



Readings in Kashf ush-Shubuhaat (Removal of the Doubts) : The Ninth Study

INTRODUCTION

All Praise is due to Allaah, we praise Him, seek His aid and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allaah from the evils of our souls and the evils of our actions. Whomsoever Allaah guides there is none to misguide and whomsoever Allaah misguides there is none to guide. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, alone, without any partners and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

To proceed: this is the treatise of the Shaikh ul-Islam, Establisher of Tawheed, and Reviver of the Religion, Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahhaab entitled “the Removal of the Doubts” and it is one of the most essential and fundamental writings on the subject of Tawheed and what is connected to it. The translation of the text has been taken from the work of Muhammad bin Abdur-Rahmaan al-Khumayyis who has added some brief explanatory notes and some additional footnotes pointing out some other doubts that the enemies of Tawheed use and spread amongst the people. The whole book is serialised in sections and explanatory titles have been given to each portion of the text to aid understanding, study and revision.

We pray that Allaah revives the light of Tawheed and the Sunnah and that He removes what remains of the darkneses of Shirk and Bid’ah, and that He corrects the affairs of the Ummah, by granting them success in correcting their own souls, following in all of that the Methodology of the Inheritors the Prophets in every generation, that of Imaam Maalik, that of the Prophets and Messengers themselves.

To proceed: The Ninth Study...

The Ninth Study: On The Meaning of Shirk And Ibaadah

[9.1 Negating Shirk from oneself requires knowledge and understanding of what is being negated]

If he then says, “ I do not associate any partners with Allaah, never, how could I! However, making recourse to the Righteous (dead) is not Shirk”.

Then say to him, “If you have affirmed that Allaah has forbidden Shirk greater than He has forbidden zinaa (fornication) and you affirm that Allaah does not forgive Shirk, then what exactly is the nature of this thing that Allaah has forbidden, and which He has mentioned that He does not forgive?”¹ For verily, he does not know².

So say to him, “How can you free and absolve yourself from Shirk while you don’t even know what it is (and its details)?” Or how can Allaah make his forbidden to you, and also mention that He does not forgive it, and then you do not even ask about it and nor do you come to know about it?! Do you think that Allaah would forbid it and not even explain what it is to us...?”

[9.2 The argument of Shirk being embodied in worshipping idols only]

So if he says, “Shirk is worshipping idols, and we do not worship idols”³. Then say to him, What is the meaning of worshipping idols? Do you think that the Pagans (of Makkah) used to believe that those wooden idols and stones had the ability to create, and provide and to regulate the lives of those who called upon them? For this is rejected by the Qur’aan, as occurs in His saying – the Most High, “**Say: Who provides for you from the Heavens and the Earth...**” (Yunus 10:31), to the end of the verse.

[9.3 The argument of Shirk being embodied in directing worship to idols and the reply to it]

If he then says, “Well it is when a person who actually intends and seeks (qasada) the wooden idols, or stones or tombs or other things, supplicating to them and sacrificing for them (i.e. a ritual sacrifice of an animal) and then say, “they bring us closer to Allaah, and bring about his blessing (barakah) upon us, or they actually give us His blessing directly”.

¹ **Shaikh Muhammd bin Ibraaheem:** “...meaning, “Explain to me the reality of Shirk”, meaning, “What is the meaning of Ibaadah”, for (verily he does not know) about Shirk and nor about Tawheed. When you ask him to explain this or that, he stops and pauses. So where is this from Tawheed? For the ruling upon something, either in terms of negation or affirmation, then it is necessary for it to be upon knowledge and proper conception of it. Hence, you will not know Shirk until you negate it (upon knowledge) and you will not know Tawheed until you have affirmed it (upon knowledge).”

² **Shaikh Muhammd bin Ibraaheem:** “Your absence of knowledge of it and your lack of being concerned about it shows that you do not know your religion, and that you do not have anything of devotion, being heedless, and away from the religion and from knowing about it. Therefore, what is upon you is to remain silent...”

³ **Shaikh Muhammd bin Ibraaheem:** “He thinks that Shirk is worshipping idols (only) and that he, in his claim, does not worship idols, rather (he worships) a wali (pious saint)...”

Then say to him, “You have spoken the truth. And this is your very action that you do near the stone idols⁴ and the tombs that are upon the graves and other than them.”

