



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

CONSEQUENCE OF LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF TAWHEED

DEFINITION OF TAWHEED

Linguistically, the word *tawheed* comes from the word *wah-hada*, which means to make something *waahid* (singular). *Waahid* is the opposite of two, three, etc., the opposite of plurality. So *waahid* is something that will continue to be singular and never become a partner of something else.

As for the *Sharee'ah's* definition, the *tawheed* means to single out Allaah with all forms of worship, so that you make all of your worship for Allaah alone. Allaah Reminded us in *Soorah Al-Anfaal* (8):39

(...and the religion will be entirely for Allaah)

The word *religion* in this verse means *worship*, as Allaah says in *Soorah Ath-Thaariyaat* (51):56:

(and I have not created the Jinn nor Mankind except to worship Me)

And Allaah says [*Soorah An-Nisaa'* (4):36]:

(and worship Allaah, and do not ascribe a single partner to Him)

Allaah also says [*Soorah Ghaafir* (40):14]:

(So call on Allaah, making the religion entirely for Him, even if the disbelievers detest it)

This is the meaning of *tawheed* - to single out Allaah in all acts of worship and to abandon the worship of anything else.

PROPHETS SENT TO REMIND US ON TAWHEED - FIRST MESSAGE

- All prophets sent to remind their nations about tawheed
 - I. "And verily, We have sent among every Ummah a Messenger (proclaiming):
"Worship Allaah (Alone) and keep away from Taghut (all false deities)."
[*Soorah An-Nahl* (16):36]

- II. *“And We did not send any Messenger before you but We inspired him (saying): Laa ilaaha illa Ana [none has the right to be worshipped but I (Allaah)], so worship Me (Alone and None else).”* [Soorah Al-Anbiyaa (21):25]
- III. *“He sends down the angels with inspiration of His Command to whom of His slaves He pleases (saying): “Warn mankind that La ilaaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so fear Me (by abstaining from sins and evil deeds).”* [Soorah An-Nahl (16):2]

THE 3 CATEGORIES OF TAWHEED

If we truly understand this, then this is enough inshaAllah to ensure that we will follow the straight path which will lead to Jannah.

Before mentioning what these three categories are, it has to be stressed that the concept of Tawheed is in no way similar to the Christian concept of trinity. The division of Tawheed does not divide Allaah up into three separate parts (as does trinity), but rather it helps us to understand as to how our Creator is Unique and Alone in being singled out for worship and reverence.

So, when we mentioned “Oneness of Allah”, it has been explained by the scholars of Islam that Oneness is in terms of these 3 categories:

1. Tawheed ar Ruboobiyah (Oneness of Rabb – Lord)
2. Tawheed as Samaa’ was Sifat (Oneness of His Names and Attributes)
3. Tawheed al Uloohiyah (Oneness of worship)

1. Tawheed ar Ruboobiyah (Oneness of Rabb – Lord)

This is the fundamental understanding that Allaah is Ar-Rabb (pronounced like Are-rob and commonly translated as the Lord). That is, He is the maintainer and sustainer of all things without Whom nothing would exist. The word Rabb in itself refers to a relationship of dominance and control. He created and sustains all of the creation, without any need of it nor does He need any assistance to maintain or provide for His creatures. Nothing occurs unless He allows it to occur, and it is He who gives any power at all to His creation.

Allaah states:

"Allaah created all things and He is the Wakeel (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian)" [Al-Qur'aan 2: 62]

And Allaah created you all and whatever you do. [Al-Qur'aan 37: 96]

It was not you who threw when you threw, but it was Allaah Who threw. [Al-Qur'aan 8: 17]

And no calamity strikes except by Allaah's permission. [Al-Qur'aan 64:11]

The Prophet Muhammad SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam stated: "Be aware that if the whole of mankind gathered together in order to do something to help you, they would not be able to do anything for you unless Allaah had already written it for you. Likewise, if the whole of humanity gathered to harm you they would only be able to harm you if Allaah had already written that for you." [Reported by Ibn Abbaas and collected by At-Tirmidhee]

His is verily all creation and commandment, blessed is Allaah the Lord of all the worlds. [Soorah Al-'Araaf Aayah 54]

The belief in predestination, or Qadr, is incorporated in this aspect of tawheed. Qadr is the belief that everything that happens is from the knowledge, will, and power of Allaah. It also incorporates the belief that Allaah Alone has the right to legislate and judge (Al-Haakimiyyah). Ar-Ruboobiyyah is found in virtually every chapter of the Qur'aan and is a type of foundation for all other aspects of tawheed. Because of His status as Ar-Rabb, He alone merits worship, reverence, submission, praise, remembrance, supplication, hope and fear. He alone possesses the power to create and command and He is the Creator, Master and Controller who must necessarily possess the perfect qualities and attributes (which we will later discuss in detail) in order to be Ar-Rabb.

