and the moon. So Allaah legislated for His Prophet to fight against them. Rather, He commanded him to do that without differentiating between any of them. He commanded him to fight against every one of them until all of the Religion (i.e. worship) became solely for Allaah and until islaam gained supremacy over all other religions. Allaah says:

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِئْتَنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ

“**And fight against them until there is no more *fitnah* (i.e. Shirk) and the Religion is all purely for Allaah.**” [Surah Al-Anfaal: 39]

So the Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) fought against all of them until he brought them under the rule and laws of Islaam. From the texts that provide evidence

¹ **Translator’s Note:** These three are names of stone idols that the pagan Arabs used to worship. They were originally righteous men who after their deaths and after many generations began to be worshipped.

that there existed those who worshipped the sun and the moon and that Allaah forbade them from doing that is His saying:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا
لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

“And among His signs are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or the moon, but rather prostrate to Allaah who created them, if it is truly He whom you worship.” [Surah Fussilat: 37]

And from the evidences that indicate that there existed those who used to worship the angels, and that Allaah forbade them from doing that, is Allaah’s saying:

وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا

“And nor did he order you to take the angels and prophets as lords (besides Allaah).” [Surah Aali ‘Imraan: 80]

And from what makes it clear that there existed those who would worship the prophets and that this worship of theirs was false is Allaah’s saying:

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي
إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَال سُبْحٰنَكَ

“And when Allaah will say: ‘O ‘Eesaa, son of Maryam! Did you tell the people: Take me and my mother as gods besides Allaah?’ He will say: ‘Glory be to You.’” [Surah Al-Maa’idah: 116]

So ‘Eesaa, peace be on him, will free himself from their worshipping of him and rule upon its falsehood. And from the proofs that show that there existed those who would worship the righteous people and the ruling that this is futile, is Allaah’s saying:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ
أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ

“Those whom they call unto (besides Allaah), they themselves seek the means of access to their Lord as to which of them will be the nearest (to Him). And they hope for His Mercy and fear His Torment.” [Surah Al-Israa: 57]

Some of the scholars of Tafseer said: There was a group amongst the Arabs that used to worship some individuals amongst the Jinn. Afterward, these Jinn accepted Islaam, but those people who worshipped them did not know this. So Allaah explains to them that those people whom you worship, they themselves seek nearness to Allaah, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment.

And from that which indicates that there existed those who would worship the stones is Allaah’s saying:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾

“Have you then considered Al-Laat and Al-‘Uzzaa, and Manaate, the third other?” [Surah An-Najm: 19-20]

These were (false) gods that the polytheists of Makkah used to worship. They were statues that they had constructed and worshipped besides Allaah.

And from that which indicates that there existed those who would worship trees is the hadeeth of Abu Waaqid Al-Laythee (*radyaAllaahu ‘anhu*) when some of the Companions went out with the Prophet during the battle of Hunayn. And among them were those who had just recently come out of disbelief, i.e. they had only become Muslims a little while before. So they saw a lote-tree that belonged to the polytheists, known as Dhaat Anwaat, which the polytheists would seek blessings from and hang their swords on. So they asked the Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) to make for them a Dhaat Anwaat tree just like theirs.

At this the Prophet said Allaahu Akbar, became very angry and was stern in his speech, forbidding them from this. He said to them: **“You have just said, by the One in whose hand my soul is, similar to what the companions of Moosaa said to**

him: ‘Make for us a god just as they have gods.’ He replied: ‘Verily you are a people given into ignorance.’”²

So this hadeeth proves that there existed those polytheists who would worship trees. It also proves that believing in trees (i.e. that they have the ability to bring good or repel harm) amounts to disbelief. It also proves that even the noble and scholarly amongst people may fall into Shirk, while not being aware of it. It also proves that if a person utters a statement of disbelief while not knowing that it amounts to disbelief or intentionally doing it, he does not commit disbelief until he is fully aware (of what he is saying).

Allaah has declared all of these different types of worship false and futile. And He commanded His Messenger to fight against all of these people without differentiating between any of them.