So this person has actually affirmed that this action of theirs (i.e. the Pagans) is actually Shirk, and this is what is desired from him (i.e. to come with this answer).

[9.4 The all-inclusive meaning of ‘worshipping idols’ and the generality of its scope and application as occurs in the Qur’aan]

It is then also said, “This saying of yours, “Shirk is worshipping idols”, is you intent behind this that Shirk is limited to this only, and that depending and relying upon the dead righteous people and supplicating to them does not enter into this?”

[If this is so], then this actually goes against what Allaah has mentioned in His Book about the disbelief of the one who is attached to the Angels, or Eesaa (alaihis-salaam), or the Righteous. Hence, it is necessary for him to agree with you and affirm to you that the one who associates anyone from the righteous people with in Allaah’s worship, that this is the very Shirk that is mentioned in the Qur’aan.⁵

This is what is desired (from him).

[9.5 The essence of the matter: request clarification of what is meant by ‘Shirk’ and ‘Ibaadah’]

The secret of the matter⁶ is that when he says, “I do not associate partners with Allaah”. Then say to him, “What is this Shirk with Allaah? Explain it to me?” If he says, “It is worshipping idols”, then say to him, “And what is ‘worshipping idols’? Explain it to me”.

⁴ I.e. that represent the dead.

⁵ **Shaikh Muhammad bin Ibraaheem:** “And this is the second reply to him... for the Mighty Qur’an has explained the kufr of the one who is attached (i.e. worships and supplicates) to those (i.e. idols) and the kufr of the one who is attached to those (i.e. prophets, angels, jinn, the righteous), as has preceded, and that the worship of idols is only one type of the many types of Shirk.... Hence it will become clear that the one who worships an idol or an effigy or other than that then he is a Mushrik, and by this will the doubt be uncovered and his proof refuted.”

⁶ **Shaikh Muhammd bin Ibraaheem:** “Meaning, the end result of this answer to the three doubts, is that you examine and scrutinise him, for he will have three conditions a) he will either withhold (from giving an answer, i.e. from explaining what is Shirk), in that case say to him, “You do not know the truth from the falsehood”, for when he withholds and is evasive and does not know, then this is sufficient for the refutation of his falsehood, and then we will have sufficed in answering him. And this is actually the state of most of those who worship idols, they do not know what is Shirk, and who are the people of Shirk and nor does he know about the meaning of worshipping idols, and nor has he managed to distinguish between worshipping idols and worshipping other than idols b) if he explains (Shirk) in the manner that the Qur’aan has explained it, then this too suffices us in refuting him and destroying his foundation which he has built it upon c) and if he explains it with falsehood, which is in opposition to the tafseer of the Qur’aan, then the various clear verses regarding the meaning of Shirk with Allaah and worshipping of idols are explained to him....”

Shaikh Ibn Uthaimen: “Meaning, when this Mushrik claims that he does not worship except Allaah alone, and then you ask him what is the meaning of worshipping Allaah alone, then he will not except in one of three conditions: a) that he explains it in accordance with what the Qur’aan has indicated. This is what is actually desired and acceptable. And it is from this that it becomes clear that he has not actualised the worship of Allaah alone, in that he has associated partners with him (by virtue of his own clarification of the meaning of

If he then says, "I do not worship anyone but Allaah alone", then say to him, "What is the meaning of 'Worshipping Allaah alone'? Explain it to me".

So if he explains it in the manner that the Qur'aan has explained it, then this is what is desired. And if he does not know what it is, then how can he claim (knowledge of) something while does not even know what it is?

And if he explains it in a manner other than how the Qur'aan has explained it, then the clear verses concerning the meaning of Shirk with Allaah and worship of idols are explained to him, and that this is exactly what the people in our times are doing, and that worshipping Allaah alone, without any partners, this is what they reject from us, and they cry and shout out, just like their brothers (of old) cry and shout out, "What, has he made all of the gods into a single god? Verily this is a strange matter indeed!" (Saad 38:5).⁷

worshipping Allaah alone) b) that he does not know its meaning so it is said to him, "How can you claim something, and yet you do not know it? Or how can you pass judgement upon yourself (concerning a matter) yet, passing judgement upon something actually follows on from conceiving of it [in one's mind] (and understanding it), c) that he explains the worship of Allaah alone with other than its correct meaning, so in this case his error is explained to him by explaining the Sharee'ah meaning of Shirk and worship of idols, and that this is exactly what they do, and yet claim at the same time that they are Muwahhidoon and nor Mushrikoon."