- i. Through this we understand that it is Allaah Who Alone created the universe, which is why one of His divine names is Al-Khaaliq (the Creator).
- ii. Through this we know that it is Allaah Alone Who controls the universe and allows things to happen. This is why Allaah refers to Himself in the Quran as Al-Malik (The Sovereign). Hence, when something happens, it only happens with the permission of Allaah, as stated in the Quranic verse (which means):

"And no calamity strikes except with the permission of Allaah" [Quran 64:11]

The Prophet further elaborated on this concept of Allaah's control over the universe by saying: "Be aware that if the whole of mankind gathered together in order to do something to help you they would only be able to do something for you which Allaah had already written for you. Likewise, if the whole of mankind gathered together to harm you, they would only be able to do something to harm you which Allaah had already written to happen to you". [At-Tirmithi]

- iii. We know that another name, which Allaah chooses to call Himself by, is Ar-Razzaaq (the Sustainer). It is Allaah who provides us with our food, shelter, clothing, families and friends. When our crops seem to be dying and there is not a cloud in sight, it is Allaah Who sends down His rain from the skies and sustains us. Allaah Says (what means):

"Allaah is the Creator of all things and He is, over all things, Disposer of affairs." [Quran 39:62]

From this you would expect that people would turn back to Allaah for good or bad fortune. However, this is not the case. Today we find some people relying on all kinds of good luck charms, which they believe will bring them good fortune and ward off evil.

These practices have absolutely no basis whatsoever in Islam, but rather the Prophet warned us by saying: "Whosoever brings something new into Islam (which does not belong to it) will have it rejected". [Al-Bukhaari]

2. Tawheed al Samaa' wa Sifat (Oneness of His Names and Attributes)

And Allaah has the most excellent and perfect names, so call on Him by them, and abandon the company of those who deviate and commit shirk with regard to them - they will be punished for what they used to do. [Soorah Al-A'raaf (7) 180]

His is the highest and most perfect description (none has the right to be worshipped but him, and nothing is like Him) in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. [Soorah Ar-Room (30): 27]

There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Seeing, the All-Hearing. [Soorah Ash-Shoorah (42):11]

In general, the unification of Allaah's names and attributes (Tawheed Al-Asmaa wa Sifaat) means the firm conviction that Allaah, the Glorious and Mighty, is characterized by all the attributes of perfection, is above all defects and deficiencies, and that He alone is distinguished from His creation by these characteristics. This Tawheed is achieved by:

- i. Attesting to all the names and attributes of Allaah reported about Himself and those confirmed by His Prophet in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. This is called ithbaat (pron. ith - like 'with'-baat).
- ii. Not altering their expression or meaning. This alteration is called tahreef (pron. tah with the 'a' in cat, -reef')
- iii. Not nullifying them by denying all or some of them. To nullify called ta'teel (pronounced 'ta' with a soft 'a' like in ball, 'teel')

- iv. Not modifying them by attempting to determine their essence and assigning a certain form to them. To modify is called takyeef (pron. 'tack - yeef')
- v. Not comparing them to any human characteristic such as assigning to Him the qualities that are not suiting His majesty but rather belong to His creation or assigning qualities that befit Allaah alone to His creation. Such similitudes are called tamtheel and tashbeeh respectively.

Guidelines For Understanding Allaah's Attributes (Sifaat)

We emphasize that the only way to know Allaah's attributes is by learning what He says about Himself and what His Messenger says about Him. The Qur'aan and the authentic Sunnah are sufficient, and must be taken as the only sources for this knowledge. We should restrict ourselves to them, without trying to improve on them by referring to earlier scriptures or books of wisdom, or by relying on our limited power of reason.

Some of the reasons for this are as follows:

- i. Allaah's attributes and qualities are part of the knowledge of the ghayb (that which is unseen and beyond human capability to perceive), which cannot be subjected to our human senses. Revelation is the only channel through which we can acquire true knowledge of the ghayb.
- ii. Allaah is the one who knows what we need to learn about Him in order to conduct our lives in a successful way. Had we needed more knowledge, He would definitely have provided us with it.
- iii. A quality of the pious, for which they are praised in the Qur'aan, is that they believe in the ghayb without questioning or doubting it, as long as it comes from the Qur'aan or the authentic Sunnah.
- iv. Allaah the Creator cannot be subjected to the limited faculties of His creatures. No matter how intelligent a human being is, he can never be a match for Allaah in knowledge, nor can he ever overstep the bounds that his Creator set for him.

The Foundations Of Tawheed Of Names And Attributes

The Tawheed of Allaah's names and attributes is based upon three foundations. Whoever deviates from them does not attest to the Tawheed of Allaah's names and attributes.

- A. Placing Allaah, the Glorious and Exalted, above any likeness to human beings, and beyond any imperfections.

The attributes of Allaah, the Glorious and Exalted, bear no resemblance whatsoever to any human attribute.

This principle is clearly stated in the following verses: There is nothing like unto Him. [Soorah Ash-Shoorah (42):11]

And there is none coequal or comparable unto Him. [Soorah Al-Ikhlaas (114):4]

So put not forward similitudes for Allaah (as there is nothing similar to Him, nor does He resemble anything) In his interpretation of the aayah, "There is nothing like unto Him", the great Islaamic scholar Al-Qurtubi (rahimahullah) said: "It is believed, in this subject, that Allaah in His Greatness, Glory, Sovereignty, beauty of names and venerable of attributes, is unlike any of His creation, and nothing could be described through likeness to Him.

The terms the Shari'ah (Islaam) employs to describe both the Creator and His creation might be similar in appearance, but they indicate no resemblance between them in reality. The attributes of The Eternal, Exalted and Glorious is He, are incomparable to those of His creation." Al-Waasiti (rahimahullah) said: "Allaah's self is not like any other self, nor are His names like any other names, nor are His actions like any other actions, nor are His attributes like any other attributes, except in the sense that the same terms are employed to describe Him and His creation. The Eternal is above having the attributes of the newly created, and the newly created cannot possibly have any of His Eternal attributes. This is the creed of the people of Truth, the Sunnah and jama'ah." (Tafseer Al-Qurtubi, Vol. 16, pg. 8)

Another component of this principle is placing Allaah above anything that contradicts His description of Himself; or the descriptions by the Prophet of Him.

