

Shirk

Shirk or Intercession

Superficial analysis of the Holy Quran would be detrimental for one's Eman. It is very important to develop its deep understanding, without it one may be misled upon applying his own intellect to interpret Quranic Verses or following someone else's opinion. For these reasons, we have no other means but to approach 'those' who are referred to as 'Ulul Amr/Rasikh ul-Iml'¹ in Holy Quran (21:7 and 16:43). In this brief article, we shall see, whoever asks for help, either from the enemies of Allah^{azwj} (i.e., Iblis) or from those who have not been blessed with a Divine Status, commits an act of 'Shirk'. And certainly not that who seeks help through His^{azwj} humble servants (The Prophet^{saww} and His successors^{asws}), the latter approach refers to 'Wasilla or Tawassul'. There is a difference in Shirk and 'Wasilla/Tawassul' (intercession), which we would like to highlight through Quranic Verses and Ahadith. We start with a Noble Hadith of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws}:

كَتَبْتُ الْفَوَائِدَ لِلْكَرَاجِكِيِّ ذَكَرَ أَنَّ أَبَا حَنِيفَةَ أَكَلَ طَعَامًا مَعَ الْإِمَامِ الصَّادِقِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَ فَلَمَّا رَفَعَ عَ يَدَهُ مِنْ أَكْلِهِ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ هَذَا مِنْكَ وَ مِنْ رَسُولِكَ فَقَالَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَجَعَلْتَ مَعَ اللَّهِ شَرِيكًا فَقَالَ لَهُ وَيْلَكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ فِي كِتَابِهِ وَ مَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَ يَقُولُ فِي مَوْضِعٍ آخَرَ وَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَ رَسُولُهُ فَقَالَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ وَ اللَّهُ لَكَأَنِّي مَا قَرَأْتُهُمَا قَطُّ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَ لَمْ أَسْمِعْهُمَا إِلَّا فِي هَذَا الْوَقْتِ فَقَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ بَلَى قَدْ قَرَأْتُهُمَا وَ سَمِعْتُهُمَا وَ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَنْزَلَ فِيكَ وَ فِي أَشْبَاهِكَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبِ أَقْفَالِهَا وَ قَالَ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ²

It is written in Kanzul Fawaid by Karajaki that once Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} was eating food with Abu Hanifa and after finishing, Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} expressed gratitude like this: "I thank Allah^{azwj} who is the Sustainer of All Worlds, O Allah^{azwj} this was a blessing from You^{azwj} as well as from Your Prophet^{saww}." Upon hearing this Abu Hanifa said: "O Abu AbdAllah^{asws}! You have included 'someone else' along with Allah^{azwj}."

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} replied: "Be Careful! Allah^{azwj} Says in His Book(9:59)³: ***"If only they had been content with what Allah and His Messenger had gave them, and had said, "Sufficient unto us is Allah! Allah and His Messenger will soon give us out of their Kindness:***

And at another place Allah^{azwj} Says (9:74)⁴: ***".....And they only stayed in opposition because Allah and His Messenger enriched them out of His grace....."***

¹ Perfect in Knowledge

بحار الأنوار 47 240²

³ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ (9:59)

⁴ وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ (9:74)

After listening to these Verses from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws}, Abu Hanifa said: “By Allah^{azwj}! It seems I have never read or heard someone reciting these Verses of the holy Quran before.”

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} said: “No, its not like this! You have not only heard these Verses before but also have read them. However, Allah^{azwj} Says for you and people like you (47:24): **“Will they then not meditate on the Qur'an, or are there locks on the hearts?”** and Says (83:14)⁵: **“Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.**”

Skirk and Wasillah

There are several Verses in Holy Quran where use of ‘Wasillah/Tawassul’ has been suggested and applied. We present some of those below.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (5:35)

O ye who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive with might and main in his cause: that ye may prosper.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ (2:255)

Allah is He besides Whom there is no god, the Everliving, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist; slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep; whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases, His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not, and He is the Most High, the Great.

There are several other Verses which suggest use of ‘Wasillah’, i.e.

“On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with” (20:109)

• **“And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits” (34:23)**

• **“And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses” (53:26)**

• **“...And they do not intercede except for him whom He approves...” (21:28)**

• **“And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him)” (43:86)**

“We did not send a messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah’s permission; and had they, when they had done injustice to themselves, come to you and asked Allah’s forgiveness; and the messenger (also) had asked pardon for them, surely, they would have found Allah oft-returning, merciful” (4:64)”

⁵ كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (83:14)

Thus it has been made clear that the presence of the Prophet of Allah^{azwj} has been a way for the people to seek forgiveness (through him^{asws}).

Wilayat and not Shirk

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

There is no sustainer except Allah who is your Wali, along with His Prophet and those Momineen who establish prayers and offer Ziqaat (Alms) in the state of Bowing'. (5:55)

And also Allah^{azwj} has clearly Warned:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مِؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا (36)

And it is not appropriate for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair; and whosoever is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong Path.

Help from an Enemy of Allah^{azwj} is Shirk:

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq^{asws} said about the verse (12:106):

وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ: (12:106)

And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (other as partners) with Him! This verse is for those people who submitted to Iblis^{la} and then kept on following him in ignorace and thus the element of Shirk crawled into them.⁶

In another tradition, Imam AbuAbullah^{asws} said: the Verse (12:106): **And most of them do not believe in Allah without associating others (with Him).** Imam^{asws} explained that this verse refers to the 'Shirk in obdience' (Shirk Tayat) and not to the 'Shirk in worship' (Shirk Ibada) and the Verse (22:11):

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ...⁷

And among men is he who worships Allah (standing) on the verge... Imam^{asws} replied this verse was descended for a single person but it applied to all those who followed him. I asked: Will that who takes an Imam someone else instead of those

⁶ Babul Shirk, hadith 3, chapter 297 (vol. 4, 370)

⁷ يُرِ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ خَيْرٌ (11) الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

And among men is he who serves Allah (standing) on the verge, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, but if a trial afflict him he turns back headlong; he loses this world as well as the hereafter; that is a manifest loss.

Nominated by Allah^{azwj} would fall under this Verse? Imam^{asws} replied: Yes, just him or sometimes even all those who follow him.⁸

⁸ Babul Shirk, hadith 4, chapter 297 (vol. 4, 370)