⁷ **Shaikh Muhammd bin Ibraaheem:** "And from this you will realise that many of those who ascribe themselves to Islaam from this Ummah are not actually upon the religion as such, for they only have the name and they do not know what is the Shirk of the very first Pagans, for if they knew the Shirk of the very first Pagans, and the Shirk of those of our times, they would have realised that it is the same thing. Rather, the Mushriks of our time are greater (in their deviation and Shirk) than those of the first times by a great deal."

Shaikh Salih al-Fawzaan: "And the intent behind that is that Allaah has mentioned that the very first Pagans (of Makkah), that amongst them were those who worshipped idols, and some who worshipped trees, and stones, and also amongst them were those who worshipped the Prophets and the Righteous and so He made them all the one and same (i.e. equated between them all) in the judgement upon them. He judged them with disbelief and Shirk. And then you, O confused one, attempt to differentiate between the one who worships idols and the one who worships the righteous people. Hence, you actually differentiate between that which Allaah has actually brought together and treated as the same thing. And this is actually contending with Allaah, free from imperfections, the Most High. This is the perspective from which the doubt is refuted in that it is explained that there is do difference between the Shirk of the first Pagans, and the Shirk of these ones who claim Islam yet they worship the graves, and the pious dead people and the righteous – because they do not know the meaning of Ibaadah, or the meaning of Shirk, and hence they are confused and are evasive about that which they do not know. And this is the end result of being ignorant about the correct aqeedah of Tawheed, and also of being ignorant of what opposes it from the affairs of Shirk... And it is from here that the necessity of being concerned with learning and studying the correct aqeedah and what opposes it becomes clear."

Points to Note

9A. After attempting to hide his own Shirk, by way of accusing the people of Tawheed of rejecting the Prophet's Intercession (a matter which he has not comprehended) – he now attempts to affirm Tawheed for himself in the guise of claiming that he worships none but Allaah, and that he does not commit Shirk, and that Shirk is merely to worship idols.

9B. Hence, when he attempts to affirm Tawheed for himself, or to negate Shirk from himself, then he is to be questioned and scrutinised by asking him the precise meaning of that which he is either affirming or negating from himself.

9C. He will only have one of three conditions in reply to this questioning:

1. Either he will not know, in which case it is said to him how can you negate or affirm something, of which you have no knowledge and understanding. Hence, you do not know your religion and you do not know what is worship or Shirk.
2. Or he will give it a meaning other than what it really is in which case it is explained to him from the Book of Allaah – as has preceded in previous lessons.
3. Or he will give the correct meaning, in which case it is demonstrated to him that that is exactly what is done in our times.

9D. Following this, he may also attempt to differentiate between worshipping idols on the one hand, and worshipping Prophets, or the Righteous on the other. And of course the answer to this is easy and simply and has preceded in previous lessons. This is done by quoting from the Book of Allaah that which shows that amongst the Pagans were those who worshipped idols, and others who worshipped Prophets, and others who worshipped the Righteous dead people, and yet others who worshipped the Angels and the Jinn. Hence, it is not what is worshipped that defines what is Shirk, but the mere fact that something that has been declared worship by Allaah and the Messenger, is actually directed to other than Allaah. Such as supplication, or sacrifice, or seeking of intercession and so on.

Action Plan of the Muwahhid

1. Simply realise that most of those who worship other than Allaah, alongside Allaah, do not actually know the meaning of either Shirk or Tawheed (i.e. worshipping Allaah alone). Hence, you have to attempt to make them understand what exactly are the meanings of these terms as explained in the Qur'aan and that what they do is actually the same thing that is condemned by Allaah in His Book.
2. Know that there are three steps or levels in questioning and scrutinising one who worships other than Allaah, and responding to his claims.
3. Think, ponder and reflect over all of this. Then, when you are satisfied with your understanding and acquisition, then proceed to Part 10, seeking Allaah's aid and assistance in all of that.

And may the prayers and peace be upon Allaah's Messenger, his family, his companions and those who follow him upon Tawheed and the Sunnah till the affair is established.