The Tawheed of the attributes of Allaah means that the Muslim should believe his Creator to be above having a spouse, partner, child, assistant, intercessor (without Allaah's permission) or protector. In addition, he should also place Allaah above all imperfections, such as sleep, exhaustion, fatigue, mortality, ignorance, injustice, absent-mindedness, forgetfulness, prejudice, and so on.

- B. Belief in the names and attributes established in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, without detracting from them, expanding upon them, altering or nullifying them.

This principle stipulates that the only names and attributes to be ascribed to Allaah are those mentioned in the Qur'aan or in the Sunnah; they are directly communicated to us and are not the products of opinion and interpretation. Allaah is to be described only by the attributes with which He had described Himself or with which His Prophet had described Him. And He is to be named only by the names with which He had named Himself or with which His Prophet had named Him.

Allaah surely knows best about Himself, His names and His attributes.

Allaah says: *Do you know better, or does Allaah?* [Soorah Al-Baqarah (2) 140] As He knows best about Himself, and His Messengers were truthful and believed, only telling their people what Allaah had revealed to them, then His names and attributes should be derived solely from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allaah have mercy upon his soul), said: "Allaah should only be attributed with those characteristics He described Himself with or was described by His Prophet . His names and attributes should not extend beyond the Qur'aan and Sunnah." (Sharh Al-'Aqeedah Al-Waasitiyyah, pg. 21)

Naim ibn Hamood, the teacher of Al-Bukhaaree, said: "*A person who compares Allaah to His creation becomes disbeliever (Kaafir), and a person who denies the attributes Allaah ascribed to Himself, or that the Prophet ascribed to Him, has become a disbeliever. None of those attributes bear any likeness or comparison.*" (Sharh Al-'Aqeedah Al-Waasitiyyah and Athaaf Al-Kaa'inaat)

This principle requires everyone to believe in the names and attributes mentioned in the Qur'aan and Sunnah of His Prophet . The believer should comprehend them by the clear and common meanings they have in the Arabic language, with no amendments (through rejecting them or denying some of them) or alteration of their evident, direct meaning.

C. Abandoning any desire to ascertain the form of those attributes.

This requires a person to believe in these names and attributes mentioned in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah without inquiring after their nature and manner or investigating their essence. As attributes vary according to the self they characterize, finding out how they manifest themselves depends upon knowing that self and how it acts. As we cannot inquire into the nature of Allaah, His essence and into how His actions take place, we cannot then ask about the way in which His attributes are manifested.

For this reason, it was reported from many scholars such as Imam Malik the great scholar and founder of the Maliki school who, when asked about the manner in which Allaah ascended the throne as mentioned in the Qur'aan, said: "The sitting (Istiwa) is known, the manner is unknown, believing in it is an obligation, inquiring about it is a heresy." (Ar-Rowdah An-Niddiyyah, pg. 29)

If someone were to ask: 'How does Allaah descend to the lower heavens?' We would reply by asking: 'What is His nature?' If the questioner says: 'I do not know Allaah's nature.' We say: 'And we know not how He descends.' To determine how an attribute is manifested, we should know the nature of whom the attribute belongs. The attribute is but an aspect of its owner, dependent upon him. How could you expect us to explain the manner in which Allaah descends, hears, sees, speaks, or sits

upon the Throne, when you do not know what His nature is? If you attest that Allaah is a constant, absolute reality, incorporating all the attributes of perfection, dissimilar from any other existing thing or being, you must accept that His hearing, seeing, speaking, descending, sitting and others are perpetual and real, and that He is characterized by the attributes of perfection which are not like the hearing, seeing, speaking, descending and sitting of the created beings.

3. Tawheed al Uloohiyah (Oneness of worship)

The pagan polytheists in the time of the Prophet believed that Allaah was their Rabb, yet that alone did not make them Muslims. They used to devote various types of worship to Him and even claimed to be followers of the religion of Ibrahim . Some even believed in the Resurrection and a Final Judgement and others in divine decree (Al-Qadr). Despite all this they were still classified by Allaah in the Qur'aan as disbelievers (kuffaar) and polytheists (mushrikoon) because of their disbelief in this most important of the categories of Tawheed. They joined other gods with Allaah and did not accept the unity of Allaah.

The unity of worship - that is, that worship is to and for Allaah Alone - must be maintained because He alone deserves to be worshipped and He alone can benefit man as a result. No intercessor or intermediary such as a priest or holy man is needed between any person and Allaah. The importance of directing all forms of worship to Allaah Alone is emphasized time and again in the Qur'aan. It is the purpose and goal of creation and the message that was the central to the mission of all the Prophets (anbiyaa') and messengers (rusul) of Allaah.

Allaah states:

And I (Allaah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone). . [Soorah Adh-Dhaariyaat 56]

Verily We have sent to every nation a messenger (saying), 'Worship Allaah and stay away from false gods'. [Soorah An-Nahl 36]

You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help. [Soorah Al-Faatihah]

The Prophet said, If you ask in prayer, ask only Allaah, and if you seek help, seek it only from Allaah. [Reported by Ibn Abbaas and collected by At-Tirmidhee]

This part of Tawheed is known as Tawheed Al-'Ibaadah, or the unity of Allaah's worship. It is this aspect of Tawheed which is the most important. It is through this that we learn how to worship our Creator alone. Allaah is not the kind of god who does not respond or hear your calls. He is not the kind of god who needs some sort of middleman to take our prayers up to Him. Rather, Allaah says (what means):

"And your Lord says, Call upon Me; I will respond to you." [Quran 40:60]

There is nothing to prevent a person from calling directly upon Allaah and asking for His help and forgiveness. Unfortunately, this is violated by most of mankind who believe that other men can intercede for them and even grant them forgiveness because of their apparent special status! An example of this is the Catholic religion which holds that the celibate priests are purer than normal people. This allows for them to then hear the confessions of people's sins and subsequently grant them forgiveness. It is this kind of behaviour which takes a person away from the worship of Allaah to the worship of man.

