

Chapter – 09

What is Polytheism?

(شُرک کیا ہے؟)

❖ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ -

(O Allah) And we seek help from You alone. (01:05)

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

وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا.

Truly Allah does not forgive (the greatest sin) that partners be ascribed with Him – and He forgives all that is below it (lesser sins) whenever He likes, and he who associates with God has indeed wandered far astray. (04:116)

Believing in many gods or considering the special attributes of God in others is Polytheism (شُرک). Whereas totally rejecting the attributes of God or straightforward negation of Allah سبحانه و تعالی is Blasphemy (کفر). Make it clear that the most important attribute of God is وجود بالذات. Means, only God has the 'Existence by Himself'. The other beings are due to God and all are His bestows. 'Self-sufficiency' is also the special attribute of God.

Look! Neglecting to God and not believing Him or very nominal believe on Him is the root cause of all evils. This negligence is a real problem that brings more problems. And must remember! Associating to God is 'revolt', whereas other sins are 'crimes'. As any government can never pardon the insurgency and the rebel is hanged till his death, similarly شُرک is a non-pardonable crime. And its punishment is خلود في النار, means the doer has to remain forever in Hell.

Muslims believe that God is ‘Eternal’ (واجب الوجود). It means His existence is essential and His nonexistence is impossible. Other than God, whichever things exist, all are ‘Probable’ (ممکن). Any probable never exists of its-own. If it would have existed of its-own then it can never be separated from the ‘Self-Existent’. Apart from this, with every probable there is ‘nothingness’ before and after. Therefore, the Self-Existence of Allah سبحانه و تعالیٰ is His special attribute. Actually, considering the special attributes of God in any human being or other creatures is شرک (Polytheism).

Now it is also essential to consider that in probable (in us), how these attributes came and from where? From whom this vitality and knowledge has reflected on us? Who has given us our hearing and seeing capability? If it is ‘Nature’, then who owns it? From which source the desire approached? In fact, all these present attributes are obtained from God, the main source, the ‘Head-spring Entity’.

کوئی شے ہے، نہیں جو مجھ میں
اک طلسمات کا پتلا ہوں میں

(Is there any attribute which I do not have?
I am like a Charismatic Personification)

So if we think, as told above, then would it be considered as شرک, “associating to God”? ---- No, Not at all. It could be شرک only if we consider ourselves as ‘Self-Existent’. But, we consider ourselves as ‘Probable’, ‘Non-Existent’, and then what else left? Our both hands are totally bare. As per Muslim belief, ‘Probable’ keeps on dying for every minute, every moment and Allah سبحانه و تعالیٰ bestows a temporary life in it. ---- Now, present day scientists also say that there is a “Cells System” in human body in which cells keep on vanishing and replacing with new one ---- As such, God is the only one who gives lives to all.

جو کچھ ہے وہ آقا کا، کچھ نہیں بندے کا

(Whatever that exists is owned by God
Nothing belongs to man)

Remember! Association is of two types: (1) Real Association; and 2) Metaphoric Association. Anything that is related to God, the ‘Real Persona’, is known as ‘Real Association’. For example: - God is

the Creator, He is All-Seeing, He has Authority, He is Ever-Lasting, He is Subsisting Provider to all. These are all “True Relations”.

Any attribute that is related to a ‘person or thing’ is known as Metaphoric Association or Illusive Relation. For example we say: ‘Spring season has produced flowers and green grass; We live; We know; We hear; We see; We have power; We have intentions; and We speak etc. All these sayings are qualifications and relate to Metaphoric Attributes. These are all “false relations”. Metaphoric Association is not شرك or كفر. So, without proper understanding, calling to anyone as ‘disbeliever’ or ‘polytheist’ is in a way “self-targeting”.

Allah تعالى سبحانه و تعالی has everything in His hand but simultaneously He has created “Apparent Systems” as well as “Definite Systems”. If these “Systems” are used, it is not شرك. However, if it is thought that these Systems are effective on their own, and also considered that ‘these are everything’, then it is شرك.

Quran’s Chapter 3, Verse 49, describes about “miracles” of Prophet Isa عليه السلام. Here, there is no place to contest. In this Verse there is a warning for those who keep calling Muslim as Polytheist (مشرك). ---- It suggests that for any work once بِأُذْنِ اللَّهِ (By the order of Allah) is told then that work turns out to be Metaphorical (بالعرض) and comes under Illusive Relation. With Metaphoric Association there will be neither شرك nor كفر. When producing a lively bird with mud, becoming its creator, and giving life in a dead body is not شرك, then how other relations could be شرك?