Summary:

1. The Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was sent to various people with different religions.
2. The Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) fought against all of these people without differentiating between any of them.
3. A Muslim does not commit disbelief by making a statement of disbelief if he says it unknowingly and unintentionally.
4. The truth may be unknown at times to the high ranking amongst people, not to mention the common folk.

Examination:

1. State some of the types of worship that existed at the time of the Prophet’s advent, giving one proof for each type.
2. Did the Prophet (*sallAllaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) distinguish between the adherents of these various religions?
3. What points of benefit can we derive from the hadeeth mentioned in this chapter?

² Reported by Ahmad (5/218), ‘Abdur-Razzaaq (20763), At-Tayaalisee (1346), Al-Humaydee (848), At-Tirmidhee (2180) who said of it: “*hasan saheeh*” and others.

SECTION FIVE: THE FOURTH RULE REGARDING SHIRK

The Fourth Rule: The polytheists in our era are more severe in their (committing of) Shirk than the first polytheists (during the Prophet’s time). This was since the first polytheists used to ascribe partners to Allaah at times of ease and worship Him sincerely during times of hardship. However, the polytheists in our era constantly commit Shirk in times of ease as well as in times of hardship. The proof for this is Allaah’s statement: **“And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allaah making their Faith purely for Him alone. But when He brings them safely to land, behold they give a share of their worship to others.”** [Surah Al-‘Ankaboot: 65]

This completes the treatise. May the peace and blessings of Allaah be on Muhammad, his family and Companions.

◀ explanation ▶

Language:

Aghlath (more severe) greater and stronger; *Rakhaa* (times of ease) times of comfort and blessing; *Shiddah* (hardship) difficulty and times when tribulations befall.

Explanation:

This is the fourth and last rule, which is that the polytheists in our time, those who devote a share of their worship to other than Allaah, such as the righteous people that are buried in graves and so on. These people are greater in Shirk and stronger in disbelief than the first polytheists.

The reason for this is because the first polytheists would ascribe partners to Allaah during times of ease only, and as for times of hardness and difficulty, they would call sincerely out to Allaah (for help) and they knew that no one else could save them and that their (false) gods would not benefit them. What indicates this is Allaah’s saying:

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

“And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allaah making their Faith purely for Him alone. But when He brings them safely to land, behold they give a share of their worship to others.” [Surah Al-‘Ankaboot: 65]

And also Allaah’s saying:

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً
لَّيِّنًا أَنجَدْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ
مِّنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ مُّشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

“Say: Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and sea (when) you call upon Him in humility and in secret (saying): ‘If He only saves us from this (danger), we will truly be grateful.’ Say: Allaah rescues you from this and from all other distresses, but yet you worship others besides Allaah.” [Surah Al-An’aam: 63-64]

So these ayaat (verses) indicate that they would mix partners in their worship with Allaah during times of ease only. But as for times of hardship then they wouldn’t.

But as for those who commit Shirk in our time, then they indeed mix partners in Allaah’s worship in both these conditions. If some blessing and comfort befalls them, they rush to the graves, presenting them with sacrificial offerings and slaughtering animals at their sites. And they put forth thanks to the deceased buried within them and glorify them with praises.

And if some calamity befalls them, they rush to these graves and seek help from them, supplicating to them and making oaths to them for such and such if this calamity is removed from them.

We see this clearly going on at the graves that are worshipped besides Allaah, such as the gravesites of Husayn, Sayyidah Zaynab, ‘Abdul-Qaadir al-Jeelaani, Sayyid Al-Badawee and others. So it is clear that the Shirk that is committed by these latter-day polytheists is greater and worse than the Shirk that was done by the polytheists of old because it is a Shirk that is done constantly under every condition. And this completes the objective of this treatise, thus all praise is due to Allaah, Lord of the Worlds.

Summary:

1. The polytheists of old used to mix partners in Allaah’s worship during times of ease and turn to Him in sincere worship during times of hardship.
2. The polytheists of this era mix partners in Allaah’s worship in both conditions.
3. The polytheists in our time are greater in their Shirk than the first polytheists.

Examination:

1. What is the difference between the polytheists in our time and the polytheists of old times?
2. Which of the two is greater in their Shirk: the polytheists of old or the polytheists of our time?
3. What is the proof that the polytheists of old would commit Shirk during times of ease and not during times of hardship?