As Muslims, we too should be careful of this, because it seems that many of our brothers and sisters are indulging in this kind of evil and are not even aware of it. How many Muslims are there today who call upon others besides Allaah? We find that in some countries, there are millions of Muslims who go to the graves of 'saints' and ask them for children, wealth, fame and more sadly, forgiveness. What makes this more ironic is the fact that many of these Muslims pray five times a day, and in every Rak'ah (unit) of their prayer they say the following to their Creator:

"It is You we worship and You we ask for help." [Quran 1:4]

Learning about the Tawheed of Allaah is the most important thing for the whole of humanity. For if we learn how to trust and worship our Creator with sincerity, then - and only then- will we escape from the slavery and captivity of this life. It is by worshipping Allaah alone does a man achieve true peace and success.

Therefore the entire Qur'aan is centered around *tawheed*. If you were to think about the *soorahs* revealed in Makkah, you would find that most of them focus entirely on *tawheed*. That is because the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhe wa sallam*) stayed in Makkah for 13 years calling to *tawheed* and warning against *shirk*. The vast majority of the religious obligations like *zakaah*, fasting, Hajj, the affairs of *halaal* and *haraam*, business transactions, etc. were not revealed until after the *Hijrah* to Al-Madeenah. The legislation of the prayer is an exception to this, as it was made an obligation while the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhe wa sallam*) was still in Makkah on the Night of *Al-Mi'raaj*, when he (*sallallaahu 'alayhe wa sallam*) was taken by night (to Jerusalem) [2], but that was only a short time before the *Hijrah*.

So the majority of the *soorahs* revealed before the Prophet (*sallallaahu 'alayhe wa sallam*) made *hijrah* were focused entirely on *tawheed*, thus showing how truly important the subject is. Furthermore, the religious obligations were not revealed until *tawheed* was presented and established within the souls of the people, and the proper *'aqeedah* had taken root. For verily actions can not be correct except with *tawheed*, nor can they have other than *tawheed* as their foundation.

The Qur'aan has illustrated that the Messengers (*'alayhim As-Salaatu was-Salaam*) all began their missions by inviting the people to *tawheed* before anything else, as Allaah says [Soorah An-Nahl (16):36]:

(*And We sent a messenger to every nation (proclaiming): 'Worship Allaah and shun false deities!')*

Allaah also says [Soorah Al-Anbiyaa' (21):25]:

(*And We never sent any messenger before you, except that we revealed to him that 'There is no deity worthy of worship except Me, so worship Me!')*

And every prophet used to say to his people Soorah Al-A'raaf (7):95]:

(*O my people - Worship Allaah as you have no other deity worthy of worship!)*

So this was the affair of the messengers - they began with *tawheed*.

Similarly the callers and revivalists who followed the messengers used to begin by focusing on *tawheed*. That is because every single *da'wah* that is not built upon *tawheed* is a fruitless call that does not fulfill its purpose, and there is no positive result to it. Every *da'wah* that does not focus on *tawheed* is a lost call, with regards to its end results. This is something well known and seen all over.

On the other hand, every *da'wah* centered around *tawheed* is a truly successful call, by Allaah's Permission, a call that benefits the society and bears many fruits. History bears witness to this.

Where are these affairs with the Muslims and their current situations today? Where is the establishment of the prayer by most of the Muslims? Or even more importantly, where is the correct *'aqeedah* for most of those who claim Islaam as their religion?!

Allaah says [Soorah An-Noor (24):55]:

(*Allaah has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will cause them to rule the earth just as He caused those who came before them to rule it, and He will grant them the ability to practice their religion, the one He chose for them, and He will change their fears into safety...)*

But where is the very first condition for this promise? [Soorah An-Noor (24):55]

(*...they worship Me without ascribing a single partner to Me)*

So He clarified that this gaining of authority and fortification will only come to pass when this condition is fulfilled - that they worship Him alone without any partners, and this is the essence of *tawheed*. These generously promised things will not be

granted except to those who understand and apply *tawheed*, worshipping Allaah alone with no partners, with acts of worship including prayer, *zakaah*, Hajj, and all other acts of obedience.

Note that Allaah, Glorified and Exalted, did not say, "*They worship Me*," only, rather He followed that up with His Statement [Soorah An-Noor (24):55]:

(*...without ascribing a single partner to Me*)

That is because worship is of no benefit with the presence of *shirk*. All forms of *shirk* must be avoided, no matter what shape, form, or name. *Shirk* simply means to perform an act of worship for other than Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic.

This is what brings about true salvation, safety, victory, and strength in the land - correcting the *'aqeedah* and then correcting the deeds. Without this, disasters and punishments will continue to befall whoever does not completely fulfill the condition (for Allaah's Aid). Being conquered by the enemies is only the result of the Muslims not fulfilling this necessary condition, their lack of proper concern for their *'aqeedah* and Religion, and their contentment with carrying Muslim names and nothing more.