This point must be remembered that a person who understands ‘By the order of Allah’ (بِأُذْنِ اللَّهِ) he can never be a مشرك. If you call such person as مشرك then there will be reaction. And according to the Noble Prophet’s saying “فَقَدْ بَاءَ أَحَدُهُمَا” you will yourself be arrested in شرك. Note down one more thing, that telling بِأُذْنِ اللَّهِ one time exempts telling these words for many times.

This is written even in usual books that when any Muslim says: “Spring season has produced green grass”, it is a Metaphoric Relation, because he believes in Allah تعالى سبحانه و تعالی. On the other hand, if any ‘Materialist’ would tell this sentence it will be a True Relation.

As regards to Polytheism (شرك) many questions are raised.

- Q.1. If the normal attributes of Allah سبحانه و تعالی are seen in any human being, for example; Divination (علم غیب). Will it be شرک?

Answer: Divination is in fact a combination of knowledge and unseen. Knowledge means ‘to know something’. Obviously, the ‘Persona’ who is self-existent, his knowledge will be his own. On the other hand, whose existence is dependent (بالعرض) then his knowledge will also be dependent. Likewise, the knowledge of all probable and creatures would also be dependent. After this acceptance, شرک has gone miles apart.

Remember! Knowledge may be of seen things. It may also be of heard substance. Knowledge may be of research or it may also be of some simulation. --- Now left Divination. If it is in the context of God, then there will be nothing which could be hidden with Him.

Look! Divination or Knowledge of hidden things (علم غیب) is of three types:

- (1) **Absolute Divination:** This is merely known to God and that is all.
- (2) **Divination given to Noble Prophets:** Quran says;

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا - إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ

{(He is) Knower of the Unseen and He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to His chosen Messengers. (72:25 &26)}

- (3) **Divination given to a Muslim:** Quran says;

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

{Those who believe without seeing (02:03)}

That Muslim who has no belief of such unseen is a disbeliever (كافر) and not a Muslim. --- How are those Divinations? Examples are; God, Angels, Heaven and Hell etc. Shaytan also knows feelings of people, whether they are in East or West, they are Near or Far. Quran and Hadiths also confirm the knowledge of unseen with Shaytan. Then whether شرک with Shaytan would be allowed? God forbid!

Remember! Doings of God are Absolute, Widespread and Its-own. Doings of human beings are with the power of God; with the permission of God. Such doings are of lower values as well.

The ‘Divinations’ of human beings are in fact Secondary Divinations. The Absolute Divination is specific to Allah سبحانه و تعالی. How one can imagine that God is so small and others may become equivalent to Him so easily? Nowadays people who create fear against Divinations and other Spiritual works are virtually ‘Monotheist without souls’.

- Q.2. Asking for help with the expired people! ----Is it not شرک?

Answer: Some materialistic Monotheist do not hesitate to treat living people as their رب (the lord), ممیت (the giver of death) and رزاق (the provider), but as soon as any expired person is addressed they declare it as شرک. Look! If there is any Polytheism in it, then it would be with living and expired persons equally.

People who leave this world whether they can see back or hear to this world? Yes! They can. It is Prophet’s saying that “when you go to any graveyard you tell: اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ (O graveyard people! Peace is upon you)”. If dead people do not see or hear then why this conversation has been made? ---- These ‘materialist’ seek help with English people for their ordinary problems and yet feel proud that we have not asked anything from the dead. It is fantastic! ---- Look! If things are related with the concept of بالذات for God, and بالعرض for human beings then it will not be شرک, but it would be called Metaphoric relation.

- Q.3. If anybody says to any Spiritual-guide: “Please remove my sickness”, Will it not be شرک?

Answer: ‘Giving health’ or ‘Giving children’ is special attribute of Allah سبحانه و تعالی. All Real Attributes are linked with God, whereas Metaphoric Association goes towards sources. Cure is connected to the doctors and medicines. ---- Quran says at various places:

إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا

{I am only a messenger sent by your Lord;
to bestow a good son on you. (19:19)}

وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِأَمْرِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِأَمْرِي

{and when you used to mould a birdlike sculpture from clay,
by my command, and blow into it,
so that it may fly, by my command. (05:110)}

وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

{And I cure the blind and the leper, and I give life to the death,
by the permission of Allah. (03:49)}

In these places the compulsion of **بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ** and **يَأْذِنُ اللَّهُ**, indicates to the Metaphoric Association. If Illusive Relation also considered as **شرك**, then it will be difficult to talk ----!

- Q.4. After offering Fatiha (pray to God), serving food with the name of passed elders! ---- Is it not **شرك**?