The confirmation and belief in Tawheed Al-Uloohiyyah necessitates the denial of all forms of intercession or association of partners with Allaah such as praying or making any supplication to a dead or living person, or to an inanimate object for any reason. The Prophet said, Duaa (prayer or supplication) is worship.

Asking a righteous living person to supplicate on one's behalf is permitted because one is not asking them to grant the blessing, favour or help but rather asking them to ask Allaah on one's behalf. As for the dead, they are unable to hear, nor are they able to help themselves! And those whom you invoke or call upon instead of Him, own not even the thin membrane over the date-stone.

If you invoke (or call upon) them, they hear not your call, and if (in case) they were to hear, they could not grant it (your request) to you. And on the Day of Resurrection, they will disown your worshipping them. [Soorah Al-Fatir 14]

Verily you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they flee turning their backs. Nor can you lead the blind out of their error. You can only make to hear those who believe in Our Ayaat and who have submitted themselves as Muslims. [Soorah An-Naml Aayah 80 - 81]

The Qur'aan mentions the excuse of those who would rationalize their worship of idols. They said, "We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allaah." [Soorah Az-Zumar 3]

Their idols were used only as intermediaries yet Allaah nonetheless condemned them for their practices. Many Christians direct their prayer to Jesus or his mother.

The Catholics have numerous saints to whom they direct their prayers for various occasions. Catholics use priests as intercessors. Some deviated Muslim sects devote certain hours of the day for prayer to members of the family of the Prophet . Many visit the grave of the Prophet in hopes that he would answer their prayers and he specifically condemned this practice so much so that it was among his last words...Do not make my tomb a worshipped idol. [Muwatta Imam Malik]. The curse of Allaah falls upon the Jews and Christians for they have made their prophets' tombs places of worship. [Al-Bukhaari and Muwatta Imam Malik].

A significant part of belief in Tawheed Al-Uloohiyyah involves implementation of Sharee'ah (Islamic Law) because to do so is recognition of Allaah as the ultimate Lawgiver who is to be obeyed absolutely. To do otherwise is an act of disbelief in divine law and an expression of belief in the correctness of systems other than Allaah's system. In this point we can clearly recognize the relationship with Ar-Ruboobiyyah and Allaah's right to judge, legislate and be obeyed.

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT UNDERSTANDING TAWHEED

1. SHIRK

In terms of sharee'ah or Islamic terminology, shirk means ascribing a partner or rival to Allaah in Lordship (ruboobiyyah), worship or in His names and attributes.

A rival is a peer or counterpart. Hence Allaah forbids setting up rivals with Him and he condemns those who take them (rivals) as gods instead of or besides Allaah in many verses of the Qur'aan. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Then do not set up rivals unto Allaah (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)"

[al-Baqarah 2:22]

"And they set up rivals to Allaah, to mislead (men) from His path! Say: 'Enjoy (your brief life)! But certainly, your destination is the (Hell) Fire!'"

[Ibraaheem 14:30]

In the hadeeth it is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever dies claiming that Allaah has a rival, will enter Hell."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4497; Muslim, 92.

The types of shirk:

The texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah indicate that shirk and the ascribing of rivals to Allaah sometimes puts a person beyond the pale of Islam and sometimes does not. Hence the scholars divided shirk into two types which they call shirk akbar (major shirk) and shirk asghar (minor shirk). There follows a brief description of each type:

1 - Major shirk

This means ascribing to someone other than Allaah something that belongs only to Allaah, such as Lordship (ruboobiyyah), divinity (uloohiyyah) and the divine names and attributes (al-asma' wa'l-sifaat).

This kind of shirk may sometimes be outward, such as the shirk of those who worship idols and graves, or the dead or absent.

Or it may sometimes be hidden, such as those who put their trust in other gods besides Allaah, or the shirk and kufr of the hypocrites. For even though their (hypocrites') shirk puts them beyond the pale of Islam and means that they will abide forever in Hell, it is a hidden shirk, because they make an outward display of Islam and conceal their kufr and shirk, so they are inwardly mushriks but not outwardly.

Shirk may sometimes take the form of beliefs:

Such as the belief that there is someone else who creates, gives life and death, reigns or controls the affairs of the universe along with Allaah.

Or the belief that there is someone else who must be obeyed absolutely besides Allaah, so they follow him in regarding as permissible or forbidden whatever he wants, even if that goes against the religion of the Messengers.

Or they may associate others with Allaah in love and veneration, by loving a created being as they love Allaah. This is the kind of shirk that Allaah does not forgive, and it is the shirk of which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allaah as rivals (to Allaah). They love them as they love Allaah"

[al-Baqarah 2:165]

Or the belief that there are those who know the Unseen as well as Allaah. This is very common among some of the deviant sects such as the Raafidis (Shi'ah), extreme Sufis, and Baatinis (esoteric sects) in general. The Raafidis believe that their imams have knowledge of the unseen, and the Baatinis and Sufis believe similar things about their awliya' ("saints"), and so on. It is also shirk to believe that there is someone who bestows mercy in a manner that is befitting only for Allaah, so he shows mercy as Allaah does and forgives sins and overlooks the bad deeds of his worshippers.

Shirk may sometimes take the form of words:

Such as those who make du'aa' or pray to someone other than Allaah, or seek his help or seek refuge with him with regard to matters over which no one has control except Allaah, whether the person called upon is a Prophet, a wali ("saint"), an angel or a jinn, or some other created being. This is a kind of major shirk which puts one beyond the pale of Islam.

Or such as those who make fun of religion or who liken Allaah to His creation, or say that there is another creator, provider or controller besides Allaah. All of these are major shirk and a grave sin that is not forgiven.

Shirk may sometimes take the form of actions:

Such as one who sacrifices, prays or prostrates to something other than Allaah, or who promulgates laws to replace the rulings of Allaah and makes that the law to which people are obliged to refer for judgement; or one who supports the kaafirs and helps them against the believers, and other acts that go against the basic meaning of faith and put the one who does them beyond the pale of Islam. We ask Allaah to keep us safe and sound.

2 - Minor shirk

This includes everything that may lead to major shirk, or which is described in the texts as being shirk, but does not reach the extent of being major shirk.

This is usually of two types:

1 - Being emotionally attached to some means which have no basis and for which Allaah has not given permission, such as hanging up "hands", turquoise beads etc on the grounds that they offer protection or that they ward off the evil eye. But Allaah has not made them the means of such protection, either according to sharee'ah or according to the laws of the universe.

[Translator's note: the "hands" referred to are objects made of metal, pottery etc, usually blue or turquoise in colour, that some people hang up to ward off the evil eye, according to their mistaken belief]

2 - Venerating some people or things in a way that does not go so far as ascribing lordship to them, such as swearing by something other than Allaah, or saying, "Were it not for Allaah and So and so," etc.

The scholars have stipulated guidelines to distinguish major shirk from minor shirk when shirk is mentioned in the texts of sharee'ah. These guidelines include the following:

(i) - When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) states clearly that this action is minor shirk, such as in *al-Musnad* (27742) where it is narrated that Mahmoud ibn Labeed said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The thing that I fear most for you is minor shirk." They said: "O Messenger of Allaah, what is minor shirk?" He said: "Showing off, for Allaah will say on the Day when people are recompensed for their actions: 'Go to those for whom you were showing off with your deeds in the world, and see what reward you find with them.'" Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 951.

(ii) - When the word shirk is used in the texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah in the indefinite form [without the definite article *al-*]. This usually refers to minor shirk, and there are many examples of this, such as when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Incantations, amulets and love spells are shirk."

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 3883; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *al-Silsilah al-Saheehah*, 331.

What is meant by shirk here is minor shirk, not major shirk.

Amulets are things that are hung on children such as turquoise beads and the like, which they claim will protect them from the evil eye.

Love spells are something that they do, claiming that it will make a woman beloved to her husband and a man beloved to his wife.

(iii) – If the Sahaabah understood from the texts of sharee’ah that what was meant by shirk here was minor shirk, not major. Undoubtedly the understanding of the Sahaabah carries weight, because they are the most knowledgeable of the people concerning the religion of Allaah, and the most knowledgeable as to the intent of the Lawgiver. For example, Abu Dawood (3910) narrated from Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Tiyarah (superstitious belief in omens) is shirk, tiyarah is shirk,” three times, and there is no one among us but (will have some of that) but Allaah will rid him of it by means of tawakkul (putting his trust in Allaah). The words “there is no one among us...” are the words of Ibn Mas’ood, as was explained by the prominent scholars of hadeeth. This indicates that Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) understood that this was minor shirk, because he could not have said, “There is no one among us...” referring to major shirk. Moreover, major shirk cannot be eliminated by means of tawakkul, rather it is essential to repent therefrom.

(iv) – If the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) interpreted the words shirk or kufr in a manner which indicates that what is meant is a minor form thereof and not the major form. For example al-Bukhaari (1038) and Muslim (74) narrated from Zayd ibn Khaalid al-Juhani that he said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led the morning prayer for us at al-Hudaybiyah following rainfall during the night. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) finished, he turned to face the people and said to them: “Do you know what your Lord has said?” They said: “Allaah and his Messenger know best.” He said: “This morning one of My slaves became a believer in Me and one a disbeliever. As for him who said: ‘We have been given rain by the grace of Allaah and His mercy,’ that one is a believer in Me, a disbeliever in the stars; and as for him who said: ‘We have been given rain by such-and-such a star, that one is a disbeliever in Me, a believer in the stars.’”

The interpretation of the word kufr here is given in another report narrated from Abu Hurayrah who said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Do you not know what your Lord said? ‘I do not send any blessing upon My slaves but a group among them become kaafirs thereby because they refer to the stars and attribute things to the stars. This explains that if a person attributes rainfall to the stars by believing that they caused it to fall – when in fact Allaah has not made the stars a means of causing rainfall – his kufr is a kind of ingratitude for the blessing of Allaah. It is well known that ingratitude for the blessing of Allaah is minor kufr. But if a person believes that the stars are controlling the universe and they are the ones that cause the rain to fall, then this is major shirk.

Minor shirk may sometimes take the form of outward actions, such as wearing talismans, strings, amulets and the like, and other words and deeds. And sometimes it may be hidden, like a little bit of showing off.

It may also take the form of beliefs:

Such as the belief that something may be a cause of bringing benefit or warding off harm, when Allaah has not made it so; or believing that there is barakah (blessing) in a thing, when Allaah has not made it so.

It sometimes takes the form of words:

Such as when they said, "We have been given rain by such and such a star," without believing that that the stars could independently cause rain to fall; or swearing by something other than Allaah, without believing in venerating the thing sworn by or regarding it as equal with Allaah; or saying, "Whatever Allaah wills and you will," and so on.