Answer: In this context the answers are as follow:

Ibn Abbas **رضى الله عنه** narrates, which is quoted in Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim: “A person came to Muhammad **صلى الله عليه وسلم**, and said “my sister had decided that she will perform Hajj but could not do so and she passed away”. Prophet asked him, “If she had debt on her, would you not pay back the debt”? He said, “Yes! I would do”. Prophet said, “Her promise is the debt of God, so it should also be paid likewise”.

One more Hadith from Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim is there. Aaishah **رضى الله عنها** narrates; one person came to the Noble Prophet and said, “My mother suddenly died. I thought if she would have alive, she would have spent money in charity”. Then he asked, May I spent money on charity on her behalf, would she be benefitted? Muhammad **صلى الله عليه وسلم** said, “Yes”.

- Q.5. Offering Fatiha and keeping food in the front. ---- Would it not be **شرك**?

Answer: Offering Fatiha is a proven act from this Hadith. The Noble Prophet said:

كُلُّ أَمْرٍ دِي بَالٍ لَمْ يُبْدَأْ بِحَمْدِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ أَبْتَرٌ

(Any work that has not begun with **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ**, that is awful, not good)

Keeping food in the front is just a symbolic act. And preparing one specific food for Fatiha comes under this Hadith:

خَيْرُ الْأُمُورِ أَدْوَامُهَا

(Best deeds are those in which there is persistence, perseverance)

- Q.6. Giving respect to elders, kissing their hands and feet! ---- Is it not شرک?

Answer: Look! Worship is for Allah تعالیٰ و سبحانه, and respect is for elders. God says:

وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ

{(And believe in) His Noble Prophet, and honor him, and respect him. (48:09)}

وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ

{And lower your wing humbly for them (parents) with mercy and tender. (17:24)}

قُومُوا لِسَيِّدِكُمْ

{Stand up in respect for your Elders. (Hadith)}

- Q.7. Calling Ya Rasoolallah! Or Ya Gauth! Will it not be شرک?

Answer: For these two calls, the answer is available in this Hadith, in which, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم has taught this prayer (دعا).

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ وَآتُوجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِحَبِيبِكَ الْمُصْطَفَىٰ عِنْدَكَ يَا حَبِيبَنَا يَا مُحَمَّدًا -

إِنَّا نَتَوَسَّلُ بِكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَاشْفَعْ لَنَا عِنْدَ الْمَوْلَى الْعَظِيمِ يَا نِعَمَ الرَّسُولِ الطَّاهِرِ -

اللَّهُمَّ شَفِّعْهُ فِينَا بِجَاهِهِ عِنْدَكَ -

(Narrated: Othman bin Hanif, --- Quoted in Tirmizi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Tibrani, Sahih ibn Khuzaimah, and Haakim Bahiqui)

In this prayer there is a call of يَا حَبِيبَنَا يَا مُحَمَّدًا, a call to prayer, a proclamation. The third Khalifah Othman, رضى الله عنه, in his tenure, has offered this prayer himself and guided others to follow.

Dear People! We believe on لا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ means there is no power all around except of Allah. We have no control to save ourselves with sins and even no power to do any sin. If this point is understood then شرک and كفر has gone miles away. Certainty on this point is ‘True Belief’ (ایمان). Its feel is awareness or wisdom (عرفان). This is ‘Annihilation of Attributes’ (قِتْلَةُ صِفَاتٍ) and ‘Self-Annihilation’ (قِتْلَةُ ذَاتٍ).

If it is realized that we cannot do any act on our own, it is ‘Annihilation of Acts’ (فناء افعال) and if one gets it, then it is ‘Oneness of Acts’ (توحيد افعالی). If it is understood that any attribute that we have is not our own and personal, then it is ‘Annihilation of Attributes’ (فناء صفات), and its feeling is ‘Oneness of Attributes’ (توحيد صفاتی). Taking into consideration to our ‘Real Nothingness’, is ‘Self-Annihilation’ (فناء ذات), and understanding to our self-nonexistence is ‘Persona Annihilation’ (فناء ذاتی). This is ‘Oneness of Persona’ (توحيد ذاتی).

God save us from Polytheism (شرك). Make our ‘nothingness’ as an ‘entity’. Do not conceal the Right in any Invalid.

Persona (God), who does exist, should remain forever. And person, who does not exist, should ‘be finished’, ‘be wiped out’.

Finally, think over at (the first Verse of Quran) “الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ”. When all praise is to Allah تعالى و سبحانه then what left in the hands of a person? ---- Praise to anyone that is in fact praise to God. ---- Think over at our ‘Real Nothingness’. The more you will think the more paths will open. You keep walking on it that leads to Allah تعالى و سبحانه, and will reach to Him. This is the secret of:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَوْلَىٰ وَأَخْرًا وَ ظَاهِرًا وَ بَاطِنًا

(All praise is to Allah who is
the First, and the Last, and the Evident, and the Hidden)