It sometimes takes the form of actions:

Such as hanging up amulets or wearing a talisman or string to dispel or ward off calamity, because everyone who attribute powers to a thing when Allaah has not made it so either according to sharee'ah or according to the laws of the universe, has associated something with Allaah. This also applies to one who touches a thing seeking its barakah (blessing), when Allaah has not created any barakah in it, such as kissing the doors of the mosques, touching their thresholds, seeking healing from their dust, and other such actions.

This is a brief look at the division of shirk into major and minor. We cannot go into great detail in this short answer.

Conclusion:

What the Muslim must do is to avoid shirk in both its minor and major forms. The greatest sin is shirk and transgression against the unique rights of Allaah, which are to be worshipped and obeyed alone, with no partner or associate.

Hence Allaah has decreed that the mushrikeen will abide forever in Hell and has told us that He will not forgive them, and He has forbidden Paradise to them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, Allaah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allaah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin"

[al-Nisa' 4:48]

"Verily, whosoever sets up partners (in worship) with Allaah, then Allaah has forbidden Paradise to him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) there are no helpers"

[al-Maa'idah 5:72]

Every wise and religiously-committed person should fear shirk for himself and should turn to his Lord, asking Him to help him avoid shirk, as al-Khaleel [Ibraaheem – peace be upon him] said:

“and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols”

[Ibraaheem 14:35 – interpretation of the meaning]

One of the salaf said: “Who can claim to be safe from this after Ibraaheem?”

So the sincere believer’s fear of shirk should increase as should his desire for his for his Lord to keep him away from it, and he should say the great du’aa’ which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught to his companions when he said to them: “Shirk among you will be more subtle than the footsteps of an ant, but I will teach you something which, if you do it, both minor and major shirk will be kept away from you. Say: *Allaahumma inni a’oodhu bika an ushrika bika wa ana a’lam wa astaghfiruka lima la a’lam* (O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from associating anything with You knowingly, and I seek Your forgiveness for that of which I am unaware).”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Jaami’*, 3731

The above refers to the difference between major and minor shirk, defining each and describing its types.

With regard to the difference between them as far as the ruling is concerned:

Major shirk puts a person beyond the pale of Islam, so the one who does that is judged to be out of Islam and to have apostatized therefrom, so he is a kaafir and an apostate.

Minor shirk does not put a person beyond the pale of Islam, rather it may be done by a Muslim but he still remains in Islam; but the one who does that is in great danger because minor shirk is a major sin. Ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “If I were to swear by Allaah falsely, that is better for me than if I were to swear by something other than Him sincerely.” So he regarded swearing by something other than Allaah (which is minor shirk) as being worse than swearing by Allaah falsely, and it is well known that swearing by Allaah falsely is a major sin.

2. CONTINUOUS SINNING AND DISOBEDIENCE

- not knowing we have a Merciful God who Loves a person who repents
- “no one knows and no one sees” concept – Lack TAQWA, Lack of understanding of Allah’s Names (al ‘Alim, al Khabeer)
-

3. UNGRATEFUL TO ALLAH FOR HIS NUMEROUS BLESSINGS

And He gave you of all that you asked for, and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily! Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer, - a disbeliever (an extreme ingrate, denies Allah's Blessings by disbelief, and by

worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). 31; 34

One will forget that Allah is the One who Provides, and starts being arrogant by flaunting one's wealth....and NOT thanking Allah for even the Blessings of Islam and the Blessings of time and good health.

Examples are given in surah al Kahf about the 2 people – one was given by Allah gardens, rivers, etc...the other was given nothing. The one who was given everything forgot Who was the One who Provides.

Other examples given in the Qur'an – Fir'aun, Qarun,

The Prophet Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said:

Whoever denies himself a type of clothing out of humility for Allah, whilst he is able to wear it, Allah will summon him on the Day of Judgement amongst the whole of creation, in order to allow him to choose from any type of adornment of imān which he wishes to adorn himself with. [Narrated by Mu'ādh b. Anas in al-Tirmidhi]

Imām Ibn 'Uthaymīn states in an explanation of this hadith:

"This indicates that if a person is amidst those of modest circumstances, who are not able to dress themselves with expensive clothing, humbles himself and dresses like them, so that he does not break their hearts or appear as haughty or superior to them, he will attain this immense reward.

"If however, he is amongst some people whom Allah has blessed (with material wealth) who wear more expensive clothing that is not unlawful, it is better for him to dress like them, because [of the hadith] "Allāh is beautiful and loves beauty." And without doubt, if a person is amongst such people who wear beautiful clothing, and instead chooses to dress himself in a manner [obviously] lower than theirs, then this is regarded as being libās al-shuhra – by which one seeks attention. So a person looks at what the circumstances dictate." [Sharh Riyādh al-Sālihīn]

4. INABILITY TO PRIORITISE THINGS IN LIFE

A person who does not understand Tawheed does not know that worshipping Allah is more important than spending too much time with friends at dinner at the expense of praying on time. This person, when faced with the tasks of school work, or office duties, would prefer to complete the assignments from school or work and pray at a later time. He would always give the excuse that there is no time to seek knowledge or to pray in the mosque (for the brothers) and would rather go on holidays to America or Europe rather than perform Hajj. To him/her, life is so short so we should enjoy first. Religion is secondary.

Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health

before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death.”

Source: Shu’ab al-Imān 9575

Grade: *Sahih* (authentic) according to Al-Albani

5. HEART TOO MUCH ATTACHED TO THE DUNYA

Thawbaan (رضي الله عنه) (the freed slave of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) narrated that the Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“Nations are about to unite (and call) each other to set upon you, just as diners are invited to a plate of food.” It was said: “Will it be because of our lack of numbers that day (i.e. will be small in number)?” He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Rather, you will be many on that day, but you will be like scum foam (that floats) on the river. Allaah will remove the fear of you from the hearts of your enemies and put Wahn into your hearts.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allaah, what is Wahn?” He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “**Love for the dunya and hatred for death.**”

[Related by Abu Da’wud, 4297 and others – graded as saheeh by Al-Albani in ‘Silsilah as-Saheehah’, 958]

“And this life of the world is only an amusement and a play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter – that is the life indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew.” [Al-Ankaboot, 64]

People will compromise Islam and will chase the dunya at the expense of the Hereafter. We need to be balanced and lead a life of middle path.

6. LACK OF PATIENCE

When you don’t understand Qadr of Allah and that Allah will Provide, you again compromise on Islam. You look the virtue of patience in life. Perfect example given by al Khidr in surah al Kahf

THE 4 LEVELS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE AFFLICTED:

The First Level:

Being angry, and this is in various ways: and anger is of two types. The first type of anger is that which is directed toward his Lord. So he becomes angry at what Allah has decreed for him, and this is Haraam (forbidden). And it is possible that this could lead to kufr. Allah said: “And among mankind is he who worships Allah upon the very edge (i.e. in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith; but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face (i.e. Reverts back to disbelief after embracing Islam). He loses both this world and the

Hereafter. That is the evident loss.” (22:11) The second type of anger is expressed by the tongue like making du’aa for destruction or ruin and what is similar to that, and this is Haraam. The third type of anger is expressed by the limbs like slapping the cheeks, ripping clothing, pulling out hair, and similar to that, and all of this is Haraam and in contradiction to patience which is Waajib.

The Second Level:

Being patient, just as in the saying: Patience is like its name – bitter in taste, yet its outcomes are sweeter than honey. The person at this level feels the affliction to weigh very heavy upon him, yet he bears it although he dislikes that it happened. Rather, his Eemaan bears it and restrains him from being angry. So the time of affliction and the time of no affliction is not the same to him, and this (level) is Waajib, because Allah commanded the people to be patient, saying: “And be patient, indeed Allah is with the patient ones.” (8:46)

The Third Level:

Being pleased with the affliction in that the person is pleased with the affliction and whether it happened or not, it is the same to him so he it is not difficult upon him. He does not bear it as if it is something weighing heavy on him, and this (level) is Mustahabb (preferred) and it is not Waajib according to the most correct opinion. The difference between this level and the one before it is apparent because the affliction happening or not happening is the same due to the pleasure of the one on this level. As for the level before it, the affliction is hard upon him, yet he remains patient over it.

The Fourth Level:

Thankfulness and being grateful and this is the highest level. This is that the person thanks Allah for the affliction which has struck him in that he knows that this affliction is expiation for his sins and perhaps a cause for an increase in his good deeds. The Prophet (sall-Allaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: *“There is no affliction which strikes the Muslim except that Allah expiates with it (sins), even with a thorn that may poke him.”* (Bukhaaree & Muslim)

7. DEAD HEART

Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمته said,

The opposite of the healthy heart is the dead heart. It neither knows its Lord nor worships Him according to what He commands, loves and approves. It clings instead to its lusts and desires, even if these are likely to incur the displeasure of Allah and His wrath. It is enslaved to other than Allah The Almighty in terms of love, fear, hope, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, exaltation and humbleness.

He loves, hates, gives and withholds motivated by his personal desires. His personal desires are preferable and dearer to him than the satisfaction of Allah. He is led by passion, motivated by lust, driven by ignorance and carried by heedlessness. His heart is immersed in its concern with worldly objectives. His heart is drunk with its own fancies and love for this worldly life. It is called to Allah The Almighty and the Last Day from a distance but it does not respond to advice, and instead it follows any scheming, cunning devil. Life angers and pleases it, and passion makes it deaf and blind to anything except what is evil.

8. LOST OR LACK PURPOSE OF LIFE

Purpose of life of those who do not understand Tawheed is simply to work and work and get the wages at the end of the month and then spend the wages, and then save money to buy a car or a house ...and take short holidays to Europe, etc.

They forget that the purpose of life is to worship Allah (51: 56). They forget that our life is short in this world compared to the hereafter.

“Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. (It is) like vegetation after rain whose growth pleases the farmer but then it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes dried up and broken down; and in the hereafter is a severe chastisement and (also) forgiveness from Allah and (His) pleasure; and the life of this world is nothing but a deceiving enjoyment.”
(Al-Hadid: 20)

“...and they rejoice in the life of the world, whereas the life of this world compared with the Hereafter is nothing but a brief passing enjoyment.”
(Ar-Rad: 26)

9. LACKING GOOD DEEDS

Because of all the above, a person who does not understand tawheed may see good deeds as a waste of time and money. He/she does not realise that, for example, charity increases the wealth, and it is Allah who Provides.

The sins which is often committed by this person also may prevent someone from doing good deeds.

Ibn Al Qayyim also stated that disobedience will prevent obedience (to Allah). If there were no other punishment for sins other than that it prevents one from obeying Allah then this would be sufficient.

10. HELLFIRE - MAY BE FOREVER

This is the worst of consequence - and the things which we forget is that some people will remain in hellfire forever, as Allah does NOT forgive shirk if one dies without repenting to Allah.

Verily! Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners in worship with Him, but He forgives whom he pleases sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, has indeed strayed far away. 4:116